

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
JANUARY 19, 2006**

Chair Debbie Price called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Members Present: Christopher Baldwin; Jerry Cook; Doug Constance; Steven Cuvelier; Jim DeShaw; Jerry Dowling; Stacey Edmonson; Mark Frank; Mary Gutermuth; Debbi Hatton; Lady Jane Hickey; Joan Hudson; Rosanne Keathley; Gerald Kohers; Brian Loft; Philip Morris; Valerie Muehsam; Debra Price; Patricia Williams; Jay Whatley; Chris White.

Members Absent: David Bailey (professional conflict); Linda Cook (professional conflict); Peggy DeMers (professional conflict); Paul Loeffler (professional conflict).

Invited Guest Presenters: Associate Vice Presidents Richard Eglsaer and Mitchell Muehsam (Invited to attend beginning at 4:00 p.m.).

Purpose:

This was a special meeting of the Faculty Senate to discuss assessment issues related to SACS reaccreditation.

Background:

On December 8, 2005, Senate Chair Debbie Price emailed a report to all Senators about the discussion of SACS reaccreditation at the previous day's APC meeting. Chair Price reported that SACS requires assessment measures; the University needed to make some decisions about the best way to make these assessments; and the Faculty Senate would have a role in this discussion. This report generated many questions from the Senators. Therefore, a special meeting of the Faculty Senate was scheduled and Provost David Payne and Associate Vice President Mitchell Muehsam were invited to address these questions.

Opening Remarks and Discussion:

Immediately after calling the meeting to order, Chair Debbie Price made a few remarks concerning the reason for the meeting and informed the Senate that due to illness Provost Payne would not be able to attend but Associate Vice President Eglsaer would attend in his place. Then, there was a general discussion among the Senators related to SACS, accreditation, and assessments.

Question and Answer Session:

At 3:57 p.m., Associate Vice Presidents Eglsaer and Muehsam arrived and a question and answer session began. As a result of this session, the Associate Vice Presidents provided the following information:

- In order to receive Federal money, the University *must* be accredited by a *regional* accreditation organization. Theoretically, it doesn't have to be SACS; but for practical purposes SACS makes the most sense for SHSU.
- SACS has four (4) standards that are related to assessments. These assessments should be integrated, systematic measures of *student learning*.

- There are three (3) areas of assessments in SACS:
 - Core – assessments of the core curriculum. There is a movement towards benchmarking in this area and the use of standardized exams that allow national comparisons.
 - Program – assessments of each program at the university. Every program (basically each major) must be assessed. The program should be assessed based on educational objectives that are appropriate for that program.
 - QEP – assessments of the Quality Enhancement Plan. The University must have a QEP that is designed to improve student learning. This plan must be assessed.
- Assessments can take many forms. These may range from standardized exams to embedded assessments that are included in classes. Student grades in a class are NOT acceptable assessments. Student surveys or opinion polls are NOT acceptable assessments.
- The assessment issue is both a challenge and opportunity for the university:
 - By taking a proactive approach, we can define the assessments that we wish to use.
 - The assessments can and should serve as feedback to improve our classes and curriculum.
 - Student learning is a university-wide objective; therefore assessments should not be directed at a single department, class, or faculty member.
 - Depending on the assessment, getting students to give a serious effort to the assessment may be a challenge.
- Although the SACS team will not be here until 2009, major efforts to ensure our continued accreditation will begin in the next few weeks:
 - A Leadership Committee will be appointed next week.
 - A Compliance Committee will be appointed within a couple of weeks.
 - The method of Core Curriculum Assessment needs to be addressed during the Spring semester so that it can be implemented during the Fall.
- The development of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will be a major undertaking that will require substantial faculty input.
- Associate Vice President Muehsam will establish a SACS reaccreditation website and a newsletter to keep the faculty informed about the reaccreditation process.
- Dr. John Schmidt of the University of Alabama will be on campus February 22, 2006. He is a consultant whose university recently successfully completed the reaccreditation process. He will make a presentation to the faculty. Details will be forthcoming from Dr. Muehsam in the near future.

Other Business:

There was no other business conducted at this meeting.

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Philip W. Morris, Chair-Elect.