

**Stephen F. Austin State University  
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
2006 Meeting #350  
September 20, 2006**

Subject to approval at the 351st meeting.

Senators present were: Norjuan Austin(1), Julia Ballenger(2), Joe Ballenger(3); Chair, Chris Barker(4); John Boyd(5), Deborah Bush(7), Linda Calvacca(8), Deborah Dunn(10); Chair-Elect, Mark Guidry(12); Gina Haidinyak(13); Secretary, Kayce Halstead(14); Kevin Langford(15), Perry Moon(16), Wanda Mouton(17), Jeana Paul-Urena(19), Anita Powell(20), Karen Price(21), Elton Scifres(22), Sally Ann Swearingen(23), Mark Turner(24), Dan Unger(25), Brian Utley(26), Michael Walker(27); Treasurer, Elizabeth Witherspoon(28).

Excused: Mary Nelle Brunson(6), Debbie Pace(18); Jeanie Gresham(11)

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair Chris Barker at the Tracy Pearman Alumni Center.

**Guests**

President Dr. Baker Pattillo

Dr. Pattillo was appointed SFA President on July 12, 2006. He has had some good discussions with Chris Barker and Mark Guidry and plans to visit each senate meeting if he is available. He has been in Austin several times already, meeting with the legislature. He is delighted with Fall enrollment—a 3% increase. He appreciates faculty time spent with parents, and saw lots of academic involvement this year. He addressed the following concerns:

- Compensation--he hopes salary adjustments for both faculty and staff can be made for Spring semester, and that a campus-wide announcement can be sent before the holidays. He has discussed it with the BOR and has their assurance that they will support it if he recommends it.
- Technology is an area he had not been directly involved in. He doesn't have answers right now about what will happen, but he will make a decision after he has time to think about it and meet with the people who are involved in technology and related issues. He has met with Tiffany Evans and Bill Wagner. He has met with Craig Wood, Department Chair of Computer Science. He wants to meet with the VPs, and with Randy McDonald in OIT. Then he will make a decision about carrying a policy recommendation to the October BOR meeting. He wants assurance that academics have had a chance to air views, and he won't bring a recommendation if there is not good buy-in from faculty. A decision has not been made as to whether the Technology committee should continue or be restructured. He is someone who wants to compromise whenever possible, and make sure that all parties have been heard.
- Funding. Recently, he has been to Austin to testify before the legislature on this issue. We are funded on a biennium basis. For many years, historical data was used to determine funding. Now funding is based on 25% historical data and 75% actual cost; and gradually moving to funding based on 100% of what actual costs are on a semester-hour basis. SFA does very well on this system, as do many of our sister institutions.

The majority of people strongly support leaving the system as it is—even the UT chancellor testified that it is probably the best system, although it is not to their advantage. The legislature feels that higher education is too expensive. Tuition deregulation allows each university to charge what they want, in addition to the \$50 /per semester-hour set by the legislature. State senators feel they may need to set a flat rate. There are questions of course-fees and how they are set. There will be an impact on us, depending on the outcome of these discussions.

- President's house. The Pattillos are not yet moved in. They have been over to look around, but some work is being done, so the house is not quite ready yet. He wants to invite people to come to the house—just to see it. He intends to invite the Faculty Senate for a social event of some kind.

**Q:** Senator Moon asked if there is consideration by the legislature for a flat tuition fee no matter how many hours a student takes? **A.** He doesn't know whether that is being considered.

**Q:** Senator Moon wondered whether summer enrollment was down across the state—and how are other schools faring this Fall? **A.** The comment he heard was that most school enrollments were down—in some cases due to the hurricanes last year. SFA 's increase was quite a shock compared to other universities who were testifying before the legislature.

### Provost Dr. Marlin Young

When Dr. Young served as interim VP, and then as Associate to the Provost, he thought he was done, until he was asked to serve with Dr. Pattillo. He sees it as a challenge, and knows it will be a busy year. The challenges he addressed are:

- Core assessment is supposed to occur every 5 years. Larry King is chairing the committee whose assignment is determining a method of assessing the learning objectives of the core courses.
- 120-hour degree program situation: We are one of only a few institutions working seriously on it now. Programs in Science and Math have been addressed and approved by the Deans' Council. He thinks the Environmental Science program has also been approved. It will be difficult for Fine Arts and Education. If we can justify going over 120 hours in some programs, the Coordinating Board will be somewhat tolerant. We must do something to reduce the program, and it will have to affect electives. Austin is telling us to get the student in and out and do it quickly. We should not only look at assessment of core, but also at other courses in the curriculum we can use for the core. A Philosophy course was added, and Greek and Latin were approved. A Core Curriculum committee was recommended back in 1998 that would include representatives from each college and three appointed by the VP of Academic Affairs. It never came into being for some unknown reason.
- Technology is an area where faculty must have input. When the computer replacement policy was going to the BOR, he was opposed because there had been no opportunity for input from faculty. Since then, there have been open forums to discuss it, and changes have been made, but we can't force through a policy in technology without an opportunity for faculty input.
- Plans are in the works to relocate OIT to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Steen library. The Teaching Excellence Center is already there. SACS told us we must do a better job of advising, so that office may possibly relocate to the library.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year experience for freshman was done simply last year. We may need to do more. He wants to continue the program.
- Tenure and promotion policies. The tenure policy has been revised, but promotion is still in the working state. There has been talk of meshing the two, but he thinks that is a

mistake. Some people may not be ready for promotion but need to apply for tenure. There are other policies needing attention in the areas of reporting structure and department chairs and their various responsibilities.

- Two dean searches are going on. One in the area of Liberal and Applied Arts, and the other in Fine Arts. He feels strongly that faculty input is required in all that is going on, and welcomes faculty views and opinions. He wants faculty placed on committees from Academic Affairs.

A period for questions and answers followed Dr. Young's remarks:

**Q:** Senator Dunn asked if any other schools feel that the 120-hour requirement will go away, or whether they will be petitioning for more hours in their programs? **A.** Dr. Young thinks that it is here to stay, and in fact, very soon someone from the Coordinating Board will be here to work with the College of Education in an effort to reduce their program hours. In all cases, an effort must be made to reduce hours, otherwise we could be punished.

**Q:** Senator Turner asked if the core will be reduced? **A.** No, it won't be reduced, and there can be no more than 42 total hours in the core.

Senator Guidry wondered if changes are made to the core, does the Deans' Council have final authority on that decision? **A.** Yes, as he recalls, they have final say.

Senator Barker made a follow-up comment noting that if Deans' Council makes the final decision, and they are part of the administration, there is concern about a lack of faculty input.

**Q:** Senator Moon asked if Deans' Council is also the Academic Affairs Council? **A.** In the past, Academic Affairs was made up of just deans, but Dr. Cullinan made some changes by making the Deans' Council only deans and broadening Academic Affairs Council to everyone who reports to the Provost.

**Q:** Will Dr. Young keep that structure? **A.** For the time being. Dr. Evans (library) is a now a Dean. Dr Wheeler (graduate studies) will join the Deans' Council.

**Q:** Senator Moon asked about the timeline for hiring a Liberal and Applied Arts dean? **A.** Dr. Young hopes to have hired someone by end of Spring 2007.

**Q:** Senator Barker pointed out that SACs says 120 hours is the minimum for programs, so how will the state mandate affect our accreditation review in terms of program quality and depth? **A.** He doesn't think there will be a problem as long as we have justification for our programs. Of course there is much preparation to be done before 2011.

**Q:** Senator Walker asked if Dr. Wheeler was invited to the Deans' Council when he wasn't originally hired as a dean? **A.** He now has the title of Assoc VP and Dean of Graduate Studies.

**Q:** Senator Barker voiced a concern about the university technology committee. It looks at all technology issues and advises the administration. The problem is that it is stacked with ITS people and there is not enough faculty input. **A.** The committee started with 5 members originally, and they came up with a policy for computer replacement which did not meet with faculty approval. So it was suggested that the committee be enlarged. All other computer committees are dissolved. There was an earlier discussion of reporting structure for Chief Information Officer. Dr. Young thinks the position should report directly to the President or it will be seen as favoring one group over another. There is a need to find some middle ground to facilitate trust between groups. The whole idea of addressing the technology issue on campus came from one of the regents—partly as a means for replacing computers regularly and saving money if possible.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Barker distributed a list of committee assignments with the comment that it is a tentative list and possible changes could be made.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from meeting # 348 held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> were approved as written. Minutes from meeting #349 also held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> were approved as written. In both instances, the motion to approve was made by Senator Boyd, and 2nded by Senator Witherspoon.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Chair's Report

Chair Barker is a member of the Computer Replacement Policy committee. This policy has been a very contentious issue. Originally, the policy came down already formed with the intentions of using a single vendor to replace computers every four years, and to eventually get rid of Macs. The news created a reaction, which led to a heated open forum meeting this summer. Faculty were extremely dissatisfied with the policy, and it was suggested that the committee be expanded to include faculty representatives. Meetings have been held on Fridays to hammer out a new policy which now states that PCs will be replaced on a 4-year rotational basis and Macs will be replaced on 4-yr basis. The single vendor idea is still an issue. There is a question as to whether any significant savings will be made by using a single vendor, and although there are still issues to be ironed out, things are looking more reasonable now. A base configuration has been specified at a cost of about \$1300. More robust computers can be acquired if the department will pick up the difference in price. Presumably, the money for computers will not come out of departmental capital equipment money. It is still a work in progress, but is looking much better in terms of faculty concerns.

**Q:** Senator Walker heard a rumor that we have site license for XP but Dell won't sell us a computer unless we pay for XP again. **A.** Chair Barker had not heard that.

**Q:.** Senator Guidry asked if the department pays for computer upgrades beyond \$1300? **A.** Yes.

**Q:** Senator Moon asked if we are currently spending \$1300 for computers we replace? **A.** He would not think so. ITS thinks we would get a better discount if we buy lots of them at once, and we'd get higher quality computers. Senator J Ballenger said it is her understanding that computers wouldn't have to be given up if the person didn't want to. Other questions included: Are we the only university that has not gone to centralization? Has a survey been taken of other universities? We need to ask questions of the committee.

Barker has asked Larry King to chair a special committee to study systems across Texas and report on the characteristics of each and which one might be a good match for SFA. He also plans to appoint a salary plan committee—Brian Oswald felt it would be useful to come to the Administration and the BOR with a plan of how to raise salaries. Brian chairs the committee. They met several times over the summer. They have analyzed money spent on faculty searches over the past several years. They are evaluating data from a Salary Equity committee that was formed several years ago, in order to come up with a plan.

### Chair-Elect Report:

Senator Guidry has been assigned to the Strategic Planning committee and they are looking at nationwide trends that affect universities. They want to look at some trends that significantly impact SFA. He asked for feedback from the group. Some ideas mentioned were:

Reducing curriculum with a study as to how to adjust to it

Distance learning

Library resources---kinds of materials, and how we research and utilize electronic collections

No Child left behind

120-hour programs—how are other states being affected?

Senator Swearingen mentioned that some places are offering 5-year programs to earn a Masters by the end of 5<sup>th</sup> year

Program accreditation—availability of resources

Flat rate tuition—students pay flat rate and take as many or as few hours as they want—and what are the ramifications. TCU is doing it right now

Senator Guidry mentioned that during a forum in Liberal Arts this summer, several faculty were discussing ways to be taken more seriously by the BOR, and one idea was that more faculty should attend Board meetings. Seating is limited, but if more faculty come to the meetings—even if they have to stand--it will be harder for the Board to say faculty don't deserve raises.

### **Treasurer**

Senator Witherspoon reported that handling and spending funds is a very complicated process. She managed to get the refreshments delivered, and is paying dues. Question was asked as to whether we could get access to the Chronicle of Higher Ed. She will look into it.

### **Secretary**

No report

#### Committee Reports

##### Academic Affairs

No report

##### Professional Welfare

No report

##### Ethics Committee

No report

##### Elections Committee

No report

##### Administration and Finance

No report

##### Faculty Governance and Involvement

No report

##### Strategic Planning

Discussed earlier

#### Old Business

None

#### New Business:

The Ad Hoc committee for academic computing hadn't been doing much, but now there is something to study. Kevin Langford has agreed to chair the committee, and make sure faculty interests are being considered at all times.

There was discussion about various technology related issues on campus—not just computers. There is a question as to what technology committees are still in place and which have been dissolved.

Another topic of discussion is housing for foreign and married students or parents with children. Now that the New Raguet Apts. are gone, former occupants were told to move into apartments or move into dorms. Foreign students can't get outside jobs and don't have much money—and can't own cars. They are being forced into more expensive housing. Dan Norton was asked if he would be interested in this issue. He is discouraged about what is happening.

Sen. Swearingen is doing research on housing trends at other universities and would like to serve on that committee. Invitations were extended to anyone who would like to serve on any committees.

Can we ask for a report about the budget from the Controller, Dora Fuselier?

Elton Scifries had drafted some questions last spring according to Senator Dunn's notes.

He talked with Gina Oglesbee, and Danny Gallant, and maybe others.

### **Adjournment**

Senator Utley moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Boyd 2nded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayce Halstead  
Secretary