

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate
Meeting No. 119
May 6, 1981

1. Chairman Mathis called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

2. Reports of Officers:

President's Report:

Chairman Mathis reported that a new organization has been created. This organization is called the Council of Faculty Governments Organization, in which the SFA Faculty Senate has automatic membership.

Chairman Mathis reported that the Faculty Senate had been contacted by the Faculty Senate at the University of Texas at Austin, which is making an effort to try to coordinate the activities of various bodies of faculty government.

In the Deans' Council there has been much attention given to changes in the funding of off campus programs at SFA.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Cole reported a balance of \$3,339.73 in the treasury.

Secretary's Report:

Secretary Stanberry asked Senators for their efforts to help with getting faculty to turn in their Grievance Panel ballots as soon as possible.

3. Old Business:

A. Grievance Hearing Procedures:

Senator Wendall Spreadbury of the Professional Welfare Committee reported on the open hearing the committee held on Grievance Hearing Procedures. He reported that the committee had two changes to make: 1) on page 5, change "five working days" to "fifteen working days" 2) on page 6, insert under the title a subtitle reading "Suggested Use for Cases of Dismissal of Tenured Faculty".

A motion was made to accept the recommendation as revised. Motion Passed.

B. Faculty Evaluation:

Chairman Mathis asked for comments from Senators on faculty reactions on the proposal. Reports on negative and positive reactions were given.

A motion was made to table the proposal until the third meeting of the 1981-82 Faculty Senate. Motion Passed.

4. New Business:

Report of the Committee on Faculty Research and Development:

Senator Devine passed out a report and gave a brief explanation of the five recommendations. (See Attachment #1)

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. Motion Passed.

5. Final Reports From Standing Committees:

Faculty Government and Involvement:

Senator Connie Spreadbury, Chairman of the committee, reported that this semester they had added the School of Applied Arts and Sciences with Senate representation, reviewed policies on Class Attendance and Excused Absences and reviewed the policy on appeal procedures for Resolving Student-Initiated Academic Complaints.

Administration and Finance:

Senator Murdock, Chairman, reported that this semester his committee had studied and reported on the budget and had given recommendations for future study of the budget.

Academic Affairs:

Senator Nicholson reported that his committee had monitored the new registration policies. They held a number of meetings on registration and felt that overall they had received a good response. He recommended that this monitoring be continued. The committee also studied SFA's admission requirements and reported that they found that SFA has not become more lenient with these requirements. They also studied the exam schedule.

Professional Welfare Committee:


Senator Wendall Spreadbury reported that his committee had reviewed the Handbook concerning office hours, researched and held an open hearing on Outside Employment of Faculty members, attempted twice to modify the Merit Pay System, developed system of Faculty Evaluation, revised the Faculty Handbook, and held a hearing concerning Grievance Procedures. He recommended that the committee do further work on Faculty Evaluation and Grievance Panel Procedures.

Chairman Mathis thanked the committees and their chairmen for their time, efforts and active participation. He recommended that the only two items of issue that need to be carried over to next year's Faculty Senate are Grievance Hearing Procedures and Faculty Evaluation.

6. Ex Officio Comments:

As previously requested by the Senate, Dr. Franklin reviewed in detail the topic of "Faculty Morale". A copy of this report is available at the Faculty Senate Office, ED 304L.

7. A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.


Kurt Stanberry
Secretary, 1980-81, Senate

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

This committee was asked to study research and faculty development at Stephen F. Austin State University and to recommend how they might be improved. The committee reached its conclusions after sending a questionnaire to the entire faculty and discussing research and development with as many of our colleagues as possible. Although the number who responded to the questionnaire was disappointingly low--only 30% of the faculty responded and all, or almost all, were from just six of the university's eight major academic divisions, enough responded to provide a reasonable sampling of faculty opinion, and most of those who did answer took the time to write very full comments. A tabulation of the results of the questionnaire is available in the Reserve Room of the Library, in the Faculty Senate office in the Ferguson Building, and copies will be sent to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and to the Coordinator of Grants and Research.

Most members of our faculty believe research is essential. They do not consider it to be in competition with teaching; instead, they believe it is a vital part of the teaching process. Most faculty think they can remain intellectually alert and interested in their disciplines only if they engage in research. Essential to teaching is the communication of intellectual excitement and curiosity, and this usually requires active involvement in research.

Seventy-five per cent of the respondents to the committee's questionnaire agreed that "research facilities are essential to the fulfillment of SFA's teaching mission." Faculty development is not identical to research, for it includes other things such as interdisciplinary exchanges and the refinement of teaching techniques, but the committee trusts that improving research opportunities and facilities will enhance faculty development.

The committee recommends the following:

- 1) Faculty should be welcome to enroll in courses offered by this university, for credit if desired, and with fees waived.

RATIONALE: As new fields of knowledge develop, many faculty discover a need to enroll in courses that were not available when they were in college or graduate school. Well over ninety per cent of those who answered the committee's question about this matter thought the university should waive fees. The university can waive local fees and could request the legislature's permission to waive tuition as well. Most who favored this proposal desired it to improve their capabilities in their present disciplines or to gain familiarity with related fields rather than to change career^s, but it would serve this latter purpose also. Furthermore, it would be an excellent help in reducing interdisciplinary barriers. The limitation presently in the faculty handbook which restricts faculty

to taking one course per semester should be retained; some rules should be established to allow an instructor to exclude faculty from a course under certain conditions; and students must have priority in registering for a course.

2) The time between the deadline for applying for a Faculty Research Grant and the period covered by the grant should be reduced.

RATIONALE: Half of those who returned the committee's questionnaire feel handicapped by having to apply long in advance for a Faculty Research Grant. Some scientists said that their fields were developing so fast they could not prophesy precisely what they would be working on a year later; artists and musicians have complained that it is very difficult to predict their interests so far in advance. The reasons why the university has lengthened the application period have been explained to the committee, but nevertheless the committee believes there are more compelling reasons for moving the application deadline closer to the grant periods.

3) Sabbaticals should be requested from the legislature.

RATIONALE: Sabbaticals every seventh year, or at least during one semester of every seventh year (as a beginning)

would be of immense value in furthering research and revitalizing teaching effectiveness. While under no illusion about the difficulty of securing the legislature's support of such a program, the committee strongly recommends sabbaticals.

- 4) Teaching loads should be reduced to permit more attention to be given to research.

RATIONALE: Reducing a greater number of faculty to nine hours should be considered not an interference with teaching but an enhancement of it. Since research seems to be expected of us, and since most faculty wish to conduct research and believe it is essential to proper teaching, student load and class room hours should be reduced.

- 5) Secretarial help should be available for preparing books and articles for publication.

RATIONALE: In most departments the departmental secretaries do not have the time to type book length manuscripts or long articles. A typist pool should be created to help with material too lengthy for departmental staff.

The committee submits this report with the hope that after the Senate considers and amends it during the Autumn, the Senate will send it to the administration. These recommendations would be expensive to adopt, but they would improve teaching

quality and faculty morale as well as faculty research and development. The committee has found the administration fully cognizant of the need for spending more on research, and the committee commends it for its concern, but the legislature has shown a disturbing inability to appreciate the importance of research at an institution such as ours. Perhaps this is because the "cost effectiveness" of research cannot be measured as easily as student load can be. The legislature's attitude toward research is particularly critical at this time because the Federal government, which has been a major source of research grants for our faculty, will probably reduce its funding of research during the next few years.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Devine (Chairman)
James Corbin
Denis Hyams
Thurman Thomas
John Thornton