

**Stephen F. Austin State University**

**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
September 8, 1999 Meeting #286**

***Chair Jill Dumesnil called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. in the Hall of Honor of the Tracie D. Pearman Alumni Building (where the Senate will meet this year).***

Absent: Wilbur Clark Rebecca Greer (Excused: departmental duties)

***SPECIAL GUESTS:***

Dr. Miles McCall, Vice-president for Alumni Affairs, welcomed the Senate, on behalf of the Alumni Association, to the comfortable Hall of Honor. Dr. McCall said it was very appropriate that the Senate meet in a building entirely financed by former students, for them have been taught by the senators or their predecessors. Chair Dumesnil thanked the alumni association for its hospitality.

Dr. Mary Ann Blind, the Director of Instructional Technology, described services her office will be offering faculty and staff. Boynton 109, now being renovated as the Center for Instructional Technology, will be open to serve faculty and staff for about forty hours per week beginning around November 1. The Center will have a computer lab equipped with ten IBM-type PC's, four Macs, and abundant software, including some software not likely to be in departments. A Teleconferencing Room big enough for a small class will contain equipment for interactive video, video editing, and taping material for class presentations. Further information is available at a web site ( <http://www.oit.sfasu.edu/staff> ) and at 468-1010.

Dr. Violet Rogers, the editor of the SACS self-study Report, appeared on behalf of the director of the SACS self-study, Dr. Patricia Russell, to inform the Senate about the latest preparations for the April 10-13, 2000, visit by the SACS team. Its leader will be Jim Knight of the University of Virginia Medical Branch. Dr. Gloria Durr will chair local arrangements. Fortuitously, the Faculty Senate's April meeting is on the 12th, and therefore Dr. Dumesnil asked Dr. Rogers if any SACS visitors will speak with the Senate. Dr. Rogers replied that SACS visitors set their own agenda, and she did not know whether they would visit the Senate. Senator King thought that at the least they were likely to wish to meet with the Senate's executive committee. SFA's self-study for SACS is nearly completed. In mid-September limited numbers of a preliminary version will be distributed on campus, with three copies in the library for those who cannot conveniently read it in their departments. It will be lengthy--about 750 pages. By late December a final version will be sent to SACS, and that final version--but not the preliminary draft--will be on the World Wide Web for everyone to see.

Ms. Jennifer Sessions from the Blood Center addressed the Senate about the critical need for blood donations. Nationally, giving has declined 1% while need has increased 1%. Local hospitals use about 7,000 units per year. To help in this vital matter, the Blood Center and SFA are arranging the first Annual Departmental Blood Drive for Oct. 26, 27, and 28 in the Twilight Ballroom from 9:00-4:00p.m., and anyone who misses those days can still participate by donating at the Blood Center on University Drive. To stimulate the flow of donations, a trophy and some kind of party will be awarded to the department donating the most blood. In answer to a question from Senator Starr, Ms. Sessions said the award will be based on the number of blood units given, not units per capita; this should encourage departments to recruit donors from among students, relatives, and friends. Ms. Sessions reminded the Senate that a donation can cover a donor's family's blood requirements for a year, and she noted that one can donate blood as often as

every fifty-six days, and doing so can lower cholesterol. The Blood Center and SFA will also conduct a drive through SFA 101, thus providing another option for donating.

Dr. Janelle Ashley, Vice-president for Academic Affairs answered questions from Senators. In response to Senator D. McCune, she said that a preliminary count of enrollment shows a slight decline from last Fall. On the twelfth class day in Fall 1998 enrollment was 12,132; today (the tenth class day) the preliminary count is 11,948. Freshmen are down 55; transfer students came from 184 places in 1998; this semester they come from 172. The bordering areas of Louisiana and Arkansas sent 49 in 1998 and 20 this year, a decline probably due to Louisiana's instituting a major scholarship program to counter Texas's offer of fees lower than regular out-of-state fees to students coming from counties and parishes close to Texas.

***MINUTES of meetings #284 and #285, both on May 12, 1999, were approved as written, nem.con.***

***CHAIR DUMESNIL REPORTED ON SEVERAL MATTERS:***

Senators' name plates now indicate that they represent colleges, not departments. Each senator has been given a packet containing the Senate's constitution, standing rules, committee assignments, meeting schedule, and roster. The roster contains three vacancies. (See Elections Committee Report below.)

During the summer Dr. Dumesnil attended three meetings of the Academic Affairs Council: In June, the Council distributed the '03 Report' (which sets objectives for SFA for the year 2003) and a preliminary policy for guidelines for using the World Wide Web with university equipment. Members of the university community are requested to abide voluntarily by those guidelines which will be the basis of a soon to be formed university policy.

In July, the Academic Affairs Council received a list of policies scheduled for a normal three-year review. Dr. Dumesnil gave each senator a copy of that list. At its July meeting the Academic Affairs Council endorsed the report from the Undergraduate Admissions Requirements Committee. That report will be submitted to the Board of Regents at its October meeting for approval. Of note at the August meeting: 1) Announcement of a \$5,000,000 gift to the College of Business; 2) Announcement that SFA had purchased the ARCO property for a science research center; 3) Approval of a Masters of Public Administration degree; The Regents will be asked to approve it in October; 4) The university calendar for the next two years was set. Dr. Dumesnil, Dr. Ashley, and several senators discussed the calendar. Each semester there will be fifteen weeks of instruction and one week of exams, giving 45 MWF days and 30 TT days each long semester, thus meeting faculty complaints that in some recent semesters one or the other sequence was short of class days. The calendar puts mid-term days on Fridays and extends the last day to drop to the following Tuesdays. This is done to give faculty an extra week-end to grade tests and thus provide students a better indication of their class standing at mid-term.

Difficulties with a copying machine caused the calendars distributed to senators to be incomplete; corrected copies will be distributed by the next meeting. Members of University Committees are normally appointed by the administration from a list of nominees submitted by the Faculty Senate. Dr. Dumesnil is seeking volunteers for several committee vacancies. Volunteers should submit their names as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the week of September 13. Dr. Dumesnil urged senators to ask their constituents if they are interested in serving (and of course senators themselves may also volunteer).

***THE TREASURER'S REPORT was submitted by Senator Betty Alford. [A copy can be obtained from the Faculty Senate office (phone 1828)]***

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Academic Affairs Committee:**

The committee chair, Sen. Brian Oswald, submitted for acceptance two resolutions supporting recommendations of the Undergraduate Admissions Requirements Committee: Draft of resolutions supporting recommendations of Undergraduate Admissions Requirements Committee:

1. Resolved that: The Faculty Senate endorses the report of the Undergraduate Admissions Requirements Committee and urges the administration to request that the Board of Regents approve the Committee's recommendations.
2. Resolved that: The Faculty Senate asks the administration to convey to the Undergraduate Admissions Requirement Committee the Senate's warm approval of the committee's work. The Senate applauds the committee's prudent sifting among several possible options. The Senate approves the committee's choice of a compromise between staying with the status quo or attempting an imprudent revision.

Sen. Scharff seconded the motion to accept the resolutions; the Senate passed the two resolutions unanimously.

The Academic Affairs Committee submitted a resolution about reporting mid-term grades: Resolved that: Unless the proponents of the idea can provide significant research to support the premise that the reporting of mid-term grades will significantly improve retention, the Faculty Senate is opposed to the idea. The Faculty Senate asks the administration to direct the resources that would be required by it towards enhancing SFA 101 and other SFA programs that have proven to improve retention and academic success.

Sen. Tinsley seconded the motion to accept the resolution; the Senate passed the resolution unanimously.

Sen. Oswald reported on the committee's work this summer on three other matters:

1. The committee examined the idea, broached by a senator last year, of a "University College," a new college, which would deal with freshmen or students without a declared major. Among universities where "University Colleges" exist, such units differ widely. No one on this campus has yet suggested in detail how SFA might structure one, and the committee is not sure whether there is sufficient justification for such a unit. At the moment the Senate's Academic Affairs Committee is not able to make any recommendation on the subject.
2. The committee is very concerned about students enrolling in classes without having met prerequisites. There is a real danger of academic failure, especially for freshmen, now that students can register for courses by telephone or internet without being advised about prerequisites. The committee thinks the registrar's computer should be programmed to block students from enrolling in classes for which they lack necessary preparation.
3. The committee is concerned about how the GPA is calculated for students who repeat failed courses. Presently a student could fail several courses many times, eventually earn an "A" in each and graduate with an apparently perfect 4.0 The

committee is considering several options. Dr. Oswald requested that senators talk with their constituents about this matter and submit suggestions to him.

**Elections Committee:**

Barbara Heard-Mueller of the College of Applied Arts & Sciences has retired. Martha Sullivan from that College is willing to complete the two-year term. The Committee nominated and the Senate agreed unanimously to appoint Dr. Sullivan. From the College of Fine Arts there is a vacancy because Marielon Ratliff resigned from the university in May, and there is also a vacancy from the College of Education. The committee and Dr. Dumesnil will seek replacements.

Faculty Governance and Involvement: Brent Burt, chair of the committee, reported the results of a survey of faculty about departments' post-tenure review policies. Only thirty-three responded to the survey. The committee hopes each department will develop "reasonable and consistent" guidelines for post-tenure reviews. Departmental post-tenure policies are not apparently now in the office of the VPAA, but departmental merit policies are.

***NEW BUSINESS***

Whether the Senate should meet Jan. 12, 2000, the first class day of the Spring semester was discussed, and it was agreed to defer a decision until later this semester when we can determine whether a meeting then will be useful.

***ADJOURNMENT: 3:50p.m.***

Joe Devine,  
Secretary