

**Stephen F. Austin State University
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2006 Meeting #353
December 6, 2006**

Subject to approval at the 354th meeting.

Senators present were: Norjuan Austin(1), Julia Ballenger(2), Joe Ballenger(3); Chair, Chris Barker(4); John Boyd(5), Mary Nelle Brunson(6), 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), 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).

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:

He thanked people for attending the luncheon he and Mrs. Pattillo had hosted for the Faculty Senate earlier that day.

He mentioned a guest on campus who was the former Press Secretary and legislative assistant for Senator Staples, and who plans to stay on and work with Senator Nichols. She is a graduate of Abilene Christian, has worked in Washington, and specializes in education matters. She was here gathering some specific information about our budget requests.

He was in Austin recently with Drs. Berry and Young, testifying before the Senate Finance committee. Four schools testifying that day were: Texas Southern, SFA, Midwestern State University, and TWU—the 4 remaining independent schools. There was much discussion and debate with TWU and Texas Southern. SFA was the second school to testify, and we were fortunate to get just one question—Senator Zaffirini (Chair of the Subcommittee on Higher Education), asked if it would be difficult to continue with our goals if we don't receive the interest on the bond? Dr. Pattillo answered that it would be devastating, but we feel confident we will get the principal and the interest because she (Zaffirini) will make sure the money is available for higher education.

The House has not begun officially, but he has received a phone call from a staffer asking that he and all presidents be in Austin right after the 1st of January to discuss budget issues at a hearing.

Regarding finding a replacement for Dr. Holbert, former VP for University Advancement, Dr. Pattillo has named Jill Still the Executive Director of the foundation, but has not changed her position in the Advancement office. Although he has made several appointments internally, he feels that the an outside search is needed to fill that position, and because he thinks it would be

difficult to find someone willing to come here to work for an interim president, he has tabled the issue for the time being.

A number of people have inquired about football coach, Robert McFarland, leaving SFA to join Gene Chizik at Iowa State. The two are best friends and had coached together here and in Florida. Coach Chizik has a big budget and made a substantial salary offer, and McFarland had to make the best decision for his career and his family. It is recruiting season and the end of the semester—a critical time. The job has been posted and must be listed for 10 days, and coaches are calling. Robert Hill will do the initial screening and narrow the field to 6-8 people. Then, he and Dr. Pattillo will narrow the applicants to three finalists, who will be recommended for consideration by the BOR. It may be possible to name someone before the holidays.

Dr. Pattillo will recommend mid-year raises in the form of a merit pool. Deans and department heads will make the decisions regarding how raises are meted out. There will be a BOR meeting on December 15th at which he will make the presentation—he doesn't want to wait until the January meeting. He will recommend for a pay raise starting on January 1st. A 1% raise equates to \$400,000. Danny Gallant is looking for the money in the budget, and a raise means that other things won't be done. He intends to send a memo out to all staff before the holidays.

With regard to the computer replacement policy, he wanted input from several people before he made a recommendation, so he will wait until the January BOR meeting. He understands the need to replace computers now, and may release some money before the holidays to be apportioned in emergency situations by Dr. Young and Dr. Berry.

He mentioned the consultant on technology he brought in last week, Doug Fox, the CIO at Angelo State. He is recognized as a top CIO in the state, and Dr. Pattillo wants his advice as someone from outside the university who specializes in technology matters. Mr. Fox spent 3 days here, and Dr. Pattillo has not had a chance to talk to him since he finished, because he's been out of town. He will talk with him at a SACS meeting they will be attending next week.

Senator Joe Balenger asked Dr. Pattillo to consider lowering the parking permit cost, and providing lower cost meals for faculty—something that is done at many universities. Dr. Pattillo will consider both items.

A question was raised about a recent press release concerning Bo Pilgrim park and its proposed economic impact on the community. Dr. Pattillo summarized what had occurred over the past few years with fundraising for the baseball park. Currently the responsibility lies with Robert Hill in the Athletic Dept. 2.5 million (est. 25%) must be raised for the project to go forward. When other universities were approached for advice on fundraising activities, all recommended that the community should be involved; so a study was done which concluded that the park could have an 11 million dollar/per year impact on the community based on all kinds of teams and playoffs utilizing the facility year round.

Dr. Pattillo intends to try to raise the money for 1 year and then reevaluate the situation. He has made that clear to the BOR. The target date is January 1, 2008.

At a recent kickoff meeting, business leaders were present, and there was lots of enthusiasm for the project. Chances are good there may be someone who wants to make a commitment on the baseball field itself. Lots of naming rights will be available. That is where the project stands at this time.

Senator Swearingen asked what the Administration's position would be regarding a department trying to do some of its own fund raising? **A:** Run the idea by the advancement office.

Senator Moon asked how much money would be coming in to the University to pay off the millions in bonds? **A:** He can not respond to that—he does not know a number.

Senator Langford pointed out that while we appreciate the President's efforts in getting faculty raises, a 1% raise does not even keep up with the cost-of-living, and we haven't even seen an average 3% raise in years. Substantial salary increases are needed, as SFA faculty are nearly the lowest paid group in the state of Texas. **A:** Dr. Pattillo replied that he is not proud of the salaries here, but he is doing what he can now, and will share our concerns with the BOR.

Dr. Pattillo introduced Danny Gallant, Associate VP for Business Affairs, and asked him to provide a budget overview and explain why tuition has increased so greatly over the last several years, and how the money is being used.

Mr. Gallant described the various forms of revenue and how they can be used. Some major points were:

- There are 3 methods of finance—general revenue, general revenue dedicated, and designated tuition.
- General revenue comes from taxes paid to the state—state gives money to schools—legislative budget board estimates our tuition for later appropriations.
- We experienced a series of unfortunate events in 2003. Our general revenue (GR) appropriation for that year was 78.7 million--about 2.6 million above the previous year. We built our budget based on that amount, and then we had to give back 2.8 million. The problem was further exacerbated by a credit hour decline.
- In the 2004/05 biennium, our GR was reduced to less than the 2001 level, meaning we had to cut programs, raise tuition, or do a combination of both. We cut student wages, and staff/faculty raises were poor.
- Other problems started in 2004. Utilities increased by 1.2 million.
- E&G budget incorporates those who deliver and those who support the academic mission.

Q: Senator Joe Ballenger asked where money came from to give Dr. Guerrero such a big raise?

A: The funds came from more than one source.

Q: Does the BOR make that decision? **A:** The president makes recommendations based on Mr. Gallant's calculations which are based on department and deans' input. Multiple revenue sources are used to fund the overall budget.

Q: Senator Guidry asked whether the baseball program (apart from baseball complex) cost over a million dollars and if so, in Mr. Gallant's opinion, is that affecting the utilities costs etc., and is it what made salary raises so low? **A:** If we fund one thing, we can't fund something else. Yes, the program did cost over a million. **Q:** So without that program, could we have had a better raise by 2.5%? **A:** Maybe not that much, but....

Q: Senator Turner asked if we could have possibly avoided the series of unfortunate events that occurred in 2003? **A:** That was a statewide economy problem—not our fault.

Q: Senator Swearingen wondered if the university is looking into alternative forms of energy on campus—because utilities will keep increasing. Other schools are investing in energy saving methods that will pay off down the road. What is SFA doing? **A:** Don't know the answer because he doesn't work in that area—but there is an energy management system we utilize.

Q: Senator Urena works with students in study abroad program in the summer. She asked them how many would take courses on campus if there wasn't a study abroad program—only about 20% said they would. Prices have more than doubled on tuition and fees. Is there any way our students who want to study abroad could pay tuition and waive fees—since they won't be stepping foot on campus? **A:** There could be possible fees that could be waived.

Q: Who would make the decision? **A:** BOR.

Dr. Berry added that this topic came up and he called the Attorney General's office to see if fees could be waived, and the answer he got was that it depends on the language of the legislation and whether there is any flexibility or discretion.

Q: Senator Turner wondered if there was a way to make distance students exempt from paying certain fees? Who writes the bills, the legislators? **A:** Yes, there may be opportunities to ask authors of the bills to write flexibility into the legislation.

Senator Scifries asked whether in raising money for the baseball park, had we done estimates of debt service? **A:** Yes, it would come from an administrative decision. We can't use general revenue or GR dedicated. Designated tuition could be used—but that raises concerns. The only discretionary revenue source we currently have is designated tuition.

Q: How much are we money are we looking at? **A:** Possibly \$12 to \$16 million.

Chair Barker asked how salary raises would be funded now? **A:** The actual revenue is good enough to cover it.

Senator Moon asked how we compare with other schools in terms of tuition and fees? **A:** We are at about the same level as Texas Tech—somewhere in the upper third.

Provost Dr. Marlin Young

Dr. Young addressed the following items:

We have to face some hard questions. Our student/faculty ratio is 18:1. In terms of class size, we have 460 sections with less than 20 students this semester. Are we willing to teach more classes and raise the faculty/student ratio? We have to bite the bullet somewhere. Academics shouldn't have to make the sacrifice alone. Other divisions should have to give up something too, i.e. athletics, physical plant, etc. He will tell the academic deans that we have to balance better. He mentioned statistics showing we had a ...(?)... with less than 20 students and 8.0 with more than 50 students, which puts us in 21st place out of 35 institutions.

Q: Senator Swearingen asked how lab classes are represented because often class size is limited by the available seating or work stations in the room. **A:** These statistics should include those.

Q: Chair Barker remarked that in the sciences, enrollment can't be opened up for more students in the credit-hour courses because they are limited by having too few graduate assistantships to be able to offer more lab sections. **A:** We need to bring this up with the graduate dean. Space utilization has improved especially in the lab area--but it is still a problem.

Dr. Berry mentioned a national initiative, Colleagues Committed to Course Redesign *CCCR* who look at redesigning a course with two goals in mind: (a) to make it more economical, and (b) to enhance its effectiveness. It may be something we want to look at for some courses on campus, or maybe become involved in a pilot study. We could realize some cost savings, but more importantly, educational objectives are met at a higher level.

Chair Barker observed that our lower student/faculty ratio has been used as a selling point for SFA. Should we sacrifice a good quality like that when part of the faculty salary problem is that money is being used for things like baseball and buildings? **A:** Dr. Young feels that if the BOR gives him an amount of money to work with, along with some incentive to improve the student/faculty ratio, and better utilize the faculty; any money saved by economizing should remain in academics, and not be moved to another budget area.

Senator Langford felt it would be significant to look at the number of classes with over 80 students because in order to compensate for faculty shortages, the biology dept. has temporarily solved the problem by increasing class sizes to 100-150 students, which bumps up the teaching load credits.

(short adjournment)

Announcements

Chair Barker reminded everyone of the Dec 15th BOR meeting concerning bond issues and the growing debt. He asked those who could, to try to be at the meeting. He will send out details. Also, he will be meeting that morning with Valerie Ertz, Chair of BOR, and will ask some hard questions.

Nameplates had to be reordered, because they arrived in the wrong size.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved with corrections.

Officer reports

Chair's report: Chair Barker will save his comments for new business.

Chair-elect report Senator Guidry mentioned that in the latest issue of the TACT bulletin (Dec 2006) there was a guest editorial about faculty salaries at Texas Universities. Some had seen the article. He will send it out as an email attachment.

Treasurer no report

Secretary no report

Academic Affairs Senator Walker gave an update on his faculty overload survey. Nine departments have reported. Two of the depts. reported that they have overloads and "faculty are paid a standard overload rate of \$2500." Another dept. reported they rarely have overloads but when they do, they are paid above what an adjunct is paid. There seems to be a difference in interpretation of policy, but as he interprets the language in the new policy, overload is based on TLC—if you go over 24 TLC, you should be paid more. There is also confusion about extra organized classes.

This university operates on the basis of culture not policy, so why spend time developing or revising policy, unless it will be adhered to and interpreted the same way by everyone? Also, the amount of money referred to as a "standard rate" needs to be clarified. After further discussion, Chair Barker asked that he incorporate the information he has into a report.

Professional Welfare no report

Ethics no report

Election no report

Administration and Finance no report

Faculty governance and Involvement Senator Boyd distributed a report regarding the committee charges as to (a) whether faculty members should be involved in the decision-making process by which classes are included in the core curriculum, and (b) are there any "Faculty Regents", or other forms of faculty representation on university Boards of Regents in Texas?

With regard to the first item, the Texas Education Code clearly states that faculty should make up the majority of members on any advisory committee dealing with core curriculum. Regarding the second item, there is no formalized process for faculty representation on a BOR, and the committee has received only two responses so far from the fourteen university faculty senates who have been contacted about the issue. Neither (Midwestern State and Sul Ross State) has faculty representation on the BOR.

Old business—none

New business

Chair Barker reported that he and Chair-elect Guidry have discussed the idea of inviting the president of TWU to speak before the faculty senate. This past summer, articles appeared in the Daily Sentinel regarding the idea of SFA possibly joining a university system. The same reporter interviewed someone from Lamar about the fact that they had recently joined a system (Texas State); and also interviewed President Stuart from TWU, which remains an independent university. President Stuart stated in the article, that they had improved their relationship with the BOR, had received salary raises that are at an acceptable level, had experienced significant growth in enrollment, and offered help to SFA. She maybe could come speak in January—either at a senate meeting or a special meeting.

After some discussion about whether to hold a debate or a panel discussion or neither, a motion was made by Senator Haidinyak, and seconded by Senator Utlely, that we invite persons representing both points of view (joining a system or remaining independent) to speak before the senate. After a brief discussion, it was decided to table the motion, pending further study. Barker had asked the finance committee to look into graduate student stipends—he would like to see some statistics.

Senator Moon is interested in looking into tuition remission and health insurance. Senator Conway thinks that out-of-state tuition is waived if students are coming from another state, and they can have an option for health coverage. RA minimum is \$1200/mo.

There was discussion as to whether the senate should respond to the recent newspaper article regarding the \$11.8 million windfall estimated to be gained by the construction of the proposed baseball park. The accuracy of the report is in question.

Chair Barker made a final announcement that there will be a January faculty senate meeting after classes begin.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Senator Boyd, and seconded by Senator Langford.
Meeting adjourned at 5:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayce Halstead, Secretary