

Chair's Report

Faculty Development Leave Policy

The FDL policy was revised in April 2014, when the time frame between development leaves was reduced from 7 to 5 years. Dr. James noticed that in the FDL information distributed by the Office of the Provost on September 3, the list of past FLD recipients ineligible to reapply for another leave still followed the old 7-year timetable.

Therefore, Dr. James and Dr. Baker have brought this issue to the Provost's attention during their last meeting. Dr. Baker will also follow up with the Provost's office and ensure a revised FDL recipient/ineligible applicant list is sent to the deans, chairs, and faculty.

Grievance Policy

During the June 3 meeting, Provost Hebert informed senators the Board of Regents had approved revisions to the TSUS Faculty Grievance Policy proposed by system counsel, Dr. Fernando Gomez. SHSU administration was given only 24 hours to review the proposed changes. The revised policy reduced the grievance reporting period from 90 to 10 days and eliminated the grievance committee hearing for issues related to termination at end of contract, including denial of tenure or non-reappointment of a lecturer.

Dr. Baker addressed faculty concerns raised since Provost Hebert's announcement. In particular, since the revision was approved on June 1, 2014, grievance issues, including denial of tenure, occurred during spring 2014 will still proceed under the existing SHSU grievance policy. Grievance issues arising on or after June 1 will be covered by the new policy.

A senator asked how the reporting period of "10 days from the initiating event" will be determined. Based on the June 3 meeting minutes, Provost Hebert stated the timetable would start on the day the faculty member received and read the letter. Several senators felt this interpretation leaves too much ambiguity and could cause problems.

Another senator asked whether racial and gender discriminations concerns related to denial of tenure would fall under the new grievance po

FES Revisions

Dr. Baker reassured senators that university administration has not forgotten the proposed FES revisions. The recommended revisions from the Faculty Evaluation Committee have been submitted for review to the Council of Chairs. Unfortunately, the chair of chairs left the University this summer, so the review will resume this fall after election for the chair of chairs.

Merit Pay Raises

Dr. Baker noted that Provost Hebert has expressed interests in more standardization in the merit process and shared some questions for senators to consider. For instance, who should receive merit pay increases? Everyone who achieved a set of defined standards, or only those who outperformed their peers? Also, how would merit be calculated? As a percentage of salary or in fixed amounts?

Several senators pointed out that faculty merit raises and market adjustments have not been updated on the Senate website since 2010. Therefore, Dr. Baker will ask the Provost to share this information so the Senate website can be updated.

Old Business

Academic Policy 900417 (Faculty Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)

During the last meeting on June 3, Senate had voted to postpone the vote on whether to accept the Faculty Affairs report on policy 900417, submitted by Donna Cox, FA chair at the time. The approval vote was postponed as several senators wished to have more time to discuss recommendations made in the detailed report.

Some concerns were raised about the treatm

Bearkat OneCard

Dr. Tracy Bilsing and Dr. John Breazeale, chair and member of the University Affairs Committee during the last academic year, met with Dr. Christie Vienne, Director of Bearkat OneCard to discuss concerns raised by faculty with the new card, issued by Higher One last spring. However, review of the resulting UA report was postponed due to time constraint at the June 3 meeting.

Dr. Bilsing summarized the UA report on behalf of Dr. Breazeale (absent) and concluded the partnership with Higher One is beneficial for SHSU as it greatly improves the operating efficiency and generates significant cost savings for the University. Dr. Vienne expressed surprise when learning about faculty concerns with the new card, but did acknowledge the close resemblance between faculty and student cards, and promised to look into making changes in the future.

One senator pointed out that UNT, also a partner with Higher One, offers a school ID and a separate Higher One card, and suggested a similar solution for SHSU. Another senator shared that Higher One still refuses to remove false information she was instructed to provide during the required new card activation process. These comments were followed by more discussions about the limitations of the Bearkat OneCard, including issues with activation and updating account information, such as difficulty with removing outdated addresses and credit card information.

Dr. Baker observed that there are a number of residual concerns with Bearkat OneCard, and asked the new University Affairs Committee to take a second look at this issue.

A motion was made to accept the University Affairs Committee report on Bearkat OneCard.

Motion passed unanimously (29 yes).

EEO and Same-Sex Marriage Spousal Benefits

A senator recalled a past senate discussion on recommending that the university offer the same benefits and rights for spouses of employees in same-sex marriages as for spouses of employees in different-sex marriages, and inquired about the current status of the recommendation. Dr. Baker will ask the Provost for an update on this issue.

Consensual Relationships Policy

Several senators have inquired about the proposed Human Resources policy concerning consensual relationships (Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy ER-10, Consensual Relationships), which was first submitted for Senate input during the January 23, 2014, meeting.

There were a number of concerns about the policy draft, including the definition for consensual relationship, concerns for privacy, including sexual orientation, and the level of discretion supervisors can exercise. Therefore, Senate had requested that the head of Human Resources,

David Hammond, provide a sampling a peer institutions' polices on consensual relationships. Dr. Baker will ask the Provost for an update on this proposed policy.

New Business

Committee on Committees

A motion was made to approve Senate nomination for Rick White to the Research Council.

Motion passed unanimously (29 yes).

Family and Medical Leave

Presently, the SHSU Employee Leaves Policy (B-1) offers a federally-mandated 12-week, unpaid leave under the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for employees. In light of Provost Hebert's charge to improve family and medical leave options, one senator suggested a survey of the system policy and policy of peer institutions. A faculty member had also pointed out to Dr. Baker that Lamar University's policy is different from the SHSU policy, suggesting there could be some flexibility within TSUS.

In a related matter, there are also faculty requests to make breast pumping stations available (currently there is only one on campus) for the campus population. One senator suggested both issues should be considered with EEOC in mind. Dr. Baker would like the Faculty Affairs Committee to examine the Family and Medical Leave Policy and the related issues.

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lower actual merit pay for female faculty members who were awarded the same percentage merit increase as their male colleagues.

Other senators also raised concerns in possible discrepancies in tenure denial statistics by gender. One senator cautioned that equality issues are not always so unequivocally male versus female; factors such as one's perceived status or marital status should also be considered to avoid overly simplifying the issue. Dr. Baker would like the Faculty Affairs Committee to take the lead in examining issues and statistics related to gender equality in tenure, pay, and promotion.

Promotion and Career Track for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Dr. Baker noted Dr. Frank Fair would like to share his trepidations concerning the lack of professional development support and merit pay for non-tenure-track teaching faculty with Senate. A lively discussion followed, with senators sharing similar issues in their respective departments and colleges.

Many senators agreed the practice of hiring "cheaper" teaching faculty on annual contracts or contract-by-course basis has created an environment that lacks stability and job security for adjunct faculty to pursue professional development, and for departments to invest in their non-tenure-track faculty members. Moreover, there are pool faculty members who have been teaching for the same departments at SHSU for many years, but are still offered annual contracts.

For the interest of time, Dr. Baker asked senators to continue this discussion at the next meeting. Dr. Baker will also ask the Provost for his input on this issue.

Constitution Day Celebration

Outgoing senator Tom Cox shared a flyer and event information about the upcoming SHSU 2014 Constitution Day Celebration on September 17th and 18th to encourage faculty and student participation.

Meeting adjourned at 5:02pm