

Academic Affairs Meeting
August 8, 2018

Dr. Bullards stated the focus of this meeting is university research, which is an important part of the strategic plan

1. **Undergraduate Research Conference (URC)**

Mike Tkacik

Dr. Tkacik distributed information, explaining it is a great honor for students to participate in undergraduate research. It enhances student learning, increases retention, increases enrollment, furthers career development, and enhances resumes. It may attract women and minorities into STEM fields. Undergraduate research is now expected - the new normal. If we are not doing this, our students are at a disadvantage.

Dr. Tkacik gave the background of Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) at SFA. It is a good tool to recruit from two year institutions, Tyler Junior College has had great, with 6-7 students each year. Attendance has increased by 300% and we have now added a faculty mentor award. The committee consists of; Dr. Mike Tkacik, Dr. Leslie Cecil, Dr. Liz Tasker, and Dr. Eric Jones but every college has representation.

The deadline is February 9, 2019 for students to submit. Each college selects finalists and 1 top scholar by February 28th, the announcement is made on March 1st and the event is April 17th. Dr. Tkacik explained this is a de-centralized conference, which helps with buy-in, and that makes it succeed. He said that if URC was recognized in merit, tenure and promotion, there would be more participation. The conference costs over \$5,000 annually, in order to grow, more resources are required, the URC needs a graduate assistant, and we need to offer larger scholarships, particularly for Community College top scholars. Dr. Tkacik explained the success of the URC is because of faculty buy-in however, incentives are lacking, which means buy-in is lacking.

Dr. Bullard explained that he wants faculty to OWN these programs. He asked how we are assessing the impact of undergraduate research. Each college/department has their own culture, for example in Chemistry and Biochemistry undergraduate research is embedded in the curriculum. The college of Education offers yearlong new faculty orientation to stress the importance of undergraduate research. When new faculty join SFA, that is the greatest opportunity to shape the culture of undergraduate research. *Dr. Bullard asked Dr. Abbott to discuss this at a future dean's council.*

2. **Graduate Research Conference**

Perky Beisel

Dr. Sampson has added mentored graduate research and has an advisory group that would cover all aspects of both URC and GRC and mentor graduate research. Dr. Perky Beisel started the Graduate Research Conference in 2013, by 2015 it was expanded to be a college research conference and in 2016 went university wide. Graduate students do not go through a vetting process, we feel all graduate students need this exposure. This is a very cheap conference at only \$600 or less. Posters are reviewed by faculty across the university, a mix of students from different disciplines. The GRC has grown.

Dr. Linda Levitt stated that Last year 25 papers and 30 posters were submitted to the GRC, this is a great opportunity to raise the profile of graduate students on campus. She is very interested in continuing to expand and involve more colleges. This can sometimes be overwhelming for faculty to have all those programs together.

Dr. Bullard asked other deans about their awareness and involvement. The college of Education has been involved, but we need to promote more. Dr. Abbott stated she is committed to graduate research.

The dates for these events are listed at the end of the minutes and these will also be on the Academic Affairs website. Need dates /calendar for April - deans need a timeline for deadlines. It is important that message is firmly communicated from the very beginning. Could use some resources. It was suggested there be representation from each college on GRC.

Dr. Guidry stated we need to assess how undergraduate research/graduate research is affecting student learning, need to talk to John Calahan.

Dr. Murphy asked “who is the intended audience?” Dr. Beisel replied graduate students and faculty, to learn and grow. Parent attendance at URC is very good and therefore, helps to recruit siblings

Dr. Abbott stated that approximately 80% of our graduate students are part-time and online.

The deadlines for URC and GRC will be added to the Schedule of Deadlines on the Academic Affairs webpage. The deadlines should be added to the page of information on the GRC and distributed by deans to their faculty and chairs.

3. **Symposium on Arts and Research (SOAR)**

Megan Weatherly

SOAR is to showcase faculty research on campus. Why is it in the Center for

Teaching and Learning (CTL)? Who is the intended audience?

Megan explained this began in 2008 as The Bright Ideas Conference, which was biennial, in 2016 it became an annual event and the name was changed.

Do we need a different timeline?

Mary Smith explained that CTL are just organizers, proposals are submitted by faculty, colleges select spotlight award. On the day of SOAR poster presentations are from 9am – 12 noon, toward end of the event Graduate and Research come in to present awards

Dr. Bullard congratulated CTL on an amazing job but despite this, attendance and engagement is not very good. He asked do we need to continue? If so, in what format? Who should have ownership? GRC/URC shared ownership with colleges. Dr. Bullard would like to see the deans and chairs take ownership.

Dr. Childs said that CTL did an incredible job, but unfortunately it was not embraced by the faculty, she asked what other universities are doing? Let's pare down and look at what makes sense. Let's rethink a model that we would like to try and look at others.

Dr. Long said from a faculty member point of view, it must be stable and consistent must have some level of commitment. He explained at the University of Maryland they have "Maryland Day", every unit on the university has some kind of event. It is a university wide initiative to bring research to the public.

Dr. Bullard said that reaching out to the community is part of our strategic plan but we have not done a very good job of that. He believes the community would embrace an idea like this and will be eager to increase students. Dr. Abbott said a great example of this is the garden lectures every month. This is the only thing other than Fine Arts that brings community regularly to the campus.

It is felt by the community that SFA does not promote internships but the university wants that, there are disconnects.

Dr. Childs said this is a way to reinvigorate the pride for SFA - currently the community does not see this. Dr. Abbott stated that Dr. Childs has done a great job with Women in STEM, a lot of community involvement and it is a fund raiser. The twice annual plant sale is another great opportunity.

Dr. Jones said there is some confusion within faculty between GRC and SOAR, maybe SOAR lost some of its impact. Dr. Bullard asked about leading this discussion within faculty senate. Is there any value to SOAR? URC and GRC have a clear agenda, audience and purpose. SOAR is confusing? Sometimes less is more.

SOAR is meant to show what faculty is doing on campus, but we do not encourage faculty to submit new material, because it is not peer reviewed but does have institutional importance. Dr. Abbott suggested using resources to highlight the Regents Professor Lecturer or Foundation Scholarship, rather than using resources for SOAR.

Dr. Cecil stated that faculty is unaware of the importance of the Regents Scholar Award, the deans know but faculty does not, which explains the poor attendance. This too could be the case with Teaching Excellence Awards, we have newer faculty coming in and we need to keep them informed.

We need to make a bigger deal about things rather than just a line on SFA Today. Megan Weatherly explained that an initiative we will see from the strategic plan next year is the Bright Spots Campaign, looking at recognition and reward for faculty and staff, having students working on those projects, videos etc.

Mary Smith, said that planning for SOAR starts in September and takes a lot of work, perhaps we want to take a break from this.

Dr. Bullard stated that we also need to look at Regents Professor Award and Lecturer.

Dr. Abbott stressed we should use our strengths, such as our new STEM building, use the lobby, people will come because they are interested. Ballroom will be finished and then that area will be great to highlight, the community will be interested.

Dr. Beverly said that we receive so much information, it is easy to hit delete if it is not relative to you in particular. We should pare down some of the information that is sent to faculty and staff and narrow in on what we want them to be focused on.

Dr. Bullard said the deans and chairs have a role to funnel the information. Resources are dwindling so we should focus our resources. He suggested we pause SOAR and highlight Bright Spots on campus. Perhaps highlight Regents Professor every other year.

Dr. Murphy suggested if we do continue with SOAR we should have items that we engage in for our community, and then ask faculty to research these. Dr. Bullard agreed and said we should be discussing with NEDCO.

Dr. Abbott suggested showcasing faculty research on the evening of the Archie McDonald lecture. She said that several huge issues that need help in east Texas are mental health issues, poverty, and drug use.

Dr. Jones suggested asking faculty what they believe is the disconnect? Is it the community? What is the engagement we need to foster?

4. **Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR) membership**

Karyn Hall

Karyn Hall an update on our CUR membership, which has now been expanded to offer more information to faculty, staff and students. She also said she can cater faculty activity report for specific areas.

Dr. Cecil said we used to send students to NCUR for students research, and thinks we should consider this again.

Attendees:

Steve Bullard	Mary Nelle Brunson
Mary Smith	Sharon Brewer
Megan Weatherly	Marc Guidry
Jonathan Helmke	Perky Beisel
Debbie Pace	Nick long
Karyn Hall	Eric Jones
Leslie Cecil	Mike Tkacik
Kim Childs	Hans Williams
Sheryl Jerez	Jason Reese
Tim Bisping	Judy Abbott
Buddy Himes	Pauline Sampson
Brian Murphy	Lesa Beverly
Linda Levitt	

**Undergraduate Research
Deadlines to participate are:**

Feb 8, 2019 – Deadline for SFA Student Submissions to Departments
Feb. 22, 2019 – Deadline for Regional College submissions to the URC Committee
Feb. 22, 2019 – Deadline for College submissions to the URC Committee
March 1, 2019 – URC 2019 Top Scholars and Finalists announced