

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

April 5, 2012

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
LSC 304

Members Present:

Len Breen (COE), Donald Bumpass (COBA), Erin Cassidy (NGL), Donna Desforges (CHSS), Randall Garner (CJ), Debbi Hatton (CHSS), Renee James (COS), William Jasper (COS), Lawrence Kohn (COE), Paul Loeffler (COS), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (CFAMC), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Javier Pinell (CFAMC), Debbie Price (COE), Ling Ren (CJ), Tracy Steele (CHSS), Doug Ullrich (COS), Ricky White (COS), Pamela Zelbst (COBA)

Members Not Present:

Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Kevin Clifton (CFAMC), Jeff Crane (CHSS), Diane Dowdey (CHSS), Mark Frank (COBA), Chad Hargrave (COS), Gerald Kohers (COBA), Paul Loeffler (COS), and Joyce McCauley (COE)

Visitor: Provost Jaime Hebert

Called to order at 3:32 by Debbi Hatton

Tenure and Promotion: The Provost reported on the results of this year's decisions on tenure and promotion.

There had been 45 decisions

31 were for tenure and promotion (assistant with tenure and associate with tenure)

There were 28 who received tenure and promotion/3 were denied

There were 14 decisions on promotion to full professor and all 14 were positive

The Provost commented that it had been an excellent year. The average number of refereed publications, presentations, proceedings, and grants was approximately 16 across the university. The Provost noted that the standard deviation was wide since expectations differ across departments (but not necessarily within colleges). For promotions to full professor, the average was 25 to 30. One of the reasons for the variation was that some disciplines focus on large projects like books.

Of the 3 no decisions for tenure and promotion, 2 were for low teaching (IDEA scores). Of the 2 no decisions, 1 candidate had very low IDEA scores for every year. The Peer Review from the DPTAC and the Department Chair's review of teaching corroborated the low IDEA scores. Therefore, the Provost felt the right decision had been made. That professor had been warned at the third year review, but did not seek assistance from PACE, etc. The second of the two candidates for tenure and promotion who received a negative vote for teaching had initially received poor teaching evaluations, but they had been some improvement by the third year. Unfortunately, teaching evaluations for that professor went down. Provost Hebert noted that one of the two professors denied tenure and promotion for low teaching evaluations was a prolific researcher, but the Provost felt the right decision had been made since SHSU professors should be balanced between teaching and research. If the balance is not there, the professors should find another position that fits his or her strengths. The third professor who was denied tenure and promotion had average teaching evaluations, but virtually no research productivity.

The Provost stated that he would like all tenure and promotion decisions to be positive. Provost Hebert does not mind if there are only 3 no's out of 45 candidates for tenure and promotion. The Provost is not looking for a high number of no's and does not feel that it reflects well on the university. Indeed, the Provost would like all tenure and promotion decisions to be YES. A "no" is a failure. To insure more "yes's" in the future, the Provost would like to see more mentoring.

The Provost told Senators that he tells new faculty that tenure is an invitation; it is a mutual endeavor. The Provost insisted that we need to mentor and inspire tenure-track faculty. Although 3 no's out of 45 tenure and promotion decisions is high for "yes's", each no represents a job lost – a human problem.

The Provost was asked if he gathered and retained information on tenure-track faculty who received a "no" at their three-year evaluation and went elsewhere before his or her actual tenure vote. The Provost informed Senators that SHSU does not keep that information, but he had tracked and retained such information when he had been Dean of COAS (now COS). Provost Hebert said that he had used information on how many faculty had left rather than risk a negative tenure vote with retired Provost Payne to show why he was submitting a high rate of recommends for tenure. The Dean Hebert felt he was able to make his case to Provost Payne that many tenure-track faculty had been encouraged to leave and had done so.

Again, Provost Hebert stressed that he is looking for balance between teaching and research when making tenure and promotion decisions. He does not want professors who do only one or the other well. – it should not be all research or all teaching.

The Provost recommends that DPTAC carry out thorough review of files and conduct a poll on tenure-track faculty in their third year. DPTAC (and Department Chairs) should start collecting data on faculty who do not make it to the tenure vote.

Provost Hebert strongly feels that a no vote is a failure of the process. He admits, however, that some people just do not want mentoring.

Appeal Process: The Provost was asked by a Senator if tenure/promotion decisions had been overturned on appeal. The Provost said yes, but that he had not for any in which he had been involved (either as Department Chair, Dean, or Provost). The Provost reminded the Senate that an appeal of a tenure/promotion decision only results in a review of the policy – if it was applied fairly or if it was carried out properly. The dossier of the failed tenure/promotion candidate is not re-evaluated. In the Provost's opinion, any "No" votes could have been predicted in the tenure process. When he had been Department Chair of Math he had helped an "untenurable" colleague obtain a position at another university. He noted that most professors who fail to obtain tenure/promotion are usually very good at some aspect of their job which means that they are employable elsewhere.

When asked for a clarification on the tenure/promotion appeal process, Provost Hebert stated that, in an appeal, the only focus was, if all the required information had been considered; the appeal committee also determines if the rights of the professor had been considered. The Provost noted that the professor's dossier would be used by the appeal committee, but it would not be re-evaluated.

In response to a question regarding whether the salary increases for promotion to associate or full professor were universal across the campus, Provost Hebert said yes. The pay increase increments are set by the university and they are approximately \$3000 for new associate professors and approximately \$4000 for new full professors. (It is not a round figure due to the need to divide the amounts evenly across 18 pay periods.)

In response to another question on the success of appeals, Provost Hebert said that he did know of negative tenure/promotion decisions that had been overturned on appeal, but he reiterated that he had not been involved in them. He acknowledged that, since becoming Provost, he had dealt with one appeal which had not been overturned.

The Provost was asked who has the final authority to make the decision to overturn a tenure/promotion decision at the end of the appeal process. According to Provost Hebert, the Appeals Committee makes its recommendation on whether or not to overturn the tenure/promotion decision directly to President Gibson. Provost Hebert said that, if the Appeals Committee was recommending overturning the decision, he would go back to the DPTAC and ask it to reconsider. As a rule of thumb, the Provost

said that he would go back to the DPTAC and then start the tenure/promotion process again. At the least, the Provost said that he would talk to the DPTAC and Department Chair. The Provost said that he would veer from this if it were a case of bias. In such a circumstance, he may not go back to the DPTAC for a discussion or ask them to reconsider their vote.

Collegiality and Service in Tenure and Promotion: Provost Hebert was asked about collegiality and service in tenure and promotion. The Provost said that service is the last topic that he discusses with new faculty. The Provost said that he tells them that you can never do enough service to overcome poor teaching or scholarship. At the same time, however, he does tell them that service is important to the tenure process. The university needs service. Using Faculty Senate as an example, without faculty who volunteer to serve on the Senate, self-government would not be possible. Services must be provided and, if faculty members do not serve, then someone else will do it. This would cause the faculty to lose power. Provost Hebert told Senators that he feels strongly, that, if anyone wants the right to complain, then he or she must be involved. In regard to service, the Provost said that DPTAC should consider if the person is a good department citizen in terms of service. This does not necessarily mean that DPTAC should attempt to determine if the tenure/promotion candidate had been on enough committees.

In regard to collegiality, Provost Hebert said that he felt that the policy change that had made it a separate heading was absurd but was the case. In the Provost's view, collegiality is either a Yes or a No; you are either a good colleague or you are not. He was questioned how collegiality can be measured. Hebert responded by comparing it to teaching and scholarship, noting that both are discussed in the tenure policy in positive terms, but collegiality is negative. The Provost was questioned if he knew that when the new policy had been made, and if it had been intended to be used against one (redacted name) individual in particular. The Provost said yes he heard that.

Provost Hebert then asked Senators how they viewed collegiality in their own votes on tenure and promotion. One Senator provided an example of a faculty member whose behavior was extremely unpredictable. Even though this individual had performed well in other aspects of his or her job, DPTAC voted to deny tenure. In that case, the basis of the no vote had been collegiality. Senators noted that such votes are tricky (difficult).

Service and Merit: Returning to service, Provost Hebert noted that it can also be difficult to measure – this needs to be re-visited on campus. The Provost noted that, even when it is counted in merit decisions, it is so high in some departments that it does not differentiate people. Therefore, the Provost wondered if SHSU needs to re-visit levels of service (clearly define how service should be measured) and merit. The

Provost said that this review of measuring service to differential numbers should be done at the departmental level not the university level.

In regard to a question from a Senator about Academic Deans who do not include merit in their evaluations, the Provost gave the theoretical example to highlight the problem: that everyone in this theoretical department is relatively equal in teaching and service – the numbers do not differentiate faculty – so the variation was really scholarship. Numerous Senators agreed that service is not accounted for by at least one Academic Dean since the numbers are so similar. Provost Hebert thinks we need to find a way to make sure we can differentiate more on service as well as teaching.

Provost Hebert gave the example of the Math Department. As chair, he had a Faculty Committee that performed FES evaluations – three members were elected and 2 were appointed by him. The Faculty Committee submitted their work to the chair. The Provost said that he particularly had liked to appoint new faculty to the committee. It was noted by a Faculty Senator that the Provost had done a great job comparing apples to apples and oranges to oranges when he had been in a position, either as chair or dean, to make determinations on FES evaluations. This Faculty Senator asked the Provost to share his style of FES evaluation with his Academic Deans.

The Provost explained that money from the merit pool is distributed to the Academic Deans. The Provost noted that money could be distributed by college or by department. His previous college, COS, was not homogeneous so he had not wanted to compare dance to physics.

In regard to questions on merit distribution, the Provost said that he felt that, if a department recommended a faculty member for merit, the individual should receive something: no one should fail to receive merit if he or she had been recommended. The Provost said that he always kept to relative differences for merit – or kept to relative rankings. For example, faculty recommended for \$2500 might go down to \$500, but would keep merit award rankings within the initial rankings from the department. Provost Hebert noted that as Dean of COS he had tried to make the average merit raises per department as equal as possible. Using the School of Business as an example, the Provost noted that it was a fairly homogeneous college. Merit rankings were done at the college level at the same time. He noted that not all colleges used the same system. The Provost reiterated that, if a person is deemed worthy of merit, the individual should get something even if a higher ranking faculty member got a bit less than recommended. Provost Hebert said that he was not a socialist, but felt that all meritorious faculty members should receive a reward. It was noted by Senators that some colleges do not award all faculty members merit - faculty lower than 50% typically do not receive merit.

The Provost was then asked about Market Adjustment pay raises. The Provost said that when he had been Dean, he had looked at CUPA to compare faculty salaries to the average in rank across the university and CUPA. The Provost noted that he is difficult to determine why a faculty member may be below average according to CUPA – it could be because of research or poor student evaluations. The Provost noted that he had used Market Adjustments to correct mistakes made in FES – for example, a faculty member who had been evaluated incorrectly when re-assigned half-time for non-academic work. The Provost said that faculty members who receive Market Adjustment awards of \$10,000 are usually chairs who have been hired internally. Internal hire Department Chairs under the former VP for finance, Parker, were not allowed to re-negotiate their contracts and these large Market Adjustments had been used to address that problem.

The Provost encourages faculty members who feel that, compared to CUPA rankings, that their pay is too low, to discuss the issue with their Chair, Dean, or the Provost (in that order). The Provost noted that it is up to chairs to make Market Adjustment recommendations and justifications. The Provost encourages faculty to discuss with their Chairs how they compare with average salaries across campus and the country. The Provost noted that he may be difficult for some faculty to hear that they are below average.

When asked about comparing apples to oranges even within the same department when it comes to merit pay or Market Adjustments, the Provost said that the Chair would have to strive for fairness through discussion with the faculty member. Senators urged the Provost to advocate fairness to the Academic Deans on a regular basis.

The Provost said that the distribution of merit pool money to the colleges would be based on a percentage of FTEs per college.

The Provost said that, down the road, we may want to consider moving from step merit to percentage merit. He noted that when a top professor receives a \$2000 merit increase that it is a big percentage difference in salary than a junior faculty member who also receives a \$2000 merit increase. Step merit does not take these percentages into account even though the percentage distribution pools are determined that way.

A Faculty Senator pointed out that colleges with well-paid professors get more money. This was a question of fairness. It was also noted to the professor by another Faculty Senator that the differences in pay across campus showed that there was a gender bias that shows that women receive much lower pay. Finally, there was discussion of the step increments in merit from college to college. Some colleges award merit in \$250 increments and other colleges award merit in \$100 increments.

Raising Admission Standards: The Provost asked for the Senate's input regarding a proposal to increase SHSU's admission standards. The Provost noted that currently the top 10% high school graduates were automatically accepted at SHSU; the current proposal recommends that the top 20% be accepted automatically. The Provost noted that a study had been conducted that showed class ranking was a better predictor of success than either the ACT or SAT scores. The Provost noted that he supported the change, at least in part, because the automatic acceptance for the top 20% speeds up the application process by at least two months and means that SHSU risks losing fewer students. The Provost noted that SHSU had reviewed data based on last year's applicants and determined that few students were lost by raising SAT and ACT requirements.

Provost Hebert reported that the recent Saturday at Sam had been extremely successful. Applications on January 31 of 2012 surpassed the total number of applications for the previous year. The Provost attributed this success to football, rodeo, market, and streamlining SHSU's admission process. In regard to this final point, the Provost noted that different offices related to the admissions process are now working together closely and have figured out where the glitches that slowed the admissions process were and have addressed them successfully.

The Provost believes that SHSU may be able to raise admission standards more in the future – raising standards does not necessarily result in lower enrollment beyond the first year. The Provost pointed out that both psychology and market had raised their standards for admission and their numbers have grown. The Provost feels that students feel that they are getting a better product. The Provost also noted that raised standards for admission also resulted in better retention.

Finally, the Provost told Senators that he appreciated the opportunity to have an open forum with the faculty and would be happy to return.

Chair's Report:

SHSU Admission Standards: Following Provost Hebert's departure, Chair Hatton opened the floor to a discussion of the proposed changes to SHSU's admission standards. Chair Hatton reiterated that, if the proposal is passed by the Faculty Senate, that it will go on to APC for vote. The proposal has already been added to the agenda for the upcoming Board of Regents Meeting. There followed a discussion of as to whether or not the increased in requirements for admission will lead to a decrease in the number of students taking remedial courses in math or English. It was noted by Senators that the increase in standards were not so great that it would impact remedial courses very much. The proposed amendments were:

Automatic Acceptance for top 20% - (students in this range receive automatic acceptance regardless of his or her ACT or SAT score)

ACT – 18 Composite, SAT – 880 (critical reading + math) – (students graduating in the 21-25% of their class have these minimum score requirements)

2nd quartile, ACT – 20 Composite, SAT – 960 (critical reading + math) – (students graduating in the 26-50% of their class have these minimum score requirements)

3rd quartile, ACT – 23 Composite, SAT – 1060 (critical reading + math) – (students graduating in the 51-75% of their class have these minimum score requirements)

4th quartile, Review Only – (students graduating in this range can be admitted by a review process only)

Students from non-ranking high schools require a minimum of 21 on ACT Composite or 1010 on SAT I (critical reading + math).

The recommendation with revisions subsequently passed with a unanimous affirmative vote. The Senate requested that admission standards be reviewed annually for consideration of raising the entrance requirements. It is felt that this would increase the university's graduation rate.

Social Media/Facebook Statement: The Senate voted unanimously on changes to the Social Media/Facebook Statement recommended by the University's Social Media Committee. The disclaimer makes it clear that the views expressed on personal Facebook pages are those of the faculty member (student or staff member) alone and may not reflect the views of the University.

Disclaimer: "The views expressed on my personal site may not reflect those of Sam Houston State University, The Texas State University System Board of Regents or the State of Texas."

Inclusion of the statement is voluntary and is designed to give faculty coverage when using their personal pages to communicate with students. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Hatton reported that an Online Reputation Module will be added to the curriculum to SAM 136 (required course for freshmen). It was noted by a Senator that some faculty members also need to be reminded about what is or is not appropriate to post to the internet – the example of someone claiming to be SHSU faculty who posed a diatribe to a LSU website was provided).

It was noted that employers look at Facebook and other online postings before hiring.

Blackboard 9: Chair Hatton reported that DELTA wanted the Senate to issue a formal announcement that it had recommended the adoption of Blackboard 9. This will be done. Chair Hatton reminded Senators that SHSU remains under contract with E-College and the migration from SHSU Online (E-College) will continue until 2014 unless the university ends its contract early. Meanwhile the transition to Blackboard 9 for classes currently using Blackboard will start this summer. The current version of Blackboard in use will be taken down in the week between Summer I and Summer II this coming summer (2012).

Nursing Mothers Act: Chair Hatton reported that SGA and the Staff Council were both very supportive of Faculty Senate's proposal to study ways to make the necessary renovations to provide areas for nursing mothers on campus. Chair Hatton announced that she had learned that grants are available (funded by WIC) to underwrite the cost of renovations. The only question was which campus office should write the grant – it was suggested that Chair Hatton should follow up with Provost Hebert on this issue.

New Business:

IRB Solution System: Senator Donna Desforges reported that IRB will get a new system in the Summer of 2012. She noted that there will be glitches during the transition period, but ultimately the new system will be much better than the present one. She noted that the current system is very user unfriendly and the \$100,000 necessary to buy a new system was better than paying \$20,000 for the old unusable and unresponsive system.

The minutes from the March 22nd meeting were adopted.

The Senate adjourned at 5:00 PM.