

**Stephen F. Austin State University  
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
Meeting #370  
October 8, 2008**

Subject to approval at the 371<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Senators present were: Neill Armstrong (1), Norjuan Austin(2), Joe Ballenger (3), Kathleen Belanger (4), Sara Bishop (5), Vikki Boatman (6), Dennis Bradford (7), Erin Brown(8), Susan Clarke (9), Parliamentarian, Ken Collier (10); Carolyn Conn (11), Randi Cox (12), Carol Harrison (14), David Howard (15), Keith Hubbard (16), Scott LaGraff (17), Chair-Elect, Kevin Langford(18); Cynthia McCarley (19), Perry Moon (20), Carl Pfaffenberg (21), Treasurer, Elton Scifres(22); Daniel Scognamillo (23), Lee Stewart (24), Chair, Sally Ann Swearingen(25); Ken Untiedt (26).

Excused: Secretary, Jeanie Gresham is presenting at the International Reading Association Regional Conference in Seattle, Washington. Kimberly Welsh substituted for her. John Dahmus substituted for Randi Cox.

### **I. Call to Order**

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

### **II. Presentations**

#### PRESIDENT DR. BAKER PATTILLO

Dr. Pattillo was not present.

#### PROVOST DR. RICK BERRY

Dr. Berry discussed the following:

- He has been in 3 meetings in Austin – Public Texas Finance Committee; Legislative Budget Board staff public hearing; and a Communications Workshop. He shared brief highlights of each meeting. He heard what the priorities of the state were; he did not hear much about higher education. Transportation was a top priority. Public Education was a top priority. Services in mental health and mental retardation were also top priorities.
- A Regents meeting will be next week.
- Dr. Berry discussed questions that have been brought to him regarding faculty incentives.
  - a. It is illegal to grant tuition at the Charter based on anything other than a lottery system.
  - b. Aramark will be rolling out a new faculty/staff dining card. If you spend up to \$5 per meal, you will receive 1 stamp. After five stamps, you will receive a complimentary meal on your sixth visit.
  - c. Dr. Berry shared that Deans are evaluated by other Deans, chairs, and by tenure track faculty. This is by policy. Associated Deans do not have line reporting authority. Since no one reports to him/her, they are not

evaluated in the same manner. Chairs are evaluated differently and by most faculty.

- d. Dr. Berry answered a question regarding recruiting. On behalf of the president, he would assume that we would admit those that meet admission requirements and those that will work hard. The concern was that students were being admitted that did not meet admission standards and were not being successful in the programs. Dr. Berry clarified that the Strategic Plan states that admission standards will be raised by 2012. He believes that we will take a 'hit' with enrollment when this goes into effect. We will take in fewer freshmen. We need to work hard at retaining those that we have.
- e. Dr. Berry discussed salaries. We do not know how the state will fund us yet – that is still up in the air. Dr. Brunson will be attending a Coordinating Board in November and may find out more then. Dr. Berry said we also do not know what will happen in the spring semester regarding enrollment. The Strategic Plan states that faculty and staff salaries are a high priority. This requires us to look at what is the absolute most that we can put toward salaries while still having a viable University. We do not know what our resources will be until June 1<sup>st</sup> when the Appropriations Bill is passed.
- f. SFA cannot match Texas A&M with tuition and fees regarding tuition waivers.

#### ASSISTANT PROVOST DR. MARY NELL BRUNSON

Dr. Brunson discussed the following:

- Dr. Brunson spoke about SACS. Dr. Stanley will be giving an overview of SACS next month. Remember there is a new procedure for online programs.
- Deep East TX P16 Council – Admission Standards and Retention. This council received a grant for this year. This allows for better dialogue between high schools and colleges/universities. Many graduates are not prepared for university work.
- A committee has been re-established for the First Year College Experience. This is according to our Strategic Plan of a 70% retention rate by 2012. This is a comparable percentage for institutions our size. This committee will coordinate all the efforts that are already in place for first year college students as well as implementing Principles of Good Practices. We currently do provide a Freshman Orientation. We only provide a First Year Seminar and may look at expanding that. We already provide supplemental instruction. We do provide Academic Advising and are moving in the right direction with advising. We do have a lot of Student Activities. Research also shows that by having First Year College students in dorms together is successful. This concept will be looked at. At this time, we will look at different versions of 'learning communities' within a dorm and explore our options. Although this is not a new committee, it has not functioned until recently. A concern was voiced about the longevity of this being in place since it was in place before, yet it did not last. Dr. Brunson replied that since it is in the Strategic Plan, there will be a more concerted effort to sustain this initiative. Kevin Langford shared that in Sciences and Mathematics, they have a system for placing high achieving students in the same sections of courses based on established criteria. They have found that these students tend to do much better when grouped together and others tend to join them. This is their

third year of implementation. A discussion followed about the need to retain and focus on the second tier students who would not normally be naturally retained.

Office of Instructional Technology, Dr. Randy McDonald

Dr. McDonald discussed the following:

- He introduced himself and passed out SFA Distance Education Facts handouts. He discussed distance education and OIT goals from the handout:
- Online education is growing rapidly across the country. SFA appears to be doing a little better in Texas. We have experienced the same growth as the national growth
- We have over 3658 enrollment in online courses. This is about a 30% growth for Fall 07. Annually we have been experiencing a 34% growth rate.
- In the fall, hybrid courses grew about 4% over the previous year to 576. Hybrid courses have three or more required face to face meetings.
- Added together, enrollments in online and hybrid courses make up about 7% of all SFA enrollments. About 5% of SFASU students take only online courses (670). About 14% of students take both online and on-campus courses. About 77% of students take only on-campus courses.
- The website used to advertise to students is [www.sfaonline.sfasu.edu](http://www.sfaonline.sfasu.edu). These are all approved courses that are offered at SFA. Several full programs are offered online. We encourage programs because they are more marketable. This allows students from other areas to enroll in SFA to complete the entire program.
- In order to create a more student centered environment, SFASU's Strategic Plan 2013 calls for an increase in online enrollments of 500% by 2013 (or academic year 2012 – 2013).
- SFA recorded 8446 enrollments in online courses during the 2007 – 2008 academic year (baseline year). To reach the 500% goal will equate to approximately 43,000 enrollments in online courses by 2013.
- Over the past five academic years SFASU has averaged 34% annual growth in the number of enrollments in online courses. To reach the 500% goal will require approximately a 38% annual growth rate over the next five years.
- He clarified that this is not OIT's goal; this is the goal of the University, and the OIT staff is there to support the University's goal.
- Managing the geometric growth necessitated by the 500% goal will require new levels of planning, funding, and support activities on several fronts. To achieve 43,000 enrollments in online courses will require a University-wide effort and collaboration.
- Currently, online enrollments make up about 7% of SFA's total annual enrollments. Depending on how on-campus enrollments fare, achieving the 500% goal could alter that ratio so that 2013 online enrollments could make up between 20% - 30% of total enrollments.
- Larger and larger percentages of our growth at SFA will be online courses. We expect that to increase at 30% a year.
- Preliminary meetings have taken place with Academic Affairs and Academic Chairs to show them these projections. If we are going to reach this Strategic Goal, it will take a lot of energy. He is hearing from faculty as well as his staff that they are 'tapped' out. We will not reach these goals by doing things the same way. We need to make sure the faculty has the resources that they need. There are just conversations and discussions at this stage with no promises made.

- There have been studies done with online in comparative to face to face undergraduate courses. The grades seem to be the same. The drop-outs are usually a bit higher for online. There is not a drastic difference in either case.
- As of now, no plans are being made for capping the amount of students that are allowed in online courses due to the types of courses that are offered and the differences in these courses. He believes that should be more of a departmental decision. A question was asked about a model for allotting an X amount of students for a class. A concern was voiced about online courses being overloaded due to being online and being paid for only one course regardless of number of students where if it was a face to face, it would be divided into three sections, and the instructor would be paid for three sections.
- Concerns were voiced about all the time required to respond to student concerns, yet instructors are required to keep physical office hours. It was asked that OIT could help department chairs understand the time requirement of instructors to answer e-mails at all hours of the night and that should constitute some aspect of virtual office hours.
- A suggestion was made that when a course is developed, maybe the creator could suggest a reasonable number of students that the course could support as well as suggested virtual office hours.
- Dr. McDonald also stated that when there are numerous e-mails each night or student issues, then sometimes it is a design issue. There may be ways to redesign and restructure the course to make it easier on you and the students.
- He has heard that OIT is making the online certification requirements too laborious for instructors to get certified. A survey was put out to all those who have gone through the process recently. Based on that, they came up with some tweaks and made the process more streamlined. We still want quality with our program. They take joy when NCATE comes, and they are able to show quality assurance that they meet best practices.
- Dr. McDonald restated that OIT really does not control anything other than being able to enter a course with a .500 listing without OIT's permission. The certification is strictly voluntary. However, they do not award financially without being certified.
- He shared the certification process. An instructor can test out of the Fundamental skills series and the myCourses skills series. However, they may not test out of the eight week Instructional Design and Online Pedagogy course.
- Course development can take from 2 weeks to 2 years depending on how quickly the material is generated by the faculty member.
- There are numerous benefits from utilizing OIT in the development of an online course.
- Mr. McDonald also discussed a flowchart for development and delivery of an online course.
- Lee Stewart complimented OIT for the job that they are doing.

### III. Announcements

- A. First Wednesday of each month – Pre-Senate meeting and committee meeting times. (Chair & Chair Elect)  
This is an opportunity for Committees to meet.  
Second Wednesday of each month – Faculty Senate meeting.

Third Wednesday will be committee chair meetings will meet every-other month. Sept. / November (Fall Semester), Feb. / April (Spring Semester)

Fourth Wednesday of each month –designated times for committee meetings

- B. Each senate representative please give Senate Chair information to be discussed by the fourth Wednesday of the month for Pre-Senate meeting.
- C. Representing the faculty on university committees:
- Distance Education  
Dr. Jeanie Gresham [greshamglori@sfasu.edu](mailto:greshamglori@sfasu.edu)  
Carol Bradley [bradleycarol@sfasu.edu](mailto:bradleycarol@sfasu.edu)
- Policy Committee  
Julia Ballenger [inballenger@sfasu.edu](mailto:inballenger@sfasu.edu)
- Graduate Curriculum Chair  
Kathleen Belanger [kbelanger@sfasu.edu](mailto:kbelanger@sfasu.edu)
- D. Kevin Langford will represent us at the TEXAS COUNCIL OF FACULTY SENATES on October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> in Austin, Texas.

#### **IV. Approval of minutes**

Motion was made by Ken Untiedt to approve the minutes from meeting #369. The motion was seconded by Vikki Boatman. Minutes were approved as written.

#### **V. Officer Reports**

Chair Swearingen discussed the following:

- Thank you to Kimberly Welsh for filling in for Jeanie Gresham as secretary.
- She went over the announcements listed above.
- She looked at top departments that had the best growth rate in the past five years and wonders what are they doing to generate this growth? She is putting together a report detailing what she collects from these departments. She will be giving that report at Monday's Board of Regents meeting. She will also be presenting on 'Thinking Outside the Box in Teaching.

Chair-Elect Langford discussed the following:

- Our completion rate is 97% with students who complete a course they take. We get money based on these rates. Standards need to be raised in order to raise completion rates and retention rates in order to not lose millions of dollars. This sub-committee is looking at other options at other institutions.
- Questions about salaries will continue to be raised. We continue to push online courses and retention, yet there is no mention of faculty salaries. A question was asked about where we came up with the 3%, and why is that acceptable. Funding is not in place or known at this time until June. A discussion continued on this topic.
- More discussion also continued regarding the topic of raising admission standards. A question was asked how students could meet admission standards, yet still qualify for 098 coursework.

Treasure Scifres discussed the following:

- No report due to no expenditures

Secretary – No report.

#### **VI. Committee Reports**

Academic Affairs: no report

Administration and Finance: no report

Communications: They have been working with Donna Bouvel.

Elections: no report

Faculty Government and Involvement: no report

Professional Welfare: This committee is exploring adjunct use. A survey is being completed first with directors to get some direction.

Ethics: no report

Strategic Planning: no report

#### **VI. Old Business**

none

#### **VII. New Business**

Board of Regents meeting is Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The agenda is on website.

In the November meeting: SACS/Dean Stanley will be giving an update on the plans and actions that have taken place.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

A motion made to adjourn by Ken Untiedt and seconded by Ken Collier. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanie Gresham  
Secretary