

**Stephen F. Austin State University
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2006 Meeting #352
November 8, 2006**

Subject to approval at the 353rd 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), Warren Conway(9), Deborah Dunn(10), Jeannie Gresham(11); Chair-elect, Marc Guidry(12); Gina Haidinyak(13); Secretary, Kayce Halstead(14); Kevin Langford(15), Perry Moon (16), Wanda Mouton(17), Debbie Pace(18), Jeana Paul-Urena(19), Anita Powell(20), Elton Scifres(21), Sally Ann Swearingen(22), Mark Turner(23), Dan Unger(24), Brian Utley(25), Michael Walker(26); Treasurer, Elizabeth Witherspoon(27).

Excused: Mary Nell Brunson(6)

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 addressed the following information items:

- The faculty/staff picnic held at the President's home was a success.
- The Wellness Center—questions were raised as to how faculty will be accommodated once the new Recreation Center is built and the Wellness Center will be chiefly an athletic training facility. Robert Hill, Director of Athletics, gave assurance that there are no plans to change regular hours or exclusive faculty/staff hours. He also stated there are no plans to update or change the equipment in the facility. Dr. Pattillo mentioned that there will be an option to buy a membership to the new Recreation Center and it will be offered as a payroll reduction.
- In a recent meeting in Austin with the legislature, SFA won the Coordinating Board STAR award for having the top university academic assistance program from a pool of 50 applicants. Robin Wright, Director of the Academic Assistance and Resource Center, gave the presentation and received the award. Two SFA regents were present to witness the honor. Robin is invited to the January BOR meeting.
- Dr. Pattillo and other administrative staff will be back in Austin soon to testify before the legislature regarding the official budget request.
- January 29 and 30 will be next BOR meeting.
- Dr. Pattillo asked for senate input regarding a mid-year salary increase for all faculty and staff. Should the increase be made across the board or be merit-based? Senator Moon mentioned that if the increase would be one-percent across the board, there would be little interest in applying for merit raises. Senator Julia Ballenger feels that merit is

important. Another option mentioned was to give everyone the same amount raise—not a percentage raise—which would be a greater benefit to those making the lowest salaries.

- A new building for Early Childhood education is under consideration. If funds become available in early 2007, Dr. Pattillo wants to be ready to hire an architect and get the project underway.
- The Christmas reception will be held on Thursday, Dec 14th.
- Commencement will be held on December 16th, with Congressman Louie Gohmert giving the address.

Q: Is the Birdwell building scheduled to be torn down? **A:** Yes, that space is needed by many departments, and no final decision has been made about a future occupant. There is a possible plan to turn the corner into a garden or a welcoming space for the university.

Q: What will happen to the outdoor pool when the new Recreation Center opens? **A:** The space may eventually be renovated for another department, but the pool should open this next summer.

Q: Will the new Early Childhood center/school allow for more students? **A:** Not sure at this time, but the new school will occupy a different site—plans are not final yet.

Provost Dr. Marlin Young

Dr. Young reported on the following issues:

- There is a serious lack of space, especially in three growing programs--nursing, theater, and music. There is also a possibility of an enrollment cap in those programs if space is not found. The phone jacks facility above Kennedy auditorium is also inadequate.
- Plans continue for the renovation of the 2nd floor of the library. The Teaching Excellence Center, OIT, and a central advising office will be housed there. We promised SACS that we would have a university advising center, and it needs to be in an open area.
- Graduate Admissions works on a shoestring budget. There is a problem with the graduate office admitting a student who has met a set of standards, and then having a department refuse to accept the student into its program.
- Graduate programs and productivity is a money demanding area, and goals need to be in order and hard decisions need to be made about which programs to support. We can't support everything, so we will retain some programs and cut others.
- We utilize many adjuncts in education. If the program is growing and we want to be recognized for it, we need to fund it adequately, and hire permanent faculty.
- There is \$903,000 in HEAF money set aside for computer replacement, and we need to do something with that money even though the policy is not yet approved by the BOR.
- We have new programs and online programs that have not been communicated to SACS or to the coordinating board. He is pulling together a list to send.

- Teaching loads were addressed in a new policy in 2005, and it goes along with overload pay—some people are not getting paid for overloads, while others are teaching very few classes and handling some administrative duties and are getting paid extra for that. The issue needs to be handled fairly campus-wide.
- Dr. Berry is picking up the First-year Experience program. He may get a student advisory council together to come up with some new ideas.
- A new program proposal for an Environmental Science PhD is sidetracked right now. The accrediting agency questioned some things that we need to resolve.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next faculty senate meeting will be the 1st Wednesday in December because final exams are given the following week.

Chair Barker mentioned a letter he received from the Texas Association of College Teachers (TACT) requesting membership dues. The letter states the main goals for the year, and the number 1 issue is repeal of the 120-hours rule.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Senator Dunn moved for approval of minutes. Senator Haidinyak 2nded . The motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chair's report

- Chair Barker asked Senator Boyd's committee to look into an additional issue—whether faculty at other universities have representation on Boards of Regents. Senator Dunn wondered if that idea had been raised before, but no one remembered. There is a student rep on BOR who does not have voting power, but even having a faculty member on the BOR to offer advice might be helpful. Discussion was both pro and con for the idea. Barker's idea would be for the senate to recommend a representative.
- He also wants to get information from the administration and finance committee about what the average graduate stipends are at other institutions across the state. He will present the information to the BOR.
- He mentioned establishing a communication link with the rest of faculty. Some senators report to their college about the senate meetings, and he would like to create a short summary to send out to the colleges.
- Handouts pertaining to faculty salaries in disciplines, and SFA's faculty salary ranking among Texas Public Universities were distributed and discussed.
- Space utilization is a problem. Some disciplines are extremely crowded, and elsewhere classrooms are sitting empty a good part of the day. Someone remembered a survey taken last year regarding the space issue. Chris will check with Brian Oswald to see if something has already been done.

Chair elect No report

Treasurer No report

Secretary No report

Academic affairs Senator Walker reported on faculty workload distributions across departments. After contacting Karen Hall in Institutional Research who said that such a report couldn't be generated quickly, he submitted an official request for a report. In the meantime, he sent an email request to chairs on campus and got 11 varied responses. Seven gave an indication of workload, while some expressed concerns about what would be done with the data. Two departments indicated they rarely have overloads, but when they do, the faculty are well compensated. Several departments indicated that they manage well enough so that they don't have overloads very often. Overall, a third of the chairs responded in some way and a third of those say they have substantial overloads. He was glad to hear that Dr. Young thought there were inequities across departments.

He asked whether he should follow up, or wait for what may filter in from the chairs. It was decided that he should submit a report at the next meeting using the information he has.

Professional welfare Senator Utley's committee has not met, but members have shared some ideas concerning their charge, which is to look at possible ways new faculty could be paid earlier than October. He asks that if anyone has any experience with this situation, please email him.

Ethics No report

Election No report

Administration and finance No report

Faculty governance and involvement No report

Old business

None

New business

Chair Barker received a letter from Emily Taravella, a writer for the Daily Sentinel who wants to write an article with the theme "progress at SFA" She is interested in writing about the accomplishments of faculty—not necessarily awards, but strides made in research, new or improved programs, and efforts made to attract and retain students. Chair Barker will circulate the email he received from her. People can talk to their colleagues and respond directly to her. Chair Barker asked if everyone had seen the E9 policy on compensation. He had been asked if the policy had faculty input or had been vetted with the faculty senate. He will check on those questions. There was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Senator Pace, 2nded by Senator Julia Ballenger. Meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kayce Halstead, Secretary