

**The Stephen F. Austin State University Faculty Senate Issues Statement Regarding
Severe Cut to Professional Development Fund**

The Faculty Senate convened on Wednesday – October 12, 2016 to discuss a twenty-eight percent cut to the professional development funding. As part of the discussion a letter submitted by the Council of the College of Liberal and Applied Arts was read into the record and a motion was passed that this letter be used to represent the feelings of the entire Senate. The Senate would like to thank Dr. Steven Galatas, Chair – CLAA Council and Dr. Elizabeth Malpass, Professor of History for their hard work on this topic.

October 4, 2016

Dr. J. D. Salas
Faculty Senate Chair
Stephen F. Austin State University

Colleagues:

The Council of the College of Liberal and Applied Arts writes to express its strongest concerns regarding the cuts in professional development funding for the academic year 2016-2017. The Council believes that these new cuts, approximately twenty-eight percent from an already severely limited economic pool of funding, will affect the university adversely and prove detrimental to the entire academic community.

Immediately, this budget reduction well may have *chilling* consequences on both hiring and retention of new and energetic young faculty, even as current faculty often must supplement or pay entirely their own development projects. Having served on numerous search committees, faculty realize that a combination of low salary scales, insufficient professional development funds, and curtailed travel money has hampered hiring practices and actually has, to some extent, led to costly renewed searches. Throughout the nation, many scholars generally judge the total quality of a university, not only upon its salary base, but also upon its supportive commitment to excellence.

Professional Development is an intrinsic aspect of every great university in the nation. It brings together on a regional, state, and national basis the best and brightest; the lions and the cubs of academia. It is exactly what this university is seeking to accomplish in the forthcoming year-long study of the undergraduate experience. In essence, professional development is to faculty what mentoring is to our undergraduates.

"In focus on institutional culture," the authors of *The Undergraduate Experience* recognize as does this council that strategic planning and execution is "...fostered by a careful alignment of plans for facilities, faculty development and support, fundraising objectives, and a host of priorities...." (Felton, *et. al*, p. 167). The Liberal and Applied Arts Council agrees with their rationale and believes the university can achieve a new and promising era of growth and trust.

In conclusion and in keeping with the spirit of building new, realistic interrelationships on campus while inspiring cooperative dialogue between divisions, we hope the Faculty Senate can urge the Administration to consider some of the following concepts:

- 1) The restoration of the professional development budget to its fullest amount at the earliest possible moment.
- 2) Appoint a committee, enhanced or enlarged by the appointment of more faculty and staff, to study fully the roles, traditional and

- innovative, of professional development as well as to promote and publicize its benefits to the individual, the campus, and the community.
- 3) Promote more transparency about the budgeting processes and important scheduling dates each year to avoid or minimize, if possible “sudden storms...” such as “sharp budget cuts” (Felton, p. 167).
 - 4) Explore new methods for increased funding, to be followed by strategic planning and execution.

The council does appreciate the leadership of the Faculty Senate and the Administration and pledges our full support in what promises to be a vigorous and dynamic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven E. Galatas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and last name "Galatas" clearly legible.

Dr. Steven Galatas, Chair
Department of Government

The Senate would also like the administration to consider two more concepts as the faculty deals with the ramifications of this cut.

- 5) Take this cut into consideration during the next few years of Tenure/Promotion reviews.
- 6) Install a moratorium on Policy 7.22 Performance Evaluation of Faculty (Post-Tenure Review) until the professional development fund can adequately support both junior faculty as they work towards achieving tenure and tenured faculty members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dr. J.D. Salas
Chair, Faculty Senate