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Faculty Senate
Gary Ford, Secretary
College of Liberal Arts
1994 - 1995

TO: Members of the Faculty Senate
FROM: Gary G. Ford, Secretary
DATE SUBMITTED: April 21, 1995
SUBJECT: Minutes for Meeting No. 247
Wednesday, April 12, 1995

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Meeting #247 of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Chairperson C. P. Barton at 2:30 PM, in the Mildred Wyatt Room of Steen Library.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion

A motion to approve the minutes for Meeting #246 (March 8, 1995) was made by Senator Hearell, seconded by Senator McDonald, and was approved unanimously.

III. Announcements

Chairperson Barton reported that the meeting that President Angel had suggested at the last Senate meeting, for which a committee of Senate volunteers had been appointed, was still pending due to President Angel's having spent most of the past month in Austin, discussing budget issues with state legislators. The meeting will hopefully be able to be scheduled for late April or early May. Any other Senate members interested in participating in the meeting should inform Chairperson Barton. Senator Gobel suggested that the meeting might be held in the Board Room in the Austin Building, rather than in the Wyatt Room.

Issues suggested for the agenda of such a meeting were: revising university policy on the evaluation of administrators; clarifying the Senate's position on the role of deans in establishing criteria for merit pay, obtaining information

regarding the self-insurance escrow fund; and posing questions about the Northeast Texas Initiative.

Chairperson Barton also reported that he had not met with the subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Council dealing with the merit pay policy revision. He believed that they had issued a new draft of the proposed revision. He will provide further information to the Senate after contacting Dean Kitterle.

Chairperson Barton asked for input from Senators regarding issues he should include in his report to the Board of Regents at their April meeting.

Senator Hearell reported that Senator Mace had surgery in late January for cancer of the esophagus. It was successful and the prognosis is good. Senator Mace is expected to return to full-time duties for the Fall 1995 semester.

Chairperson Barton reported that he would send condolences on behalf of the Faculty Senate to SFA Regent Murray Shaw regarding the recent death of his son.

IV. Officers' Reports

Chairperson-elect Berry had been unable to attend the last meeting of the Graduate Council, but reported that consideration is being given to changing the method by which people are chosen for seats on the Council. Currently, one member is elected by each College and three members are appointed by David Jeffrey, one each from Liberal Arts, Education, and Science and Mathematics-- the three Colleges with the largest number of graduate faculty. The proposed changes center around the issues of whether each College should be represented equally on the Council and whether all members of the Council should be elected, or whether some should continue to be appointed. Senator Mueller, who had attended the meeting, reported that the possibility of a change in the Graduate Council constitution was tabled.

Treasurer Dahmus reported that the budget printout he received in March contained the same information (and errors) as the February printout. Senator Daley commented that the issue of inaccurate budget information discussed at the February Senate meeting had continued essentially unchanged, and now the year is virtually over.

Chairperson Barton suggested that President Angel might be asked to comment further on the issue, since he had assured us that the budget problems had all been resolved; apparently they have not been.

Treasurer Dahmus also reported on the Council of Faculty Governance Organizations meeting he had attended on March 31 and April 1 in Austin. The most important (and disturbing) session had been one in which three representatives of the State Comptroller's Office explained the budget savings that would be

realized from the many cuts being proposed in higher education funding. The proposed cuts generally involve reductions in state funding (e.g., cutting the state's ORP contribution from 7.31% to 6.0%), with the difference being made up from local funds. The state's TRS contribution is being targeted as well as ORP.

Regarding the evaluation of administrators, it was reported at the meeting that the Chancellor of the UT system had ordered regular evaluations of administrators up to the level of VPAA with evaluation input from all faculty within the academic unit. Administrators must be evaluated every six years, though each school can set up its own procedures and schedule.

V. Committee Reports

A. Elections

Senator DuFrene distributed a handout listing the nominees from each College for available Faculty Senate seats. The field of nominees is so limited that only one election will be needed for each seat. There was not a nominee for the College of Forestry seat, in spite of the efforts of Senators DuFrene and Lowry. The seat will be considered a vacancy when the Senate convenes in the fall.

B. Nominating Committee

Chairperson Barton reported that the Nominating Committee, which consists of outgoing senators, would meet in the next week to finalize the slate of nominees for Senate offices. The Senate constitution requires that there be at least two nominees for each office.

Senator D. McCune returned to the issue of the faculty's lack of interest in serving on the Senate and suggested that the Senate survey faculty opinion regarding the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate and their support for the existence of the Senate.

Senator Lowry asked VPAA Ashley about her perception of the Senate. She replied that she would need to give the matter some thought.

Motion

Senator Mueller made the following motion: **When the Senate convenes next year, incoming Chairperson Berry will assign to the appropriate committee the task of conducting a study to evaluate the faculty's perception of the value of the Faculty Senate.**

The motion was seconded by Senator Hearrell.

Senator DiNucci agreed that faculty interest is certainly dwindling and that the time had come for an in-depth study of the viability of the Faculty Senate. Senator Berry pointed out another possibility regarding the non-participation of faculty:

the ambiguity of the Faculty Senate nominating procedure. He argued that faculty organizations serve an important role of addressing the activities of deans and other administrators. Senator Mueller agreed, pointing out that he wanted faculty to reflect on what the Faculty Senate does and what functions they would like it to serve.

Senator S. McCune pointed out the need for leadership on the Senate that will advocate strongly for faculty interests in dealing with the administration.

Senator DuFrene asserted that the apathetic attitude of faculty is not directed primarily at the Faculty Senate. Faculty are apathetic because service to the university in any form is not rewarded.

Chairperson Barton pointed out that Senate leadership at SFA has to deal with the reality that this is only an advisory body. Furthermore, there is a great diversity in faculty opinion on most issues. The value of the Senate is that such issues are discussed openly here.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

Motion

Senator DiNucci made a motion that: **The Faculty Senate should conduct a self-study of its importance, along with the evaluation by faculty.**

Senator Hearell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairperson Barton asserted that the Senate's argument that budget cuts were being directed disproportionately against the instructional budget may have contributed to President Angel's decision to not replace his administrative assistant.

Senator Choate responded that President Angel had made a lateral transfer of Ms. Stringer to a position for which she has no training, in which her actions affect us all every day. This change was not of any benefit to faculty.

Chairperson Barton pointed out that the position in question had to be filled by law.

C. Professional Welfare Committee

Senator Mueller reported that the SGA has voted to adopt the idea of a "self-evaluation" form for faculty, which will probably be similar to the Faculty Disclosure form first presented at the December 1994 Senate meeting. The form would involve faculty describing the content of courses, as well as the tests and any other requirements for the course (essentially, a more detailed version of one's syllabus). This information would be made available to students prior to pre-registration. Senator Mueller recommended that the Senate review the proposal if we are requested to and cooperate with the process if the SGA is committed to doing all the work involved in coordinating such a project.

VI. Old Business

A. Faculty Service Awards

Senator Gobel asked what had ever been done about the Faculty Service Awards luncheon discussed during the October 1994 Senate meeting. Senator S. McCune, who had volunteered to serve on a Senate committee to arrange the luncheon, reported that the data regarding years of faculty service at SFA is not easily accessed from any data base on campus. She and other senators also felt that the administration was essentially asking faculty to honor faculty because of the administration's lack of interest in pursuing such initiatives. Senator Daley commented that the fact that the administration doesn't know how long faculty members have served at SFA speaks for itself.

Senator S. McCune commented that the administration's interest in honoring senior faculty appeared hypocritical in light of VPAA Ashley's suggestion that junior faculty be given priority for summer teaching. Senator McCune considered thought the suggestion was an insult to SFA's excellent senior faculty and a disservice to student consumers. Senator McDonald cautioned Senator McCune to be careful not to give the impression that junior faculty provide inferior instruction.

Senator Lowe pointed out that President Angel has encouraged the College of Education to use less expensive, master's-level faculty whenever possible. Comments from other senators addressed the enormous potential dangers associated with SFA's perceived shift toward a "community college model."

VII. New Business

A. Nominating Procedure for Faculty Senate Elections

Chairperson Barton reported that several members of the Executive Committee believed that the current procedure of self-nomination for election to the Faculty Senate is confusing and might account for the limited number of nominees for Senate seats. A change in the nominating procedure might help to alleviate this problem. Senator DuFrene pointed out that a constitutional change could not be dealt with by the Senate and submitted to the full faculty for ratification this year.

Chairperson Barton assigned the matter to the Faculty Government and Involvement Committee. They will report at the May Senate meeting on the advisability of amending the nominating procedure in the Senate constitution.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Senator Hearell and seconded by Senator Mueller. It passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Visitors
Janelle Ashley
Suzy Weems