

October 2007 Faculty Senate Minutes

Faculty Senate Minutes 10-3-07

Senators present: Lea Ann Alexander, Angela Boswell, Beverly Buys, Steven Carter, Martha Dale Cooley, Kevin Durand, Brian English, Linda English, Doc Gibson, Paul Glover, Maralea Gourley, Marty Halpern, Cindy Jackson, Catherine Leach, Mike Matthews, Rick McDaniel, Vicki Posey, Gary Smithey, Georgine Steinmiller, Don Wells, Patrick Wempe and Fred Worth.

Senators absent: Bev Baker, Troy Hogue, Paula Leming, Jack Meadows, Paul Williamson and Hank Wilson.

Guests: Ms. Debbie Buck, Staff Senate and Stephen Eaves on behalf of Laura Storm.

1. President Durand announced the quorum and called the Senate to order at approximately 3:15 p.m. The complete President's Report covering the Discussion(s) with President Dunn and Vice President Houston appears at the end of the Minutes.

2. Discussion with Vice President Robert Houston:

- Progress of Transitional Student Cohorts.
- Progress of Freshman Class, in general.
- Trip to Bosnia and possible program(s) development.

3. The September Minutes were approved as distributed.

4. President's report:

- Senate recommendation in re: Dropping students for non-payment.
- "Official parties" resolution passed by the Senate.
- Possible faculty raises in January.
- The question of "Admission Standards".

4. (Continued). Points of Discussion with Vice President Robert Houston:

- Endorsement of Registration Policy.
- Feasibility of a "progress toward degree" policy.

5. Committee reports

A. Executive Committee

1. Resolution Regarding Dropping Students during Registration.

Faculty Senate recommends that students shall not be dropped from courses for non-payment during the regular two-day fall and one-day spring registrations until those registrations have concluded. We further recommend that the last day of registration end at 4 pm in order for students to be able to make arrangements for payment by 5 pm. This is not intended to affect the current policy on dropping students who participated in pre-registration. We further recommend that students should be regularly informed of all registration policies.

2. Resolution Concerning the Early Retirement Program.

We, the Faculty Senate, believe that the recently--and temporarily--instituted early retirement provision by the administration, though not without its commendable features, has on the whole been a disruptive agent in the orderly operations of the University. The University has in the past generally provided for the orderly retirement of its senior faculty and staff members, and this unexpected and arbitrary provision interrupts that orderly process which every faculty and staff member has a right to expect, and which orderly process also serves the larger interests of the University itself.

We are concerned that the plan was secretly discussed during an executive session of the Board of Trustees that appears to be in violation of the Freedom of Information Act of the State of Arkansas^[1] and was approved in the Board Meeting of August 23rd, 2007.

We further believe that any program of such importance as retirement of long-term faculty/staff should be based on a gradual and consistent implementation, and that a one-time "wind-fall" provision offered a large group of faculty/staff on such short notice as has occurred in this instance is ill-advised and detrimental to the stability of the University as a corporate body. We are perplexed by the lack of

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general faculty/staff involvement in the planning of this venture, which we note must have occurred primarily outside the regular academic year.

While we recognize the good this provision has done for those in a position to effect their retirement, we also point out that those recently retired as short as three months before the Plan was announced have been adversely affected by way of their own good-faith decision made earlier.

We are especially concerned that a resolution expressing these concerns was presented by an esteemed group of faculty during 1998 when a similar plan was initiated and that the recommendations of that resolution, which we reiterate and endorse, were not taken into account during this process.

In sum, we strongly recommend that before any such far-reaching program be instituted in the future at Henderson, sufficient and timely faculty/staff involvement take place so that a spirit of reasonableness, orderliness, and fairness can be reaffirmed as our guiding principle. The following statements and recommendations should be considered.

1. Replacing faculty who retire with adjunct faculty is not easy. Arkadelphia is a small town and we do not have a pool of potential adjunct faculty that other more urban universities have.
2. Replacing senior faculty who retire with adjunct faculty in all likelihood will weaken departments as they strive to carry out the Public Liberal Arts University mission.
3. Departments must be given the flexibility of replacing retiring faculty members that insures a realistic search process. Not being able to advertise until late-October, at the earliest, does not give departments ample time to search for adequate replacements. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays, along with final exams, creates an environment that is not conducive to hiring a faculty member.

It is recommended that people be allowed to elect to take early retirement at the spring contract and receive a contract for the fall semester. Then departments can advertise for the position in the summer with the plan to interview prospective replacements in mid-fall. (Departments will have more flexibility in replacing faculty and faculty who plan to retire will have more time to plan for the transition from employment to retirement. The process will also make recruitment of minority faculty easier.)

There was a motion and second from the floor to amend the proposal as follows: Although the Faculty Senate appreciates President Dunn's assurances that the Early Retirement Program will not lead to a permanent reduction in force, conflicting information from other sources leads the Senate to express its concerns about and opposition to any such reductions.

The following quote is taken from paragraph two (2) of the Voluntary Early Retirement Plan Document: "The Henderson State University Voluntary Early Retirement Plan of 2007 is designed to generate significant salary savings and provide flexibility in assisting the academic and administrative units in achieving optimum staffing levels. In some units, that does involve a realignment or reduction in faculty or staff positions."

The motion in re: adding the friendly amendment passed.

There was a motion and second to accept the resolution as amended. Motion passed.

B. Academics Committee

1. Recommendations regarding retention 9-24-07

We are still waiting for some data that would help indicate the reasons some of our former students left. Once received, that data may help us decide on other recommendations.

Initial recommendations regarding retention

1. Students who leave are asked for some information. We recommend that a more complete "exit interview" be held to try to ascertain the reasons for departures.
2. Henderson Seminar students should be made aware of guidelines and suggestions when considering withdrawing from classes or school.
3. The university must appropriate sufficient funds to academics so that no department is forced to rely too much on adjunct faculty or graduate assistants.

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4. All departments should investigate the possibility of creative scheduling of classes, possibly offering classes in evenings, on Saturdays, etc. If such options begin to be offered, the university needs to give them sufficient time to establish themselves rather than simply ending them if the first such offerings do not attract large numbers of students. Further, the university should make every effort to advertise to the community the availability of such offerings. [Note: This recommendation should not be viewed as a mandate that all departments must make such offerings, simply that all departments should make a conscious decision as to whether or not such offerings would work for their students or potential students.]

5. All departments should investigate the possibility of alternative means of delivery of courses. This includes but is not limited to on-line courses, hybrid (partially on-line, partially in class) courses, and other forms of distance learning. [Note: This recommendation should not be viewed as a mandate that all departments must make such offerings, simply that all departments should make a conscious decision as to whether or not such approaches would work for their students or potential students.]

6. Summer school must become more predictable for both students and faculty, with a sufficient number and spectrum of offerings.

7. Computer services needs to be certain that all university policies are supported by the registration software. There should be no option of overriding the prohibition against taking junior/senior level courses until remediation is complete. The software should make clear that a student must be in remedial courses until any required remediation has been completed.

8. No student, regardless of the number of hours completed, should be allowed to web register until all required remediation is completed.

9. Realizing that retention is the responsibility of all members of the Henderson State University community, faculty should make a strong effort to notify the retention office of any students with excessive absences or related issues.

10. There should be a central clearinghouse of information regarding services and resources available to students. This will enable faculty and staff to help guide students to any such services or resources that would help meet their needs.

11. There should be a centralized location dedicated to student tutoring. Such tutors should be chosen with input from the respective departments, schools or colleges.

This report is presented for Informational Purposes Only. This issue will be referred to an Ad Hoc Committee.

2. Recommendations regarding retention – 10/01/07

We recommend institution of an advising center to be staffed by faculty (from all disciplines) and trained staff (such as those who have taught HSU Seminar). There should be compensation for those participating. It should have a dedicated room.

There was a motion and second to accept this report as Informational and address this issue as per Ad Hoc Committee Appointment. Motion carried.

Senate President Durand presented an e-mail from President Dunn re: Appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Retention. This committee is to be composed of Dr. Gail Stephens, Mr. Larry Grant, Ms. Pam Ligon and Senator Fred Worth. This issue will be addressed later in the Minutes under New Business.

C. Buildings and Grounds Committee: The following proposed resolution was proposed by the Buildings and Grounds Committee: Faculty Senate would like to express its appreciation to Bobby Jones, John Corley, et al involved in repairing sidewalks around campus.

D. Finance Committee – No report.

E. Operations Committee – No report.

F. Procedures Committee

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1. Report on Faculty Senate Constitution Ballots. All five (5) Petitions to change the Constitution passed by a landslide.
2. Departmental elections for Faculty Senate will be conducted in October.

G. Ad Hoc Chain of Command Committee

Recommendation for handbook change

IV. Faculty Responsibilities

E. Chain of Command

“In the event of a complaint against a faculty member by a student, a staff member, a member of the administration, or another faculty member, that complaint shall be made in writing to the immediate supervisor of the faculty member in question. Complainants shall not have the right of anonymity in the filing of a formal complaint; neither shall any other source offered in support of the complaint have the right of anonymity.

The “immediate supervisor” of the faculty member in question will be understood as the individual who has supervisory responsibility over the faculty member in the capacity in which the complaint is made. In the normal course of events, the immediate supervisor for faculty is the chair of the relevant department. The immediate supervisor of chairs is the relevant dean. The immediate supervisor of deans is the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In special circumstance in which a faculty person is under the supervision of more than one direct Chain of Command (e.g., a director of a graduate program who, as a member of the faculty is subject to the supervision of the chair of his/her department and as a director of the program is subject to the supervision of the Graduate Dean), the complaint shall be made to the immediate supervisor relevant to the area in which the complaint is filed.

In the event that a faculty member and his/her immediate supervisor are both parties to the complaint, in whatever capacity, the complaint shall be initially reviewed by the supervisor of the next highest order. For example, a complaint between a faculty member and his/her chair shall be heard by the relevant dean, and so forth. In the event that a complaint comes from outside of the direct chain of responsibility, the chain of command specified here shall be considered the proper order for determination and disposal of the complaint. For example, should a staff member, a member of the administration, or another member of the faculty wish to offer a complaint against a faculty member, the chain of command of the faculty member against whom the complaint shall be the chain through which the complaint will be adjudicated.

The University General Counsel may be invited to the process at any level and by any party to the complaint unless he/she is a party to or a witness of the complaint.

All members of the Chain of Command bear the responsibility to direct complainants to the proper authority within the Chain of Command. Complaints that do not follow the Chain of Command shall not be heard and are to be immediately referred to the appropriate level.”

Rename previous Section “E: Other Responsibilities” as “F. Other Responsibilities”.

The Chain of Command Resolution was tabled for Faculty Senate consideration.

6. Old business: None.

7. New business:

A. Student email: This issue was referred to the Operations Committee.

B. Other new business: The need was a Policy and Procedures Manual was discussed. A resolution from the floor suggested: Faculty Senate resolves that a Policy and Procedures Manual containing the policies of the University, particularly those approved by the Board of Trustees, be compiled and maintained in an accessible and public place.

There was a motion and second to accept the above resolution as the will of the Senate. Motion carried.

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C. Ad Hoc Committee on Retention. After having been referred to the Academic Committee by the Senate, and in light of President Dunn's e-mail, the members of this committee will include Dr. Gail Stephens, Dr. Pamela Bax, Mr. Larry Grant, Ms. Pam Ligon and possibly three (3) more faculty members. President Durand will work toward the completion of the faculty appointments. Hearing no further business, the Senate adjourned at approximately 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda G. English
Secretary, Faculty Senate

End of Minutes... le...

Beginning of Reports:

President's Report

Meeting with Dr. Dunn.

My meeting with Dr. Dunn covered a variety of topics and issues of concern for faculty.

1. The policy regarding registration. The Executive Committee, following the instructions of the full Senate and having gotten a sense of the Senate during the September meeting, developed the following recommendation concerning the procedures for registration and payment of fees, with particular attention to those students who might find themselves in the position of being dropped for non-payment.
2. Faculty Senate recommends that students shall not be dropped from courses for non-payment during the regular two-day fall and one-day spring registrations until those registrations have concluded. We further recommend that the last day of registration end at 4 pm in order for students to be able to make arrangements for payment by 5 pm. This is not intended to affect the current policy on dropping students who participated in pre-registration. We further recommend that students should be regularly informed of all registration policies.

Dr. Dunn was quite supportive of the policy suggestion.

1. With regard to the "official parties" resolution passed by the Senate, Dr. Dunn and I discussed what I and the Executive Committee took to be a misreading by Dr. Stephens. In her response to the resolutions, she stated that "If I were to provide my personal opinion it would be that Greeks could not party Sunday through Thursday, either. However, it would be very unrealistic of HSU to presume to prohibit these gatherings." (email correspondence) I pointed out that the resolution says nothing about prohibition of parties as that would be jousting a windmill. Rather, the resolution says that "official" parties should be prohibited – by which it was meant that university-sanctioned advertising (flyers, posters, banners, etc.) could only be given to those parties scheduled for Friday or Saturday night. Dr. Dunn was quite receptive to this and said that he would take the matter up with Dr. Stephens. I will follow up on this in the coming month.
In a similar vein, I expressed a long-running Senate issue with regard to the advertising of parties (that also has to do with presenting the best possible campus environment). It has often been

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mentioned that the use of benches as places to staple flyers is unacceptable. Dr. Dunn agreed wholeheartedly with this view. Perhaps a follow-up resolution (or consideration by Buildings and Grounds) would be in order.

1. Consideration is being given to the question of raises in January. I pointed out that when the question of raises had been broached in the past, that the preference was for the raises to take effect as soon as feasible and to be in the form of base compensation rather than in the form of one-time bonuses. This matter is currently being considered. Dr. Dunn said that it might well be the case that the University Budget Committee would meet to discuss options.
1. The question of admissions standards, particularly whether or not the policy is properly administered, was raised. Following my meeting with Dr. Dunn, I met briefly with Tom Gattin. The admission policies are as follows:
 - 1.
 4. An 18 on the ACT (or corresponding score on the SAT)
 5. or
 6. A 17 on the ACT **and** rank in the upper half of the class
 7. or
 8. Rank in the upper half of class **and** have successfully completed the College Core

Meeting with Dr. Houston.

1.

My meeting with Dr. Houston covered a considerably smaller range of topics. Dr. Houston endorsed the registration policy and said that he would take the matter up with Bobby Jones soon. We also discussed the feasibility of a “progress toward degree” policy that roughly mirrored the time limits on completion of a graduate degree.
9. Announcements
10. Founders’ Day

End of Reports... le...

[1] “Executive sessions may be held only to consider personnel matters concerning individual officers or employees. ... Board and Commissions can meet in executive session for purposes of preparing examination materials and answers to examination materials that are administered to applicants for licensure. “ And, “An executive session may deal with a specific salary issue involving a specific individual, but not broad salary issues or blanket hiring of personnel. An executive session may be held to review applications and develop a list of applicants to interview, assuming that the meeting is held to consider individual applicants.” From the “Board Members’ Handbook,” Office of the Attorney General, March 1, 2003, p9.