

**Stephen F. Austin State University
Faculty Senate Minutes- Meeting #458
Wednesday, March 13, 2019
McGee 121 2:30 p.m.**

Voting Senators in Attendance: K. Ainsworth, C. Allen, T. Barrios, W. Berg, Y. Castillo, D. Cegelka, C. Conn, P. Dutra, D. Gooch, A. Greule, P. Griffin, A. Jones, S. Josephsen (proxy for M. Montgomery) D. Joubert, M. Kahla (proxy for G. Hardin) A. Lannen, C. McKenna, J. Mehaffey, P. Ogale, K. Onchoke,, J. Reese, K. Sheriff, S. Sosebee, L. Stoehr, J. Stovall, B. Uriegas, K. Wallace (proxy for J. Morris), J. Weaver (Proxy for Senator L. Rogers was present, but signature was unidentifiable)

Excused Senators: D. Joubert, M. Montgomery, L. Rogers

Guests: Interim President Steve Westbrook, Provost Steve Bullard, Associate Provost Mark Guidry

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Guests:

I. Call to order:

Faculty Senate Chair Jason Reese called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. He welcomed the senators, and guests. First up, Interim President Steve Westbrook.

II. Presentations:

Dr. Steve Westbrook, Interim President, Stephen F. Austin State University
Dr. Steve Bullard, Provost, Stephen F. Austin State University
Dr. Mark Guidry, Associate Provost, Stephen Austin State University

President Westbrook began his discourse by describing the time line for the Texas legislature, in session since January 7th, pointing out that some of the dates will be watched closely by universities. The date has past by which any more bills can be submitted for consideration and any bills that could affect SFA will be monitored closely from this point until the last day in May (27th) that the legislature is in session.

He advised that for the first time in some time the comptroller was reporting an increase of 8.1 % in the revenue estimate by which the state legislators will develop a budget. The comptroller also reported a record high in the “rainy day” fund. Westbrook indicated these were hopeful indicators for higher education funding. He continued by outlining the top 4 priorities for SFA to emphasize to the state. These priorities range from more complete funding according to the higher education general formula, through examination of distance degree programs at higher education institutions. Westbrook provided visual information on the 16 programs for online learning that are presently offered at SFA. He told the group he was able to report in his testimony that SFA is meeting the expectations of the state on distance degree opportunities.

Westbrook completed his discourse and told the group he was happy to field questions at that time. He responded affirmatively to a question regarding SFA student

debt ratio vs. peer institutions debt when it was pointed out the dates listed on the visual information were needing adjustment.

Westbrook added that most of the ideas coming from the legislature were generally sound ideas but sheer volume tended to dent the budget of each institution. He gave the example of the Hazelwood program, an important tuition exemption program for veterans. Initially this program was costing SFA around \$75000 yearly but when the state added veterans' dependents to the exemption, the cost for SFA increased to \$ 4.5 million. Approximately \$700 thousand is now provided by the state to help offset the \$4.5 million. Westbrook speculated that perhaps the health of the rainy day fund might indicate more relief could be given SFA to offset the much higher burden. Westbrook told the story about his own children taking hours at Midland College.

Westbrook concluded his presentation with the comment that he would be glad to come back and update the group as the state legislature session goes along.

Faculty Senate Chair Reese introduced Provost Bullard.

Dr. Bullard said during his time he would attempt to continue to tie together some of the threads discussed by Dr. Westbrook. He asked the group what they thought were some of the items that have been driving costs up since 2003. Response from the group included utilities, health insurance, student and faculty expectation for technology support, and security for the campus. Westbrook agreed with all of the latter. In addition, he described that the state had adopted from NIST a set of 269 controls for safety that SFA is phasing in over time. The school is being observed and judged whether these controls are being used appropriately. Bullard noted that with each new control there was some cost added to the bottom line. He made reference to a comment from Board of Regent David Alders in a previous meeting where Alders tasked the university to not be JC Penneys in an Amazon world. Bullard said the object was to be smart and dedicated and to stay with the strategic plan in place. He announced there is a Strategic Plan meeting in the multi media room at 1:30 p.m. on April 13 and he hoped those interested would plan to attend. Senator D. Gooch asked the Provost to advocate for some innovative changes to the current way the summer budget offers faculty compensation that will allow faculty to offer more courses, and also students to make greater progress toward degrees. Provost Bullard averred that he would take such an idea to a university cabinet meeting.

III. Break – Committee Breakout Session (if needed)

IV. Approval of Minutes from Meeting #457

After a change of wording of a spelling of a name, the minutes are up for approval. Some proxy names were illegible, and after clarification those were added. Senator Stoehr moved to accept the minutes, and Senator Barrios seconded. Minutes were accepted by voice vote affirmation.

V. Officer Reports

A. Chair – Dr. Jason Reese

Chair Jason Reese offered reports on the following:

Presidential Search: He reported that the BOR hired the search firm of R. William Funk and Associates on January 29 to coordinate the national search. On February 22 a screening committee was chosen by the BOR to work with the search firm, and will review the submitted candidates. Chair Reese is on the committee. He sent out a survey to faculty, and 85 responses came back. He compiled summary points of the responses that he will share at request. The search firm did organize a community meeting with the faculty community. The time line moving forward will be as follows: from present through May they will be conducting research and compiling qualifications for the position. At that point, they will identify potential candidates and will begin reaching out to those (May-June); June, top candidates will be screened and reduced to a handful of candidates. They will then be submitted to the BOR, who will then select the finalists. President will be names in August, although it may be later in the fall semester. Senator McKenna asked how many finalists will be named, and Reese responded that it would be multiple candidates. He further asked Reese to summarize the responses from faculty, but Reese declined; since he had promised that the survey would be anonymous, he was not comfortable in revealing those responses.

Texas Council of Faculty Senates Meetings: Chair Reese attended the meeting, and he reports there was a conversation about Texas AAUP and their efforts at lobbying the legislature concerning funding, a discussion about the need for clarification about tenure and promotion for librarians. A presentation on shared governance concerning relations between faculty senate and administration.

Reese read a letter from the CTL to the Faculty Senate: The letter thanked the senate for co-hosting the CTL open house and Bright Spot. The letter applauded the cooperation between the CTL and the Faculty Senate.

- B. Chair-Elect – Dr. Jeremy Stovall (Reese): Stovall was not present to give report.
- C. Secretary – Dr. Scott Sosebee
- C. Treasurer – Dr. Paula Griffin: Senator Griffin reported that the Faculty Senate had a total of \$5793.05 remaining in the budget.

VII. Committee Reports

A. External (University) Committees

- a. Academic Affairs (Reese)
- b. Core Curriculum Assessment & Advisory Committees (Sosebee)
- c. University Assessment Steering Council (Stoehr)
- d. Distance Education (Montgomery, Onchoke, Griffin, Sheriff)

- e. Graduate Council (Stovall)
- f. Policy (Jones, Barrios, Lannen)

B. Ad Hoc Committees

- a. SACS-COC (Griffin)
- b. Student Retention (Mehaffey)
- c. Chosen Name Committee (Conn)
- d. TCCNS Committee (Reese)

C. Internal (FS) Committees

- a. Academic Affairs (Stoehr)
- b. Administration and Finance (Griffin)
- c. Communications (Conn)
- d. Elections (Jones)
- e. Ethics (Morris)
- f. Faculty Government and Involvement (Mehaffey)
- g. Professional Welfare (Dutra)

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

- A. Support for Ethics Committee Proposal for Faculty Mentorship Program.
Chair Reese asked the Senate to consider a proposal to help fund a Faculty Mentorship Program, which is designed to help new and current faculty members adjust to being on the Faculty at SFA, and have resources that can enhance the life and experience of faculty members. After discussion, the following proposal was offered:

“Resolved: That the Faculty Senate will support the proposal for faculty mentoring by contributing a total of \$3,000 from the Senate Treasury to assist in funding the program. The amount would be distributed over a two-year period, with \$1500 transferred by the end of 2019, and an additional \$1500 during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Senator McKenna made the motion, and Senator Stoehr seconded. The Resolution passed unanimously.

Senator Aisnworth made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Senator Jones. Motion was carried by acclamation.

Senate adjourned at 4:37 P.M.

Submitted by Scott Sosebee, Secretary Faculty Senate.