

Stephen F. Austin State University
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2000 Meeting #292
(To be approved at the next meeting)

CALLED TO ORDER by Chair Jill Dumesnil at 2:35 PM

Absent:

R. Abel; J. Ballenger (excused); E. D. McCune (excused); T. Oswald (excused)

MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING were approved with these corrections: on p. 3, Counsel Clark for Council Clark; at the bottom of p. 1 and top of p. 2 of the printed copy: remove two duplicated sentences.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Chair Dumesnil:

The SACS visiting committee will present a preliminary exit report tomorrow, April 13, at 9:30 AM in the Cole Auditorium. All are invited.

Dr. Dumesnil attended the March 8 and 15 meetings of the Academic Affairs Council. Extra compensation is being studied for those who teach honors and linked courses.

The Campus Wide Information System Policy committee has submitted a draft report, copies of which Dr. Dumesnil distributed to the senators. The committee that drafted the report does not think there will be any controversy about it, but Dr. Dumesnil suspects there may be.

The office of Institutional Research has finished a survey of the opinions of 119 "native" students (i.e., students who did not transfer here) about General Ed. Requirements. On the whole they seem satisfied.

Concerning the systems question, deans suggested that instead of the Faculty Senate inviting systems representatives here, a small contingent of senators should visit systems campuses. Deans are divided in their opinion about systems.

Sen. Dumesnil reported on the Faculty Forum in March:

She does not anticipate meeting with the Regents' Academic Affairs Committee. She will tell the full Board of Regents about faculty concerns when she submits a report to them at their next meeting. Counsel Yvette Clark informed her that an Attorney General's ruling about employee briefings of employers will require that she submit a topical outline of her report fourteen days in advance. Sen. Sullivan asked for the reference to that ruling. It is JC-0169 and can be found by conducting a search at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/>.

Two or three senators did not believe that ruling applies to their chair's statements to the regents.

Sen. Dumesnil has e-mailed chairs of faculty senates at campuses that have been added to systems. Replies from some have come in, and the gist of them is that joining a system has brought more bureaucracy but not improvements.

Chair Dumesnil met with a SACS representative for about an hour and these subjects were discussed:

1. The faculty handbook's statement about academic freedom;
2. Promotion and tenure policies;

3. Academic freedom from administrative interference;
4. Faculty input on the policies and procedures manual;
5. The current policy of faculty signing evaluations of deans and department chairs. The SACS representative seemed surprised that evaluations are not anonymous.

Chair-elect Stahl:

Faculty reaction to the recent Faculty Forum was been very favorable. The Senate will organize more forums starting in the fall.

At a meeting on April 5, Drs. Smith and Ashley were interested in what the forum revealed about faculty opinion. Sen. Stahl reported that attendees wanted more information about the systems question before they formed an opinion. She told the administrators that faculty wished to know how a system might affect salaries, travel money, search for and retention of faculty, our programs, and the place of athletics in the university. Drs. Smith and Ashley noted that no campus had been put into a system against its will. In regard to salaries, they said our low 18.1-1 student-faculty ratio affects our salaries adversely. (Sen. Stahl wonders whether that ratio is up-to-date.) Faculty wished to have a faculty list-serve. Sen. Stahl explained the purpose of the list would be to post announcements to faculty; Drs. Ashley and Smith anticipated no problems with it.

The Chair-elect asked the VPAA and the president about February's ExCET.

Hispanics and Native Americans missed the necessary cumulative score, but their numbers were too few to be significant.

The 70% score for new test takers was not met by African-Americans or Hispanics.

Examination of cumulative statistics for this academic year indicates that African-Americans missed making the required 80%. Ten African-Americans are registered for the April 29 test; only two must pass.

The April test will determine whether or not the state assigns a conservator to guide our teacher certification programs. The July test is reserved for repeat tries.

Treasurer Alford reported \$3,365 in the Senate account.

The Senate has received a letter from a high school requesting a contribution for its graduation party. Several senators applauded the idea of a graduation night party which would curb celebratory drinking, but they questioned the legality and practicality of the senate contributing to it. Sens. Alford and Devine will draft a response.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs: Sen. B. Oswald brought to the floor for its final reading the policy on Cheating and Plagiarism:

BE IT RESOLVED:

Whereas, almost all students do their own work honestly and few are guilty of plagiarism or cheating, nevertheless because a small number do cheat or plagiarize, a university must have a just and consistent cheating/plagiarism policy. Because the Faculty Senate believes some changes and clarification are needed for the present policy, the Faculty Senate recommends these changes to the current policies on Cheating and Plagiarism (A-9.1) and Add/Drop (A-5):

The first paragraph in the current Procedure (A-9.1) suggests that the faculty member who accuses a student of cheating must also be the one who informs the accused student of

his or her options for appealing the accusation. The Faculty Senate recommends that the wording of this section be changed to reflect students' responsibility to know what the University Policy and Procedure Manual and the SFA Student Handbook say about cheating and plagiarism. Whether cheating or plagiarism have occurred can be a complicated question; the Senate believes it unwise to add to the fundamental issue of whether academic misconduct has occurred the second issue of whether the instructor has explained the appeals process to the accused student.

The senate recommends addressing the problem of students who have cheated and who then withdraw before the drop day with a "W" and receive no penalty. Presently, the "W" a cheater gets is no different from the "W" given to another student innocent of any cheating. The current policy states that if a student withdraws from a course prior to the awarding of a grade, mention of the infraction can be placed in his/her student record. We feel this is a meaningless sanction because only the diploma and the transcript are likely to be seen by third parties such as potential employees or professional school admissions officers. Therefore the senate believes there should be an option to place an "F" or "WF" on the transcript of an offending student.

Present policy states that cheaters' grades must be withheld, but also states that a student can withdraw from the course. A contradiction exists because an instructor cannot "withhold" a "W" which has already been assigned in the drop process. To end this contradiction, the Senate proposes that from the 12th day until the drop day, the instructor should have the option of awarding a "WF" instead of a "W" to a student guilty of cheating or plagiarism. The drop system should be changed so that from the 12th day until the drop day the instructor will be notified that a student intends to withdraw, and the instructor would then assign the W or WF; the policy would be to assign WF only because of cheating or plagiarism, not because of poor grades. An added benefit of this change in drop policy is that it would save faculty members the time and effort of preparing material for students who have withdrawn from class without any notification to the instructor.

These proposed changes would not diminish students' present rights to appeal any sanctions or penalties for cheating or plagiarism.

The policy was approved unanimously by all those voting; there were three abstentions.

Elections: Sen. Greer reported that requests for nominations to fill vacancies for next year have been mailed.

Professional Welfare:

On behalf of the committee, Sen. Scharff, who chaired the committee last year, presented a resolution to amend Policies E38A and E10A which require faculty to sign evaluations of deans and chairs. Last year the Senate approved a policy which would have had faculty sign a sheet indicating they had participated in the evaluation but without requiring them to sign the actual evaluation forms. Last year's senate thought requiring any signature would be as unreasonable as faculty requiring students to sign student evaluations of faculty, but it recommended, as a compromise, that faculty sign a separate sheet so that the "demographics" of the evaluators could be known. The Academic Affairs Council rejected the compromise. In today's discussion about resubmitting the proposal this year, several senators noted that, as far as they knew, on every other state campus faculty did not sign evaluations of deans. This anonymity was to avoid the specter of retaliation against faculty over tenure, promotion, and assignments. Chair Dumesnil said two campuses require authenticating signatures on an envelope, but not on the actual evaluations, and she recalled the surprise of the SACS visitor at our practice. Another senator said in the past our administrators were not evaluated by faculty at all, and, regrettably, in order to get any evaluation system, faculty had been obliged to accept signing evaluations.

Chair-elect Stahl moved to amend the proposal: Eliminate any signing, even on a separate sheet. Sen. Howard seconded. In the discussion on the amendment there was not disagreement about the virtue of the amendment, but several senators thought it would be politic to retain the compromise of a signed separate sheet.

The vote on the amendment to eliminate the separate signature sheet: YES: 12; NO: 6; the amendment was adopted.

The vote to submit to the administration the original proposal as amended (completely anonymous faculty evaluations of deans and chairs, with no signature sheet) was unanimous: YES: 18; NO: 0

Sen. T. Oswald's committee, having studied the Sick Leave/ Emergency Leave policy, presented the following for its first reading:

Proposed Changes to Policy E-47 Sick Leave:

Due to the fact that faculty may need to be excused from their duties for reasons other than a sickness, and due to the fact that faculty members do not accrue vacation time or compensatory time, amend Policy E-47 to include Emergency Leave.

Change title of the policy to: *Sick/Emergency Leave*.

Include the following:

A faculty member will be granted emergency leave due to an unusual, personal, or emergency situation that is not covered under the sick leave entitlement. To use emergency leave, a faculty member must show good cause for such leave and fill out a "Request for Vacation, Compensatory Time, Sick Leave Taken" form. The leave must be approved by the faculty member's Department Chair. This leave is to be granted with full pay. Sick leave accruals must be taken to cover the days used as an emergency leave.

OLD BUSINESS

The Survey of Faculty Opinion About the Presidential Search, which Sen. King wrote, will be mailed this week with a return date in early May.

NEW BUSINESS

There have been complaints that new modems for off-campus dialing into the network are not working efficiently. How can they be fixed? There may be a conflict of interest if university employees come out to faculty homes to fix the modems and expect to be paid. Sen. Sementelli advised the chair to report the problem to the CETAC committee.

Questions were raised about how Teaching Excellence Awards and other teaching awards are made. Practices vary in different departments. Sen. Greer: According to a member of the Teaching Excellence Awards Committee, that committee was endeavoring to solve the problem, and therefore at least one member of that committee saw no need for the Faculty Senate to also work on it. But the Chair thought it would be useful for the Professional Welfare Committee to study the matter.

Sen. Howard reminded the Senate that it was agreed by a past Senate, a former president, and an earlier Board of Regents to have a faculty ombudsman, but when Dr. Angel became president he was unwilling to have such an office. Sen. Howard thought the idea should be revived. The Chair said she would remind the Board of Regents of that when she gives them a report, and she asked the Faculty Government and Involvement Committee to study it.

RECESS: At 4:00 P.M. the Senate recessed. Senators whose terms extend into next year were excused, and the Nominating Committee, which is "composed of all outgoing senators," began deliberations to choose for chair-elect, treasurer, and secretary to serve during the coming year two nominees for each office. Adjournment of the April meeting will come "virtually" after the Nominating Committee e-mails its nominations to the senate.

[When the Nominating Committee's report is finished it will be added to these minutes and at that point the April meeting will be considered to be "virtually" adjourned.]

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Devine, Secretary