

**Stephen F. Austin State University  
Chairs Council  
AY 2023-2024  
Meeting Minutes**

Date: November 7, 2023

Time: 11:30am – 1:00pm

Location: Culinary Café

1. HOP 02-101: [Academic Unit Head—Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation](#). Dr. Hendricks led the discussion. The following was shared:
  - a. Every policy must follow the UT System policy.
  - b. Department chairs can be appointed to 3 or 5 years terms after summative or triennial review. Dr. Hendricks asked if the group wanted to conduct the summative review every 3 years as has occurred, or every 5 years, as the UT System allows.
  - c. Academic Unit Heads viewed as administrators would require a comprehensive review no longer be confined to the department, but would include the campus at large, including students. Academic Unit Heads viewed as faculty may deviate from this.

**Consideration:** Council was asked to consider amending the HOP to change the schedule for comprehensive evaluations to every 5 years. This is supported by all in attendance.

- d. Hendricks asked the council if we want to define chairs as administrators as defined by the UT System policy or are SFA department chairs faculty? UTS views academic unit heads as administrators, but the institution can overrule this.

**Consideration:** Council was not unanimous in the charge. Dr. Troy Davis, suggested a definition that stated the academic unit heads at SFA are in a unique role as both faculty members and administrators. Dr. Matthew McBroom suggested that the Deans' Council would need to weigh in on such a definition. The Council did not vote on this action item.

- e. Hendricks also asks that department chairs get written proof of satisfactory performance so that there is a record of performance over time.
- f. He also stated that triennial evaluations were followed by an official appointment. There is nothing in writing to verify terms for department chairs.

**Consideration:** It was suggested that 02-0101.D.6 would be updated to state the expectation of a written summary and recommendation of renewal or not be provided by the provost at the conclusion of the review.

- g. He also asked the council to consider if we should allow visitors to come to Chairs Council meetings because it takes the time that is needed by the chairs to discuss items that are important to them without guests taking up time.

Discussion from the group:

- Members of the Council expressed that the topic of 3 or 5 year appointments and evaluations should be posed to the deans.
- Some expressed that there is merit in having others across campus evaluate chairs to gain feedback about the chair's interactions with offices across campus.
- Some expressed that they did not want to forfeit their faculty status.
- Faculty Senate does not view department chairs as faculty and does not welcome them to their meetings.
- At UTRGV, department chairs are designated as faculty. This is a university that has been held up as an example for us to follow.
- Section D was discussed, with attention to item 4 to ensure that department chairs receive a written evaluation. Adding a written sentence that states that a written summary and a formal recommendation for the length of the term should be added.
- Not having sufficient documentation of satisfactory performance is problematic if there is a grievance or potentially litigious situation.
- There is conflicting information across the UTS policies where the evaluation could be every 3 years, every 5 years, or every 6 years.
- The consensus of the group is that comprehensive evaluations should occur every 5 years.
- There appeared to be consensus that the department chair position is at the intersection of the faculty and administrator role.

Summary:

- The Council supported:
    - a. A 5-year comprehensive review including input outside of their department.
    - b. A definition that states an academic unit heads at SFA are in a unique role as both faculty members and administrators.
    - c. A written summary and recommendation of a renewal of a 5 year term, subject to satisfactory annual evaluations, at the conclusion of the comprehensive review.
  - The Council recommended input from the Deans' Council on the (a) and (b) in the previous bullet.
2. Dr. Beauregard discussed [Unmet Needs](#).
- a. Dr. Smith noted that he will use these documents to share with the incoming President, once that person is in place, the unmet needs of SFA. His desire is to have the input of the stakeholders in the spirit of share governance, and that to be specific and strategic rather than providing general information that does not reflect the thoughts of campus stakeholders.
  - b. Dr. Hendricks made a recommendation to add a new line under Section 5 that asks UTS to honor their commitment to increase faculty salaries. "Increase salaries to be equitable and competitive, as promised by UTS."

- c. It was suggested that a line about a regular COLA or merit fund be added.
- d. Comments were made that a merit increase should be over and above a COLA increase.
- e. It was suggested that a line be added to make the resources in the library on par with other UTS schools.
- f. It was suggested to add a line to promote undergraduate and graduate research experiences and the funding necessary to support these.
- g. It was suggested to add to the line in Section 5 about modernizing classroom instructional and learning infrastructure include a point about classroom furniture specifically.
- h. There was discussion about the quantitative assessments we are using to measure the efficacy of our systems.
- i. Admissions and financial aid have stumbling blocks that create issues in admitting students. Streamlining the enrollment and financial aid will help enrollment more than anything else.