

Faculty Senate Minutes 3 September 2014

Senators Present: Lea Ann Alexander, Ajay Aggarwal, Steven Becraft, Kristen Benjamin, James Duke, Carolyn Eoff, Dan Fitzroy, Greg Gibson, John Greene, Megan Hickerson, Frank Hudspeth, Jana Jones, Travis Langley, Lonnie McDonald, Richard Miller, Holly Morado, Janice O'Donnell, Malcolm Rigsby, Ingo Schranz, Brett Serviss, Suzanne Tartamella, Patrick Wempe, Penny Whelchel, Peggy Woodall, Fred Worth

Senators Absent: Emily Gerhold, Patricia Loy, Richard Schmid, R. C. Smith

Others Present: Steve Adkison

- I. Call to Order: President Fred Worth 3:15; President Worth mentioned the “Meet the Provost” sessions on September 12 and 16 as chances for the faculty to meet informally with the provost and ask questions.
2. Discussion with Provost/VPAA, Dr. Steve Adkison
 - a. Dr. Adkison noted that he is not only the leader of Henderson’s “academic enterprise” but also an advocate for faculty; he is interested in ways in which he can support the faculty
 - b. Dr. Adkison raised the issue of online identity vis-à-vis online courses; for example, a non-HSU student was found to be taking an online course for an HSU student; how do we prevent these issues going forward? Several suggestions included Proctor U or a biometric signature system—both are cost effective.
 - c. Dr. Adkison mentioned that faculty development was discussed at the President’s cabinet meeting and is a focus going forward.
 - d. Dr. Adkison stressed that his meeting with the Faculty Senate was not *his* agenda, but rather the Senate’s.
 - e. A senator asked what is meant by the term “innovative instruction.”
 - i. Dr. Adkison noted that we are not interested in online courses simply as an end (online instruction is a modality, not a goal); learning is the most important aspect.
 - ii. Dr. Adkison also asked how we can institutionalize what we already do well.
 - iii. Dr. Adkison mentioned mini-grants that would allow us to try things that we have not tried before.
 - f. A senator asked about interdisciplinary courses while noting that workload has always been a problem in the past in attempts at interdisciplinarity.
 - i. Dr. Adkison noted that academic departments should be able to maintain a commitment to their disciplinary studies; interdisciplinarity can be hard to create and maintain momentum; in the past we have had lots of ideas, but no specific solutions.
 - ii. The senator mentioned a hospitality degree that would combine the resources of family and consumer sciences and recreation.

- iii. Dr. Adkison mentioned an interdisciplinary core curriculum, something that would allow students to experience interdisciplinarity immediately upon walking in the door; we should think big.
- iv. Another senator asked about a center for interdisciplinary studies and noted the immediate barriers to team-taught courses that have been present in the past; a center for interdisciplinary studies would give people a place to develop interdisciplinary programs.
- v. Dr. Adkison mentioned that overload payment must track with full compensation, else it undermines everything we do.
- vi. A senator asked about interdisciplinary courses as part of a faculty member's regular load—or course relief for course development.
 - 1. Dr. Adkison mentioned that we will not get students involved unless it “counts”; students cannot afford to take “extra” courses and do not see hard lines between disciplines; one way to approach interdisciplinarity is via the common core.
 - 2. Dr. Adkison asked what the current conversations are regarding interdisciplinary studies.
 - a. A senator mentioned the recent development of a comics concentration—an interdisciplinary program that does not depend on one specific discipline.
 - b. Another senator noted that Theatre Arts and Oral Communication classes could benefit from the perspective of a historian or a businessperson.
- g. A senator asked how enrollment looks.
 - i. Dr. Adkison noted that the head count is approximately 3800 students.
 - ii. The budget had projected a 3% drop in SSCH; we are currently about 4% above that projection; we have approximately 40-50 students more than at this time last year.
 - 1. A senator asked how many students had been admitted conditionally.
 - 2. Dr. Adkison responded that it is difficult to say, but is approximately the same as the past 2-3 years; however, changes in the definition of what constitutes “conditional admission” show an increase of 40%.
 - 3. The senator followed up by asking about how many conditionally admitted student actually graduate.
 - 4. Dr. Adkison noted that they are about half as successful; he added that we are in the first year of our increased admission standards and are in “good shape” with recruitment; we need to work more to retain students.
 - 5. President Worth noted that our “conditional student” numbers will increase temporarily as our standards change.
 - 6. Dr. Adkison noted that 75% of our students are “underprepared” according to federal standards; he added that the situation is very similar to his previous institution—we cannot pretend that by simply admitting them that all will be okay; high school preparation has changed.

7. Dr. Adkison also noted that a Retention Taskforce will be created; Dr. Lewis Shepherd will be asking for both faculty and professional staff representation.
8. A senator raised the issue about whether faculty members serving on task forces could receive release time for their service.
9. Dr. Adkison stated that task forces should be given very specific tasks and then allowed to dissipate; he also mentioned that he found it odd that the University Academic Council (UAC) was not a Senate body.
 - a. A senator noted that professional staff outnumber faculty on the UAC.
 - b. Dr. Adkisson remarked that a “conversation should be had” about the UAC.
- h. A senator asked about the president’s comments regarding an enrollment goal of five thousand students—how do we change structurally to make that happen?
 - i. Dr. Adkison responded that he could not answer that specific question, but that his initial goal is for each program to have a 5-10 year plan.
 - ii. Dr. Adkison also noted that five thousand students constitute the capacity of our current infrastructure, although that would strain core departments; we should strive to increase junior/senior enrollment as well as expand graduate degrees.

3. Approval of May 2014 Minutes by Acclamation

4. President’s Report

- a. Report of Meeting with Dr. Glen Jones, President (28 August 2014)
 - i. No pressing issues, but we talked about several general topics.
 - ii. NCAA regulations are now emphasizing progress toward graduation, not just eligibility.
 - iii. President Jones is concerned about academic dishonesty, in both traditional and online courses. Policies need to be established.
 - iv. President Jones also said that we need to establish uniform policies regarding official university travel involving students.
 - v. We spent a good bit of time discussing “annual leave” for faculty as well as how extended absences should be handled. Some of the following questions raised during our discussion were:
 1. Exactly what problem are we trying to solve? Alternatively, what obligation are we required to fulfill?
 2. Do colleagues cover extended absences as an obligation or as a courtesy?
 3. Compensation?
 4. When classes are not taught due to illness or other circumstances, how much of one's “job” was missed? Part of our job is service, part is scholarship/creative activity.
 5. Since this item falls under Human Resources, it would be a good idea to visit with HR and the provost to understand the university’s current policy on this issue.

- vi. The website may not launch on the planned date. We want it done right even if that means a slightly later roll out.
 - vii. President Jones explained that a successful advancement program takes time to establish and that the new strategic plan will play a critical role in establishing a foundation for future success.
 - viii. He also said it is important that faculty work through the media relations staff when contacted by reporters lest we inadvertently come across as speaking for the university. The current policy is not intended to keep us from talking to reporters about our areas of expertise. However, conversations of that nature are sometimes followed by “while I have you on the line, let me ask you about . . . [a university policy issue].” He indicated that we should invite Tonya Smith to one of our meetings to discuss the policy.
- b. Report of Meeting with Dr. Steve Adkison, Provost/VPAA
- i. There is a need for discussion and policy development regarding integrity of testing in online courses.
 - ii. Dr. Adkison would like to see if we can do things to enhance academic advising at the program level. For example, departments could develop FAQs related to advising issues that are particular to a program or department.
 - iii. The senate will be scheduling a special “Meet the Provost” meeting sometime in September.
 - iv. Dr. Adkison is interested in working on “innovative instruction”—for example, using technology because it enhances the educational process, not just “because we can.”
 - v. We have a need for developing standard policies for international travel for course credit. This would include proper compensation for faculty. We want to encourage and support student travel but must protect faculty and the university.
- c. Report of meeting with Mr. Bobby Jones, Vice-President for Finance (28 August 2014)
- i. We discussed issues related to bicycle racks, handicap ramps and handicap doors.

5. Reports of Committees

- a. Executive Committee – No Report
- b. Academics Committee – No Report
- c. Buildings and Grounds Committee – No Report
- d. Finance Committee – No Report
- e. Operations Committee – No Report
- f. Procedures Committee – No Formal Report
 - i. Departmental elections will begin later in September and be followed by at-large elections in October.
 - ii. The Faculty Award Excellence Committee Elections will take place in November.

6. Old Business – None

7. New Business

- a. New Representative to the Graduate Council
 - i. President Worth asked about the election of a new representative to the Graduate Council.
 - ii. Some discussion ensued; it was ultimately concluded that the current representative has not yet fulfilled his/her term.
- b. Committee Appointments
 - i. President Worth asked if committee appointments should follow the calendar (and Senate) year or the academic year.
 - ii. A senator suggested that appointments should coincide with the committee on which one is serving.
 - iii. A senator noted that it might be easier to run the Senate on the academic year.
 - iv. President Worth asked about sending the issue to the Operations Committee—they could recommend a course of action.
 - v. A senator suggested looking at each individual committee and considering each committee's specific tasks.
 - vi. President Worth suggested looking at the *Faculty Handbook*, Senate Constitution, and bylaws.
 - vii. A senator suggested waiting to discuss this further until after the roll out of the shared governance taskforce.
 - viii. The issue was ultimately *not* sent to committee.
- c. Online Course Policies and Guidelines
 - i. President Worth asked about policies and guidelines that had been put together in the past.
 - ii. Dr. Adkison mentioned that we have an “almost policy,” which reached a nearly concrete form and then stopped; we have reported to the ADHE and HLC that we have a policy, but the specific policy was never forwarded to them.
 1. A senator asked who developed this policy. The senator presented a proposal regarding proctoring and monitoring of online exams (see addendum).
 2. Dr. Adkison noted his surprise that this had not been a Senate issue; he said he would bring both the old policy and the draft of a new policy to the next Senate meeting.
 3. President Worth asked the Academics Committee to look at the senator's proposal and perhaps look at what other institutions do.
 4. Dr. Adkison responded that he had a great deal of information regarding what other institutions do and would be glad to share that information.
 5. The senator who brought forth the proposal (cf. I above) asked if other senators were “onboard” with looking at proctoring of online exams.

6. A senator noted that in his/her department, 40% of the final course grade must come from proctored work; the final letter grade cannot be more than one letter grade above the final exam.
 7. Dr. Adkison noted that we (the faculty) are spending lots of time and effort on issues that we were not hired to do.
 8. A senator reiterated the need for a policy.
 9. A senator noted that totally online courses make him/her “cringe.”
 10. Dr. Adkison noted that this is also linked to degree integrity.
 11. A senator noted that some cheating could be taken care of through the use of a testing center
 12. A senator asked if any of our exams were proctored by National Park Community College.
 13. Dr. Adkison mentioned two key ideas relative to the discussion: *instructional integrity*: we must exercise some degree of oversight regardless of the mode of instruction; *academic integrity and honesty*: we must verify identity
 14. Another senator mentioned that we are “aiming at a moving target”—the technology is constantly evolving; the senator also questioned how other institutions handle this problem.
 15. A senator mentioned that the testing center (as it is currently stands) is not a possibility.
 16. Dr. Adkison indicated that he would work with the academics committee and present something on this issue at the next Senate meeting.
 17. A senator asked about students’ registering remotely; some discussion ensued about the use of biometric technology.
- d. Office Hours
- i. A senator asked about the issue of office hours—particularly as it pertained to faculty who taught primarily online. The senator was concerned about instructions that members of his/her department had received about remaining in their offices until 5pm.
 - ii. Another senator said that his/her constituents had also raised some questions about the policies regarding office hours.
 - iii. Dr. Adkison responded that the faculty would have a “more sympathetic ear” about issues like these than they have in the past.

8. Adjourn 4:51

Respectfully Submitted,
P. Gregory Gibson
Faculty Senate Secretary

Addendum I

Proposal to the Faculty Senate regarding Proctoring /Monitoring of Online Exams *Presented to the Senate 3 September 2014*

Online course provision is important to the growth and competitiveness of Henderson State University. However, it is important that the university do whatever is necessary to exercise (and enable) academic integrity in its online provision. At this time there is no service available at the university for monitoring students' examinations, whether through online proctoring, in the form of a campus testing center, or through partner institutions (we should ideally have a combination of the three methods). The amount of cheating by HSU students in their online courses is significant; this is not surprising, since there is virtually no way-barring scheduled classroom proctoring, which rather defeats part of the purpose of online provision and is extremely difficult (if not impossible) to arrange--to prevent it. I would like to propose that this problem be resolved through the employment of a monitoring service called ProctorU. This service, used by the University of Arkansas in its online provision, checks students' identity (by access to university-issued ID), monitors students taking their examinations through a webcam, and monitors students' keyboard/computer activity.

While it would be helpful for the university to offer campus- and partner- human monitoring options for these examinations, it seems that the simplest and most user-friendly option is to employ this service—which in the flexibility it facilitates is fully in line with the mission of online provision. I feel strongly that continuing to allow this problem to go unaddressed compromises us as an institution, in terms of the integrity of our provision. It is obviously desirable to offer online courses: it is a good thing to offer this option to our students, and to be able to teach from a distance. It is certainly the case that HSU cannot compete as an institution without not only maintaining but also increasing its online presence. However, it is not a good thing if many of HSU's online classes are understood to be classes in which the students can cheat with virtual impunity—which is the current situation.

<http://www.proctoru.com/>