

Stephen F. Austin State University
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2006 Meeting #346
March 8, 2006

Subject to approval at the 347th meeting.

Senators present were: Julie Ballenger(1), Parker Ballinger(2), Chair-elect, Chris Barker(3), Linda Bobo(4), Mary Nelle Brunson(6), Debbie Bush(7), Warren Conway(8), Deborah Dunn(11), Mark Guidry(12), Greta Haidinyak(13), Secretary, Kayce Halstead(14), Lu Yu(15), Wanda Mouton(16), Chair, Brian Oswald (17), Debbie Pace(18), Jeana Paul-Urena(19), Anita Powell(20), Kelly Salsbery(21), Elton Scifres, (22), Dan Unger(23), Brian Utley(24), Michael Walker(25), Elizabeth Witherspoon(26) Leisha Bridwell(27).

Excused absences: John Boyd (5), Deborah Dalton (9), Troy Davis (10)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Dr. Brian Oswald at the Tracy Pearman Alumni Center.

GUESTS

PRESIDENT DR. TITO GUERRERO

Dr. Guerrero introduced a special guest, Dr. Tomas Calvo Buezas, who holds the rank of an endowed chair at the university in Madrid, Spain. Dr. Buezas spoke for a few moments about his primary area of study, which is minorities, and that he is now doing research on immigration.

Dr. Guerrero discussed what he will be focusing on this summer, which is mounting a campaign for increasing student enrollment, and he invites the senate to join him in the effort. Because the base period begins in even-numbered years, the number of students we have for fall 2006 affects our revenue from the state legislature. If we grow faster, we will see more revenue in tuition and fees. He is gearing for a target of 5%, and has spoken to the Board of Regents about resources needed to fund a sizeable increase in graduate assistantships (\$300,000) which could improve our numbers there as well. He is also looking to improve academic scholarships—another gain of \$300,000. He hopes to increase the stipend for family members of faculty and staff. He realizes International scholarships need to be increased. He is also lobbying the BOR for a 3% salary pool for employees.

Chair Oswald wondered, with regard to the International program, what housing alternatives many International students will have when the New Raguet apartments are torn down this spring.

A. He wants the additional revenue to increase their student stipends, and move as many as possible into University Woods apartments which are across University Drive, and within walking distance to campus. The rationale for tearing down the New Raguet apts. is that upkeep is so high it is hard to justify keeping them. John Rulfs, Director of the Physical Plant, mentioned that the plan is to reinvest in housing across campus. Senator Barker asked if enrollment didn't increase due to raising our entrance requirements, should we continue to build? **A:** Some BOR members want to move ahead on housing.

Discussion ensued about: **1.** the building plans (Phase 2 is Lumberjack Village); **2.** whether we should perhaps wait to see if students can afford the new housing before building more; and, **3.** the timing for raising enrollment requirements (maybe in the fall of odd-numbered years). Senator Guidry wondered if the university knew whether the students displaced from New Raguet apts. would stay at SFA? **A:** Dr. Guerrero shares the concern that displacing the students might have an adverse impact. Then, Senator Dunn asked how many graduate students, students with children, and international students live in New Raguet?

A: John Rulfs estimates that there are about 24 international students, and the apartments are rented one person to an apartment. There are approximately 100 apartments in total, and about 20 families living there.

There is concern about what will happen if there is not an increase in scholarships. **A.** We need the resources to be serious about what we want to do. There is currently a 30% increase in the number of international students. The senate is concerned about the displacement of students needing affordable housing. **A.** Students can pool their resources and share apartments. Senator Bobo asked what the land currently home to New Raguet apts. will become?

A. The future of that property is undecided, but New Raguet apts. are too expensive to maintain according to administrators.

PROVOST MARY CULLINAN

Dr. Cullinan had the following items to discuss:

- Faculty handbook. She appreciated the work done by the senate committee and their recommendation for a standing committee who could revise the current handbook, and continually review it. She will pull a group together from various areas on campus. She is assuming we will put that group together for next fall.
- VP position for graduate studies—3 people will be interviewing on campus, and there will be an opportunity to meet with them.
- Chair Oswald asked about the 120 credit-hour program legislation —anything new? **A.** We can raise the issue with Commissioner Paredes when he comes to visit at the end of March. According to what she hears from colleagues at other schools, people are moving ahead with plans to comply with the policy.
- What is the update on the promotion policy? **A:** Dr. Rogers told her that the subcommittee is about ready to give a draft to the Policy committee, then there will be opportunities for input, and she hopes to get it to the BOR in July so we will have a combined tenure/promotion policy to use in the fall. There were no further questions.

Chair Oswald asked for a slight change to the agenda, so that he could let 3D/I give their report after the officer reports. He then introduced *Robert Hill, the Director of Athletics at SFA*

Mr. Hill asked for help and cooperation from the faculty. He believes we can improve the scholarship of student athletes, and we can win conference championships and raise the graduation rate at the same time. He, and his staff, are in the business of recruiting student athletes, and academics are very important to that process. He feels we can recruit a better academically prepared student athlete. In order to explain his cycle plan, he used a sports film analogy: the 1st quarter is academics; the 2nd quarter is athletic preparation, training, and competition; the 3rd quarter is graduation; and the 4th quarter is

giving back to the school. If we don't have graduation, we don't have giving back. Smarter athletes can give back more at the end of their college career. His staff probably contacts, in some way, nearly 1000 possible recruits each year, and recruiters seem to spend a lot of time discussing and selling the academic side of the university to the parents—who want to know what academic programs we offer, and what degrees we offer. He appreciates that so many faculty are willing to spend one-on-one time with potential student athletes. Although there is still progress to be made, 146 or nearly half of the athletes made a 3.0 grade point or higher this year. Through the NCAA, the Athletics dept. has acquired the SAMS software system, (Student Athlete Management System). It was created by A&M, and most of the Big 12 schools use it. This system allows faculty to quickly correspond via email with the Athletics dept. about any problems the student athletes are having in their classes. Mr. Hill also asked that colleges and departments send over to his dept., any useful program information that could be imparted during recruitment. He extended his compliments to the faculty for the support they provide to the athletic program. Senator Oswald asked about access to the Wellness Center by faculty and staff after the new Recreation Center is built? **A.** Mr. Hill hopes to expand the Wellness Center hours for faculty and staff, because student athletes could use the new Recreation Center for some of their training, although they will continue to utilize the Wellness Center too. Senator Urena asked whether faculty and staff will have access to the new Recreation Center? **A.** Dr. Guerrero responded by saying that because the Center is being funded by student fees, the school is obligated to charge a fee to anyone besides students who use the new facility. He thinks the cost may be \$120/semester. There were no further questions. Chair Oswald asked for any announcements. There were none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved.

Chair's Report

Chair Oswald had a few items to discuss:

- He announced scheduled events taking place in the next few weeks.
- He asked if anyone would be willing to write a resolution honoring Dr. Jeffrey, current Associate VP of Graduate Studies, who is retiring. Senator Barker volunteered.
- Three faculty members are currently working on the faculty survey commentary; when they finish, an electronic copy will be distributed to senators. A brief summary was sent to senators already, and may be shared with colleagues.
- Send any issues to Brian that need to be incorporated in the report he will be presenting to the BOR meeting in April.

Senator Guidry asked if the final survey would be going only to the BOR? **A.** Copies will also go to Texas Tech faculty senate and to the local media.

Chair Elect Report

Senator Barker reported on the following issues:

- Graduate VP search—as Dr. Cullinan mentioned earlier, three final candidates will be coming to campus soon.
- Core Curriculum committee—departments will have to have a plan in place by May or by next fall for how they intend to develop new assessment instruments for core courses—they will not need the actual instruments themselves until later.

- Asked for volunteers to be candidates for chair-elect position—and all other officer positions too. He will be knocking on doors soon.

TREASURER

\$3042. as of March 1st. We may have paid dues twice to the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. If that is the case, we are paid for a term in advance.

SECRETARY

No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs

Senator Walker and his committee were given the charge to review the policy and procedure for voluntary modified employment (VME). A packet with a copy of the policy (E54.1), a copy of a statement that prompted the revision of the policy, and a summary of TRS related legislation was distributed. One possible issue is a TRS requirement that states if an employed retiree is paid 50% of salary, the university must contribute 12.4% to TRS, so salary was decreased to alleviate the requirement. If the employee had been a Public School employee then the university has to pay health insurance. There is a cost burden to the university. The current policy does not prevent the approval of VME, but will be done so judiciously based on need of the department in consultation with the Dean. It appears clear, that these decisions will be based heavily on the cost burden to the university, and if academic courses can be covered by hiring adjuncts, there must be a compelling reason to retain faculty at ½ time appointments. Chair Oswald volunteered to contact Senator Davis (who brought the issue forward) and see if there was anything else the senate should do.

Elections

Senator Bobo led the discussion on two constitutional issues that require attention: 1.) determining who should be able to vote on faculty matters, which may require changing the definition of “voting members” in the constitution to reflect more inclusion; and 2.) changing the name of the College of Forestry to reflect the addition of Agriculture. Since these items can be taken care of either through a vote or a petition, Chair Oswald suggested that she poll the senators electronically, and we can try to have the vote completed for these items before the April meeting. Senator Bobo also plans to send nomination forms out electronically to the various colleges asking for candidates to run for senate.

Administration and Finance

Following up on the information regarding athletic spending that his committee distributed at the last meeting, Senator Scifres said that he had received no response to his request that senators email him their concerns or questions, so he decided to come up with some questions on his own. He distributed the list of questions, and again, asked for our input—reminding the senate that this is a chance for us to request a meeting about an ongoing issue that has concerned the faculty for many years.

Faculty Governance and Involvement

The faculty survey was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Ethics Committee--No report

Strategic Planning Committee--No report

Professional Welfare--No report

Academic technology--No report

Two representatives of the Houston based 3D/I Company were introduced. 3D/I won the assignment to do a full-scale campus plan for the future. They have met with deans, and plan to meet with various groups on campus. They asked that the senate give them time for a participatory workshop—which would take about 1 and ½ hrs. There was discussion as to when to hold the workshop and it was decided that since next month we have not arranged for any speakers, we can expedite officer reports electronically, and use the regular meeting time on April 12th. Senator Guidry asked what happens with all the collected responses? **A:** The company is looking for repetitive themes, concerns and issues. They want to determine the future purpose for facilities. They anticipate producing a raw document with the information they gather. Senator Bridwell wondered how decisions were made regarding the new tennis courts and new student recreation center—because their construction has caused a parking problem for faculty in Human Sciences. **A:** There is a plan for more parking which should alleviate that problem. Senator Conway asked about current construction—what plan is it under? **A:** A plan was devised in 1997—but at that time, many of the housing projects had not been proposed; although, the new recreation center was in an earlier plan. Senator Scifries asked if the BOR is committed to the creation of this new plan? **A:** Yes, they are committed.

Senator Conway wondered what the plan is for the space now occupied by New Raguet apartments? **A:** Mr. Rulfs responded that the location was part of an original plan for new housing. Our residence halls are quite old-fashioned and outmoded compared to many on other campuses. They may be a detriment to attracting students to SFA. Senator Urena asked if there was any thought to building housing for the international students, or the non-traditional students who can't drive and can't afford to live far from campus? **A:** There has not been any specific thought given to this situation, but by participating in these workshops, these kinds of concerns can be brought forward. Senator Guidry asked if the New Raguet apts. have lost money? **A:** Mr. Rulfs doesn't know how full they are. They are old and in need of a new roof (\$500,000), and they may break even at best.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Oswald plans to revise the draft of the wellness center resolution. Dr. Guerrero had a tour of the Wellness Center and was informed of its history. The equipment being purchased is geared toward the athletes—not so much to the middle-aged faculty and staff. More discussion took place regarding the demolishing of New Raguet apartments, and hardship it will cause the international students—especially since we claim to be building that program. Chair Oswald asked Senator Guidry to write a draft resolution regarding the issue.

The point was made that SFA is the only school in Texas where students are required to live on campus for 60 credit hours.

There was discussion regarding the million dollars from the general fund for the baseball complex, and issues raised about both the new baseball and equestrian programs. A resolution will be drafted concerning these programs. Chair Oswald said there is no word on merit raises until BOR approves the budget at a later meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Senator Utley, and seconded by Senator Guidry. Meeting adjourned at 4:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayce Halstead
Secretary