

# Stephen F. Austin State University

## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

2004 Meeting #334

November 10, 2004

Subject to approval at the #335 meeting.

Senators present were: Parker Ballinger(2), Chris Barker(3), Secretary, Linda Bobo(4), John Boyd(5), Mary Nelle Brunson(6), Leisha Bridwell(7), Debbie Bush(8), Troy Davis(10), Greta Euginia Haidinyak(11), Kayce Halstead(12), Roy Joe Harris(13), Jere Jackson(14), Tommy Matthys (15), Gary Mayer(16), Chair-elect, Brian Oswald(18), Jeana Paul-Ureña(20), Parliamentarian, Kelly Salsbery(21), Elton Scifres, (22), Treasurer, Sarah Stovall(23), Brian Utley(24), Michael Walker(25), Elizabeth Witherspoon(26), Chair, Gary Wurtz(27)

Excused absences: Deborah Dalton(9), Lisa Mize(17), Sue Ormsby(19), Julia Ballenger(1)

### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:31p.m. by Dr. Gary Wurtz at the Tracy Pearman Alumni Center.

### II. PRESENTATIONS

#### PRESIDENT DR. TITO GUERRERO

President Guerrero began his discussions by introducing his guests: Dr. Jerónimo C. Domínguez, Vice Provost of Extended University, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico and Dr. Jaime Ortiz, Executive Director of International Programs, William Paterson University, Wayne, New Jersey. Both gentlemen expressed the observation of the congeniality of students, faculty and staff, and community offerings. They also agreed that all universities share common problems across the nation; that we are not alone. They enjoyed visiting with Dr. John Moore, Director of the Strategic Plan '08.

President Guerrero gave a presentation to the Senate Finance Committee. It was noticed that other universities were scrutinized much more than SFA.

We have positive representation within the Senate Finance Committee. President Guerrero mentioned quite a few names that have a connection to SFA either through past positive experiences / relationships or having a child currently attending SFA, or they just prefer to express support to SFA because of its ability to adhere to standards and guidelines.

Retention rate for freshman to sophomore has jumped up 6%. Largest retention rate increase was among Hispanic students (8% leap). Demographics for African-Americans had a retention rate of 70%. Students of all ethnic backgrounds are coming from every regional district within Texas. SFA is competing with larger institutions in metropolitan areas for student numbers. SFA has had a steady number over 11,000 students for more than a decade. Performances of academic standards have also increased. This new freshman group has higher ACT composition scores at state levels and higher SAT scores for national averages. Interventions (contacts) are increasing with good experiences. SFA 101 has showed retention rates of 72.5%. We are currently waiting for numbers from the Academic Assistance and Resource Center. The conveyed message was to continue looking at the performance of graduation rates, persistence rates, certification tests, discipline scores (nursing lowest rate of attrition), to see how SFA is

servicing its student population. SFA still has high attrition rates for a university with fairly high freshman student enrollment

**Senator Wurtz asked how SFA did after all was discussed.** President Guerrero replied that he only gave testimony. Discussion and feedback was not part of the agenda.

**Senator Jackson asked were other universities "raked over the coals."** President Guerrero responded that he could not speak for other universities. He heard Texas Tech received some comments. Texas A&M was discussed because of their increase of tuition. Lamar Institutional Tech was hit because the Senate noted that they were failing to comply with the agreement to use under-utilized state businesses for state contracts. After so many years of this being addressed, Lamar still failed to remedy the situation.

**Do people understand that SFA is different from urban universities in that we can not schedule classes at any time of the day?.** President Guerrero noted that that is a weakness. SFA does well with county-wide points. Scheduling can be addressed and improved. We are vulnerable to the larger institutions because of the limited class hour offerings, but this can be addressed.

### PROVOST MARY CULLINAN

The Provost noted she did not have a lot to report. Her trip to Austin was quite an experience for her to be able to see legislation for the first time. The Provost apologized for not being able to meet with John Moore because both meetings coincided. The commitment with Strategic Plan 08 is still there, performing its role and continuing to matriculate information from the administration down to the departmental levels.

We are continuing to make progress with the budget process. Had a meeting with the President and the leadership team. Visitors were able to provide valuable outside perspectives. We are hopeful to begin a better budget building process this year in line for academics and to provide the support we need to do this. Despite our desires for our budget planning, legislature is a long way off from making any final decisions. The 5% cut is still being discussed and is something that we must consider on how it will be addressed. Every President wanted to know why. All are hoping that the Senate Finance Committee is aware of the possible cut and will realize how unpopular that would be. The Provost is unsure of how SFA will be treated by the legislature. The goal is to get the academic "word" out that SFA give the best academic experience.

Discussion of the campus-wide convocation for all new in-coming freshman will be enacted by having a formal welcome. This will not substitute for college enterprises. After having been witness to summer orientation, we want to see changes on how that is performed. Feedback from parents is valuable and positive. It is noted that SFA has one of the best freshman orientations in the state. However, parents do not get a good academic introduction. Suggested topics for the parents' session are student decisions, commitments, and how to survive the first year. After having met with Dean Rick Berry, the recruitment tactics are being re-thought. The focus should be on academics, but during orientation sessions it tends to take a back seat. They are also finding that students who attend the summer orientation are not committed to SFA and are planning their next visits to other institutions.

**Senator Stovall asked are you seeking for it to become academic, rather than a social session.** The Provost responded yes. Academics are just a minute part of the whole orientation. The only academic / administrative people invited to participate are the Provost, the Dean of Financial Affairs, and the Head of ROTC. We have very poor media and public relations to the parents. We need to work on establishing learning goals for them instead of conveying that academics are boring.

**Senator Salsbery asked what other mode is there to deliver, create expectations. A possibility could be to have smaller groups and discover the parents' philosophies. Many times freshmen have an unrealistic perception that attendance is not mandatory. Do the parents know that? Interaction with the parents and students together would help.** The Provost felt those were valuable comments and agreed that this does need to be addressed. Another point that needs to be discussed was how much outside time is required beyond sitting in the classroom. It is appalling to know how little time is vested with academics.

**Senator Ureña made comment that we also need to heighten the awareness of the many opportunities that are offered here that support academic endeavors, not just social activities.**

**Senator Wurtz asked what was the official statement regarding summer pay.** The Provost again appreciated the feedback that was sent. SFA will not be going to a stipend for summer pay. However, pay for the summer can not be finalized because of the threat of a budget cut.

**Senator Barker asked if SFA is committed to raising the bar for academics across the board.** The Provost believed, yes. It is difficult to speak on behalf of the Board of Regents. The Board has expressed concern with the decrease in enrollment. Any administration changes will not occur until they see more students at SFA. We are excited about the outstanding marks of this incoming freshman class. **Is the Board still supportive after the second year of the increased admission standards?** The Provost replied that they were. They were pushing for the higher academic standards and supported the Pathways program. This program is available for those who did not achieve highly on tests for major admittance to take remedial courses to raise performances. The Provost opened the floor for the Faculty Senate to propose a five year plan.

**Senator Wurtz commented that we currently have too much paperwork and are spread thin.** The Provost said that she would be more than happy to hear of alternatives. A good discussion was held with the department chairs on that same topic. P. A. R.'s are a burden. It feels like these demands are what should have been done because of SACS requirements, for example, the Faculty Activity report website. SACS is the one demanding these. Some departments have already begun implementing these changes because of their accrediting bodies. We want to avoid duplications. The Strategic Plan 08 is calling for program reviews. This needs to be done in a more meaningful way, right now curriculum committees are creating interaction with more issues and realize the paperwork overload. We need to become more streamlined and simpler. It is not my objective to sit around and think of meaningless jobs to assign.

**Senator Salsbery wanted clarification with the on-line evaluations. Is this mandated?** The Provost replied that this is not a mandate. We are hoping by fall of 2005 that this will be enacted. Some departments / colleges have already chosen to adopt this process. **What are the logistics? Some samples will be unrepresented and skewed.** The Provost replied that she is wanting feedback from various departments.

**Senator Wurtz commented that the students will have access to the surveys by November 22. These evaluations permit the instructor to add up to 10 questions of their own.**

**Senator Ureña commented on that students could have their grades held until the survey was completed.** Discussion was held that that could create negative feedback.

**Senator Mayer commented that students could fill out more than one form.** No, students are not able to do that. There is more opportunity for fraud with the hand-written format than the on-line. The Provost commented that we need to come together after more departments have implemented this.

**Senator Matthys asked if the evaluation scores will be automatically incorporated into the Activity reports.** The Provost answered that they will, therefore eliminating the need for paper reports.

The Provost thanked the Senate for giving her time to meet with them.

### FORMER SENATE CHAIR, LARRY KING

Dr. King reported the many comments and concerns that were made regarding the change of years for promotion in regards to the revisions in the Promotion policy. The promotion period from Associate to Full Professor was increased to five years. This will only affect new 2005 hires. Dr. King addressed the Senate for comments.

**Senator Boyd asked why change, it should be parallel to the other promotional terms.**

**Senator Salsbery asked why there are such strong feelings about this issue.**

**Senator Jackson commented that some deserve the promotion after three years. Yes, leave it at three years but make the promotion standards more stringent, base it on performance.**

However, three years may not be enough to be able to observe performance if one is already at the Associate Professor level. Should be at discretion of department chairs.

**Senator Matthys commented that three years is good. Even if denied, one can reapply. Upon the hiring, the new person should be told the timeline from the start.**

**Senator Wurtz wanted a summary of opinions. The people of the Faculty Senate would like to see the promotion period remain at three years. It was asked if a vote were necessary.**

**Dr. King added the comment that one can go up early for anything. Be careful making a policy that will fit every department, be sure to leave possibilities for individual needs.**

A motion to leave the number of years for being allowed to go up from Associate Professor to Full Professor as is was made by Senator Oswald, seconded by Senator Boyd. Comment was made. **Is there anything else being addressed other than the years?** No. Motion accepted.

### **III. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Fall picnic for University Men's will meet at Liberty Hall.
- Distinguished lecturer announcement made by Senator Salsbery. John Locks, distinguished philosopher, will be presenting on November 11, at 6pm. Apologized for lack of advertising.
- Academic Technology committee (Sharon Brewer) wants input on technology issues through Survey Monkey. She is very interested with advancing thoughts.
- LaTasha, the student worker, is looking for old copies of any Senate documents. If you have any please submit them to her

### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES #334**

A motion was made to accept the Faculty Senate meeting minutes of #334 by Senator Boyd, seconded by Senator Salsbery. No discussion. Accepted.

## **V. OFFICER'S REPORT**

### **a. CHAIR'S REPORT**

1) On October 14, he presented to the Board of Regents on behalf of the Faculty Senate. he described the passion of the Senate and reminded them of our purpose and how we function. He invited the members to attend a Senate session. He also reminded the Board that faculty are the reason that students come to SFA. Without the faculty, we are just an infrastructure.

2) He was able to meet with John Moore. He is a bright man generally concerned with helping SFA. We were able to discuss benefits of the plan that are limiting and facilitating our success.

3) Met with President and Provost about summer stipend pay, option retirements for those employed before 1995, promotional stipends, Dean Standley staying, paperwork complaints, and a cost break for employees.

### **b. CHAIR ELECT'S REPORT**

1) Asked for members to refer to the e-mailed report. Asked for a replacement to attend the Graduate Council's meeting. Senator Bobo agreed.

2) The meeting with the Provost about next year was very structured. Felt that SFA's biggest legacy is our orientation. It was discussed on how that can be improved.

#### *Chair-Elect Report for November 10, 2004 Faculty Senate Meeting*

#### *Academic items (topics and my comments) from October 20th meeting of the Senate Executive Committee with Dr. Cullinan (Dr. Guerrero was in Austin)*

1: Past resolution regarding a Review Committee to assist the Provost in evaluating academic administrators.

Bigger issue than just review of Deans. There is a huge lack of consistency in evaluating most at the Dean and up level. I took away from that meeting that a new resolution raising the committee idea again but also looking at overall review of administration/staff levels that impact faculty and academics would be a good thing. A more structured method of gaining input on the non-academic administrators is needed, and faculty should be part of the input since we are impacted by their decisions and actions.

2: Restructuring of Academic Units- what is the direction for the next few years? Nothing new, but the idea of a Graduate Dean was received well by the provost. We should pursue the idea and bring it forward as a resolution. This will take a few years to get in place, but now is the time.

3: Clarification of method used to determine pay raises for faculty and administrators. Deans, etc. were also in a 5% pool, but equity, etc. may have also been part of any pay raise. Dean raises ranged from 3.9% - 8.7% this past year.

4: Summer pay-stipends vs. past practice-this is getting to be hot issue. (See email from Chair Wurtz for up-to-date information on this topic). Elton's committee gets this one (with your permission Gary). He can ask Danny about costs for summer school, etc. SFA

needs the different Departments and Colleges to develop procedures for summer teaching slots, rotations, etc. We need to push for this, and the Provost needs it too.

5: Lack of academic notification regarding the Recreation Center's building location (tearing down the tennis courts). Athletics was notified. Academics was not. The provost was concerned that more communication had not taken place with Academics on this and will work to improve and confirm better communications.

6: Are we or are we not going to a higher level of Carnegie research. Yes, but Carnegie is changing the levels, so we may not meet the new requirements.

7: Communications. There may be an assumed transfer of information from the various committees and the faculty as a whole. This is not always the case, and raises concerns that the process is transparent. What can be done to better improve communication?

The posting of information bullets may be the best thing on communication we can hope for without adding too much work on the committees. I think this will be a great move for SFA.

**Senator Wurtz commented that the recruitment comments were faculty driven. We suggested ways to improve it, not how it can become another responsibility.**

### **c. TREASURER**

Finances are the same minus expenses for the cookies and drinks provided during the Senate session.

### **d. SECRETARY**

No report.

### **e. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### Administration and Finance – Senator Scifres

1) They have not met. The committee was charged with finding information about summer budgets and stipends. Not sure if this is a battle to pick.

2) OPR contributions, House Bill 264 was approved a couple of years ago. It gives institutions the ability to supplement those who were matching retirement contributions. It allowed institutions the ability to fund an extra 2.5% at their own will. Senator Wurtz addressed with the President. The response given was that it would cost a quarter of a million to do it.

#### Faculty Governance and Involvement – Senator Salsbery

1) Have not met. Discussion was held in regards to long term goals with technology. The campus going wireless was part of this.

#### Ethics Committee – Senator Mayer

1) Dr. Robert Gruebel (Physics department) was nominated up for the Piper award. We had six names submitted. One did not send paperwork by the deadline date.

2) The faculty discipline policy has not been reviewed. Will be discussed at next meeting.

#### Academic Affairs – Senator Jackson

- 1) The draft of the dean's review did allow privacy of comments.
- 2) Discussion with the Provost was in favor of a Dean of Graduate Schools position to be created. Discussion was also held with Dr. Jeffery. A University task force will be created on this issue. (This issue was brought up many years ago.)
- 3) Grade changing (regarding repeating courses) was not implemented. The Registrars office agreed yearly changing was not good. The Registrars did not approve the action.

#### Professional Welfare – Senator Davis

- 1) Faculty Handbook is to have a survival guide theme. The charge was not sent to the New Faculty committee, yet kept within ours.
- 2) Maternity / Paternity leave as requested by Dr. Johnston addressed problems that exist for new faculty who do not have enough years built up to claim leave. It was recommended to contact Glenda Harrington for further information.

### **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Web reconstruction progress is well under way with Roni Lias. Many ideas have been relayed, but Loni does not want to be the sole decision maker. LaTasha is trying to gather past docs to help Roni in posting old documents.
- B. Summer teaching policy brought up the question of, should we push departments to produce a written policy. The Provost demanded it. The thought was that this has already been done.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Promotion policy input as discussed by Larry King:
- B. Cost break for faculty dependents. The Chair commented that this was not a private agenda. The President at first felt this would be an illegal action. After researching the possibility, it was discovered it was not illegal. It is a money thing. Senator Wurtz suggested creating a program similar to Academic Excellence by allowing a maximum of \$3,000 per dependent annually. We need to research the needs for faculty. The Election Committee was charged in creating an on-line survey to discover the number of faculty and staff who have dependents that would attend SFA in the future.  
  
Senator Barker asked if there are dorm rooms going empty. Senator Wurtz replied yes, but everything given has to be paid for by the university.
- C. Faculty becoming involved in recruiting tactics.
- D. On-line evaluations
- E. Last year Senator McDonald created the "Outstanding Senator Award." Senator Wurtz asked the Senate for the approval to pay for a certificate / award be made and for this to become an annual event.

No reports from the floor.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business to conduct, a motion for adjournment was made by Senator Davis, seconded by Senator Oswald . The Senate stood adjourned at 4:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Linda Stark Bobo  
Secretary