



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Faculty Senate
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<https://www.sfasu.edu/facsenate/>

Date: October 13, 2021

To: Karen Gantt, Chair, Board of Regents, Stephen F. Austin State University, Austin Building, Nacogdoches, TX 75961

From: Faculty Senate, Stephen F. Austin State University

Re: Faculty Senate response to Board of Regents' statement to the Faculty Senate on 10/12/2021

First of all, thank you for following up with the Senate via the General Counsel with a written response that addresses at least some of the questions raised by the Senate on 22 September 2021.

The faculty and staff at the university recognize both the breadth and unfortunate timing of the executive leadership, fiscal, and cultural challenges facing the institution, and those same parties seek to work together with the Board of Regents to tackle those issues and to strengthen the university going forward.

With respect to the response by the Board to the Senate's detailed requests for further information on 22 September, we appreciate the lengthy treatment of the procedures followed during the university's selection of the firm (BHP) that is now contracted to work on the external audit. We look forward to updates on the progress of that audit going forward.

However, the Board's response forwarded via the General Counsel to the Senate yesterday provided no additional information as to the status of President Gordon's role at the university, specifically in the wake of the No Confidence vote taken in September by the Senate with the backing of core governance bodies representing the Deans, the Chairs, and the Staff Council. We continue to await an update on that issue.

Finally, the suggestion in yesterday's response of a monthly session between campus leaders and the Chair of the Board at least in part addresses the Senate's request on 22 September for a communication plan. Clearly, the Senate leadership plus the Deans and the leaders of the Chairs' Forum and the Staff Council all recognize the value of the meetings held between members of the Board and those specific groups in late September after the last lengthy Board session. Having those parties all in one meeting rather than several sessions, however, would mitigate the possibility of mixed messages across meetings, which to an extent represented in retrospect a drawback of those sessions.

Therefore, it is the request of the Senate on this day (13 October 2021)—a request featuring the unanimous support of the leadership of the Chairs’ Forum, the Staff Council, and the six college Deans—that the Office of the Board of Regents establish a monthly meeting (the modality for which may be chosen by the Board) strictly between the Board Chair and the identical set—and only the identical set—of Senate/Chair/Staff/Dean leaders alluded to in the previous paragraph, until such time as that group elects to amend the attendee list. If the Board Chair so desires, then the Senate/Chair/Staff/Dean leadership team would welcome the SGA president, too, as well as additional Board members.

The purpose of those monthly sessions would be to avoid the tyrannies of gossip, rumor, miscommunication, and silence that have accompanied conversations about the executive leadership, fiscal, and cultural challenges facing SFA currently. The sessions would also provide a forum for working jointly towards actions designed to operate the university successfully while we seek concurrently to address those challenges.

Respectfully,

Brian Uriegas, Chair, Faculty Senate

Christopher J. McKenna, Chair-Elect, Faculty Senate
