

April 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

Faculty Senate Minutes 4-5-06

Senators attending: Brett Serviss, Randy Duncan, Linda English, Larry Thye, Linda Wen, Cindy Wilson, Alan Wright, Shanta Sharma, Jules Mollere, James Engman, Celya Taylor, Beverly Buys, Maralea Gourley, Georgine Steinmiller, Kevin Durand, Laura Storm, Carol Underwood, Rick McDaniel, Martin Halpern, Fred Worth, Paula Leming, Don Wells, and Brian English.

Senators absent: George Ann Stallings, Patti Miley, Kenneth Taylor, Troy Hogue, and Rafael Bejarano

Guests in attendance: Vice President Robert Houston.

President Jamie Engman announced the quorum and called the meeting to order.

The Minutes of the March meeting were approved as distributed.

The President's Report (attached below the minutes) was discussed. There is concern that the cancellation of budget meetings takes the faculty out of the loop in the budget process. Question was raised regarding the existence of a written policy statement regarding the nature of the budget process at HSU, specifically where do faculty have a formal input?

Vice President Houston met with the Senate for discussion. (Details of this discussion follow this set of Minutes.)

Committee Reports:

" Academic: No report.

" Operations: Report is attached below the minutes.

- o Motion to approve recommendation was passed to place the items in the committee report regarding Letters for Tenure & Promotion into the Faculty Handbook.

- o Motion was made to make the proctor's instructions regarding student evaluation of faculty to correspond exactly to the Faculty Handbook and approved as on 2(a) of the report.

- o Motion passed that the Senate President take the issue of custody of the student evaluation forms up, and that the Operations Committee look into this issue as well.

- o Motion to approve recommendation 3(a) from the committee report was passed regarding Faculty Excellence Award Guidelines.

- o Senators are encouraged to send the Operations Committee suggestions about what types of service should be considered as service for the Faculty Excellence Award Guidelines.

- o Building and Grounds: No report

" Procedures: No report.

" Faculty Morale: Report is attached below the minutes.

- o It was determined to be the sense of the Senate to place a friendly amendment on part 2(a) of the committee recommendations that the survey not be put on the Web.

" Finance: No report.

Old Business: Mr. Gattin and Mr. Choate will be at the May meeting to discuss privacy issues.

New Business:

" Founder's Day: Dr. Dunn would like recommendations on how to increase Founder's Day participation. The Academics Committee was asked to look into this issue.

" There is concern from some faculty regarding the manner in which sexual harassment is addressed on campus. President Engman was asked to discuss this issue with Mr. Choate, and will report back next month.

" The Building & Grounds Committee was asked to consider an energy conservation policy for the campus.

" The Senate was asked for their opinion on the matter of full-time instructors who have ten or more years of service with HSU to be allowed to apply for promotion to Assistant Professor. The issue was forwarded to a temporary committee composed of volunteers interested in the issue. Motion was

April 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

raised and approved to give President Engman the power to form this committee.

" Concerns about the Faculty Excellence Awards outlined in the last cabinet meeting were forwarded to the Operations Committee.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian English

Faculty Senate Secretary

Senate President's report of meeting with President Dunn

Friday, March 17th, 2006

I asked about Henderson's recognition as a College of Distinction, and whether there are plans to publicize this. I was under the impression that this recognition was made early last fall, but apparently my information was incorrect; our recognition as a College of Distinction was only made in January. Dr. Dunn explained that Henderson does plan to publicize this. He was not aware that we had already been featured on the organizations website. That website, www.collegesofdistinction.com, portrays Henderson in a very positive light, and places us in a very select set of institutions. In Arkansas, only 4 other colleges are so recognized (Hendrix, OBU, Harding and College of the Ozarks), and Henderson is the only public institution in the state that has been named a College of Distinction.

We discussed a faculty member's March 16th request for an issue to be brought up for consideration by the Faculty Hearing Committee.

Dr. Dunn explained that he will not reach a decision on the proposed fitness facility until after 2006-2007 tuition and fees have been determined. He feels that it will be very important for students to understand that the increase in fees that would be required for construction of the facility will be separate from and in addition to the increases that will be needed simply to allow us to meet our general budgetary needs.

We discussed Founder's Day and the Faculty Excellence Program, and the potential benefits of considering some changes in each. He would appreciate proposals from the Senate. (See additional comments on this in my report of meeting with Dr. Houston.)

Dr. Dunn discussed some possible changes in the handling of scholarship awards. He questions whether Henderson's current "first-come first-served" approach is the best option. He also discussed other issues that the scholarship committee is reviewing, including using a student's academic challenge grant as a foundation, and then awarding scholarships in addition to that up to a "ceiling," and decreasing the emphasis of ACT scores in determining scholarship levels.

We discussed budgetary issues. One of the biggest challenges to meet will be the anticipated increase in utility costs. Currently, it appears that we will be at least \$200,000 over budget on electricity alone. I asked about the current problems for summer 2006 that have been blamed on greatly increased use of adjunct faculty members, and the difficulty that faculty have understanding or obtaining information on this situation. In particular, how is it that using adjunct faculty, who have very low salaries, to teach classes would cause a shortfall? He explained that he did not have that information, but stressed that he is not pleased that controls on the use of adjuncts apparently were insufficient.

I raised a concern from faculty that placing the Director of International Programs under the administration of Student Services appears to move an academic program out of the area of academics. Dr. Dunn explained that this is, to some extent, what has been done. The majority of responsibilities (he estimated 80%) for the Director of International Programs, however, are related to dealing with the details of getting international students on campus, keeping them here, and helping them assimilate into the community. This includes dealing with the logistics of visas, other paperwork, financial issues, and the many unique situations that arise when students from other countries struggle with a new environment. Because of Dr. Reinhold's background in academics and student services, Dr. Dunn has

April 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

been assured by Dr. Houston that he is comfortable with the arrangement, and feels that this arrangement will work well.

Senate President's report of meeting with Vice-President Houston

Tuesday, March 28th, 2006

We discussed Henderson's recent (January, 2006) recognition as a College of Distinction. Dr. Houston explained that while there is a small fee associated with this, it is a true honor, and one that Henderson will be publicizing and will use in recruiting. After being contacted by Colleges of Distinction last year, he visited their Washington, D.C. offices and was impressed with their facilities and services. HSU will pay a small fee (approximately \$0.25) to Colleges of Distinction for each student who uses the COD website to express an interest in attending Henderson. A representative from Colleges of Distinction will be on campus during the 3rd week of April.

We considered the assessment program, and the feeling of some faculty that we need to stress the importance of two-way communication and assessment team responsiveness to departmental needs and requests for assistance.

The budget process was discussed, particularly the very minimal involvement that faculty have in making any decisions and the repeated cancellation of University Budget Committee meetings this semester. Dr. Houston described how the process has been particularly difficult this year, and has moved slowly recently because many important decisions cannot be made until Henderson decides how much tuition will increase in 2006-2007. I stressed the concern that many faculty members have expressed regarding the summer budget issues, and the budget problems that have been attributed to increased use of adjuncts, particularly the lack of information that has been made available on these matters. Dr. Houston reiterated some of the many constraints that the budget faces, and stated that he would be happy to take questions on this matter when he attends the next Senate meeting.

I raised some issues of load calculation as they are related to different colleges and programs. In particular, a faculty member had asked me to address an apparent difference in the calculation of loads in Teacher's College Henderson versus Ellis College. Neither Dr. Houston nor Sharon Gardner was familiar with the situation, and Dr. Houston requested that the Senate provide more specific information. I have made requests for that information from the faculty member who raised the issue, but as of this writing, it has not been provided to me. We also discussed the handling of capstone courses for the BGS degree, and the assigning of load for teaching those classes.

We discussed the statement that appeared in recent cabinet minutes regarding the possibility of Henderson requiring all freshmen and sophomores to live on campus beginning in fall 2006. I asked if the University has investigated how students would feel about such a change, and whether this would have the potential to negatively impact enrollment. Dr. Houston stated that he is not aware that such an investigation has been conducted. He discussed how the two new dorms and Sturgiss may be available to students during their second year living on campus, and that these facilities may be attractive to students and encourage them to prefer on-campus living. He described changes that are planned for Newberry and Smith Halls, including converting the top two floors of each to single residences. The University feels that this may be more attractive, and will encourage some students to choose to remain in the dorms.

Some faculty members have asked if offices might be kept open later than 5:00 PM occasionally, in order to better accommodate graduate student needs. Dr. Houston explained that this does take place during the start of the semester, but it has not been done during other times. There would be additional costs associated with keeping offices open later, but it could be considered. Making more administrative forms available via the web might assist graduate students who are not on campus during regular business hours, but he agreed that having an individual "behind a desk" to work with would generally be more efficient.

April 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

We discussed both the Founder's Day program and the Faculty Excellence Program, and possibilities for changes to make them more effective and more valuable. There are a number of concerns, including funding of travel for Founder's Day honorees, general lack of student and community attendance at the ceremony, inconsistencies in the level of achievement in individuals who have been honored in the past, and questions regarding the number of honorees that it may be reasonable to expect to recognize in the future. Also, with the retirement of older faculty members, "institutional memory" is becoming more limited, so that some departments may not be familiar with some of their more outstanding alumni who may have graduated decades ago. Dr. Houston suggested that working with the Development Office might be beneficial in considering potential inductees. The Senate will consider possible changes to the Founder's Day program, and the operations committee is already considering changes in the Faculty Excellence Program.

We discussed some concerns that faculty members have expressed regarding significant changes in university procedures being made with little or no apparent faculty input. Examples include the change from one spring graduation ceremony to two, and changes in policy regarding logistics of registration at the beginning of the semester, and the handling of students who do not attend or who stop attending. The most recent cabinet minutes described a proposal to allow instructors who have been teaching on campus full-time for at least 10 years to apply for promotion to assistant professor. Faculty members in this situation, who have not been required to serve on committees and who generally carry a 15-hour teaching load would continue in that manner. This is a proposal that has been made specifically to address three faculty members on campus who were hired in that capacity over 10 years, and have not had any possibility of promotion. Dr. Houston discussed that no new positions of this type have been created in at least 10 years, and that he does not anticipate that additional hires of this nature will be made in the future. The proposal is not intended to create a new class of faculty members, but simply to reward a small number of faculty for significant service over 10 years.

Discussion with Vice President Robert Houston

Dr. Houston recently returned from the Higher Learning Commission meeting in Chicago. The theme of the meeting was the importance of student learning in our assessment plans. We should do everything we can to improve and provide opportunities for student learning, and document these as part of our assessment. The majority of presentations now are focusing on collection of data as an avenue to document improvements in teaching and documenting improvements in student learning. We should all be able to answer questions regarding our students.

We will have a Sunday afternoon Scholarship Reception on April 23. All faculty are encouraged to attend in regalia.

We are trying to keep our tuition from going up any more than it has to. Most universities are going to go up 5-6% for next fall. Other fees/costs are also being embedded, so it's hard to know what the exact cost increase is. We may be looking at a 7.5-8.0% increase if you factor in all fees and costs along with tuition. There will be another budget meeting Thursday, April 6.

A Student Activities Center is not part of our current plan at HSU. An incremental student fee to provide seed money for this project would be a possibility. As of now, we do not even have the money to draw up architectural plans for such a project.

Vice President Houston was asked if we had an energy saving campaign at HSU. We could save considerable amounts of money if we were to implement one. Vice President Houston believes the idea is a good one and that it will be well received.

Report of Operations Committee

Recommendations of the committee:

April 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

1) Letters for tenure and promotion:

a) That the tenured faculty in an individual department area may choose to require a single group letter or individual letters.

b) That a recommended format for a group letter be adopted:

"If the tenured faculty in a department or area so choose, this recommendation may consist of a single letter approved and signed by a majority of the tenured faculty. This letter should note the number of votes for and against approval. Any individual tenured faculty member in the department/area (or group of tenured faculty in the department/area) may submit a separate concurring or dissenting letter to the school/college tenure and promotion committee."

2) Use of evaluations

a) That as no official request has been made of the Faculty Senate to change the wording in the faculty handbook with respect to how evaluations of faculty by students are used, the purpose of the evaluations is as stated in the handbook: "to be used in a program of instructional improvement and faculty development." Unless an official change in this wording is authorized by the Faculty Senate, all use of these evaluations and all wording of how these evaluations are to be used must consistent with this wording.

b) that David Epperhardt be consulted as to current plans for online evaluations and the security measures planned for these evaluations.

3) Faculty Excellence Guidelines

a) That for the Excellence Award in Teaching the listing of suggested materials be dropped.

b) That any evaluation of the importance given to community service as opposed to service directly to Henderson be left to the Excellence Award Committees. The operations committee's suggestion is that outside community service may be considered but not required.

Report of Faculty Morale Committee

Recommendation of the committee:

1) That we analyze the current faculty survey in terms of different groups of faculty (Rank, Years of Service, Gender, etc. among other factors) so as to identify more specific concerns. This work is currently proceeding.

2) That we plan a new survey for Fall '06 directly addressing the issues highlighted by Dr. Houston and the HERI survey. That participation in this new survey be increased by

a) posting the current survey on the Faculty Senate Website.

b) that the need for a new survey be addressed by the Faculty Senate president at the Fall pre-session conference. Dr. Engman

suggested that the old survey not only be put on the website but that a discussion of it be included in the agenda of the pre-session conference so that it receive more attention.