

Stephen F. Austin State University

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

2004 Meeting #328

March 10, 2004

Subject to approval at the April, 2004 meeting.

Senators present were: Vi Alexander Parker Ballinger, Joe Ballenger (Substituting for David Gunderson), Linda Stark Bobo, Leisha Bridwell, Sam Copeland, Alyx Frantzen, Roy Joe Harris, Tom Houston, Stephen Jeffcoat, Peter King, Gary Mayer, Darrell McDonald, Dixie Mercer, Lisa Mize, Brian Oswald, Beverly Reed, Dawnella Rust, Kelly Salsbery, Carol Scamman, Mark Simmons, Sarah Stovall, Gary Wurtz, Tracy Zinn

Unexcused absences: Ron Culpepper, Troy Davis, Cody Edwards, Jere Jackson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m. by Dr. Darrell McDonald at the Tracy Pearman Alumni Center.

GUESTS

PRESIDENT DR. TITO GUERRERO

Dr. Guerrero began his discussions with the Senate by asking for questions from the group. Senator McDonald asked why he intended to leave SFASU for the presidency of New Mexico State University. Dr. Guerrero answered that he had not pursued this job, but instead had been approached by NMSU. He stated that he was genuinely fond of SFA and was proud of the steps forward that had been accomplished during his tenure. The position at New Mexico was, however, attractive because it is a land grant university with more challenges, etc. On a more personal note, he also stated that since he had begun to pursue administrative goals in his career it was tempting to take advances whenever they were offered. Having said that, however, he reiterated that his talks with New Mexico indicated no unhappiness with SFA.

Dr. McDonald then asked the President to discuss his strategies for approaching the Legislature next year for more funding for the University. The President indicated that his highest priority would be working to obtain funds for a merit/equity salary increase. SFA is in the bottom third of university tuition costs. In order to fund the merit/equity raises, the University would be forced to raise those costs into the bottom middle category unless more money can be obtained from the state.

Dr. Guerrero stated that indicators point to a higher level of recruitment and retention for higher next fall.

Dr. McDonald thanked the President for his time and openness with the Senate.

PROVOST MARY CULLINAN

The Provost followed up on Dr. Guerrero's comments on retention and recruiting by pointing out that this is a critical time for the University. She challenges all of the faculty and staff to redouble our efforts to keep SFA's students in the University. The Provost is also placing emphasis on strengthening the community college recruitment connection so the University can avoid having a

very small junior class. Currently, most of her efforts are directed toward Panolea and Angelina Community Colleges.

The Provost also informed the Senate that the other part of the process of increasing recruitment and retention is data gathering. This process was begun this spring, and data being returned now.

Dr. McDonald asked if offering mini semesters has been considered as a way to increase summer enrollment. The Provost answered that it had, but that there was uncertainty as to how such a program would fit in with the budgeting and financial structure.

Senator Wurtz raised another issue with the Provost. He indicated that several students in the Music Department had received letters that indicated that they had been admitted to the University, when Departmental approval is actually required before admission is finalized. Dr. Cullinan indicated that the letter would be changed to correct the problem.

Dr. McDonald asked about progress related to altering the budgetary process. Dr. Cullinan answered that some progress was being made. The President firmly supports a more transparent budgeting process, and having specific personnel in budgeting in the Provost's office has been very helpful. Dr. Cullinan stated that the most troublesome aspect of her work in this area is that she had hoped that the entire university could work together as a team in order to set priorities, etc. However, at this point this may not be so important because the top priority is salaries and there is no money to allocate.

RICHARD BARNHART

Mr. Barnhart works with Instructional Technology Services, and has been involved in developing options with mySFA (especially surveying). He explained how the surveying options were developed and how they can be used by faculty members and by the University as a whole. He emphasized that the system is secure and can be mastered fairly easily. Dr. McDonald asked how much lead time is required to use the system. Mr. Barnhart answered that the system is up and running, and that he has been working with Senator Scamman to establish a system which would allow Faculty Senate elections to take place on line.

Senator Reed asked what kinds of reports can be generated from the data. Barnhart answered that reports included the number of people who voted for each option. The administrators will be able to see these reports only after the ballot has been closed. He also noted that the system has been very successful in increasing participation rate. A pilot project was conducted and got a 66% response rate. With the student elections, the number of voters went up by about 50%.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Scamman reviewed the hours that the Library would be open over Spring Break. She also announced that the Library is going to be having its annual user evaluation on March 22-April 4.

Senator Wurtz reminded the Senate that the time is approaching to develop a slate of potential officers for next years. He encouraged continuing Senators to think about volunteering to be nominated to serve.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Senator Frantzen made a motion to accept the Minutes for Meeting 326 as presented. Senator Oswald seconded. Passage was unanimous.

Consideration of the Minutes for Meeting 327 was tabled until the next meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Evaluation of Deans -- Dr. McDonald reported that he and Dr. Wurtz had met with the President and the Provost regarding the process currently used to evaluate the performance of Deans. Provost will take their comments under advisement for next year, but the process will not change it for this year.

Tenure and Promotion -- A committee has been constituted to examine issues related to tenure and promotion. March 12 will be their first meeting. Each Senator should collect and bring back any notes that were developed by tenured and untenured groups within their Colleges. Dr. Guerrero has committed himself to continue his investigation into issues related to removal of information from portfolios.

Work Load reports -- Dr. McDonald asked that if there were comments from your constituencies regarding work load these needed to be collected.

Summer classes -- The current structure for scheduling and teaching summer classes will remain the same. Fall will remain the time when Deans can cancel classes.

CHAIR ELECT'S REPORT

Dr. Wurtz reported that:

Conversation with the President and Provost -- During the conversations between Drs. McDonald and Wurtz and the Provost, the need to rewrite all of the handbooks was discussed.

Graduate Council -- Numerous new Graduate course proposals were submitted and most of them were approved by the Graduate Council.

Academic Planning Committee -- The Committee will meet two more times this semester. Budget priorities and a Provost's web page have been established. All tenure and promotion information will be posted on that website.

Salary Equity Committee -- Salary Equity Committee continues its work.

Academic Technology plan -- A draft of the Academic Technology plan is available from Dr. Randy McDonald.

TREASURER

Treasurer Senator Vi Alexander reported that the financial status of the Senate remains as reported except that \$300 state dues have not been encumbered. She also noted that Dr. McDonald's trip to a statewide Faculty Senate conference was cancelled.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Elections

Senator Stovall reported that the Elections Committee had worked in conjunction with Faculty Governance Committee to calculate the number of eligible voters and calculate how many representatives should be allocated to each college. The Committee also considered how many new Senators should be elected every year. Senator Stovall noted that there be a balance between the updated allocation per college and the total number of Senators every year. Senator

Wurtz noted that part of the problem is that people don't serve their full three year terms. Senator Scamman noted that the Senate would be rebalanced by 2006-2007 if adjustment of term limits were made for a limited time.

Dr. McDonald emphasized to the Senate that members should plan their class schedules around Senate meetings. A class is not sufficient reason for an excused absence from Senate meetings. Senator Scamman underscored this by reminding Senators that they are allowed only three unexcused absences before they are suspended.

Senator Scamman has asked for nominations and they are coming in at this point. The deadline will be extended to March 29. Currently, the following vacancies exist:

- Applied Arts and Sciences – 2 positions
- Education – 3 positions
- Fine Arts 4 - positions
- Liberal Arts – 2 positions
- Library – 1 position
- Sciences and Mathematics – 1 position

She indicated that there is a good possibility that Senate elections will be able to be conducted using mySFA.

Senator Mize then opened the floor for nominations to fill the position as Senator representing the adjunct faculty. Senator Jeffcoat indicated that he had truly enjoyed his experiences on the Senate, but that he felt like another of his colleagues should have an opportunity to serve. He nominated Ty Spradley.

Administration and Finance

Senator Rob Culpepper's memo was summarized. The Committee will work toward suggestions for a more transparent budgeting process. Senator Rusk is part of the strategic plan implementation committee and they were asked to establish priorities for funds. She encouraged any Senators who had ideas in this area to provide feedback to her. She indicated that now is the prime time for input, as the decisions are still being made.

Faculty Governance and Involvement

The Committee proposes an amendment to standing rule to establish the Faculty Governance and Involvement Committee as the body which is responsible for transferring names for the Senate Roster to the webmaster.

Ethics Committee

No report.

Academic Affairs

No report.

Strategic Planning Committee

No report

Professional Welfare

Senators should make sure that their colleagues obtain new course numbers for all classes which were traditionally carried as either 475 or 575. This will allow the faculty member to get credit toward the class. If the same class is carried as an independent study no such credit will be awarded. Karen Hall is the primary contact for questions regarding this issue. The Committee expressed its belief that a resolution should be developed that recognizes independent studies and provides compensation for 475, 575, 570, etc.

OLD BUSINESS

Senator Oswald completed a report on the tenure and promotion issue. This document was shared with all Senators via email.

NEW BUSINESS

Senator Houston asked if all the faculty members who were supposed to get merit raises last year see that carry over to the next semester, or if new assessments will be made. Dr. McDonald answered that it would be a departmental issue.

Dr. Joe Divine notified the Senate that there was a rumor that the Bookstore will be privatized. He asks that the Senate investigate the pros and cons of this arrangement. Dr. McDonald assigned this issue to the Professional Welfare Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to conduct, a motion for adjournment was made by Senator Houston and seconded by Senator Scamman. The Senate stood adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Dixie Mercer
Secretary