

**Stephen F. Austin State University**

**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
December 3, 1997 Meeting #271**

***Approved February 11, 1998***

Faculty Senate meeting #271 was called to order by Chair Darrel McDonald. The following senators were absent: Briggs, Clark, Shows (excused), and Stewart.

The minutes for meeting #270 were approved as written.

***ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CHAIR MCDONALD***

Chair McDonald recognized two new senators who are filling current vacancies: Joe Devine from Liberal Arts and J. Mark Thompson from Fine Arts. Acting chair of the Elections Committee Jill Dumesnil announced that Dr. Franks would be meeting with his faculty later in December to fill the senator vacancy from Education. McDonald thanked the library staff, especially Gwen Feagley in Circulation, for accommodating the senate's change in meeting date.

McDonald informed that SFA had been visited by the Civil Rights division from the Department of Education in response to the Hopwood case. All Texas public campuses are being visited to look at student admissions...those accepted and not accepted to SFA. Jim Hardy's office is compiling information with some as far back as 40 years ago.

The New Faculty Orientation Committee from the ACE Project is holding a reception December 11th from 6-8 pm in the Yellow House at Millard's Crossing to meet new faculty.

The President's reception this year is being held December 9th from 6:30-8:30pm in the University Center Grand Ballroom.

McDonald offered congratulations to Dr. Miles McCall as the new Vice-President for Alumni.

The Senate was also invited to the "Nine Flags Over Texas/Oldest Christmas in Texas" celebration beginning on Friday, December 5th, in downtown Nacogdoches.

***OFFICERS' REPORTS***

Chair McDonald and Chair-Elect Jimmi Rushing met with Dr. Dan Angel and Dr. Janelle Ashley on December 1st. Dr. Angel and Dr. Ashley were unable to attend today's Senate meeting. Dr. Angel is in Austin attending legislative committee hearings, and Dr. Ashley is also in Austin meeting with the Coordinating Board regarding new programs.

Dr. Angel was asked about the status of the self-study for the NCAA Accreditation. The Senate now has a copy for those interested. McDonald reported that he will be interviewed December 4th by the accrediting group concerning faculty ideas on the issues. The NCAA accrediting review is now required once every ten years.

The Senate will be involved in submitting recommendations for university committee vacancies early next year. Senators may want to take note of colleagues interested in serving on committees.

Discussion is still underway with Dr. Angel and Dr. Ashley concerning the election of a 21-member University Grievance Panel. There would be three representatives from all seven colleges of the university. Dr. Ashley will identify what part the Faculty Senate plays in this procedure at a later date.

Dr. Angel and Dr. Ashley were asked about Senate Bill 694 dealing with the Governmental Dispute Resolution Act put forward by Senator Buster Brown encouraging state agencies and entities to use alternative dispute resolution procedures as oppose to litigation. Both agreed to look over the policies concerning the bill. Dr. Angel was asked if this was a good time to reinstate the ombudsman to which he stated "no." Angel stands by his 1992 position that he feels it would not be a position beneficial to the process.

Also, discussed were concerns about the use of the new Evaluation of Tenured Faculty policy for evaluations being currently conducted on last year's accomplishments. Some colleges have already implemented the first review of faculty. It was thought that by law the policy was to take place January 1, 1998. Angel and Ashley responded that if there is a problem in place, why wait. This is a developmental program not a punitive program. If you have concerns on how it's working in your department, immediately talk with your chair or dean about it.

In the December meeting of the Academic Affairs Council Chair McDonald also discussed the concerns about the use of the new Evaluation of Tenured Faculty policy. McDonald suggested the need for more communication about the process. It was indicated that those who should be concerned are the faculty who have not received merit pay for the last 3, 4, or 5 years. McDonald asked Dennis Jones the reasoning for limiting faculty at graduations. Jones explained that there is a limit of 1100 chairs on the floor and at the May graduation SFA has been pushing 900 graduates attending and 200 faculty. There is no more room on the floor for another chair. A committee came up with faculty only being required to attend one graduation. Jones did not recommend attending only one graduation but just to balance graduation attendance. The August graduation has had less faculty attendance. The Administration at this time is not interested in multiple graduation ceremonies.

Jones went on to report that SFA had 200-300 fewer students pre-registering. He estimated 7,000 students pre-registering by the end of the week. Effecting the numbers are that no students on probation can pre-register and Dean Speer said that TASP scores came out later so advising was pushed back. Jones also said 8.5% of pre-registering students used the web.

Senator Kandy Stahl asked if there was a \$10 fee tacked on for pre-registering by the web. McDonald replied that he would find out.

Chair McDonald reported from Roger Bilow, Director of Admissions, that if your department has any travel study programs or brochures that you post, they must go through the Admissions Office for a disclaimer holding SFA not libel for the program.

McDonald shared that the SFA '98 report will be out early summer. The deadline for materials to be included is May.

Mathematics and Statistics will pilot a new course, Mathematics and Society (MTH 215), in Spring '98 to substitute for a student's math requirement. They are also discussing to introduce a placement test for math to determine in which math course a student needs to begin.

McDonald announced that the Educational Testing Service has granted SFA as a testing site with the first test being offered in April. McDonald indicated that the GRE will be given and was not sure of what other tests. Dr. Sylvia McGrath will be recognized as Regents Professor at the December '97 graduation.

Chair-Elect Jimmi Rushing attended the November meeting of the Graduate Council. The Council approved a revision in the Overlap Program Admission section in the Graduate Bulletin. The revision allows an MPA student with twelve or fewer hours remaining on the undergraduate degree plan and who has been admitted for graduate study to be eligible for an assistantship.

Rushing also noted that the Council continued its discussion regarding a revision to the probation policy. The following revision was offered to replace a parallel statement in the current Graduate Bulletin: A student placed on academic probation and failing to restore an overall B average the following semester or summer session will be placed on academic suspension. The Academic Affairs Committee was asked to reexamine the policy and add a statement which adds an appeal process to the dean of the appropriate college to reinstate graduate students to probationary status if suspended.

Changes to the "Regulations for Graduate Faculty Membership" were reported by Rushing. In regard to Associate Member a statement was added to read: Appointment at or above the rank of assistant professor or equivalent\*. The note, marked with \*, would indicate "as certified by the dean of the appropriate college." There are a number of people coming into the university not as classroom faculty but administering programs that they may be teaching. They will be sitting in on committees such as graduate review committees so this would allow them to come into the Graduate Council as associate members. There was also a change in the privileges of an Adjunct Member to read: Serving as a member and/or co-director (but not as director) of a thesis or dissertation advisory committee.

Rushing said Graduate School application fees were discussed. Currently, SFA does not charge a fee for domestic student applications; international student application fees are \$25. The proposal is to institute a \$25 fee for domestic applications and raise the international application fee to \$50. This is equivalent to or less than the majority of Texas public universities.

Senator Lauren Scharff asked where the money would go from Graduate application fees. Chair McDonald replied that Dr. Jeffrey indicated that about \$15 would stay in the Graduate Office for background work and \$10 would come to the department for background work. One suggestion discussed was to let individual colleges institute a fee if they felt it necessary.

Treasurer Mark Simmons reported that the Faculty Senate account has a balance of \$3,272.00. A large amount of the O&M expenses include \$300 for membership to the Texas Council of Faculty Senates and equipment ordered in FY97, for which the money was encumbered and transferred from the FY97 budget.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Academic Affairs Chair Martha Sullivan reported that the committee was given the task to look into some formal recognition for the Regent's Professor. They are taking suggestions on what might be done. The suggestion was made that the Administration gives the honor so they should arrange the recognition. Sullivan also requested feedback on the proposed SGA bill on the attendance policy, in which students would no longer be penalized for not attending class and possibly be rewarded for attendance. One concern is that SFA is not a correspondence course university. If the attendance policy was passed as university policy, faculty could be held to it. McDonald noted that it was useful for the Faculty Senate to communicate with the SGA to build communication between the two bodies.

Senator Frank Codispoti, chair of the Professional Welfare I Committee, presented for second reading the Academic Freedom and Responsibility statement. It was moved and seconded that the Faculty Senate recommend to the Board of Regents that the statement be made policy. Senator Simmons did go on record as not supporting the policy. His concern rests with not introducing controversial matters in the classroom. In some subjects it is difficult to determine where the subject matter starts and stops, and this should be left up to the faculty member. Codispoti replied that the American Association of University Professors' guidelines includes this statement, and that there is already a statement in the Faculty Handbook. The question becomes can you as a faculty member justify what you use in the classroom. After further discussion the vote was called. The motion passed with one opposition.

Faculty Government & Involvement Committee Chair Lauren Scharff presented for first reading an alternative term limits proposal. The proposal will eliminate term limits including the chair. Since there is no true power, this will allow those that want to serve be elected again. The proposal will be voted on in the February meeting. It then will have to be voted on by the entire faculty due to a change in the constitution. The committee also presented for first reading a revision to the Academic Complaints by Students policy. This issue was tabled from last year. The revisions introduce peer representation for the faculty member(s) and student(s) and ends the process with the VPAA. Several questions were asked whether this policy would give students a better opportunity to challenge grades. It was clarified that the faculty member's judgment is not being challenged but the faculty's own rule or an university rule that can be challenged. After lengthy discussions Chair McDonald ask the committee to revise and distribute the policy to the senators for suggestions having a recommendation ready by the February meeting.

Rushing, chair of the Professional Welfare II Committee, presented for second reading minor changes to the Intellectual Freedom policy. Rushing moved to accept the changes and forward the policy to the Administration. The motion passed.

### ***OLD BUSINESS***

Again, the two new senators were welcomed to the Faculty Senate.

### ***NEW BUSINESS***

Senator Jim Howard presented a resolution that the Faculty Senate acknowledges and supports the fact that Stephen F. Austin State University faculty, staff, and administrative officers must comply with university policies. Chair McDonald called for a vote on the resolution. Voting 13-for and four-oppose, the resolution passed.

Senator Janie Kenner moved that the meeting be adjourned; Senator Florence Elliot-Howard seconded the motion. The motion was carried; the meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Sherry Williford  
*Secretary*