

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

October 10, 2024

Austin Hall

Senators Present (23) Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Michael Arrington (CHSS), Emma Bullock (COSET), Patrick Buzzini (CJ), Jennifer Child (CHSS), Miltonette Craig (CJ), Kevin Crouch (CAM), Magdalena Denham (CJ), Dustin Gross (COSET), Debbi Hatton (CAM), Nick Lantz (CHSS), Victoria Lantz (CAM), Kimberley LaPrairie (COE), Ricardo Montelongo (COE), Audrey Murfin (CHSS), Jill Pagels (COE), Erica Pasquini (COHS), Todd Primm (COSET), Bradley Seaberg (CHSS), Zachary Valdes (NGL), Xiaobo Belle Wang (CHSS), Darren Williams (COSET), Willow Yang (COBA).

Guests

Volha Minich (COSET)

Senators Not Present (6): Miriam Akoto (CHSS), Lindsay Clark (COBA), Brandy Doleshal (COSET), Owen Kelly (COM), Kenneth McIntyre (CHSS), Rebecca Wentworth (COE).

Special Guest: Jeanine Bias, Chief Experience Officer, Sam Houston State University

Called to Order

3:30 PM by chair, Zachary Valdes

Discussion with Special Guest

Dr. Bias gave a presentation on focus group interviews pertaining to persistence and retention challenges. She met with six focus groups comprising 75 students, freshman and seniors. Dr. Bias suggested a focus on relational strategies, building connections, being a “broad access” institution by customizing services to different populations, and early outreach to students delivered by someone that they know. The process is now entering phase two: Experience Design.

Senators asked questions about marketing to prospective freshmen regionally, in mailed publications and SEO. Applicants wait to hear if they have been accepted here longer than they do at neighboring institutions.

Dr. Bias expressed a willingness to speak to colleges and departments about her findings.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 19, 2024 meeting were approved with a revision to the attendance.

Senate Committee Reports

Academic Affairs Committee

- **APS 110511 - *Appointment and Evaluation of Chairs***

The committee moved to accept the policy, with a request for clarity on whether the comments are shared with department chairs. The policy was approved.

Faculty Affairs Committee

- **APS 820317 - *Faculty Evaluation System of Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty***

The committee moved to accept the policy with substantial edits, concerns raised were with how it affects NTT faculty, 3/3 and 4/4 teaching loads, and a concern that many departments don't have an approved workload policy. The policy was approved.

University Affairs Committee

- **APS 800722 - *Merit Increases in Salary***

The committee moved to accept the policy but noted the change in language stating that merit was "guided by" FES instead of "based on," and this was debated. After discussion by the senate, a motion was made to reject the policy based on the change of language from "based on" to "guided by." Senators questioned whether evaluations of merit should be spread across multiple years when there are years without merit, and why were we evaluating this policy when we aren't getting merit or COLA. The policy was rejected.

Committee on Committees & Surveys

The committee ran a special election in CHSS to replace two senators who resigned. Senate Chair Valdes introduced the new senators, Dr. Xiaobo Belle Wang and Dr. Michael Arrington.

New Business

Senate Committee Assignments

Academic Affairs Committee

- **APS 240430 - *Course Structure and Management (second review cycle)***

Changes were made in response to feedback from first Faculty Senate review on 09/19/24.

Faculty Affairs Committee

- **APS 900417 *Faculty Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty***

Note: Minor Revision. Changes made to align with recent revisions to APS 790601, *Faculty Workload*.

University Affairs Committee

- **APS 800401 *Class Attendance***

Note: Major Revision. Changes made in response to legislation requiring accommodations for pregnant and parenting students, as well as for student athletes with increased travel commitments.

Committee on Committees & Surveys

- University Committees: Nominees needed for six committees.

Other Business

1. Watermark Faculty Profiles - Discussion

Senators want editorial oversight to emphasize certain aspects of their CV. Senate Chair Valdes will create a poll about which website is preferred.

2. Texas Council of Faculty Senates - Role of Faculty Senate Talking Points

Senate discussed the need for better understanding of the role of faculty senates on our campus. Senators gave input on important functions of Senate, including 1. Representation in faculty leadership as part of our identity as a HSI, 2. Keeping our own departments updated as to what we do. We discussed ways to improve our messaging, including continuing to reach out to our own departments, the need to reach out to smaller departments without Senate representation, and a possible revision of our statement on our web page. We need to communicate to long standing faculty especially (who may have assumptions based on institutional history) that we are working well with the current administration.

Chair's Report

1. Academic Affairs Resource Allocation Advisory Committee

Chair Zach Valdes is on the committee. The committee will only produce recommendations on what method to use if reallocation is necessary, they will not decide on the reallocation.

Announcements

- Following clarification from our 9/19 discussion regarding interim chair eligibility, Senator Diana Brown (COBA) has resigned from Faculty Senate. Faculty Senate thanks Diana for her service.
- Upcoming university events of interest:
 - Conversations with Administrators – *Charting Our Course: Exploring New Enrollment Targets*. Tuesday, October 15, 2024; 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. on Blackboard
 - Campus Open Forum: Thursday, October 17, 2024; 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. at White Ballroom, Lowman Student Center

Adjournment: 5:00 PM.

