

**Stephen F. Austin State University**  
**Faculty Senate Agenda – Meeting #484**  
**Wednesday, November 9, 2022**  
**2:30 pm CST**

**I. Call to Order / Roll Call (McKenna / Day)**

- a. Present: Jeremy Becnel, Julie Bloxson, Jason Bruck, Gina Fe Causin, Arye Chakravartty, Rebecca Davis, George Day (Secretary), Sarah Drake, Erika Hoagland, Lindsey Kennon, Michelle Klein (Treasurer), CC Conn (Chair Elect), Wenjing Li, Daniel McCleary, Darrel McDonald, Rob McDermand, Chris McKenna (Chair, non-voting), Herbert Midgley, Rajat Mishra, Johnathan Mitchell, Perry Moon, Tina Oswald, Gretchen Patterson, Bidisha Sengupta, Louise Stoehr, Sarah Straub, Leland Thompson, Samantha Inman (proxy – Chris Turner), Victoria Wagner-Green, Jake Walburn, Yanli Zhang
- b. Absent (no proxy): Emily Payne, Bailey Thompson

**II. Presentations**

- a. Dr. Lorenzo Smith, Provost/Exec. VP for Academic Affairs.
  - i. Discussion of Ombudsman proposal status.
    - 1. Chair meeting results - 11 out of 32 chairs did not support an ombudsman, with only 5 supporting an Ombudsman position
    - 2. Position details provided to the chairs by the Provost: 3-year terms; the ombudsman will be a faculty member paid through admin leave; role is to advocate for faculty and staff with administrator; ombud would report to Provost; ombudsman training to be provided
    - 3. Selected feedback from chairs: ombudsman is not needed because a process already exists for advocating for faculty; others express concern about the possible number of complaints; some suggest that the ombudsman should come from outside the faculty or someone with professional ombudsman training; Provost suggested a plan that provided for random chance in the selection of the ombudsman
    - 4. Senate concerns include: loss of TLC to a department & related funding; questions about why now and not when proposed in the past
    - 5. Chair McKenna requested that the Provost provide a copy of the document given to the chairs & deans
  - ii. Review of current state of PERM Special Handling pilot.
    - 1. Proposal discussed last month for international faculty; assist with immigration issues, including \$5K for the process
    - 2. No real additional update from Provost as the pilot is still ongoing; Senate expressed support for the program, though even those that did not support PERM felt that there needed to be a clear policy that is followed; point was made that the lack of support is a recruiting issue
  - iii. Overview of rationale for proposed changes to Course Enrollment 7.26 (aka Small Class Size) Policy.

1. Provost suggests that a system will make us look at increasing course enrollment minimum
2. Proposed 1000/2000 level course minimums increased to 20;
3. Provost suggested that this could be used to free up faculty workload for scholarly/creative activity or increase salaries;
4. Senator suggested a stepping stone – 15 -before going to 20; older policies used to list exceptions to the enrollment minimums (blanket exceptions)—these expected to remain in new policy in some form; small producing programs with smaller classes may need to file for an exception every semester; Senators expressed concern about small programs and increased caps in other classes as well as increased load without increased compensation.

**III. Session Break, inc. transition to Senate Business Segment (Faculty members only).**

**IV. Approval of Minutes from meeting #483**

- a. Requested Changes: add Jake Walburn to faculty present; Senator names and spelling issues need to be corrected
- b. Motion to accept with corrections by: Tina Oswald; Seconded by: Gina Fe Causin; Motion carried

**V. Officer Reports**

- a. Chair (Chris McKenna) – Board of Regents (BoR) meeting reiterated current Senate priorities; presidential search – more faculty input in search; still waiting on update on the budget, esp. profit or loss from AY22; still waiting on a plan for faculty compensation; talked about interest in ombudsman proposal; discussed key reasons for potential membership in a state system (i.e., which system is most likely to address compensation issues; which offers the highest probability that SFA will still be serving the community 50-100 years from now; open session on November 29 to discuss system decision (special called meeting); VPFA office tasked to analyze a budget if SFA joins a system
- b. Chair-Elect (CC Conn) – no report
- c. Secretary (George Day) – senate minutes page up to date
- d. Treasurer (Michelle Klein) - \$2000 balance; actual \$1983.92 (water bottles not credited to our account)

**VI. Committee Reports**

- a. Academic Affairs: (Herb Midgley/Sarah Straub).
  - i. Policies reviewed discussed:
    1. probation/suspension policy not changed
    2. tenure policy not changed
    3. academic qualifications – no major changes
    4. use of facilities – no change
    5. English oral proficiency program – no program currently; policy would require individuals to have a certain proficiency in English – will be discussed in the next meeting

6. summer teaching assignment – no change
- b. Grad Council: (CC Conn, *ex officio*).
  - i. Gathering clarity around change from LEAP to new funding plan – continued efforts being made (Judith Kruwell), particularly with respect to funding for graduate student workers
  - ii. Will begin reviewing curriculum changes soon. Get these done ASAP
  - iii. Recruitment Funds available
  - iv. Student Travel Funds available
  - v. Registration Rally for November 14 Showcase Saturday
- c. Core Curriculum Assessment: (CC Conn, *ex officio*).
  - i. Will begin reviewing course syllabi in the Communications core courses this semester
  - ii. Reviewed findings of last year's graduate outgoing survey
  - iii. Town Hall for presentation and discussion on January 19 at 2 pm
  - iv. Please make sure to complete surveys regarding sample students if you have received notification from Paul Henley in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

## **VII. Old Business**

- a. Elections committee proposal on unused NTT seats (Mishra, etc.).
  - i. Work is still in progress on the recommendation

## **VIII. New Business**

- a. Faculty perspectives/discussion re: Special Handling/PERM (All).
  - i. Concern about a lack of details on the Provost's pilot plan; Senate should monitor the program's progress/status; majority of the Senate supports PERM; noted that federal law requires an employer to pay PERM expenses
  - ii. Wagner-Green: motion to create ad hoc committee to investigate immigration issues for faculty members; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tina Oswald); "on faculty immigration processes" - motion carries (members: Sengupta; Wagner-Green, Oswald, Li, Causin, Stoehr, Chakravartty)
- b. Small Class Size policy (All). – the Senate has requested that the policy committee recommend that no action be taken until there is an examination of the change's impact on the university and faculty staffing; also a concern over issues with summer compensation for small class sizes
- c. The Policy Committee has also agreed to reject any proposed policy changes that either require or imply additional work on some or all faculty members until such time as a credible plan for addressing faculty compensation issues has been presented to the faculty by the Administration.

## **IX. Adjournment**

- a. Motion by: Johnathan Mitchell    Seconded by: Gina Fe Causin; Motion carried