

Faculty Senate Chair's Report  
Jason Reese, Ph.D., Faculty Senate Chair 2018-19  
Address to Board of Regents  
April 30, 2019

Greetings Madam Chair, Board of Regents, Dr. Westbrook, Dr. Bullard, Colleagues, and Guests:

## **Opening**

Today I would like to talk about two things: 1) I'd like to review the Faculty Senate activities for this academic year and 2) highlight the accomplishments of our faculty.

## **Faculty Senate Activities & Academic Year in Review**

As I wrap up my time as Chair of the Faculty Senate, I cannot help but look back and be proud of our Senate. But as with any goal setting, you have to ask the question "how do we measure success?" The answer, you have to go back to what you wanted to achieve when it all started.

We began our time together as a Faculty Senate by holding a retreat before the fall semester. The purpose was to take a step back and reevaluate what the Faculty Senate is all about. We decided we wanted to go back to the beginning. In 1970 the Faculty Senate at SFA was formed with the purpose of ensuring faculty representation for a positive SFA future. The functions of the SFA Faculty Senate are outlined in our Constitution. We are to "formulate and recommend academic policy" and "consider all other matters of general welfare to the University." We decided that the collective goals for the 2018-2019 academic year were four-fold: 1) communication and transparency, 2) shared governance with faculty 3) strengthen the academic mission of SFA, and 4) be intentional and focused. I believe we have done a good job working toward these goals this year. I would like to briefly mention how we have done this.

### 1) Communication and Transparency

The Faculty Senate wanted to make sure that communication between administration and all faculty at every level is emphasized. To achieve this we started first with our own communication efforts. The Faculty Senate's Communication committee regularly announced Faculty Senate meetings and topics to be discussed through SFA Today. In addition, we have posted all of our meeting minutes and meeting recordings on our website. Furthermore, to encourage communication and transparency, representatives of the Faculty Senate met with each Vice President throughout the year regarding various topics. For example, the Faculty Senate's Administration and Finance committee was investigating the employee scholarship program, which is outlined in policy 12.5, Dr. Gallant worked with us to provide more information regarding the policy. In addition, we met continuously with Dr. Bullard about our activities and proposals. Finally, we invited interim president, Dr. Westbrook, to attend our monthly Faculty Senate meetings.

### 2) Shared Governance with Faculty

In my opinion, the Faculty Senate made great strides in encouraging shared governance at SFA. For example, the Faculty Senate's Faculty Governance and Involvement committee felt more attention should be placed on the enrollment goal of becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). Their focus was not on the number of students we needed to achieve the goal, but more so how we are to serve these students. Due to their efforts, and the efforts of others around this campus, there is now a SFA HSI Readiness Team, a SFA Envisioned subcommittee.

This year also brought the opportunity for the Faculty Senate to lead the campus in a collaborative discussion about family welfare. Our Professional Welfare committee co-hosted a Family Forum with the Student Government Association to discuss a proposed policy for "Children in the Workplace" and other family welfare related topics. A Faculty Senate ad hoc committee then took the feedback from that forum and a follow up survey, and proposed revisions to the proposed policy. We are grateful for inclusion of faculty in this discussion and would like to thank Loretta Doty and Dr. Danny Gallant for their involvement in this process. This policy will likely come before the Board of Regents in July. In our last Faculty Senate meeting, one senator said, "this is an example of what shared governance should look like."

During each one of my addresses to you all this academic year, you heard me talk about the same thing; the Career Ladder for Non-Tenure Track faculty. This career ladder is yet another example of how shared governance has worked. The Faculty Senate brought this proposal to the Dean's Council in September. Following their feedback, a committee that included representatives from Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs, and Faculty Senate was formed. Their task was to find a structure for this career ladder that would be a good fit for SFA. I am proud to say that all of these groups have approved a career ladder for these very important faculty. This is now being considered for the next academic year.

Finally, another way we have seen shared governance is in the sheer number of ad hoc committees faculty senators have been purposefully placed on this academic year. These ad hoc committees are in addition to the seven standing external committees faculty senators are on. These ad hoc committees included: Athletic Director search committee, Chief and Assistant Chief of Police search committees, Quality Enhancement Plan selection committee, Texas Common Course Numbering System committee, SACS-COC committee, Student Retention committee, Chosen Name committee, Internship committee, and the Presidential Screening Committee. This shows that faculty voice is being considered and sought after when making important decisions on this campus. For that, I would like to say thank you to you all, Interim President Westbrook, and all of the Vice Presidents. Furthermore, we know that all of this involvement would not have happened if it wasn't for our Provost, Dr. Bullard. He is a great advocate for faculty on this campus. Thank you.

### 3) Strengthen the Academic Mission of SFA

Beyond the inclusion of faculty on important committees and working groups on this campus, the Faculty Senate have taken steps to try to ensure the academic mission of SFA is strengthened. One of those activities included the work of the Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs committee. This academic year they have been working with the Center for Teaching and

Learning to help them with their rebranding effort and supporting their efforts to make the center more faculty driven.

#### 4) Be Intention and Focused

Our last goal was more of an internal goal. We wanted to take care of our own house so we can be positive leaders on this campus. To us that meant holding our meetings with structure and purpose. It meant encouraging our committee to provide support for our faculty. For example, the Ethics committee has proposed a mentorship program for faculty, by faculty. This initiative is funded by the Faculty Senate and the Strategic Planning budget and will be organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning this fall.

As you can tell, we've had a productive academic year.

#### **Faculty Accomplishments**

I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments of our Faculty. In your packets you will find a 13 page list of Outstanding Faculty Accomplishments since your quarterly meeting in January. Please look through these and see how productive our faculty in each college have been just in the past three months.

In addition, I would like to continue to highlight a faculty member from each college that represents the positive student engagement that happens all over our campus, every day. Today, I would like finish this series of presentations with the introduction of my replacement as Chair of Faculty Senate, Dr. Jeremy Stovall from the Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture.

Dr. Stovall serves as an associate professor of forestry, **until September 2019 at least. You all just voted to approve his promotion to full professor.** Dr. Stovall teaches and conducts research in the area of silviculture and dendrology. Dr. Stovall joined the SFA Family in August 2010 after graduate teaching and research appointments at Clemson University, the University of Vermont, and Virginia Tech. He received his bachelor's degree in Environmental and Natural Resources at Clemson University, a master's degree in Natural Resources – Forestry from the University of Vermont, and a doctoral degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Forestry and Forest Products.

He has also been recognized by his peers in several ways. For example, he was the recipient of the 2018 Teaching Excellence Award for the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. In addition to his teaching excellence, Dr. Stovall is also an active researcher and grant recipient. Dr. Stovall has been the primary investigator or co-primary investigator for grants received totaling just under \$1 million in his time at SFA. His work has also led to him receiving to Distinguished Grant Awards for Faculty Research and was selected at the 2018 Spotlight Exhibit Winner for the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture at the SFA Symposium on Arts & Research.

While all of those activities are spectacular, I want to point out to you his efforts with our students. Dr. Stovall is the faculty advisor to the Sylvans, SFA's timber sports team. He spends hundreds of hours and more than a month sleeping in a tent since 2012 leading this team. He takes students to the annual Conclave for competition and has won 6 of the last 7 years. In

addition, he was the lead faculty member in hosting the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Conclave on SFA's campus in March 2017.

It is without a doubt that faculty like Dr. Stovall represent the student centered activities occurring on this campus every day. Faculty like Dr. Stovall should be commended for their hard work in recruiting and retaining our students.

I am happy to have Dr. Stovall as my Chair-Elect this year. His leadership next year will continue the positive things we have been doing this year.

## **Conclusion**

In July, my first time speaking with you all, I told you that my agenda as Chair of Faculty Senate for the academic year was simple. First, I wanted to be positive. I wanted to be a positive leader and voice for faculty with administrators. Second, I wanted the Faculty Senate to be a positive voice for faculty. Third, I did not want us to spin our wheels on things that are negative and not in line with the mission of SFA. I believe we have done that. It is my hope that this continues under Dr. Stovall's leadership and the Faculty Senate next year.

Thank you for all your support this academic year. Thank you for including faculty in important decisions. Thank you for thinking of faculty when making tough decisions. If there is one thing I could ask of you all, the Board, it would be this. Please continue to have a positive relationship with the Faculty Senate. Just as it was formed in 1970, the Faculty Senate continues strives to ensure faculty representation for a positive SFA future.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.