

Stephen F. Austin State University

**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2001 Meeting #306
(Approved at December meeting)**

I. Call to Order

Chair Joe Devine called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

Excused: Senator Nason

Announcements

Chair Devine noted that foreign travel no longer has to be approved by the governor. Approval is now granted by the Chair of the Board of Regents.

II. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes for Faculty Senate Meeting #305 were approved with changes.

III. Guests

A. Roland K. Smith, Vice President for Business Affairs, addressed the senate regarding payroll advances. Dr. Smith noted that paydays and periods were set by the State of Texas, with the first pay period for new faculty hires being the first workday in October. Dr. Smith noted that SFA has no control over or ability to change this process. Moreover, "[SFA] has no source of funds to initiate the capital that would allow for such a loan program" as had been considered by the senate.

One suggestion offered was for the senate to contact local financial institutions to determine if these businesses could provide assistance to new hires.

Dr. Smith noted that individual departments could make requests for funding for moving expenses but that those requests had to be approved. Very few such requests were made in the past several years.

Loans from the university to students that covered the gap period between the beginning of the semester and the beginning of their financial aid are interest free for 60 days with 5% accrued simple interest assessed after that period. These loans, facilitated by the Texas Public Education Grant, cover tuition and fees while another program allows for book fees. Room, board, and tuition can be paid on the installment plan.

Dr. Smith indicated that "If someone wanted to raise money for such a program (for faculty loans)" then that would be acceptable; however, he cautioned that the program would not be cost-free and that the senate would need to take into account the cost of administering the program.

Questions from the senate included clarification of whether or not auxiliary money went to the athletic fund and how auxiliary monies were appropriated. Dr. Smith indicated that auxiliary services were covered by the auxiliary funds with student fees paying for most of the athletic expenses.

IV. Officer's Reports

A. Chair:

The Salary Committee has been meeting to discuss salary issues.

The main focus at the October 26-7 Texas Council of Faculty Senates meeting was a study of post-tenure review.

The Academic Affairs Council meeting on November 14 examined three policies:

1. A-54: The recording of semester grades, notably "WH"

Chair Devine assigned this issue to Academic Affairs I for study.

2. E-24A: Faculty searches

The Council had addressed Faculty Senate Resolution 2001-2.01.

3. E-54.1: Voluntary Modified Employee "status"

Chair Devine assigned this issue to Professional Welfare for study.

The Kohlar Consulting Company had suggested the university adopt a set format for all correspondence and mailings from the university.

According to the Admissions Office, SFA ranked 29 out of 30 in regards to Fall 1999-Fall 2000 retention.

B. Chair-Elect:

The Texas Graduate Council meeting in Austin examined House Bill 1641 that proposes specific standards and criteria for acceptance into graduate programs at Texas institutions.

C. Secretary: No report.

D. Treasurer: The current budget was presented to and accepted by the Senate.

V. Committee Reports

Academic Affairs II

Senator Pickard presented Resolution 2001-2.03. Senator Wurtz noted that several faculty from his department had commented that retention, in part, was affected by the fact that SFA accepts students who may not be prepared to succeed in college. After additional discussion, the Senate voted on the resolution which passed with a unanimous vote.

A suggestion to change class days to a MR/TF schedule was rejected by the senate.

Elections

There will be a virtual election to fill the position vacated by Jim Howard.

Faculty Government and Involvement

Senator Caffery read the “Proposed Motion to Amend the Constitution of the Faculty Senate.” The motion was seconded. Discussion focused on how the adjunct faculty member would be selected to serve on the Senate and whether the Senate or all adjunct faculty would vote on the nominees.

Two amendments were made to the original motion. The motion, with the changes, reads (changed wording appears in italics):

We move that Article I of the Constitution of the Faculty Senate be amended to read as follows:

Section 13: Adjunct Faculty Representative. The adjunct faculty shall be granted one seat on the senate. This shall be a voting seat with speaking privileges and the term will be for one year and the Senator may not hold an office. Nominations for this seat shall be made by the faculty senate from among the adjunct faculty and the representative will be selected by the faculty senate.

At the request of the chair, the senate voted on tabling the motion. The vote was unanimous to table the motion until a later meeting.

Professional Welfare

Senator Williams introduced Resolution 2001-2.04. Senator Williams explained that this resolution is directed towards the faculty and offers guidance to those faculty members who might feel pressured by their chairs to teach distance education courses.

The resolution was voted upon by secret ballot. The vote was 19 in favor with one abstention.

Senator Williams introduced Resolution 2001-2.05. The resolution passed with a unanimous vote.

Strategic Planning

Senator King presented Resolution 2001-2.06, noting that the resolution was in response to a position that originated in the Dean’s Council. Senator King indicated that at this time it would not be wise to add another administrative position. The Senate voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

Conservation

Senator Williams presented Resolution 2001-2.07. Responding to questions from the Senate, Senator Williams commented that a consultant could direct the university towards low cost and no cost measures that would have positive long term results. The resolution passed with a unanimous vote.

VI. Old Business

The Senate returned to Resolution 2001-2.02. Senator King explained that he had been assured by Glenda Herrington that background checks do take place and that the check is done only on the person recommended for hire. A friendly amendment changed the wording in the first “Whereas” to read “Whereas, Stephen F. Austin State University

regularly conducts criminal background histories/checks on applicants for faculty and other positions” (change is noted in italics). The resolution passed with a unanimous vote.

VII. New Business

Senator Ballenger raised the question of whether it was legal for the university to require faculty to sign outside employment forms. Chair Devine assigned this issue to the Administration and Finance Committee for study.

The Senate considered the motion to investigate support for a Staff Senate. The vote for the motion was unanimously in favor of the motion.

The Senate considered the motion to conduct an investigation of the possibility of hiring a lawyer to represent the faculty. The motion for the motion passed with 19 votes in favor, one opposed. Chair Devine assigned the issue to the Professional Welfare.

Senator Wurtz raised the question of whether family members of faculty could register for university courses at a reduced tuition and fees rate. Chair Devine deferred assigning this issue to a committee until a later date.

VIII. Adjournment The Senate meeting was adjourned at 4:40.