

March 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

Faculty Senate Minutes 3-1-06

Senators attending: Brett Serviss, Randy Duncan, Linda English, George Ann Stallings, Patti Miley, Larry Thye, Linda Wen, Cindy Wilson (alt. Duane Jackson), Alan Wright, Jules Mollere, James Engman, Kenneth Taylor, Celya Taylor, Georgine Steinmiller, Kevin Durand, Laura Storm, Carol Underwood, Rick McDaniel, Rafael Bejarano, Martin Halpern, Fred Worth, Paula Leming, Don Wells, and Brian English.

Senators absent: Shanta Sharma, Beverly Buys, Troy Hogue, and Maralea Gourley

Guests in attendance: none.

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

The Minutes of the February meeting were approved as distributed.

The President's Report (attached below the minutes) was discussed. There is concern over the Guaranteed 8-Semester Plan required by the state. As read, we must put specific liberal arts core courses, activity courses, etc into the plan. This could pose a problem due to the inherent flexibility of choices in these courses given to our students. More clarification may be necessary as to the purpose and use of this plan. Faculty evaluations were also discussed.

Committee Reports:

- **Academic:** Report is attached below the minutes.
 - The Senate will invite Mr. Gattin and Mr. Choate to discuss registration issues.
- **Operations:** Report is attached below the minutes.
 - A motion was made to allow departments to decide which method should be used. A friendly amendment was made to the motion stating that it can go back to the committee. The motion was then withdrawn, and it will be sent back to the committee for a more formalized language to be voted on by the Senate.
- **Building and Grounds:** Report is attached below the minutes.
 - Concern was raised that there are no crosswalks defined at 12th and Richardsonstreets.
 - The parking lot by the Ross building also needs to be added into the lighting concerns.
 - There was a motion that the Senate strongly endorses all recommendations of the Building and Grounds Committee report and urges the administration of Henderson State University to do whatever is necessary to address the concerns of the committee in order to protect the safety of the University Community. The motion was seconded, discussed, and unanimously approved.
- **Procedures:** No report.
- **Faculty Morale:** No report.

Old Business: no old business.

New Business:

Faculty Evaluations: The statement at the end of the proctor's instructions for Faculty Evaluations was sent to the Operations Committee for consideration of language to specify the handling of the evaluation documents between the time they are turned in to the receptionist and when they are returned to the faculty members.

- Faculty Awards Committees: There is concern that the number of nominations is low. A lot of effort is required on the part of the recipient of the award, especially for the Excellence in Teaching award. The issue was forwarded to the Operations Committee to consider whether it is necessary for the awards committee to establish guidelines every year, and to examine ways to streamline the awards process.
- There was a call for volunteers to serve on the Faculty Morale Committee.
- The Senate Budget Committee was instructed to look into the issue of funding for summer courses.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm.

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Respectfully Submitted,
Brian English
Faculty Senate Secretary

Faculty Senate President's Report for March Senate Meeting Meeting with Vice President Houston

Dr. Houston and I discussed several items related to the faculty evaluation program. We discussed the issue of the manner in which student evaluations forms are routed through various offices. We met with Mr. Epperhart and Ms. Buck, and they explained how the forms are handled prior to delivery to the deans. As described, the protocol being followed appears to be reasonably secure, but the protocol is unwritten. Dr. Houston stated that he would welcome language from the Senate specifying the protocol on how course evaluation forms should be handled. We also discussed with Mr. Epperhart and Ms. Buck the possibility of web-based evaluations. Some courses on campus, specifically in the School of Business, have used web-based evaluation in recent semesters. There are some advantages of using this approach, including an increased level of anonymity for the students. There are also some challenges, such as ensuring an adequate level of student participation. Using the Poise/Campus Connect system for web-based evaluation should be possible soon, and would allow the university to "encourage" students to complete evaluations by making online viewing of grades dependent on the completion of evaluations. Apparently, many schools are using this approach with success.

We also discussed the instructions read by proctors when administering the course evaluations. The instructions included in the Faculty Handbook and the instructions currently being distributed with evaluation packets are not consistent. The statement "The results will be used in making personnel decisions" has apparently been added without involvement of the Senate or inclusion in the Faculty Handbook. Dr. Houston felt that he would be comfortable changing the sentence, possibly to read that the results "may" be used in making personnel decisions. He is going to look into how this change came about.

We discussed the status of implementing the *Writing Across the Curriculum* initiative, and some changes that were recently discussed in an Ellis College meeting. He is looking into that matter.

We had a discussion on a matter that was mentioned in the February 16th Budget Committee Meeting. At that meeting, Vice President for Finance and Administration Bobby Jones explained that it was possible that the cost of living adjustment next year would be 3% for classified employees and 2.7% for non-classified employees. Some Senators subsequently commented to me that in past years when faculty proposed larger increases for non-classified than for classified employees, the administration explained that it was not possible to have a two-tiered system. There has also been comment that a cost-of-living adjustment should be applied equally at all levels. I expect that this topic will be discussed at the February 23rd Budget Committee Meeting. (It was. Mr. Jones provided his views and some additional information at that meeting.)

Meeting with President Dunn

I discussed the matter of the proctor's instructions with Dr. Dunn. He stated that he would have no objections to removing the sentence in question from the instructions distributed with the packets.

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I also discussed the cost of living adjustment with Dr. Dunn. He provided some history, explaining that when the salary equity committee formulated its plan last year, that plan was based on an anticipated 2.7% increase for both classified and non-classified employees. The increase for classified employees was higher last year (3%) in order to correct for some salary compression that was resulting in new hires being paid more than employees with some seniority. The 3% figure for classified employees this year is state mandated. With regard to the cost of living adjustment for non-classified employees in the coming year, he stated that nothing is written in stone at this point, but that he is uncertain what the total cost would be if raised from 2.7% to 3%. He expressed some concern that funding at the higher level might affect our ability to increase supplies and services and travel funding to departments.

Dr. Dunn explained that the 2006-2007 University budget is one of his top concerns at the moment. Utility costs are expected to rise considerably, and could have a significant impact on the budget. Henderson currently pays of \$1 million annually in utilities, and a 20% increase in rates (not an unreasonable expectation) would represent a significant impact. Some other areas of the budget are of less concern, including our bonded indebtedness level, which he characterized as good, due to a recent refinancing. Our health insurance costs will only rise slightly. In the planning process for the budget, Dr. Dunn strongly supports a cost-of-living the implementation of the 2nd year of the salary equity adjustments. We discussed the faculty satisfaction with the adjustments, which varies considerably among individuals. He believes that the equity adjustment was handled very fairly, and that overall it has had a positive effect.

Dr. Dunn believes that a tuition increase is likely for next year. Henderson's current tuition cost is currently near the middle of the state 4-year institutions.

Summary of February 8, 2006 Meeting of Academics Committee of the Faculty Senate

Members Present – Marty Halpern, Randy Duncan, Maralea Gourley, Laura Storm, Celya Taylor, Carol Underwood

Members Absent – Shanta Sharma, Fred Worth

Marty Halpern, temporary chair was elected permanent chair of the committee. Following the election, former chair Randy Duncan noted that one of the duties of the position was attending the meetings of the UAC. Your reporter did not make any note on Dr. Halpern's reaction to being provided this information.

Dr. Halpern reported on the detailed objections of Mr. Choate and Mr. Gattin to the proposal to open up for a brief period access to student records to all faculty members in order to check whether students have met remediation requirements. It was the consensus of the committee that the privacy concerns were legitimate and that targeted department-level solutions should be sought that do not involve opening up a student's entire record to non-advisors. The committee thought the Faculty Senate would be interested in learning more about Mr. Gattin's suggestion that a recent software fix regarding students' meeting prerequisites might eliminate many problems. The committee recommends that Mr. Gattin be invited to a Faculty Senate meeting to report on this development and entertain questions from senate members regarding registration issues.

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Regarding the issue of the item in the planning document about increasing travel money with “distributing additional monies through the deans for prioritization,” it was the consensus of the committee that reviewing the planning documents was not timely. The committee strongly supports increased funding for research and travel and recommends that there be flexibility in the method of distributing any additional funds. It was suggested that the committee might look into gathering data on the amount of research and travel funds available to faculty at other institutions. The committee believes faculty should have a central role in decisions regarding the allocation of funding.

Prepared by Marty Halpern

Operations Committee Report

Letters for Tenure and Promotion

- The sentiment of the committee is to allow each department/area to choose whether to require a single group letter or individual letters.
- The committee did approve language recommending the form of a group letter such that dissenting views were represented. [This is designed to break up Section III, L, 2 paragraph 3 into two paragraphs with the recommended language inserted as a separate paragraph just after paragraph 3 says: “Only tenured faculty shall make a recommendation.”] The recommended language states “If the tenured faculty in the department 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 (or group of tenured faculty in the department) may submit a dissenting letter to the school/college tenure/promotion committee.”
- Dr. Alan Wright reported on the current procedure of the School of Business and noted that the School of Business faculty preferred their current procedure. According to Dr. Wright “We have a committee of tenured faculty discuss the candidate and forward a letter to the Dean with our recommendation—it’s a committee decision/one letter signed by the chair of the committee...Any dissent has been verbally relayed to the Dean/committee members.” The School of Business’ procedure differs from the recommended language for group letters in that it is signed only by the Chair, doesn’t record the vote, and dissent is relayed verbally. However, given the committee’s preference for allowing departments and areas to choose what they submit, we are not recommending that this procedure be changed. Given the difference in form of the group letter submitted in the School of Business and the recommended language voted on by the committee, the question is how to word the statement in the handbook. The committee has not discussed this.

In Summary:

- The department/areas may choose whether to submit group or individual letters.
- We have a recommended form for a group letter.
- However, departments/areas may choose their own form for a group letter.

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Building & Grounds Committee Report

The Buildings and Grounds Committee would like to formally address the appropriate Henderson personnel in regards to the following safety related items on and in proximity to the Henderson State University campus. It is the opinion of the Buildings and Grounds Committee that the conditions currently present or occurring in the five areas discussed below create an increased risk to the safety of people on and around Henderson 's campus.

1. Intersection at 12th and

Henderson Street

This intersection has long been an area of heightened risk to pedestrians attempting to cross either 12th Street or Henderson Street because of vehicles which routinely exceed the speed limit, especially while moving along 12th Street .

Possible solutions:

1. Henderson State University (HSU) could contact and work with the City of Arkadelphia , including the city manager, Jimmy Bolt and the Chief of Police, Al Harris, in order to devise a solution to the problem of high speed traffic at the above mentioned intersection.
2. Place a pedestrian light at the intersection. This would force vehicles to stop when pedestrians needed to cross. A pedestrian light could be placed (depending on position) to allow pedestrians to either cross 12th Street directly or Henderson Street directly.
3. Make the intersection a four way stop by placing stop signs at all four corners.
4. Existing cross walk should be repainted and an additional crosswalk(s) should be placed at the intersection.
5. More permanent speed bumps could be placed along 12th Street on both sides of the intersection.
6. Enforcement of parking laws, which would inhibit vehicles from parking within a certain minimum distance of the intersection.
7. Police could strictly enforce the speed limit along 12th Street by consistently writing tickets to people exceeding the speed limit.

Some combination of these ideas would probably function to minimize the risk to pedestrians when crossing 12th Street or Henderson Street at that intersection.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommends that the university collaborate with the City of Arkadelphia to reduce, by whatever means necessary, the risk to pedestrians crossing 12th Street or Henderson Street at the above mentioned intersection.

2. Crosswalk between Caplinger and the

Education Building

There is no crosswalk spanning

10th Street between Caplinger and the Education Building . The only "safe" option for pedestrians is to cross the bridge that goes over 10th Street between the north side of Caplinger and the Caddo Cafeteria. Crossing at the bridge is inconvenient, especially for handicapped individuals. Many pedestrians would prefer to cross 10th Street at the intersection of 10th Street and Henderson Street . A crosswalk placed across 10th Street at the above mentioned intersection would benefit pedestrians wishing to cross campus at that area.

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The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommends that a crosswalk be placed across 10th Street at the northern edge of the intersection at 10th Street and Henderson Street between Caplinger and the Education Building .

3. Poorly lit parking lots on campus

There are at least two parking lots on the Henderson campus which have extremely poor lighting. This situation creates a safety risk to any employees or students who need to park in these areas during periods of darkness. The two parking lots are:

1. the parking lot to the west of the Baptist Collegiate Ministries Building , and
2. the large parking lot to the west/northwest of the bed and breakfast (Captain Henderson House) that spans between Henderson Street and Haddock Street (included within this vicinity would be the parking area adjacent to the old Ross house off of Henderson Street).

The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommends that the lighting inadequacies of these two areas be remedied as soon as is possible.

4. Poorly lit pedestrian bridge that crosses 10th Street between Caplinger and the Caddo Cafeteria

The pedestrian bridge that crosses 10th Street has lost (apparently through vandalism) most or all of the functioning of the lights along its length. This lack of lighting potentially compromises the safety of pedestrians who need to cross this bridge during periods of darkness. In order to minimize the chance for vandalism of the lights once they are repaired, the following ideas could be implemented:

1. place the lights at a height that would greatly increase the difficulty of would be vandals to reach them.
2. place some type of damage resistant/protective covering (preferably a clear one, if possible) over the lights.
3. have periodic and regular patrols conducted by campus security during periods of darkness.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommends that the lights on the pedestrian bridge be repaired and steps be taken to minimize the chance of future vandalism of the lights.

5. Lights on the Reynolds and Evans buildings

There are several attached lights on the Reynolds Science Building and Evans Hall (in particular, at the entrances of Reynolds) that are inconsistently on or functioning during periods of darkness. When the lights are off during these periods, many of the areas around the two buildings are poorly lit and dark, which increases the safety risks to pedestrians in these areas at these times. If the lights are not on timers or sensors, would it be possible to place them on timers or sensors? If the lights were connected to one of these types of systems, the lights would automatically come on at the appropriate times. If not, could security routinely turn the lights on in the evening?

The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommends that a solution be devised in order to ensure that the lights are functioning and routinely turned on during periods of darkness.