

Faculty Senate Minutes 5 March 2014

Senators Present: Lea Ann Alexander, Ajay Aggarwal, James Duke, Carolyn Eoff, Dan Fitzroy, Ryan Fox (for Janice O'Donnell), Greg Gibson, Megan Hickerson, Jana Jones, Travis Langley, Patricia Loy, Richard Miller, Lonnie McDonald, Holly Morado, Malcolm Rigsby, Ingo Schranz, Brett Serviss, Anna Smith (for John Greene), R. C. Smith, Suzanne Tartamella, John Thomasson (for Patrick Wempe), Penny Whelchel, Fred Worth

Senators Absent: Steven Becraft, Emily Gerhold, John Greene, Janice O'Donnell, Richard Schmid, Patrick Wempe, Peggy Woodall

Others Present: Maralyn Sommer

1. Call to Order: President Fred Worth 3:15; President Worth opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their prayers and support during this past month.
2. Discussion with Interim Provost/VPAA, Dr. Maralyn Sommer
 - a. Salary Merit/Equity Committee has met and is struggling with this “complex” issue; Dr. Sommer said she hopes to have something “soon”; she noted that the \$45,000 put aside for merit/equity pay will disappear in June if not used.
 - b. Heart Start will change, effective this summer; the deans and chairs will be involved—faculty fora may be held; the plan is to offer more Heart Start sessions with fewer students so that students are not waiting hours for academic assistance; focus will remain on academic integrity.
 - c. The promotion and tenure process is a bit behind schedule; however, this is not a problem because the Board of Trustees, the final authority on these matters, will not meet until May.
 - d. Retention continues to be the university’s biggest downfall—as is persistence; we must find a way to better retain students; increased admission standards will help, but those effects will not be fully evident for another 3-4 years; Dr. Sommer stressed that the classroom is an important component in retention. She asked senators and their constituents for any suggestions on improving retention.
 - i. A senator asked to whom those suggestions should be sent; Dr. Sommer and Dr. Shepherd will gladly accept suggestions; the Strategic Planning Committee will also be taking up the issue of retention.
 - ii. Dr. Sommer mentioned that recruiting events have been or will be conducted in Texarkana, Benton, and Hot Springs, among other places; she noted that these events cost money and it is cheaper to retain the students on campus than to have to recruit new ones.
 - e. A senator asked if the sabbatical process would be affected by the delay in the promotion and tenure process; Dr. Sommer said that she did not anticipate this being a problem.
 - i. The senator pointed out that lumping final decisions about sabbatical in with decisions about promotion and tenure prevented faculty from confidently applying for external research, travel, and fellowship funds.
 - f. A senator asked for clarification about Dr. Sommer’s statement that “retention begins in the classroom.” Dr. Sommer responded by noting that students who have problems outside of academics will “put up with a lot” if the faculty are caring and challenging and subsequently create a positive experience in the classroom; she also noted that students will often stay in spite of other issues if they know that the faculty are concerned with their success.
 - g. A senator asked if the provisional program has had any effect on retention; Dr. Sommer said that the effect, if any, was negligible; about thirty (30) students were admitted in the fall with ACT scores below 16; supplemental instruction (SI) has been effective in helping some of these students.
 - h. A senator noted that the University of the Ozarks found that the best predictor of student success is a class similar to Henderson seminar; another senator responded by noting that his/her Henderson Seminar students’ grades were often in line with the students’ overall grades.
 - i. Dr. Sommer noted that the Academic Enhancement subcommittee (part of the Strategic Planning Committee) will be looking at the overall first-year experience

3. Approval of February 2014 Minutes by Acclamation

4. President's Report

- a. Report from Meeting with President, Dr. Glen Jones (28 February 2014)
 - i. Presidential reports to the Board of Trustees are sometimes written, sometimes oral; when they are written, the president will make those available; when they are oral, they will be available through the minutes.
 - ii. In response to questions about morale (i.e. salaries, facilities, etc.): Henderson has the opportunity to participate—at no cost—in the Great Colleges to Work For annual survey that is conducted by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*; the survey would assess various aspects of HSU's being a good place to work. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate is supportive of the idea. President Jones believes that the survey will help us identify issues regarding morale so that we can develop and implement a plan that will address specific morale-related issues. Rather than having a nebulous "morale is low" mindset, this approach will actually allow us to do something about it. President Jones hopes that the faculty will be honest, but not vent or overstate issues. An invitation to participate in the survey will be forthcoming.
 - iii. Regarding administrative positions versus faculty positions: Each vice-president has significant freedom in making hiring/salary decisions in his/her area; reallocation of positions happens more frequently in non-academic areas; in academic areas, it is uncommon for a position to be moved from one department to another.
 1. One senator noted a recent article regarding the expansion of higher education administration; some discussion ensued.
 - iv. It is important that faculty not only ask for greater communication, but also be willing to do their part. This includes reading communications sent out by various units on campus, senators' communicating to their constituencies, and personnel's observing the proper chain of command.
 - v. While raising standards for admission, we need to work to meet the needs of the students who need remediation but are also potentially successful.
- b. Report from Meeting with Interim Provost/VPAA, Dr. Maralyn Sommer (4 March 2014)
 - i. The Salary Equity/Merit Committee is charged with a "complicated" process due to a number of issues; a proposal is expected soon.
 - ii. Regarding restricted days: we know our academic calendar a year in advance; we have "the basics" two years in advance.
- c. Report from Meeting with Vice-President for Finance and Administration, Mr. Bobby Jones, and Mr. Jacob Mills, President of the Staff Senate (26 February 2014)
 - i. If the private-option legislation does not pass, a new budget might include cuts of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. {*Secretary's note—as of this writing, this legislation has passed.*}
 - ii. Climate control work in campus buildings is upcoming; work could take as long as eighteen (18) months.
 - iii. Garrison Center renovations will eliminate one of the racquetball courts; Mr. Jones will look into the climate issues in the Garrison workout room.
 - iv. Downturn in enrollment (loss of 190 students) has created some challenging budgeting issues; loss in tuition is as much as \$1,088,700.
 - v. Various landscaping projects are being considered; we will be seeking attractive, low-maintenance landscaping.
 - vi. Lighting issues in Russell Hall and across campus will be addressed; Russell Hall restrooms will be renovated.
 - vii. Bids for the remaining portions of the Garrison renovation were opened 25 February; the hope is to bring the project in under-budget.
 - viii. The wires between Foster and Womack Halls might be placed underground; this would result in fewer power failures on campus.

- ix. Regarding a raise: “don’t count on it” (cf. downturn in enrollment [iv] above); this is one of many reasons that we need to work to recruit quality students and improve retention.
 - 1. A senator pointed to the fact that salaries are consistently tied to tuition—something that the senator sees as rhetorical rather than “true”; the senator continued by noting that the faculty receive the same story “over and over” vis-à-vis salaries. The senator pointed to Dr. Sommer’s comments regarding retention; between those comments and the comment made in the report from the meeting with Mr. Bobby Jones (cf. [ix] above) the senator worries that administration is developing a paradigm according to which faculty are to blame for their own bad pay; some discussion ensued. The senator suggested that one could easily believe that the administration is deceiving the faculty about sharing faculty concern over their pay.
- x. The \$45,000 equity/merit fund will likely be repeated next year—and hopefully increased.

d. Ad Hoc Senate Committee on Academics

- i. The committee grew out of the two recent proposals regarding academics that were taken to—and tabled by—the UAC; it was suggested that a committee be formed to address academic issues at large; however, the previous Senate’s proposal regarding changes to the “W” policy will most likely be sent back to the Academics Committee.
- ii. Co-Chairs: Ajay Aggarwal and Patricia Loy
- iii. Members: Clint Atchley, Lenette Jones, Pam Ligon, Malcolm Rigsby, Brett Serviss, Katherine Strause, Celya Taylor, Kenneth Taylor, Fred Worth
- iv. Charge: Consider *any* issue related to academics in an attempt to establish a consistent, unified set of academic policies.
- v. All faculty and staff are encouraged to suggest topics for the committee.
- vi. Role of the provost: the provost will not be a member of the committee; however, he will be involved regularly with the committee.
- vii. President Worth asked those serving on the committee for a two-year commitment.
- viii. One senator, while praising the credentials of those who will be serving on the committee, mentioned that some of these issues have perhaps been “committee-ed to death.”

e. Media Relations

- i. President Worth quoted an e-mail from Ms. Jennifer Boyett, Vice President of University Advancement, from 19 February 2014: “All media inquiries should be routed through Tonya Oaks Smith in the Office of Marketing & Communications; Tonya or a member of the Office of Marketing & Communications should be present at each interview and should accompany reporters when they are on campus.”
- ii. President Worth contacted Ms. Boyett for clarification: This is not intended to keep faculty from responding to media inquiries regarding their research. If questions begin to diverge from research areas to general HSU policies or issues, faculty are requested to follow the above procedure to assure the appropriate university spokesperson addresses the issues and that correct information is given to the media. This policy protects both the university and the faculty member. Ms. Boyett also asked that faculty let Ms. Smith know about their areas of research. This helps public relations with calls from the media seeking comment on particular subjects/issues.

5. Reports of Committees

a. Executive Committee

- i. Feedback from February Report of the Executive Committee
 - 1. Senators discussed the role of the provost/VPAA vis-à-vis the Faculty Senate.
 - a. The Senate reached a general consensus that the provost/VPAA will have a reserved amount of time (15 minutes) at the beginning of each Senate meeting; several senators noted their opposition to making the provost/VPAA an *ex officio* member of the Senate; President Worth noted that the latter was never a consideration.

- b. Some discussion ensued about whether a written report or talking points should be provided to the Senate beforehand.
 - c. President Worth noted that the incoming provost/VPAA was enthusiastic about Senate input in the Fall Faculty Conference; this has happened in years past, but not recently.
 - ii. Concurrent Enrollment
 - 1. Brett Serviss (a member of the concurrent enrollment committee) reported that President Jones wants Henderson to become capable of/eligible for participation in the concurrent enrollment program; we have until 1 June to become qualified. *See addendum for additional information and for the ADHE's concurrent enrollment policy.*
 - 2. The committee needs faculty feedback/comments/suggestions; committee members are Mr. Eric Bailey, Dr. Steven Carter, Dr. Lloyd Moyo, Dr. Brett Serviss, and Dr. Maralyn Sommer; please contact committee members no later than 31 March.
- b. Academics Committee
 - i. Restricted Day Policy Revision
 - 1. The committee had been asked by Dr. Maralyn Sommer to examine the existing restricted days policy to ensure that it did not target any specific department; the committee invited Ms. Lenette Bailey to attend the meeting as a representative of athletics.
 - 2. The committee presented two proposals (see addendum)
 - 3. A motion was made to discuss the two proposals; significant discussion ensued; several concerns were reiterated by multiple senators:
 - a. What is the true purpose of the restricted days?
 - b. Should they be removed completely?
 - c. What constitutes "university-sponsored" and "extracurricular"?
 - d. How do recitals fit in with the definitions for those terms above?
 - 4. A motion was made to table the discussion; the motion was seconded.
 - 5. The proposals were sent back to the committee; senators were also asked to speak with their constituents regarding the elimination of restricted days.
- c. Buildings and Grounds Committee
 - i. Heating and Cooling issues in several buildings—including Russell, McBrien, and Reynolds—have caused more problems than usual this semester. Mr. Bobby Jones said that a study will be conducted to show the difference in replacing chillers as they fail compared to installing a chilled water loop with fewer, more efficient chillers; Mr. Jones has instructed physical plant employees to communicate more quickly and clearly with building supervisors regarding the status of work orders.
 - 1. A senator asked if there were any timeline for this study; at this time, there is none.
 - 2. A great deal of discussion ensued about the various climate-control issues on campus; several senators mentioned issues of sustainability; another senator noted that of the various COPLAC schools, Henderson is one of two that does not have a sustainability plan.
 - ii. Mr. Jones will look into a safety issue concerning the windowless door facing McBrien on the west side of Mooney; the door opens outward, presenting a hazard to people walking by; a yellow striped hazard area would present a warning. Mr. Jones will also consider paving the unsightly packed strip of earth on the other side of the walkway to provide more room for pedestrians.
 - iii. Different ideas are being considered for the area between Mooney and Huie Library, some of which involve a different version of a fountain. The university is working with a landscape architect, but this project is unlikely to happen this year. Most of the landscaping projects in the near future will be "low-maintenance," i.e. "trees and grass."
 - iv. Mr. Jones was informed of several other issues around campus:

1. Wells has several maintenance needs: painting, chipped steps, missing tiles, and insufficient lighting in the back. This building, which hosts both graduation and sporting events, needs attention.
2. The benches outside the fence at the tennis courts are in deplorable condition.
3. More bicycle racks are needed on campus; students are chaining bikes to the wheelchair access ramps at Arkansas Hall.
4. Lights at McBrien and at the BCM parking lot have not be turned on every night, most likely because the timer had not been set to reflect the time change; Mr. Jones will investigate.
5. The area just outside the campus gates (South Lawn) is very dark.
6. The short speed bumps in front of Whispering Oaks represent hazards to pedestrians. People sometimes drive far too quickly around the speed bumps. Committee members suggested either installing longer speed bumps to cover the width of the street or constructing raised crosswalks that would also function as speed bumps; Mr. Jones will investigate.
- v. Mr. Jones will contact the chair of the Buildings and Grounds committee the next time a campus walk-about is planned.
- vi. The committee informed Mr. Jones of their desire of the committee to use more environmentally safe maintenance and custodial materials/methods and to place weather-proof recycling bins outside as well as inside buildings.

d. Finance Committee

- i. The committee presented a proposal (see addendum) regarding fees associated with faculty taking courses.
 1. A senator noted that the Staff Senate is considering a similar proposal; however, that proposal has met with resistance from Mr. Bobby Jones.
 2. A motion was made and seconded to accept the proposal; the motion passed unanimously.
- ii. The committee presented a letter (see addendum) that they had drafted to President Jones.
 1. As background, the committee noted that a Faculty Salary Committee had been formed in 2000, an extensive salary study had been conducted in 2004, and President Welch had commissioned a Faculty/Staff Compensation Committee in 2010—none of these have been implemented fully.
 2. The committee noted that they are asking for three things: fairer salaries, administrative resources to gather data, and an ongoing salary review process—not an *ad hoc* affair.
 3. A senator noted that the letter was nicely written and liked the idea of the letter, but questioned if some information might be added—e.g., a freeze on administrative hiring or a moratorium on administrative raises until the problem with salaries is rectified.
 4. A senator observed that the issue speaks directly to morale—administrators are living comfortably; a moratorium would speak to solidarity.
 5. Another senator noted that the faculty are constantly told that there is “no money” for salaries, but we continue to add administrative positions.
 6. A senator, noting that we are often told that new positions will help the university bring in new funds, asked why we should not ask *how* the administrative positions are benefitting the university; another senator mentioned that he/she would be willing to give the new vice president of university advancement another year or two to prove herself; in response, a senator noted Ms. Boyett’s mentioning, in her meeting with the Senate, of her use of a consultant.
 7. A senator suggested that the Senate perhaps hold the letter and gather more data; a Senate committee could do this work; another senator argued that this course of action places a great deal of work on the Senator; yet another senator suggested that we must do *something*.

8. A senator noted that the composition of a new compensation/salary committee should be carefully considered; no members should be above the chair or dean level; the committee should not be chaired by the provost or a member of the administration, as previous committees chaired by members of the administration seemed to have gone nowhere.
 9. A senator suggested that the proposal be sent back to committee—not because it was problematic, but rather to gather additional information.
 10. The committee then withdrew the proposal.
 11. A senator raised a question about whether the administration was truly aware of the “sorry state” of faculty salaries at Henderson; some discussion ensued.
 12. A senator asked if the proposal could be shared with constituents: the answer was “yes.”
- e. Operations Committee
- i. The Operations Committee reported that they had been asked to look at two sections of the Faculty Handbook.
 - ii. They presented two options (see addenda) for eliminating the term “student teachers,” as it is no longer used by the Teachers’ College.
 1. Some discussion ensued, and a motion was made to accept the second option; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
 - iii. The second proposal dealt with the removal of excess verbiage regarding the make-up of the Faculty Senate.
 1. Some discussion ensued—including the decision to make some minor grammatical changes to the proposal; a motion was made to accept the proposal with the grammatical changes; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
 - iv. The Operations Committee reported that they are still looking at the Workman’s Compensation portion of the Handbook; this is delayed by new guidelines that are soon to be released by the state.
- f. Procedures Committee:
- i. The committee reported the results of the Faculty Excellence Awards Committee Elections (see addendum for full report)
 - ii. The committee noted that ballots for the Faculty Hearing Committee will be released in March.
6. Old Business
- a. Provost/VPAA Attendance at Faculty Senate Meetings – no discussion; addressed earlier in Executive Committee Report
7. New Business
- a. Meeting Time: Dr. Sommer had suggested that the Senate meet at 3 instead of 3:15; an earlier start would allow the provost/VPAA more time with the Senate; after some discussion, the Senate concluded that the 3:15 start time was more appropriate.
 - b. Academic Integrity Policy
 - i. A senator noted a concern that the various colleges do not communicate with one another in regards to students who have violated academic integrity standards.
 - ii. A senator noted that the Senate passed a proposal that addressed this issue several years ago; another senator responded by observing that the proposal was tabled; additionally, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has stated that he knows of no such policy.
 - iii. After significant discussion, the issue was sent to the Academics Committee.
 - c. A senator made the point that we need to know what shared governance is—and that faculty should have more of a say in this definition
 - i. A senator responded that the Executive Committee is presently looking into this issue.
 - ii. A senator stated that when the Faculty Senate and administration disagree, the administration should not automatically trump the Senate.

- iii. A senator suggested coming up with a working definition for shared governance; President Worth noted that this falls under the purview of the Operations Committee and asked them to take up the issue.
- d. A senator raised two concerns he hoped the Senate would take up in its next meeting:
 - i. Summer School Compensation: the system we have in place currently is problematic
 - ii. Lack of Technology for Fully Online Classes: the push is for more online courses; however, the technological infrastructure is not in place to do this.
 - iii. Both of these issues were tabled for future discussion.

8. Adjourn 5:00

Respectfully Submitted,
P. Gregory Gibson
Faculty Senate Secretary