

## **CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS – JANUARY 2015**

Greetings Mr. Chairman, Board of Regents, Dr. Patillo, Dr. Berry, Esteemed Colleagues, and Guests:

On behalf of the Faculty Senate, I stand before you today to present the findings of the Peer Comparison Project, a research study of salaries at SFA in comparison with 17 peer institutions across the state. With me today is my colleague and former Senator, Dr. Robert Henderson, Asst. Professor of Statistics, who served as the statistician and lead author of the study.

I would like to share a bit of background about the purpose of this study and why it came about. Since the economic downturn in 2008 and the resulting changes in faculty salary compensation during the summer, faculty morale began to decline. In her remarks to the Board of Regents in July 2013, Dr. Dana Cooper acknowledged the difficulty many new faculty who are bridled with college debt from earning a terminal degree face as they seek their first teaching position within a university. She also acknowledged the difficulties we experience when we are not able to successfully fill a faculty vacancy.

As an academic community, we have experienced faculty attrition among high quality junior faculty who joined SFA but then left for better salaries in other institutions. Coupled with these factors, there are senior level faculty at SFA who earn less than their more recently hired peers due to the effects of salary compression. These factors are not uncommon within the life of a university, but they are indicators that it is time to examine salaries.

Within this context, Dr. Dana Cooper turned to the upper administration and working together launched the Senate on an investigation of faculty salaries in comparison with peer institutions in TX. She appointed an ad-hoc committee of senators that included Dr. Jannah Nerren, Dr. Violet Rogers, Dr. Robert Henderson, and myself with Dr Cooper serving as Chair. Working with the Office of the President, the Provost, the Vice President of Finance, and the Office of Institutional Research, we were able to compile a list of 17 peer institutions and obtain the necessary data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for analysis.

Today, the Senators and I express our appreciation to Dr. Patillo, Dr. Berry, Mr. Gallant, and Ms. Hall, for their assistance and support in the undertaking of this research study. We hope that the findings will prove valuable to our university community so that we can become more competitive in recruiting high quality faculty and ensure that SFA will sustain its outstanding reputation for excellence in teaching, research, and service by retaining high quality faculty to serve our students.

It has been over a decade since the last major salary adjustment at SFA. The Faculty Senate pledges its support to the administration and to the Board of Regents in addressing the needs that are illuminated in the findings. Just as we have been able to collaboratively address faculty concerns with salaries, we hope to be equally engaged in identifying viable solutions.

I would now like to introduce Dr. Robert Henderson, Asst Professor of Statistics, and author of the report to present the findings and answer any questions.

(Dr. Henderson's report provided here.)

The second item on the agenda from the Faculty Senate is the development of a Faculty Senate Multi-Purpose Room located in the McGee Business Building of the Nelson Rusche College of Business. Dr. Berry mentioned yesterday the changes in the ways faculty communicate today and the need to learn how to build community among faculty within our changing environments. The Faculty Senate Multi Purpose room is a former classroom that is being renovated as a conference room for Senate Committee meetings with areas for informal seating and the capacity to host small receptions, such as visiting keynote speakers.

Senator Leisha Bridwell, associate professor and Coordinator of Interior Design and Interior Merchandising Programs, is directing the renovation of this reallocated space on our campus. We are thrilled with the opportunity of a designated space for the Faculty Senate, and we hope that it will become broadly utilized by the faculty for a variety of purposes. I hope that we will be able to offer the Regents a tour when it is completed. Are there any questions?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that concludes the Faculty Senate report.