

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate
Meeting No. 117
March 18, 1981

1. Chairman Mathis called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m.

2. Reports of Officers:

President's Report:

Revisions for the Constitution of the Faculty Senate have been approved by President Johnson.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Cole reported a balance of \$3,628.

3. Report on Faculty Governance Meeting in Austin:

Having represented SFA at the Faculty Governance meeting, Senator Wendall Spreadbury reported on items that were discussed on the topic of "Faculty Evaluation". Also attending the meeting were Senators Cole and Devine.

4. Old Business:

A. Recommendations on Faculty Salaries for FY '83:

Senator Schoenewolf of the Professional Welfare Committee reported that members of the committee had been attempting to respond to faculty sentiments on the present merit system and the loss of purchasing power. The result of their effort was the recommendation introduced at the previous Senate meeting. (See Attachment #3 of February meeting) Extensive debate followed with comments against and in favor of the recommendation calling for all available funds, including an appreciable portion of the growth money generated by enrollment increases, be used for general raises in FY '83. The recommendation also contained a commitment by the Senate to devise a faculty evaluation procedure, acceptable to both the faculty and administration, before FY '84.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the recommendation. Eight senators were in favor and twelve were opposed. Motion Failed.

B. Report on Draft Policy on Class Attendance and Absences:

The Faculty Government Committee presented a revised report on the Draft Policy on Class Attendance and Absences. A statement on Unexcused Absences was added to the recommendations. (See Attachment #1)

Senator Blocker made a motion for acceptance of the recommendations which was followed by a second. Motion Passed.

B. Report on Draft Policy on Class Attendance and Absences: (continued)

Senator Devine moved that the recommendations be adopted and Senator Irwin seconded. Motion Passed.

C. Report on Draft Policy on Procedures for Resolving Student-Initiated Academic Complaints:

Senator Devine of the Faculty Government Committee gave a formal report on this draft policy. The committee outlined steps for the student to follow in pursuing an academic complaint and suggested that a preamble be included in the policy. (See Attachment #2)

Senator Cole moved that the report be accepted and the motion was seconded. Motion Passed.

Further discussion will resume during the April meeting of the Faculty Senate.

D. Report on Faculty Evaluation Proposal of Student Government Association:

Senator Brannen of the Ad Hoc Committee to Consult With the Student Government reported on the SGA's proposals for a dead week, an awards program to recognize outstanding faculty, and a student evaluation form. Senator Brannen asked for suggestions from the Senate. Chairman Mathis encouraged senators to give comments to the committee.

E. Progress Report on Pre-Registration:

Senator Nicholson of the Academic Affairs Committee reported that the committee is still gathering opinions on pre-registration. He reported that they recently met with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Registrar. The committee was also instrumental in having sessions scheduled to update advisors on registration changes.

5. New Business:

A. Report of the Committee to Review the Southern Association Re-Affirmation Report:

The committee presented a report which Senator Walker explained in summary. (See Attachment #3)

Senator Schoenewolf moved that the report be accepted and the motion was seconded. Motion Passed.

Senator Walker moved that the rules be suspended so that the report could be adopted. Motion Passed.

Following discussion, Senator Walker moved that the recommendation be adopted, and the motion was seconded. Motion Passed.

B. Social Security Petition:

Senator Hyams presented a petition from eight faculty members in regard to the University's participation in Social Security. (See Attachment #4) Chairman Mathis appointed the following committee to consider the petition: Hyams (Chair), Blocker, Carns.

6. Comments From Ex Officio Members:

Dr. Johnson informed the Senate of preliminary work of the Legislature on higher education matters. He also said that all presidents of colleges and universities are stressing faculty salary increases as a top priority.

Dr. Franklin reported on the state's plan for increasing minority enrollment. He indicated that guidelines from the Governor's Committee will be received by the end of March.

Dr. Reese reported that nominations are due immediately for Regents' Professors. He also announced that an Academic Convocation will take place on April 29 and he encouraged attendance.

7. Nominating Committee for Faculty Senate Elections:

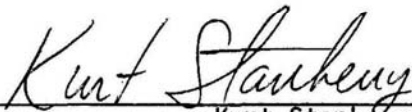
Chairman Mathis asked Senators to submit to him in writing their interest in serving as Treasurer, Secretary, Vice Chairman, or Chairman. The Nominating Committee was to be constituted at the end of the meeting.

8. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on April 8, 1981, Wednesday, at 2:15 p.m. in Rusk 303.

9. A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Absentees:

James Howard
Thurman T. Thomas



Kurt Stanberry
Secretary, 1980-81, Senate

REPORT FROM THE FACULTY GOVERNMENT AND INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE: Connie Spreadbury (chairman)
Joe Devine
June Irwin
Sue Jones
Don Richter

INTRODUCTION: The Committee was charged with reviewing the draft of a POLICY ON CLASS ATTENDANCE AND EXCUSED ABSENCES for the Student Handbook. The draft which we reviewed was prepared by the Academic Affairs Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. The Committee recommends one change in wording and three additions, all underlined on the attached:
1. Substitute the word "absence" for "attendance" in the original draft. (second sentence under Class Attendance)
 2. Add the sentence "It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence." (second paragraph under Excused Absences)
 3. Add the phrase "or for a reasonable time at the discretion of the instructor." (at the end of the second paragraph under Excused Absences)
 4. Add a new paragraph titled "Unexcused Absences."
- B. We also recommend that in the future the administration scrutinize more carefully excused field trips in terms of their worth to the student and their effects on other classes.

POLICY ON CLASS ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Class Attendance -

Regular and punctual attendance is expected at all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which a student is registered. For those classes where absence is a factor in the course grade, the instructor shall make his/her class policy known in writing at the beginning of each term and shall maintain an accurate record of attendance.

Excused Absences -

It is University policy to excuse students from attendance for certain reasons. Among these are absences related to health, family emergencies, and student participation in certain University-sponsored events.

Students are responsible for providing to the instructor of each class missed satisfactory documentation for an excused absence. In the case of absences caused by participation in University-sponsored events, inclusion in the University's public listing of such absences will constitute an official excuse. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence. Students with acceptable excuses will be permitted to make up work for absences to a maximum of three weeks of a semester or one week of a six-week summer term when the nature of the work missed permits, or for a reasonable time at the discretion of the instructor.

Unexcused Absences -

It is university policy that each instructor will establish his/her arrangements for handling unexcused absences and will so inform each class at the beginning of each term.

Date: March 18, 1981

Attachment #2

Governance Committee: Connie Spreadbury (Chairman), Joe Devine, June Irwin, Sue Jones, Don Richter

POLICY ON APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING
STUDENT-INITIATED ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS

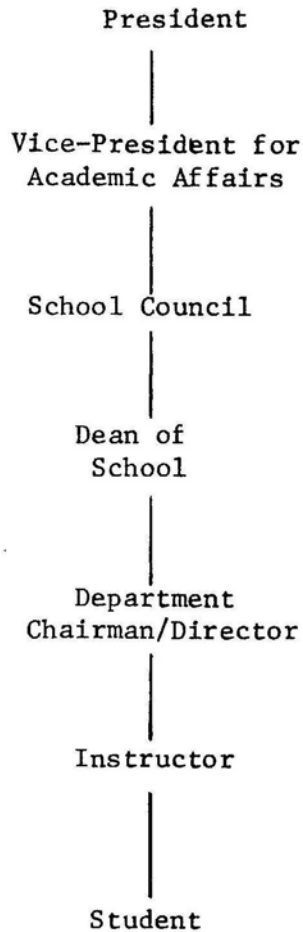
Good communication between faculty and students will make disputes between them infrequent, but if disagreements occur, it is University policy to provide a mechanism whereby a student may formally appeal faculty decisions. When a student uses the appeals procedure, all parties should endeavor to resolve the dispute amicably at as early a stage as possible. If the Chairman, Dean, Academic Vice-president, or President finds that the faculty member's disputed action conflicts with University, School, or department policy, or with the instructor's own stated policy, then a decision should be made in the student's favor. If the dispute involves a faculty member's professional judgment, such as the evaluation of a test, a thesis, or performance in a class, the student is entitled to have the Chairman, Dean, Academic Vice-President, or President form an opinion about the dispute and advise the instructor of their opinion, but the faculty member, after considering the advice of the administrators, shall retain his/her complete academic freedom to decline to change his/her judgment.

These steps should be followed when making an academic complaint:

1. In the event of course-related complaints or disputes, the student must first appeal to his/her instructor for a resolution to the matter and must so do within six months from the end of the semester.
2. If a complaint or dispute is not satisfactorily resolved, the student may appeal to the Chairman/Director of the academic department in which the complaint or dispute is centered. If a formal complaint is to be registered, it should be made in writing stating the specific charges.
3. If the complaint or dispute is still unresolved, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of the academic school in which the complaint or dispute is centered. The Dean will then notify the faculty member of the complaint and the faculty member will provide a written explanation of the circumstances to the Dean and to the student.
4. If a resolution of the matter is not reached, the student or the faculty member may appeal to the School Council of the school in which the complaint or dispute is centered. The School Council will evaluate the oral and written statements of the student and the faculty. If the School Council does not have at least one student member, the President of the Student Government Association will be asked by the Dean to appoint no more than two student representatives to serve for each case. The School Council will submit its recommendation to the Dean of the Academic School.
5. If the matter remains unresolved, a written appeal may be made to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. The Dean's recommendation, and the recommendation of the School Council will also be submitted to the Vice-President.

6. If the matter remains unresolved, the final appeal is to the President of the University. The President will receive all documents pertaining to the dispute or complaint. After making a decision, the president will inform the student and all persons involved in the appeal process of the final disposition of the matter within a reasonable period of time.

STEPS FOR RESOLVING
STUDENT-INITIATED ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS



Report of the Faculty Senate Committee to Review the Southern
Association Reaffirmation Report

The Faculty Senate originally constituted this committee to review the Southern Association Reaffirmation Report and identify areas of greatest concern to the faculty other than those relating to the Senate or research and development. After considerable deliberation by the committee, it was decided that those statements in the report concerning faculty morale were the only ones which this committee could profitably address. Chairman Mathis concurred in this decision.

The Reaffirmation Committee visited the campus during April, 1980. Based on interviews conducted during this visit and the University Self-Study [USS] conducted prior to its visit, the Reaffirmation Committee subsequently compiled a written report. The section of this report entitled, "Standard V--Faculty," contains the following:

"There is, however, evidence of an increasing faculty morale problem, which appears to have two causes, one specific and one general. The specific cause is the failure of state appropriations for salaries to keep up with inflation. As a result, the purchasing power of faculty is being steadily eroded, with no certain prospect of relief in sight. This specific cause, which can be remedied only at the state level, is doubtless contributory to the second, more general cause of low faculty morale--a vague sense of dissatisfaction described by some faculty members as a loss of collegiality and a rising sense of labor-management relations between faculty and administration, a lack of concern for educational

goals and academic values, a removal of the rank-and file faculty from meaningful participation in University governance, a failure of the University to acknowledge the academic accomplishments of the faculty [although it was also pointed out that President Johnson writes letters to faculty members congratulating them on their achievements], a preoccupation with quantity rather than quality education, a loss of sense of purpose, and a fear for job security. This second general cause of low morale appears to be a concomitant of low salary raises in recent years, stabilizing enrollments with the resultant anxiety over the continuation of programs, and a pandemic feeling by faculty that they are not properly valued by administrators, or by the world at large. Insofar as low morale can be analyzed into the factors just listed, it must be tolerated until the conditions that have generated these factors change. The administration would be well-advised, however, to monitor this sentiment on the part of some, albeit a minority, of the faculty and make what efforts it can to alleviate the anxieties from which the low morale spring."

After studying the appropriate sections of the USS this committee decided to compile and distribute to the faculty a questionnaire using questions similar to those used in surveys conducted in the fact finding phase of the Self-Study. This questionnaire had a two-fold purpose: [1] to ascertain any change in faculty attitudes over the approximate two year period since the original survey, and [2] to provide, through written responses, some pinpointing of specific causes of morale problems.

Questionnaires were circulated to all faculty members and 217 responses were received. This committee regards this to be a representative response.

Table I lists the questions and percentage tabulation of responses. In this text, the questions are referred to by their numbers in Table I. It should be noted that it is not possible to ascertain from the published USS whether surveys included all faculty, and if so, what the percentage return was in each.

TABLE I

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

1. Is the faculty adequately involved in making and implementing academic policy? [201 responses]
52%-yes 34%-no 14%-no opinion

2. Is the academic environment at SFA conducive to scholarly growth? [203 responses]
43%-yes 53%-no 4%-no opinion

3. Do the central administration, deans, and departmental chairmen take adequate means to improve the quality of academic life? [197 responses]
45%-yes 44%-no 11%-no opinion

4. Are the criteria and procedures for faculty evaluation clear? [198 responses]
44%-yes 48%-no 8%-no opinion

5. Are the criteria and procedures for faculty evaluation fair? [198 responses]
36%-yes 50%-no 14%-no opinion

6. Has the administration done all that could be reasonably expected to improve faculty salaries? [196 responses]
35%-yes 39%-no 26%-no opinion

7. In the areas of concern referred to above, how would you compare SFA to other state universities? [194 responses]
7%-much better 16%-worse
9%-better 3%-much worse
25%-about the same 40%-no basis for comparison

Total number of questionnaires returned: 217

For Question 1 the most direct comparison with the USS survey is with the statement, "Faculty opinion is reflected in University policy governing the academic environment of the University." Fifty percent agreed, 24 percent disagreed and 26 percent had no opinion [USS, page 85]. It might be concluded that there is a detectable shift from the "no opinion" to the "disagree" response.

The USS states that, "from 53-66 percent of the faculty respondents believe [1] that the academic environment of the University is conducive to scholarly growth; and [2] that the central administration, school deans, and departmental chairmen all take adequate means to improve the quality of academic life," [USS, page 93]. In the present survey, Questions 2 and 3 indicate a somewhat less positive attitude.

The USS states that 42 percent of the faculty considered the criteria and procedures for faculty evaluation fair, while 35 percent disagreed and 22 percent had no opinion [USS, page 101]. The present survey Question 5 finds that 50 percent of the respondents believe the criteria and procedures are not fair.

No direct comparison can be drawn between the present survey Questions 4, 6, and 7 and the USS. However, the committee finds the responses to Questions 4 and 6 to be especially significant. Many of the faculty took the time and effort to include written comments to these questions. Even a casual reading of these comments reveals a serious morale problem at the University.

At the outset of the study leading to this report several members of this committee expressed the opinion that low salaries and the concomitant continual decline in purchasing power were the

chief causes of any morale problems. It is undoubtedly true that if salaries had been keeping pace with inflation, faculty would be less negative. However, this committee must conclude that there are concerns of the faculty unrelated to salaries that have contributed in a substantial way to declining morale.

This committee cannot adequately summarize all comments that were made. But some of those that were repeated frequently or were otherwise considered significant are listed below:

Complaints About Administrators [various levels]

1. They pay too little attention to faculty opinion.
2. They give faculty too little real power.
3. They fail to implement faculty policies.
4. Faculty and lower administrators fear reprisal for criticism.
5. Administrators spend too much time defending the status quo.
6. They fail to support and encourage faculty adequately.
7. They behave too arrogantly toward faculty.
8. They fail to encourage faculty to improve teaching methods.
9. They push their jobs off on the faculty.
10. They get paid too much more than the faculty.
11. There are too many administrators.
12. They are not educating the public well enough about the needs of higher education.
13. They are not lobbying the legislature effectively enough.

Perceived Impediments to Scholarly Growth

1. Teaching loads are too heavy.
2. Scheduling lacks flexibility.
3. Travel funds for faculty development are unavailable.
4. Continuous registration puts an added burden on faculty.
5. Faculty is assigned too much busy work.
6. There is too little support for research and research assistants.
7. Faculty has too much committee work.

Complaints About Evaluation

1. Criteria do not exist.
2. Faculty are not adequately informed of criteria.
3. The relative worth of teaching, publication, and service is unclear.
4. The relative worth of types of publications is unclear.

5. Too much variation exists between departments.
6. Publishing gets too much weight.
7. Evaluations are too subjective.
8. Teaching is not evaluated adequately.
9. Committee assignments get too much emphasis.
10. Evaluations are influenced by friendships.

The Southern Association Reaffirmation Report suggested that a morale problem exists and this committee feels that it has now confirmed that it does. Ultimate alleviation of the problem must come from the State through more equitable salaries and from the Administration in its reaction to the problem areas summarized above and amplified in the written responses.

Recommendation

The Committee to Review the Southern Association Reaffirmation Report recommends that the Faculty Senate send a copy of this report along with the questionnaires used in compiling the report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for his study and interpretation, and further recommends that the Faculty Senate request that the Vice President for Academic Affairs present his reaction to the Senate.

Faculty Senate Committee to Review
the Southern Association Reaffirm-
ation Report

R. L. Blocker
J. Irwin
W. J. Oliver
C. Schoenewolf
B. F. Walker, Chairman

Petition -

This petition is presented to the Faculty Senate to indicate that there is concern in the University's participation in the current Social Security Plan. We the undersigned feel that our participation in this Social Security Plan is undesirable and would like to recommend that the Faculty Senate begin an effort to have the University's faculty relieved from such participation.