

Stephen F. Austin State University

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes November 12, 2003 Meeting #324

Subject to approval at December 2003 meeting.

Senators present were:

Gary Mayer, Brian Oswald, Carol Scamman, Parker Ballinger, Tracy Zinn, Sarah Stovall, Leisha Bridwell, Peter King, Cody Edwards, Linda Bobo, DawnElla Rust, Sam Copeland, Larry King, Jere Jackson, Alyx Frantzen, Beverly Reed, Kelly Salsbery, Roy Joe Harris, Vi Alexander, Gary Wurtz, Darrel McDonald, Ty Spradley (sitting in for Stephen Jeffcoat), and Troy Davis.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:34 p.m. by Dr. Darrel McDonald at the Tracy Pearman Alumni Center.

GUESTS

PRESIDENT TITO GUERRERO

Dr. Guerrero announced that he would be hosting an event which would "launch the Strategic Plan." At this event, he will be announcing the names of the members of the Strategic Plan Implementation Team.

Dr. McDonald asked if a tuition increase targeted specifically for faculty salary increases was planned.

The President answered that he remains committed to salary equity. He added that he plans to approach the Board of Regents to ask for an additional dollar in tuition to help with the process. He also pointed out that, even given this increase, SFA will still be well under the limit for its tuition costs. Dr. Guerrero also indicated that he was exploring the possibility of a midyear adjustment of salaries that would take effect immediately after the Board Meeting (probably February 1).

Dr. Jackson asked whether the increase would be based on cost of living, merit or other considerations.

Dr. Guerrero's answer was that it depends on how much money is actually available to be divided. An attempt will be made to find the best combination in order to use the funds as wisely as possible.

PROVOST MARY CULLINAN

New Employees –

Dr. Cullinan indicated that the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs has hired the Academic Affairs Budget Coordinator (Gina Oglesbee) and the Executive Director for Enrollment Management (Monique Cossich) Other searches across the University are underway and in various stages.

Committees –

- The Provost is putting together a group to study the possibility of revising the way commencement ceremonies are conducted. This year, SFA will continue to use a single commencement ceremony, as opposed to having two ceremonies (a shorter and more generic one at the university level and a more specific one at the college level).
- An Academic Technology Committee is being put together, and the Policy Committee is already meeting.
- Part of the Strategic Planning process is to have a group within Academic Affairs that looks at the unique aspects of the university.
- Dr. Cullinan will hold an open forum on the honors program 21st 130-300.

Questions –

Advertising positions for which searches are underway -- Senator Rust asked the Provost if the University planned to publish another comprehensive advertisement in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* covering all of the academic positions available at SFA. Dr. Cullinan answered her office planned to utilize comprehensive ads in the future. She also noted that the first ad covered only clear cut vacancies that were approved before she came on board here. Senator Rust indicated that the process for releasing the initial advertisement made it difficult to recruit the highly specific type of candidates that her program needed. Senator Mercer agreed, citing similar problems with the search for a Chair of the Department of Human Services. Dr. Cullinan said that faculty search committees are still free to send position announcements to appropriate list servs. She indicated that the Provost's office needs to be more involved in the search process, and the idea of developing and disseminating a single large ad makes this more likely.

Senator Oswald requested information on what the Academic Technology Committee was charged to do. The Provost answered that it would be working on canvassing, prioritization, and advocating for the most important technology needs on campus.

Senator McDonald reminded the Provost that she had mentioned that a Faculty Development Center might be created, and asked if that center was still a possibility. Dr. Cullinan replied that her thought was that since there is an Academic Planning group functioning, there will be new ideas and priorities coming forward which will be translated into funding, and she hoped that would include a Faculty Development Center.

Senator Stovall stated that she had forwarded data to Dr. Guerrero regarding student assignment to remedial math programs and asked if this information had been used to help make those placements. The Provost replied that several meetings have been held and the best solutions possible have been developed given the limited time frame. Senator Stovall asked if different criteria had been developed. Dr. Cullinan indicated that the math grid had been changed.

Senator McDonald told the Senate that will be no hard copy bills sent out to students, nor has information about how students are to respond been distributed. Dr. Cullinan explained that when students register, their billing information will be sent to them immediately. After that, their billing information will be emailed to them every Friday. The Provost's Office, she indicated, was not consulted in advance regarding this change in procedure. The President explained that he had not been informed of the policy change either. They learned about it in a meeting with the Pine Log staff. This is an effort to try to take care of the problems that the University has when relying on the physical mail service and to reduce costs. Dr. King suggested that it might be a good idea to have a redundant system (sending an email and a paper bill as well). He further expressed his opinion that the real issue here is that an obviously academic issue was decided without either the President or the Provost knowing anything about it.

Senator McDonald asked why some Deans have announced to their Colleges that classes are going to be cancelled well before registration closes. The Provost indicated that the number of classes available is a dynamic issue. When it looks pretty clear that classes are not going to make, people need to be informed as quickly as possible. Dr. Guerrero observed that he is very hopeful that our problems with enrollment numbers will improve quickly. Showcase Saturday had a huge turnout, retention rates are up by 2%, and entrance scores have risen. The challenge continues to be retention. Dr. McDonald encouraged the President and Provost to have Institutional Research examine how many faculty are teaching individual studies in order to get the required classes to the students.

DR. DAVID JEFFREY
– ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Graduate School

Dr. Jeffrey explained to the Senate that enrollment for Graduate School increased 5.6% over last fall. Graduate students make up 14.5% of all university students. Several new and innovative programs are currently available. These include:

- An on line program in forestry which is conducted under a contract with the National Park Service. The program, which primarily serves park rangers, has admitted 37 new students.
- The Music Department has an online program; and
- The Department of Human Services provides a program in Special Education which provides preservice teacher training in the field of visual impairments and orientation and mobility.

There are also many on campus programs that are growing, and new programs such as those in athletic training and in accounting, have also been developed.

Research and Sponsored Programs

In the last biennium, the legislature appropriated funds, under the Texas Excellence Fund, the money was earmarked to increase the quality and capacity of research by universities. The appropriation was vetoed by Gov. Perry. SFA did manage to maintain approximately \$90,000. It is possible that these funds will be replaced in the next session.

A search is underway for a Director of Research and Sponsored Programs. Advertisement has begun and seven applications have been received.

In house grant options:

Each year there is approximately \$120,000 allocated for Faculty Research Grants. This year, there were 20 applications submitted, and 12 of these were funded at approximately \$16,000 each.

Mini grants of \$1,000 or less designed to help with pilot projects and so forth are also available. Most of the time responses happen within a week. Last year 14 of these were funded.

Questions

Senator Jackson indicated that the Liberal Arts Council has discussing moving all graduate students out of 400G classes and into 500 level classes. Dr. Jeffrey indicated that no more than three 400G programs would count. The University was not getting a higher rate of reimbursement for those students, even though they were graduate students and should have produced more revenue. The University can cross list classes as both graduate and undergraduate. A total of 10 undergraduates or 5 graduate students is required for the class to make. Dr. Jackson expressed his opinion that the real question is whether we can provide quality to graduate and undergraduate students in the same class. He indicated that he feels that it is simply not a good educational policy, and would like to see the practice stopped.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senate Chair McDonald made the following announcements:

- Faculty identification numbers will be changing as of January 3 and 4. Each faculty member will be given a random number. Starting January 16 faculty will be able to exchange their old identification card for a new one.
- Dr. Jeffrey has sent out the new calendars. These have been approved.
- Friday, November 14 there will be a research grant writing workshop in the Wyatt Room in the Library.
- Dr. McDonald welcomed Dr. Beverly Reed to the Senate.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Senator Ballinger questioned why the Minutes from Meeting 323 indicated that a Senator from Economics and Finance could not be nominated. Senator Scamman replied that the Senator could come from any Department other than Marketing, Management, and International Business. Senator Oswald made a motion to accept the Minutes for Meeting 323 as amended. Senator Frantzen seconded. Passage was unanimous.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. McDonald indicated that he had participated in a variety of meetings with members of the administration. Topics discussed included:

- An exploration of the possibility that the University would increase its contribution to new employee's Optional Retirement Programs. Older employees were grandfathered in at a higher rate. At this time, there are no plans to do that.
- Possible midyear salary adjustments which Dr. Guerrero had already addressed during his remarks to the Senate.
- The Provost had reported that only three of the seven colleges had responded to her request for copies of policies related to tenure and promotion.
- Faculty workload and how it is being determined. The Provost is still attempting to generate more discussion on ways that faculty might be able to get credit for their effort.

CHAIR ELECT'S REPORT

Senator Wurtz distributed Minutes from the Graduate Council meeting, and asked if there were questions. Senator Jackson asked how decisions as to the elimination of courses from the Bulletin were made. Senator McDonald replied that it was a local as opposed to a Coordinating Board decision. Senator Salsbery asked if this issue could be directed to a committee since several questions in this area have been raised. Senate Parliamentarian Mayer indicated that such a charge could be made. Chair McDonald requested that the Professional Welfare Committee examine class size and independent study courses without compensation to the faculty.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer distributed a copy of the budget. There is a balance of \$4,120.73.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Senator Oswald reported that, as charged by the Senate Chair, the Committee considered the committee Mission Statement and found it to be substantially in line with the current expectations and needs of the Senate. It was also pointed out that the committee structure of the Senate is likely to change and therefore, major modification would be a poor use of time.

ELECTIONS

Senator Scamman indicated that the position representing Liberal Arts had been filled. Ballots were sent by attachment for this election and seemed to work very well in an uncontested race. There has still been no progress toward filling the vacancy for the College of Business. Senator Ballinger asked if the term in question is a full three year term. Senator McDonald indicated that it was a single year. Senator Ballinger will canvas his colleagues. The Committee needs to meet with Sandy Turner from ITS to see what the requirements might be if we choose to use the new electronic election system.

Senator Scamman also informed the Senate that there are some issues about reallocation of Senate representation. She pointed out that this function is actually the charge of the Faculty Governance Committee, but that her committee is willing to work on it. Chair McDonald indicated that he would like for work on this issue to be conducted by both committees working together.

The committee has agreed upon and submitted a revised mission statement to Chair McDonald.

FACULTY GOVERNANCE AND INVOLVEMENT

Senator Alexander reported that there is an acceptable existing Mission Statement for the Committee.

PROFESSIONAL WELFARE

Senator Frantzen reported that the Committee will be working on an evaluation of the Committee Mission statement and completing the charges given to it during this meeting of the Senate.

ETHICS

No report.

OLD BUSINESS

Evaluation of employees answering to the Provost's office

Senate sent a resolution to the Vice President for Academic Affairs last year regarding this issue, and there was no response. Dr. McDonald followed up and was notified that it is now in the hands of the Policy Committee. In addition to other faculty members, Dr. King is on that committee. Dr. Jackson pursued the question of representation by asking if we, as a faculty, had actually lost representation through the restructuring of the committee system. Dr. McDonald indicated that he felt that the faculty was actually better represented, and that he would ask Provost to provide the Senate with a flow chart detailing how Senate resolutions will flow to the President.

Policy E 38A

Senator Scamman observed that questions about this policy will be considered by the Provost's Policy Committee.

Piper Award

Senator Davis indicated that there have been four applicants for the Piper Award.

Resolution on Promotion and Tenure

Senator Oswald presented the second reading of the proposed resolution on tenure and resolution with friendly amendments.

Request for University to Review Tenure and Promotion Policies Across Campus (Senate Res. No. ???)

Whereas, achieving tenure is a critical and timely issue facing university faculty nation-wide and locally at Stephen F. Austin State University:

Whereas, over the last few years more than half of the faculty have entered into volunteer modified employment or retired:

Whereas, new tenure track faculty have been hired to fill most of these vacancies:

Where, tenure requirements vary and should vary across disciplines but are often not well articulated or documented at the department or college level for tenure-track faculty to access to help guide their development:

Whereas, tenure requirements need to be met by faculty to gain tenure;

Whereas, promotion also is an important goal for faculty and the requirements are hard to find in an organized package; Be it Resolved:

That the Faculty Senate requests that the Provost's office initiate a campus wide review of tenure and promotion requirements to bring about a clear understanding for faculty as to the requirements and review process of tenure and promotion at SFASU.

We are asking that the first step in this process should be the submission of all departmental and college tenure and promotion requirements and procedures to the Provost's office so that the Faculty Senate may initiate a review process in conjunction with a cross campus representative committee including representatives from the Provost's office.

Dr. McDonald opened the floor for discussion and there was none. Senator Oswald indicated that his Committee moves the Resolution, and Senator Jackson seconded. The vote of the Senate was unanimously in favor of the Resolution.

Dr. McDonald indicated that the Provost has already begun the process of reassessing tenure and promotion. She has asked all of the Colleges to respond with the policies they have in place. Three responses have been received. Senators are asked to get their Departmental policies and forward those to Senator Oswald.

NEW BUSINESS

Revision of the Process for Developing the University Budget

Dr. McDonald indicated that he had received a request to participate in developing a way for the budget to be more transparent to the faculty. He charged the Administration and Finance Committee with this task. Based on information gathered in several meetings, he observed that two important questions need to be addressed:

- (1) what is a transparent budget; and
- (2) what recommendations could the Senate make on how the faculty could be more involved in the process?

A short discussion regarding this issue ensued.

Internet II

Senator Oswald gave a brief overview of I2 and how SFA has utilized it in the past. There is a new organization which has been developed to help coordinate I2. It costs \$20,000 annually for a voting seat on the Board of Directors. ITS did not have the funds in its budget. It was decided by the nonacademic administration that this was too expensive, and, therefore, SFA does not have a seat at the table in this organization. The Provost knows about this, and the decision was made without any faculty input. He also expressed his belief that this is a huge decision that stands to have an enormous impact on the future of the University. Not having a seat would be very costly. It impacts our ability to conduct research and obtain grant funding. Senator Scamman added that it also impacts delivery of distance education courses. Senator Jackson agreed and observed that we need a resolution on this very quickly. Dr. McDonald said that he and Senator Oswald would compose one in the next two days.

With no more business to transact, a motion for adjournment was made and seconded. The Senate stood adjourned at 4:46 pm.