

July BOR Address

Hello Dr. Pattillo, Dr. Berry, Dr. Brunson, Chairman McCarty, and Board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I had the occasion to meet many of you last year while I was serving as Faculty Senate Chair-Elect, and now I would like to briefly share with you a bit about my role at SFA; but more importantly, I am delighted to share with you about the summer activity of the Faculty Senate as well as our plans for the future.

In terms of an introduction, my professional “home,” is the James I. Perkins College of Education, where I have served the last fourteen years; first as an adjunct, and then since 2006 signing on the dotted line for a full-time faculty position.

I am an east Texan, a homegrown two-time Lumberjack, hailing from just across the Angelina River from the little town of Huntington, which has a new claim to fame as the hometown of our new Lumberjack Mascot! To turn a phrase, Huntington makes great Lumberjacks! Now, in light of the Lumberjack’s recent basketball success, I can’t help but mention that I am an avid basketball fan, as I have shared with Dr. Westbrook on occasion.

What a great time to be both of these things: a Lumberjack AND a basketball fan. I think you will appreciate an encounter I had this summer that demonstrates the widespread effect of the recent Lumberjack basketball fever. You can find Lumberjack fans just about anywhere! Two weeks ago I found myself chatting on a Caribbean beach with a man who ended up being a Lumberjack. When we made the connection, his first response was: How ‘bout that basketball team! What. A. Ride.” His enthusiasm and Lumberjack pride was obvious, just as it has become increasingly obvious in the students, alumni, and faculty of SFA. Now obviously, I’m not here to talk about basketball, I am here to share with you some plans that Faculty Senate has for this next year, but there actually is a connection. In a recent communication to the campus, Coach Underwood called for the SFA community not just to dream, but to “Dream Bigger.” I believe that we can do that in all aspects of life here at SFA. I firmly believe that more success is in the air and that Faculty Senate can be a part of that.

Not only is success in the air, change is in the air at SFA as well. I would like to spend just a moment discussing change, and clarifying my own role here at SFA as I share this, what will be my first and last address to you as Faculty Senate Chair, as I am actually in the process of transitioning from a faculty role to an administrative role, contingent upon your Board approval earlier in this meeting! As I will be taking on the role of Associate Dean in the College of Education, this makes my address today a rather interesting one, as it will be my sole opportunity to speak to you as a representative of the Faculty Senate. While the task of leading the Senate was one that I eagerly undertook when I began my term on May 7th, I know that I can continue to serve SFA and our talented faculty

in my leadership role in the College of Education beginning on September 1, at which time I will hand off the gavel to Dr. George Franks, who is currently serving as Chair-Elect. Let me take a moment now to introduce you to Dr. Franks, whom you will be hearing more from in the near future.

Dr. Franks is an Associate Professor in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, in the Department of Government, where he teaches in both the Criminal Justice and Master of Public Administration Programs. Dr. Franks will tell you more about himself at the October meeting, but in the meantime, let me assure you, he brings a plethora of experience to the table, as well as an established commanding presence in the Senate, an excellent record of teaching and scholarship, and a willingness to serve for the betterment of this institution.

Because of the uniqueness of a split term in Senate leadership, Dr. Franks and I have worked closely to clearly define some objectives for Senate work this year, and I would like to share those with you now.

You may recall last year that the Senate embarked on the arduous task of gathering and compiling data for the Peer Comparison Project. The intent of this project was to gather information in order to better inform all faculty and administration, as to how we compare to our peer institutions. You may recall a preliminary report of this information delivered by Dr. Cooper at the 2013 October board meeting. This year we plan to continue to glean information from this work and to share that information in order to guide decision making for the betterment of the university.

Another project planned for the Senate this year is an internal evaluation of our guiding documents. It has been several years since the Faculty Senate constitution and standing rules have been reviewed, and this is on the forefront of our plans this summer. The Senate Budget and Finance Committee has already been at work establishing a clear budget for the Senate, in order to continue to be good stewards of our allocated funds. The new budget guidelines, set after analysis of previous years' expenses, should ensure that our body is running efficiently and productively, with clearly defined expectations. To that end, we would like to continue to increase our visibility and accessibility on campus, through regularly scheduled faculty forums in our newly acquired Senate office.

It seems that change, big dreams and positive growth are all recurring themes across the university. As we move toward the development of the new Strategic Plan, I would like to express how willing and ready Faculty Senate is to contribute in any way possible to this process. Several members of the Senate attended the informational meeting with Dr. Patrick Sanaghan in June, and their willingness to serve in any way to facilitate the process was evident.

In higher education, assessment and evaluation for continuous improvement is the culture in which we live. The initiative for the implementation of a new

campus-wide assessment collection and data management system is exciting. While I see this as a positive change, it is nonetheless change, which we know can always bring about a strand or two of resistance. Faculty Senate can serve as a catalyst for promoting transparency, faculty involvement and understanding through exchanges of information. As campus leaders, informed Faculty Senators can serve as ambassadors for this important process.

I mentioned earlier the excitement over SFA's trip to the "big dance" last year. One of the most pleasing aspects of that entire series of events was the unity and school pride that it sparked. In all the years that I have been a Lumberjack, I honestly do not remember another time that equals the fervor of the students and community than this. The buzz in my classes was unmistakable. Through those events, I was reminded that a cornerstone of building faithful alumni, is building a student body, as well as faculty, who are involved on many levels, and who CARE. Through transparency, and opportunities for involvement and awareness, the Faculty Senate has a vision of continuing to build on that ideal of CARING about what goes on across this university, from the biology lab to the basketball court and everywhere in between, and contributing to its continual promotion and advancement.

On that note, I would like to share with you some accomplishments that our faculty have achieved since you last met. You will find a more extensive list of faculty accomplishments in your board materials, but here let me share a few highlights:

From the College of Mathematics and Sciences:

Dr. Jennifer Gumm was awarded a Section 6 Endangered Species Grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife and US Fish and Wildlife. This is a 2-year grant to support work examining behavior and genetics of hybridization.

Twenty-eight chemistry faculty and undergraduate students presented at local, state and national meetings and five chemistry faculty received internal/external grant funding totaling \$100,000.

From the College of Fine Arts:

You may be aware that for the first time in SFA history the Lumberjack marching band, under the direction of Dr. David Campo and Dr. Tamey Anglley, has been invited to perform in the famous Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in November, 2015. Out of 175 applications and videos only 10 marching bands were selected, giving our band the opportunity to be seen live on the streets of New York by three million spectators and over 50 million people through media.

From the Arthur Temple College of Forestry:

During the 2014 Maymester, three forestry faculty led a study abroad course to a university technical program in Alvdalen, Sweden.

Drs. Hans Williams, Brian Oswald, and Matt McBroom led the course, with students from forestry, environmental science, and biology, on the trip, where they studied forest ecology and forest management practices in Sweden, and where their lodging, meals, and transportation were all provided free of charge by the local university. A group of faculty and students from Sweden will be coming to Nacogdoches during the spring semester of 2015, and another study-broad course will be offered from SFA to Sweden in Maymester 2015.

Through courses and working relationships like this, SFA programs including Forestry are addressing SFA's Strategic Plan goal of increasing study abroad opportunities and creating more engagement opportunities for international and domestic students to increase global awareness and understanding.

From the Nelson Rusche College of Business:

Business law professors, Drs. J. Keaton Grubbs, Justin R. Blount, and Kyle C. Post, were presented the *Southern Law Journal's* Best Article Award for their published article, "Arbitration Agreements, Expanded Judicial Review, and Preemption - Hall Street Associates and NAFTA Traders, Inc. - A National Debate with International Implications."

Dr. Mike Stroup (Professor, Economics and Finance) received a \$5,000 research grant from the Koch Charitable Foundation.

From the James I. Perkins College of Education:

Kinesiology Professor Dr. DawnElla Rust will be recognized in December by the Texas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance with an "Honor Award." This is the Second highest award that a professional can earn from this association. The award recognizes her excellence in teaching as well as her contributions to research, professional literature, and leadership in the professions of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Also from the College of Education, Dr. Kenneth Austin, Associate Professor in the Department of Secondary Education and Education Leadership, will be traveling to Oxford, England next month to present a paper at the Oxford University College of Business in England.

An interesting project I would like to share within the College of Education's Human Sciences Department, under the direction of Chef Todd Barrios, students enrolled in HMS 385, Catering in the Film Industry, are learning the different types of services offered in this specific environment, time management and planning, menu planning, food prep, cost analysis, legal constraints and regulations in the catering industry, cooking techniques, and catering management principles. Students are preparing the main meal each day for the cinematography students while they produce their movie.

Dr. Mitzi Perritt, Professor of Human Sciences, was named a Fellow of the Interior Design Educators Council at the National Conference in New Orleans.

From the College of Liberal and Applied Arts:

I am sure many of you read in the Daily Sentinel about the Pre-Law Experience for high school students held in June. The innovative event for high school juniors and seniors interested in pursuing a career in law was unique to the state of Texas. Kudos to those faculty involved for providing an opportunity open to all interested juniors and seniors to explore education and career options in this field.

What a bunch of bright faculty stars we have! To come full circle with my basketball connections, and the high expectations we all hold for the future of SFA, I want to close with a quote from the greatest basketball coach of all time, John Wooden, who states: "The main ingredient to stardom is the rest of the team." SFA is a star in many areas: basketball, biology, band, and beyond, and that main ingredient is our SFA team! Faculty Senate wants to support and represent that team, in every endeavor. It IS TRULY an amazing time to be a Lumberjack. Axe 'em Jacks!