

Faculty Senate Chair's Report  
Jason Reese, Ph.D., Faculty Senate Chair 2018-19  
Address to Board of Regents  
January 29, 2019

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

Before I begin to discuss Faculty Senate activities, I would like to take a special moment and recognize, on behalf of the faculty at SFA, the contributions of Dr. Baker Pattillo. Dr. Pattillo was beloved by the faculty here at SFA. Since his passing, I have had numerous conversations with faculty about the void Dr. Pattillo leaves at SFA. Our faculty continually told me about personal experiences he has had in their lives and the lives of the students they teach.

In my very first address to you as Chair of the Faculty Senate, I mentioned to you the family atmosphere that attracts faculty to SFA. That atmosphere was not created by chance, but was the purposeful efforts of Dr. Pattillo and his leadership team. And while our SFA Family is hurting over the loss of Dr. Pattillo, I think we can all agree that we will carry on his legacy with pride.

## **Opening**

Today I would like to talk about two things: 1) the Faculty Senate activities over the past few months and 2) highlight the accomplishments of our faculty.

### **Faculty Senate Activities**

As we start a new year, the Faculty Senate is excited about continuing the important work set before us from the fall semester. I would like to highlight some of the activities and ongoing projects we are working on.

The Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs committee has been in conversations with the Center for Teaching and Learning, trying to help the efforts of the Center to be "owned" by faculty. These conversations have led to the creation of two showcase events that will highlight exemplary teaching and research of our SFA Faculty. These two events will be held this spring, on March 7<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The events will give our faculty the chance to share ideas for innovation in the classroom and in our research agendas. I would like to thank Dr. Bullard and the rest of Academic Affairs for their support of these events.

One of the initiatives of the Faculty Governance and Involvement committee this year was to look into the role faculty have in recruiting and retaining our students. In doing this, they reviewed the strategic plan, specifically the foundational goal of "Meaningful and Sustained Enrollment Growth." Our conversations led to the focus on the 8<sup>th</sup> Enrollment Objective, to increase the percentage of our Hispanic enrollment to 25% of the total student population by 2023. This would lead us to become a "Hispanic Serving Institution." As faculty, we believe the second word in that title "Serving" is the most important thing. The foundational goal of the SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan states that we will achieve our goal "by seeking and accepting diverse students with a strong potential for success and providing them the resources and experience." As faculty, we believe we must provide them the resources and experience they need to be

successful. We are pleased that the Vice President's also agree with this notion and have created a SFA Envisioned Strategic Planning committee to carry on this conversation. This group will move forward and attempt to answer the question of, "what does it mean for SFA to become a Hispanic Serving Institution?"

The Professional Welfare committee is also actively involved in moving forward our proposal for a Career Ladder for Non-Tenure Track faculty. I am pleased to inform you that a preliminary proposal has been developed and is currently under review by the Deans and will hopefully move forward for review by the Academic Affairs Policy Committee soon. This proposal includes a promotion proposal for those faculty at the ranks of Lecturer and Clinical Instructor. We truly believe this proposal will help us achieve our first supporting goal of the SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan, "Attract and Support High-Quality Faculty & Staff."

Beyond our internal committees, our faculty senate representatives are continually included in important changes happening on this campus. For example, a special effort was made by the Vice Presidents to include Faculty Senators on the Chief of Police and the Assistant Chief of Police searches. In addition, faculty have been involved in the Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, is a big part of our SACS-COC reaffirmation. Again, thank you to the SFA Leadership for involving faculty in important decisions.

### **Faculty Accomplishments**

I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments of our Faculty. In your packets you will find a 15 page list of Outstanding Faculty Accomplishments since your quarterly meeting in October. 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. Each of these faculty have shown their passion for the recruitment and retention of our students. Today, I would like to introduce you to three faculty members, Dr. Heather Olson Beal and Dr. Lauren Burrow from the James I. Perkins College of Education, and Dr. Gina Harden from the Nelson Rusche College of Business.

Dr. Lauren Burrow is an associate professor of Elementary Education. She earned an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts from Mary Baldwin College, a Master of Education in Reading and Language Arts, and a Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Houston. Dr. Heather Olson Beal is an associate professor of Secondary Education. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from Brigham Young University, a Master of Arts in Spanish from Texas A & M University, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction from Louisiana State University.

In Fall 2018, Dr. Burrow and Dr. Olson Beal launched the first semester of an interdisciplinary pilot program called C.R.E.A.T.E., which stands for Community Responsiveness and Engaged Advocacy in Teacher Education. The primary purpose of C.R.E.A.T.E. is to better prepare SFA's pre-service teacher candidates to seek out and nurture relationships with families and community members, which will make them more effective teachers. In the first semester, there were 14 elementary education and 7 secondary education students.

The C.R.E.A.T.E. program is an exemplar of academic and co-curricular innovations and transformative student experiences which increase connections between key stakeholders crucial to student success. C.R.E.A.T.E. is unique for several reasons. First, the program enrolls both elementary education and secondary education students in coursework together. Traditionally the College of Education students take classes in either Elementary Education or Secondary Education. Students in the C.R.E.A.T.E. program are co-enrolled in classes with Drs. Burrow and Olson Beal, allowing them to reap the benefits from being able to learn from the experiences and knowledge base of each other's programs. One student said, if it were not for the C.R.E.A.T.E. program, "I never would've made lasting friendships. I think the C.R.E.A.T.E. program is a community all its own. We have such a great bond that it's hard to feel alone. I know for the rest of my career I have people I can go to when I need help. I think this program prepared me for teaching even more than the regular track would. I feel confident in who I am as a teacher. I think even if you want to work in another city after graduating you should still enroll in the C.R.E.A.T.E. program."

Second, the C.R.E.A.T.E. pilot program is an immersive, round-the-clock experience in which students and faculty have class together throughout the week and also meet together regularly to volunteer and attend community events and build rapport and camaraderie as a learning community. One student said "Because of CREATE, I formed so many great relationships and made memories with community members all while giving back to the community I have become a part of during college." C.R.E.A.T.E. students built relationships with local organizations (including the Nacogdoches Public Library, the African American Heritage Project, C & R Kutt Bottle) and attended and volunteered at community events—showing them a side of Nacogdoches they had never seen—despite having lived here for 3.5 years. In addition, C.R.E.A.T.E. students were partnered with a local Nacogdoches ISD family in order to prepare them to build and nurture positive community and family relationships once they graduate and become teachers.

While Dr. Burrow and Dr. Olson Beal aim to prepare their students to build these kinds of critical family-community-school relationships wherever they ultimately end up teaching, their primary goal is to grow the program into a two-year sustained experience in Nacogdoches ISD schools that will result in graduates who fall in love with Nacogdoches and choose to settle and teach in Nacogdoches. Thanks you Drs. Burrow and Olson Beal for your efforts with our students.

Dr. Gina Harden serves as an assistant professor of management in the Nelson Rusche College of Business. With a bachelor's degree from SFA, she joined the faculty in 2013 after completing her master's degree at the University of Texas at Tyler and her doctoral degree at the University of North Texas. Dr. Harden teaches management productivity systems and management information systems to both graduate and undergraduate students.

She has also been recognized by her peers in several ways. For example, in 2014 she received the Outstanding Intellectual Contribution award and the 2015 Outstanding Researcher Award by the Nelson Rusche College of Business. Beyond her research excellence, she excels in her efforts

with students. She was the recipient of the 2018 Teaching Excellence Award for the Nelson Rusche College of Business.

As you saw yesterday, the renovations within the McGee Business Building, such as the Naymola Innovation Hub, have provided faculty in the College of Business areas for student engagement. Student engagement and experiential learning are important to Dr. Harden. For example, she serves as the faculty advisor for the Society for Advancement of Management, a professional student organization. She has led these students to numerous national competitions. In addition to this student organization, Dr. Harden was instrumental in developing the management productivity systems course, which introduces students to information system concepts they will encounter in various business disciplines. Dr. Harden is a certified instructor for Systems, Applications and Products (SAP), one of the largest software companies in the world. With this certification, Harden utilizes the software's enterprise resource planning simulation to provide her students with the opportunity to work in a SAP environment and gain valuable experience.

At the Teaching Excellence Award ceremony this past spring, Dr. Harden said that if there was anything excellent about her teaching, it is the phenomenal student she gets to work with. It is faculty like Dr. Harden that make SFA a special place to be and should be commended for their student engagement. Thank you Dr. Harden.

It is without a doubt that faculty like Drs. Olson Beal, Burrow, and Harden represent the student centered activities occurring on this campus every day. Faculty like these individuals should be commended for their hard work in recruiting and retaining our students.

## **Conclusion**

As I conclude, I would like to say thank you. Yesterday it was mentioned that "SFA's greatest assets go home every night." As representative of faculty at SFA, I want you to know we are encouraged by your genuine care for the faculty and staff at SFA. We recognize the very difficult decision you had to make to increasing designated and fixed-rate tuition in order to support a faculty and staff salary pool. Your efforts to support the first supporting goal of the Strategic Plan, which is "Attract and Support High Quality Faculty and Staff," have not gone unnoticed. Thank you.

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