

September 2006 Faculty Senate Minutes

Faculty Senate Minutes 9-6-06

Senators attending: Brett Serviss, Randy Duncan, Linda English, Patti Miley, Larry Thye, Linda Wen, Duane Jackson, Shanta Sharma, Michael Taylor, James Engman, Kenneth Taylor, Celya Taylor, Beverly Buys, Maralea Gourley, Georgine Steinmiller, Kevin Durand, Laura Storm, Carol Underwood, Rick McDaniel, Martin Halpern, Fred Worth, Paula Leming, Don Wells, Brian English

Senators absent: George Ann Stallings, Alan Wright, Troy Hogue, Rafael Bejarano

Guests in attendance: Vice President Robert Houston

Senate President James Engman announced the quorum and called the meeting to order.

The Minutes of the May meeting were approved as distributed.

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

The President's Report (attached below the minutes) was discussed.

Committee Reports:

- **Academic:** No report.
- **Building and Grounds:** No report.
- **Operations:** No report.
- **Procedures:** No report.
- **Ad-Hoc Morale Committee:** No report.

Old Business:

- The Operations Committee should consider the nature of the Faculty Excellence Awards issue
- A report is needed from the ad-hoc promotion & tenure committee.
- Michael Taylor will be the temporary chair of the Operations committee until their first meeting.
- The Academics Committee is considering the issue of textbook rotation.

New Business:

- There are three paragraphs on the same page of the Faculty Handbook (Chapter V, Part B, Section 2, Paragraphs 7-9) that give three different policies on the same item. This issue will be forwarded to the Operations Committee for recommendations.
- President Engman will create an Ad-Hoc committee to investigate the Chain of Command and Faculty Hearing Committee issues to make progress toward resolving them.
- The following issues were brought to the attention of the Building & Grounds Committee:
 - With the addition of East and West dorms, parking is now a big problem at Foster and Sturgis halls. The parking lost to the dorms has not been replaced.
 - The gravel parking lot across the street is also a big problem. Students park indiscriminately, and cars are blocked in and sometimes damaged.
 - Next to East dorm, the curb stops, and there is no retaining wall. There is a lot of mud washing down the hill in that area, and it poses danger to student and faculty pedestrians.
 - There are no sidewalks for East and West dorms.

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- If you park in the gravel lot, there is no sidewalk up or down Huddleston Street .
- The lack of a street crossing at the International House is also a dangerous problem.
- The Building & Grounds Committee will investigate these issues, and President Engman will discuss with Dr. Dunn the recommendations that have previously been forwarded, but not acted on.
- President Engman will discuss the issue of Diversity in faculty with Dr. Futrell (chair of the Diversity Committee) and discuss possible solutions.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian English
Faculty Senate Secretary

Discussion with Vice President Robert Houston

Enrollment is up a little bit at the current moment, and we should be ahead of last year, but we have not yet hit the target from the budget for the Freshman enrollment this fall. We had an additional 200 graduate students this summer, which gave us unexpected revenues, however.

Our Accreditation visit is coming up in February. It is important that we prepare ourselves as well as possible before this visit. We should be able to demonstrate that we are doing something with our assessment data, not that we are just collecting it.

Question was raised to the issue of International students being admitted and registered for classes with no test scores of any kind on file. Dr. Houston agreed to investigate the issue. He also reminded the Senate that HSU has a Center for Language Proficiency for International Students who need help with the English Language. If there are students in your academic area that are having problems with language, please refer them to Susan Rinehart.

Last minute changes to the computer systems were discussed.

Dr. Houston will also discuss the advising process at next week's Deans' meeting in light of numerous problems that were raised during discussion.

Faculty Senate President's Report – September 2006

Meeting with Dr. Houston

Dr. Houston is interested in continuing to attend our Senate meetings for discussions. We both agree that this is a valuable opportunity to keep the channels of communication more open.

I asked about possible changes that have been mentioned concerning the process of web registration and its effect on the nature of academic advising. He is looking into the details of this matter.

Dr. Houston and I discussed the assessment workshop that was held during the week prior to the start of classes. He is interested in any feedback that the Senate would like to provide on the value of that

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workshop, changes that might be suggested, or any other comments. We discussed the problem of low retention of our students, and what might be done to address this important issue. He is interested in any ideas that the Senate would like to propose.

We also discussed the fact that the faculty hearing committee was called upon to hear a grievance last semester. This was only the second time that this committee has been asked to serve in this manner, and it is possible that the Senate will want to examine the sections of the Faculty Handbook that concern this committee and its procedures. There is currently little detail regarding how the hearings are to be conducted.

Meeting with Dr. Dunn

We discussed probable changes for the Founder's Day activities. Dr. Dunn listed several changes that he felt would make the activities more valuable; these were in very close agreement with the Senate's recommendations approved in the May meeting. These include moving the Founder's Day ceremony to fall semester, doing more to honor the recipients, providing more financial support to cover travel costs and lodging at the Captain Henderson House, and reducing the number of honorees. We also discussed potential changes to the Faculty Excellence Awards, including reducing the number of individuals to be honored in a year. He stressed that he is not looking at this as a cost-cutting measure; his intention would be to reduce the number of awards, but to make the cash award associated with the honor substantially higher than it currently is.

I passed along a faculty member's concern that the University might be considering lowering admission standards. He said that no such change is being considered. He did describe a change in admission policy that the administration is examining. In the future, we may begin calculating ACT scores using "superscoring," a practice that involves selecting the highest subscores from more than one testing. U. of A. Fayetteville, UCA, Arkansas Tech and some other schools are currently using this method. He explained that many consider this to be a valid approach because students may perform below their ability level on a test, but not above it, so repeated measures might provide a more accurate estimate of a student's potential. Superscoring would not be used in the determination of eligibility for scholarships. He further explained that the overall effect of superscoring would probably result in a change in admissions status for a relatively low number of students. Applying the proposed change to this year's freshmen applications would only have resulted in admission of 8 students who were denied using the current system, which looks at the score of only a student's best ACT.

I asked about our retention numbers, and what options we might have for increasing our retention. He reminded me that we retain only about 60% of our students from the freshman to the sophomore year, while the national average is about 80%. We currently do not have a clear picture of what factors are important when students do not return, so the administration is planning to conduct a survey of non-returning students. This survey will be mailed out, and will consist of a number of questions designed to let us know the relative importance of factors related to academics, financial matters, personal issues, satisfaction with their experience here, etc. He plans on keeping the questions to a limited number in the hopes of securing a good level of participation. Students who do not respond by mail will be contacted by phone. He hopes that the survey will be ready to mail out by October 1st.

The scholarship committee has proposed changing some aspects of the manner in which financial aid need is determined. Dr. Dunn describes this as basically "turning the process upside down." Presently,

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institutional aid is determined first, and then other aid (Pell grants, loans, etc.) are added on top; this sometimes results in students receiving very large refunds. The new approach would be to determine what the other aid is first, and then use institutional aid to help students reach the funding level required. This may allow Henderson to stretch its scholarship budget further, helping more students.

Dr. Dunn gave me a copy of an article that indicates that public college graduates accrue educational debt in college that is about equal to that accrued by students attending private schools. The article, from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, lists the average debt of HSU 2005 graduates as \$16,500, Fayetteville at \$19,862, Arkansas Tech at \$17,064, ASU at \$18,500, OBU at \$14,016, Hendrix at \$15,271. The proportion of our students graduating with debt (38%) is much lower than at most other institutions listed; Fayetteville is 50%, Arkansas Tech is 53%, ASU is 68%, OBU is 52%, Hendrix is 78%. The article contains much more information than I have listed here. I'll be happy to send a copy of the article to anyone who is interested.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Engman