

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Recently, the President, the Faculty Senate, and the Chairs' Forum had open and productive conversations about the present and future of the university. Like many academic institutions, SFA has faced budget cuts, a global pandemic, declining enrollment, and increasing competition in the recruitment of college-bound students. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic ends, SFA, like all institutions of higher education, will face serious challenges in upcoming years.

As a result of these conversations, the parties all agreed that SFA's chances to thrive in the future depend in large part on the ability of all university stakeholders to communicate with each other consistently and clearly, and then to work together through shared governance for the common good.

Therefore, the President, Faculty Senate, and Chairs' Forum have reached an understanding on two broad goals.

First, enhancing existing lines of communication and building new ones so that administrators, faculty, staff, and students always have the current and accurate information they need to succeed.

Second, drafting a written framework for shared governance that clearly delineates the roles of different groups and bodies at the institution. This shared governance document should be drafted by and agreed to by all relevant parties and ultimately submitted to the Board of Regents for approval at their October 2021 meeting. After approval, university policies will be updated to reflect the final approved document.

To accomplish these goals, the following initial steps have been agreed upon by all parties:

- The President and appropriate senior leadership will meet regularly with Academic Unit Heads, Deans, and Provost to ensure that messaging is clear, consistent, and accurate.
- The President will work with the deans, academic unit heads and Faculty Senate to determine appropriate liaison representation on the Cabinet from among them.
- The President empowers the Office of the Provost with the authority for final decisions involving the filling of faculty and staff positions in the Academic Affairs division, within budget constraints.
- The President acknowledges the need to prioritize academic positions among VSIP replacements.
- The university will halt restructuring efforts until the new Provost is in a position to lead the initiative in partnership with all stakeholders.
- Faculty, in conjunction with their unit heads, will have full authority to determine modality and term length for courses.
- The Lumberjack Innovation Team will continue with their charge, though no funds are currently available for the implementation of their efforts.

The President, Faculty Senate, and Chairs' Forum believe that these steps will strengthen SFA and position the university to face and overcome the challenges that lie ahead.

Adopted unanimously by Faculty Senate and Chairs' Forum, 12/17/2020