

CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

APRIL 2016

Greetings Mr. Chairman, Board of Regents, Dr. Pattillo, Dr. Bullard, Esteemed Colleagues and Guests:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this update from the Faculty Senate. It has been a deep honor to serve the Senate as chair over the past fifteen months. This is my final address to the Board of Regents.

I will begin with a brief update of Senate activity since the last Regents meeting. In February, the Senate was tasked in soliciting faculty feedback on two policies currently under review: Policy 7.9, Distance Education Competencies and Compensation and Policy 9.4, Intellectual Property.

During a two-week open review period, the Faculty Senate received 41 responses regarding the proposed revisions to Policy 7.9 concerning Distance Education compensation. Through qualitative analysis of the narrative data, six thematic categories emerged and were reported to the Academic Policy committee. The Senate also shared this feedback with Dr. Bullard, Provost and VPAA, and Dr. MaryNelle Brunson, Associate Provost.

The thematic categories illuminate faculty concerns over the proposed changes, including workload differences from face to face teaching, possible effects to online teaching, effects to faculty support of the strategic plan initiative, effects faculty morale and culture, financial concerns, and concerns over who or what entity will control course content.

Through the analysis of the data and vigorous discussion in the Senate, we realized the complexity of making widespread changes to this policy at the present time. The Senate has requested to Dr. Bullard that greater time be given to the vice presidents, deans, and appropriate faculty and staff in order to work out a viable plan for adjusting the current compensation levels for the delivery online courses while seeking to attain the goals of SFA Envisioned and close equity gaps in faculty and staff salaries through targeted salary increases.

In March, the Senate Ethics Committee presented an ombuds proposal to the strategic planning committee on university culture. We also met with and received feedback from the Director of Human Resources on this part time position for an ombuds.

Currently, we are busy - in the midst of elections for new Senators and the election of officers for the 2016-2017 17 academic year.

In summary, this has been a highly engaged and productive year for the Faculty Senate, and I would like to share a few highlights of Senate activity followed by recent Faculty Accomplishments.

In the 2015-16 academic year, the Senate:

- Approved a joint resolution with the Student Government Association to establish SFA as a tobacco free / smoke free campus;
- Completed the renovation of McGee 483 as conference room for Senate committee meetings and faculty forums;
- Summarized faculty feedback on seven policies concerning merit pay, promotion, tenure, post tenure review, distance education faculty compensation, and intellectual property;
- Conducted a review and update of the SFA Faculty Handbook;
- Began live streaming the Senate meetings and archiving the webcasts on our website;
- And created a Senate email address, facsenate@sfasu.edu, for improved communications with faculty.

As my term concludes, I know that the Senate will move forward in excellent hands. I introduce to you Dr. JD Salas, Chair Elect of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Salas is an assistant professor of tuba and euphonium in the College of Fine Arts. Dr. Salas is a native Texan who hails from the Rio Grande valley with familial ties to Lufkin. His service on the Senate includes Chair of the Professional Welfare committee for two years, Chair of Strategic Planning for the Senate, and service on the Graduate Council and Campus Carry Committees among other university service. He is a natural leader, an excellent communicator, and a trusted colleague.

I will close with noting recent Faculty Accomplishments. (Refer to notebooks.) The full report is posted on the Senate website.

To Dr. Pattillo, Dr. Bullard, Dr. Brunson, and the university vice presidents, the Senate and I thank you for reaching out and appointing faculty to university committees. We thank you for asking for our feedback and for listening and responding to it in your decisions for the university. This is shared governance, and as Dr. Danny Gallant shared last week, “The conversation has changed.”

To the Regents, I thank each of you for your commitment to SFA faculty and staff and for your investment in sustaining excellent programs for our students. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report. Thank you.