

**Stephen F. Austin State University
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2007 Meeting #355
February 14, 2007**

Subject to approval at the 356th 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), 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), Michael Walker(26); Treasurer, Elizabeth Witherspoon(27).

Excused: Deborah Dunn(10), Dan Unger(24), Brian Utley(25)

Guest: Dr. James Howard

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

(Drs. Pattillo, Young, and Berry were away from campus)

Announcements

Chair Barker announced that a TACT bill (HB894) filed recently with the Texas Legislature seeks to raise faculty salaries.

Approval of minutes

Motion to approve minutes of meeting 354 was made by Senator Boyd, and 2nded by Senator Witherspoon. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

Chair's report—Chair Barker and Senator Guidry met with Danny Gallant and learned that a portion of salaries for coaches do come from O&M budget. Mr. Gallant was optimistic about efforts being made to improve funding for academics and provide a more transparent budget operation. He mentioned that joining a system would add another layer of bureaucracy to campus governance. He also cautioned that there are outside forces, i.e. the possibility of the federal government raising the minimum wage, that could affect our budget.

Chair-elect's report —Regarding the meeting with Danny Gallant and Debbie Sellman, Chair-elect Guidry added that the amount of money mentioned that comes from O&M is \$1mil --\$1.2 million for the baseball and equestrian programs. Gallant's advice was to move past the

baseball issue because it is here to stay, and to foster a cordial working relationship with Dr. Pattillo because he is our conduit to the BOR.

Treasurer--no report

Secretary—no report

Academic Affairs—Senator Walker distributed his report regarding the *Survey of Department Heads: Workload and additional compensation*.

He felt there had been good response to the survey. He received 12 responses from a total of 28 email requests. The responses are summarized as follows:

Four departments indicated it was rare to have overloads. Each of these departments indicated that when overloads occurred, faculty were provided additional compensation. The compensation ranged from a fixed stipend to salary equivalence.

Three departments stated overloads were common across most faculty in all ranks. Overloads ranged from 3 TLC to 12 TLC annually per faculty. This equates to 1-4 additional courses offered by an individual faculty member each year. Of these departments, no additional compensation was provided to faculty for overloads.

Two departments responded with interest but provided no specific information or indicated salaries were provided outside the university budget.

Senator Moon asked about any consistency with teaching organized classes in regard to overloads. Senator Walker responded that it was hard to say, because the data he asked for was independent of organized classes.

His committee has also been asked to consider bringing together a panel to discuss the systems issue. He contacted Larry King who gave him four names—all from Lamar. He has sent an inquiry to them and now awaits a response. He then asked senators if anyone knows someone he could query.

Senator Calvacca stated that she had been a visiting professor at Corpus Christi before it became part of the A&M system. After it became part of a system, it flourished in terms of faculty and student resources. She has a contact she could ask about it.

Professional Welfare —Senator Utley's committee had been charged with creating a plan to provide some relief for new faculty who have to wait several weeks before they get a 1st paycheck. Senators Barker, Guidry and Utley will talk to Mr. Gallant about some ideas the committee suggested, and work out a plan to send forward to the President. It was recommended that information be included about new faculty having to work before their actual contract dates, and having to be on campus early for various meetings, orientation, etc.

Ethics—No report

Elections--Senator Mouton noted that it is time to start thinking about elections. Those who are rotating off should talk to department members and encourage them to run for office. Her committee will be sending out a nominating form to all faculty soon. The May meeting will be the first meeting for new members. Remind new senators of the time of the meetings so they can adjust schedules accordingly.

Administration and Finance—Senator Scifres' committee has been asked to look into what we pay graduate assistants and compare it with what other schools pay. He distributed a report

with the information the Graduate office collected in August 2006. The problem is that jobs differ depending on the department and the university. So he decided, for consistency, to look only at graduate assistants in Biology departments. He has received feedback from 5 schools so far and will create a report when he has more information. Chair Barker hopes the information will provide justification to pay better salaries and hopefully, attract more grad assistants to SFA.

Faculty governance--no report

Old business—Earlier discussions concerning the idea of studying different systems around the state, resulted in Chair Barker asking Larry King to chair a committee to look at the various systems and see what the best fit would be for SFA. That committee created a 40 page report which will be on the senate website. It will be discussed at the next meeting (March).

A guest, Dr. Jim Howard, was on that committee, and he stated that the report is an evaluation of systems—not a recommendation to join or not. That decision is a separate issue. The report has data including potential positives and negatives. No goals are stated.

A number of issues were discussed and are summarized as follows:

- Senator Langford questions the mixed message being conveyed regarding class size—on one hand the university boasts about small class size and individualized attention as selling points for SFA, and yet we are being told to increase class size as a means to strengthen the argument for higher faculty salaries.
- Senator Guidry mentioned that the issue came up in a discussion with Danny Gallant who said that increasing efficiency by having more large classes and fewer small classes *could* result in better salaries, but there is no guarantee.
- The goal seems to be to increase the student body, but keep faculty numbers about the same—which could have a negative affect on our academic rating.
- The BOR needs to be educated about actual faculty workload—which is something they indicated they wanted in a Daily Sentinel article written last summer, " (BOR) asked Senate Chair Barker to help hold faculty accountable for growing the enrollment" ...and "wants a quantitative report of faculty workload to help assess the problem". Ideas included asking faculty to keep a log of their activities for one week to indicate the number of hours they really work. It was mentioned that this had been done two years earlier and hadn't made a dent. It was suggested that if Dr. Pattillo called for the time survey and it had his backing, it might have some impact. Senator Paul-Urena suggested the information should come from a different angle, such as inviting the Daily Sentinel to do a profile on all that professors do, and by making it public, it could educate the community as well. Senator Guidry suggested a visual document, such as a video, might have more impact. Senator Julia Ballenger felt it was important to voice our concerns through Dr. Pattillo. Senator Langford feels that the faculty are seen as teachers; but that for undergraduates, the faculty ARE the resources.
- Chair Barker felt that with regard to educating the regents about what we do, there are several things to consider positively, such as 1) the Senate Chair now has place at the BOR Academic Affairs committee on the first day of meetings, whereas before, the faculty senate report was in the last 10 minutes of the BOR meeting, and there had been

no forum for discussion—now there is time for 2-way discussion. Most of the regents appreciated having a chance to ask the Senate Chair questions, so, the beginning of a communication process does signal a change; 2) faculty are not aware of how hard regents work either—or the many issues they grapple with; 3) keep in mind that in Dr. Pattillo we've got someone who can communicate well with the BOR. They will listen to him; and, 4) one significant difference—SFA hadn't changed in 20 years, and the regents have addressed several infrastructure problems in the last 5 years. The students care about that. The new Student center is going to be incredible, and the new Recreation center will be a draw. The potential is here to increase enrollment which could impact faculty salaries. How all of these things will translate to addressing academics remains to be seen.

- Senator Paul-Urena asked if the private funding for the baseball park had been raised? Chair Barker did not think so. Senator Guidry feels that the administration should keep its word about the deadline for raising the funds—if the money isn't there by January 1, 2008, the project gets reevaluated. Senator Moon feels the senate should send a resolution about our concern for the 75% funding the university will have to underwrite if the 25% of private funds are raised.

New Business—

Chair Barker was asked about the pre-retirement seminars that used to be held annually. Senator Mouton remembers that the professor who gave the seminars had retired.

Someone asked about the status of modified employment. Chair Barker will have the Professional Welfare committee look into that issue.

Someone asked if there was any data on turnover rate for faculty? Are departments hiring assistant professors instead of associate or full professors?

Chair Barker wondered if departments could gather information about evidence of low salaries, i.e. examples of faculty searches where people won't come here because of salaries, or a 10-year history of faculty movement with a break down by length of service. He will send out information regarding how to collect the data.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Senator Langford, seconded by Senator Boyd. Meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayce Halstead, Secretary