

**Stephen F. Austin State University  
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
2007 Meeting #361  
October 10, 2007**

Subject to approval at the 362nd meeting.

Senators present were: Neill Armstrong (1), Norjuan Austin (2), Joe Ballenger (3), Sara Bishop (4), Vikki Boatman (5), Dennis Bradford (6), Erin Brown (7), Parliamentarian, Ken Collier (8); Carolyn Conn (9) Randi Cox (10), Lani Draper (11), Secretary, Jeanie Gresham (13); Al Greule, (14), Chair, Marc Guidry (15); Scott LaGraff (16), Kevin Langford (17), Tomy Matthys (18), Perry Moon (19), Debbie Pace (20), Rose Powell (21), Treasure, Elton Scifres (22); Lee Stewart (23), Chair-Elect, Sally Ann Swearingen (24); Ken Untiedt (26)

Excused absences: Debbie Dunn (6), Dan Unger (25)

**Call to Order**

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

**GUESTS**

PRESIDENT DR. BAKER PATTILLO

- Dr. Pattillo is out of town and unable to attend the 361st Faculty Senate meeting.

INTERIM PROVOST DR. RICK BERRY

Dr. Berry discussed the following:

- He clarified that the advancement office and development office will still operate separately.
- Searches:
  - CIO search –There will be a candidate on campus on Monday. The candidate is Michael Grissom coming from St. Louis.
  - Provost search – There are ten applicants. The screening will begin in November.
- Strategic Initiatives – The committee will meet this Friday. They will finalize the plans for seeking campus input and how the information will be processed. The student body, staff, and faculty will be included in the data search. The information will be used to determine initiatives and in forming the mission statement.
- Adequate Affordable Housing for Married Students and Those with Children – According to Steve Westbrook, a comprehensive study on housing will be undertaken or has already begun. Mr. Westbrook said that the first responsibility will be to those that we require to live on campus.
- SFA Commuter Friendly – The bus routes are reconsidered each year. The timing of the runs, etc. is examined.
- Development in Austin – The legislature is not in session. The interim committees are receiving their charges now. The Coordinating Board works year round. Dr. Berry said that he does not know of any pressing issues that are going on right now. He relayed that one thing happening in Ft. Worth. The Opera

House was nominated for an award for Best Rehabilitation Project. We may get some good press on that project.

- Update on the Baseball Park Donations – There is no substantial change. We basically have two million dollars. The deadline to Robert Hill is December 31, 2007. Dr. Pattillo is to make a recommendation to the Board in January. Dr. Berry stated that Dr. Pattillo does not know what he will recommend at this time and does not know how the Regents will react to whatever he recommends.
- Student Retention –The retention rate before was at 60 percent. The next year it jumped to 66 percent. The last two years, we have settled at 64 percent. The retention rate has gone up by four percentage points since the increase in admission standards.
- Regents' Concern (With enrollment dropping and with all the new facilities, why is the enrollment not up?) - Dr. Berry told a Regent that the new facilities are probably not recruiting ventures but retention ventures. They have just opened; it is too early to tell if the new facilities will impact enrollment.
- Core (Should the Dean's have total control?) - He said that the faculty owns the curriculum and should have direct input. The Core Curriculum Committee should be the first line of review for curriculum. This committee should be separate from the Core Assessment Committee. He will be appointing a Core Curriculum Committee very soon.
- Department Chairs and Selected Persons Review of Dr. Wheeler – The process for review is lined out by the university for many administrative positions. His job review is not defined by the university. The people evaluating Dr. Wheeler are peer evaluators, direct reports, department chairs, and graduate advisors in the various colleges. Dr. Berry would be happy to receive input from any on campus concerning Dr. Wheeler's performance.
- Central Advising Center – Dr. Berry said that we are looking at advising options. Many believe that our system is not good. One model being pushed is a University College. This is where students go to a site for advising for the first year or two. This model has some problems. All students do not fit into that model. Additionally, SGA senators brought a plan to address improving advising at SFASU. They asked for a student fee to provide a student advising center. Right now, we are not ready to pose a student fee. Many colleges are working on ways to improve advising at SFASU. Also, we were criticized concerning our advising system during the last SACS review ten years ago. We need to address this issue according to that report.
- 4/4 Teaching Load – Some disciplines have mandated 3/3 teaching loads. We will be looking at a teaching load policy soon. We need to look at what Sam Houston has in place. Lowering the teaching load impacts what we can do about raising salaries. It is a fact that this impacts salary increases. Much thought needs to go into this issue. The enrollment must be raised to generate funds, but it will take more than that.
- Questions to Dr. Berry:
  - Academic Affairs Budget (Senator Moon) – It is not set and approved by the president yet. Also, it is not fleshed out yet. Dr. Berry stated that he is working with Mr. Gallant on an Academic Affairs Budget.
  - Search Costs from O&M Budgets (Senator Moon) – Some departments use professional development budgets, but that is forbidden now. Dr. Berry is trying to identify some funds to help departments not use O&M

budgets. Also, he said that we now can look at rolling over O&M from year to year. This is a possibility.

- Math & Science Department Graduate Assistantships are low and facing a crisis. We can not attract out of university students. Are there plans to raise these funds or lower tuition? (Chair Guidry) – Dr. Jeffrey's worked to increase graduate assistantships. Dr. Wheeler believes it is best to look at internal scholarship ways to cover some of the graduate hours. He is requesting that in next year's budget.
- Is there any discussion about waiving or eliminating the faculty and staff entry requirement for the Recreation Center? (Senator Cox) – Dr. Berry does not know if there has been any official discussion. He believes that is a good idea to waive the fee, and he will pass the idea on to others.
- Complaints from Online Students Paying Fees – Danny Gallant is studying waiving student fees for distance education. Also, they are looking at the present distance education fees. We need to look at all of the fees that we have discretion over. We must find ways to compete. We need to be careful and look at the legal issues when removing fees for some and not others.
- Daily Sentinel reported that Angelina College has made a deal with NISD to offer classes in Nacogdoches. Are these classes going to be classes we have in the CORE? (Chair Guidry) – Years ago, a deal was made by past administration that Angelina College would only offer courses that we do not offer. Dr. Berry checked the courses that they are presently offering; only one of the courses was one that we offer. Dr. Berry has a meeting scheduled with Angelina College to discuss courses offered in Nacogdoches and dual credit offerings in public schools. We need to keep the bad press minimized.
- SFASU offering courses at Angelina has been cut back (Senator Ballenger) – Dr. Berry was told that online offerings were the better way to go.
- Are we studying Summer School? (Senator Ballenger ) – Dr. Brunson is leading a task force on summer school.
- Intercession Courses (Senator Swearingen) –Dr. Brunson said that we are exploring that option.

#### INTERIM ASSISTANT PROVOST MARY NELLE BRUNSON

- We are seeking input from faculty on increasing enrollment in summer school. We are looking at intercession offerings. We are considering offering these in May and maybe January. The discussion is exploratory. A student survey will be going out soon to see what choices would entice students.
- Has anyone asked students why they think that enrollment is down? (Senator Ballenger) – Dr. Brunson is unaware of any surveys of this kind. Dr. Berry said that Monique Cossich surveys many issues and may have information concerning this question. Senator Ballenger suggested that we (the Senate) ask Monique to visit with us about these types of surveys.
- Increase Readiness for College – Meetings are about to be underway with outside organizations concerning increasing student readiness for college, P16 Council. The intent of the Council is to look at ways to help students better prepare to attend college, but the committee will also look at the PK student. We are involved in that and a workshop for that committee will be coming soon. Now, the committee is limited to Lufkin and Nacogdoches. SFASU wants to start small

and be successful prior to expanding to other areas. The first workshop for the P16 committee is on November 7.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Strategic Planning Committee meets this Friday. A website will be put up for faculty, students, and staff to give suggestions. Tell your colleagues about this website.
- Advancement is now being called Development. Alumni Affairs will handle scholarship funding, and Advancement will raise money for the academic side.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Chair Guidry made two corrections to the minutes for the 360<sup>th</sup> meeting. A correction was made to page 3, faculty workloads. "The report was a report given at the April Regents' meeting concerning the Sam Houston policy pertaining to 3/3 and 4/4 teacher workloads." The second correction was to page 5. The word last was added to this sentence, "Chair Guidry said that tomorrow is the last day for submitting a letter to the Army Core of Engineers concerning the Bo Pilgrim Park." Motion was made by to approve the minutes from meeting #360<sup>th</sup> by Senator Langford and seconded by Senator Collier. The minutes were approved with the additions of the two corrections.

### **Chair's Report**

Chair Guidry discussed the following:

- Richard Boyer, Regent who chairs Academic and Student Affairs, asked Chair Guidry to contact him. Mr. Boyer plans to come to a senate meeting. Chair Guidry discussed the Baseball Park Survey with him. Boyer was upset because he believed that the Complex issue would die due to funding issues. Boyer also believes that the faculty focuses on the negative. Chair Guidry told Boyer that he would get out the positive messages. Chair Guidry told him that as far as he knew the plan to build the Complex is still on line, and there is a chance that it will be built. Chair Guidry stated to Boyer that the faculty can not remain silent if the project is reevaluated. The survey was intended to show the Regents how the faculty feels about the project. Later, Boyer was contacted, and he felt at that time it was a good idea to reveal the survey data to the Regents in January. Regents may be influenced by the strong 87% negative survey output concerning the Complex.

Vice-Chair Swearingen – No Report.

Treasurer – The Senate has \$3988.00. Funds were spent to pay the faculty senate state dues and to purchase a plaque for Chris Barker, past Senate Chair.

Secretary - The vote for discontinuing the Nomination Committee is as follows:

20 For and 2 Abstention

The vote for creating a Communication Committee is as follows:

21 For and 1 Against

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Academic Affairs: Scott LaGraff said that they had begun looking at numbers by degree. The committee will look at current recruiting practices in the colleges. Also, the

committee is trying to find out SFASU's net dollar gain per student. They are planning to meet with Monique Cossich to look at what recruiters can do and are doing.

Administration and Finance: This committee began a survey to follow up on Chris Barker's email that he sent to department chairs last semester. The email asked how faculty salary scales are affecting recruiting and retention in departments. The survey is trying to add more detail and to obtain some statistical data. Seven chairs have responded to date. Data reported so far has shown that salary scales are affecting recruiting and retention. The committee also reviewed the Coordinating Board website data. SFASU is next to the bottom of salary for faculty. In the final report, the committee will focus on assistant and associate ranks. Senator Cox encouraged the senators to check with the chairs to encourage them to complete the survey. Chair Guidry stated that the board meets in October. The data in this survey will be presented at that time. Chair Guidry believes that we are making progress in presenting this issue to the Board. Past salary plans have not been followed up by past administrators stated Chair Guidry. Discussion continued concerning the importance of bringing the issue to the Board, the need for adding this issue to the Strategic Plan, and how quality faculty influences recruiting students. Discussion continued concerning how low salaries impact faculty searches and the need to encourage chairs to complete the surveys.

Communications: No Report.

Elections: No Report.

Faculty Government and Involvement: No Report.

Professional Welfare: No Report.

Ethics: No Report.

Strategic Planning: No Report.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Baseball Survey results were reviewed by Chair Guidry. The data is as follows:

367 votes

311 or 85% votes not to support the construction of Bo Pilgrim Park.

56 or 15% voted to support the construction of Bo Pilgrim Park.

Also, Chair Guidry reviewed the comments in the survey. A handout was provided to senators that outlined the survey comments.

Senator Scifres asked what we would do with the survey results. Chair Guidry said the results will be sent to the faculty, Dr. Pattillo, Dr. Berry, and the Regents. It was asked if we should send this information to the media. Chair Guidry stated that the information would be picked up when the media covers the Board meeting. Discussion continued concerning what to do if the money was raised for the Complex. Also, it was discussed if we ever do anything beyond surveying and if we should write a resolution. Chair Swearingen stated that writing a resolution should be secondary to the survey facts. She also stated that we should consider a resolution later if needed. Senator Pace stated that a resolution now would conflict the rationale for completing the survey. Chair Guidry stated he had researched other university faculty senates' use of resolutions and found that they were the least effective way to get things done. Senator Matthys moved that

the Chair take the results of the questionnaire to the Board indicating the faculty opposition to the Complex. The motion seconded by Senator Cox. All approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Advising Excellence Award – Chair Guidry talked with Dr. Berry about student retention. He noted that the university has a teaching excellence award, but there is not advising excellence award. Chair Guidry asked Dr. Berry why we do not recognize advising. Chair Guidry suggested to the Senate that each college could present an advising award. The academic affairs may need to fund the plaques, etc. This could be another incentive to do a good job with advising. Senator Perry believes that teaching excellence is easy to document; it might be hard to document advising excellence. Chair Guidry listed ways to document advising. Senator Collier agreed that documenting advising would be daunting. Senator Guidry will seek assistance from the Teaching Excellence Center to see if documenting would be feasible. Discussion continued concerning how hard documenting advising would be. Chair Guidry will seek help from the Teaching Excellence Center personnel concerning the issue and go with their recommendation as to pursuing advising awards.

Senator Bishop announced that flu shots would be given at the County Fair.

Chair Guidry suggested that we may not need to address the issue of the graduate assistants' pay incentives since it was being addressed by Dr. Wheeler. Senator Moon asked if we should just drop the graduate assistance pay scale issue. Senator Stewart stated that the Graduate Committee is studying the issue. Discussion continued concerning waiving course fees and stipends for graduate assistants. The Graduate Committee recommended implementing six-hour scholarships for graduate assistants. Chair Guidry asked if we need to do something else as a body. Discussion ensued on how the Senate can support this issue. Chair Guidry suggested that he send an email to Dr. Wheeler in support of his proposal for helping with the graduate assistance issue. Senator Langford moved that Chair Guidry write such an email. Senator Collier seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 pm by Chair Guidry.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanie Gresham  
Secretary