

Stephen F. Austin State University
SFASU Faculty Senate
Faculty Senate Report to the Board of Regents
July 25, 2002
Submitted by, Larry J. King

First, let me say thank you for the opportunity to report to you on the activities of the Faculty Senate. The Board's practice of inviting reports from the Faculty Senate and Student Government Association is to be commended. These reports are an excellent way to create positive dialogue between the Board and the university community, and we hope to continue and extend this dialogue.

It is a personal privilege for me to represent one of the hardest working, most dedicated, and caring university faculties in the state. Since coming to SFA four years ago, I have come to appreciate my colleagues and their professionalism. Serving as Chair of the SFA Faculty Senate is also a privilege for me as a native of Nacogdoches and former SFA student. Since I have served as President of the Faculty Senate at another university, I understand that this is not an easy or popular position. Yet, I am happy to serve to help make a positive difference for SFA faculty and students.

I want to thank Dr. Joe Devine for his distinguished service as Faculty Senate Chair this past year. I would like to echo Dr. Guerrero's view that "Dr. Devine is always a gentleman," and I truly appreciate Dr. Devine's thoughtfulness and determination in representing the interests of SFA faculty.

I also want to give special thanks to Dr. Guerrero for his commitment to collaborative decision making and interest in issues that concern faculty. His public commitment to dealing with inequities in faculty and staff salaries is greatly appreciated. As a member of the University Salary Equity Committee, which was charged by the President to study and recommend responses to the salary problem, I can say this is a difficult issue that will take time to resolve. As Dr. Guerrero said last August, "We didn't get into this situation overnight, and we won't solve this problem overnight." However, Dr. Guerrero is to be commended for taking a significant first step in dealing with salary inequities by requesting the dedication of funds in the 2002-2003 budget for salary equity. Enhanced salaries will allow us to be more effective in our recruitment of faculty. Dr. Guerrero and you, the members of the Board, should also be commended for your support in increasing entrance standards. Increased standards will allow us to

recruit more qualified students, enhance our student retention efforts, and enhance our academic reputation.

Dr. Darrel McDonald will serve as Faculty Senate Chair-elect this year. You may already know Dr. McDonald because he served as Faculty Senate Chair during 1997-1998. Included with your copy of this report you will find a list of the current Senate members and officers (SFA Faculty Senate Roster, 2002-2003).

Under the leadership of Dr. Devine the Faculty Senate considered and acted on several important issues and policies. With my report is a copy of the resolutions passed by the Senate this year. Included is a call for the competition of revisions of the intellectual property policy to protect the rights of faculty involved in distance education (Resolution 2001-2.04). The Senate completed its review and recommendations for changes to the policy in May 2001. Review and revision of this policy have yet to be completed by the Academic Affairs Council, but because this policy has important implications for faculty rights, we hope that the council will complete its work on the policy as soon as possible.

This year the Senate will examine several university policies and issues. I have included a list of these with this report (SFA 2002-2003 Faculty Senate Committee Assignments). I would like to highlight some of the more important policies and issues we will consider. The search for a new Vice President of Academic Affairs will, naturally, be of great interest to the faculty. We look forward to involvement in a process we hope will bring us a Vice President with a strong vision for academics at SFA. Tenure policies will be reviewed to ensure that they are fair, clear, and consistently applied throughout the university. Special consideration will be given to how faculty are notified of where they stand in the tenure process. I have also asked the Senate's Professional Welfare Committee to consider alternate procedures for awarding tenure. The Administration and Finance Committee will examine how faculty summer employment is distributed. The Faculty Government and Involvement Committee will review university policy-making bodies to determine whether faculty are given adequate voice in policy development. The Strategic Planning Committee will consider ways that faculty can become more involved in recruiting and retention. Recruiting and retention are important to all of us, and faculty should find ways to be involved in these activities. These are just a few of the issues we will deal with next year. I am sure that other issues will develop in the course of the year, and I will update you on these. Next

year the Faculty Senate leadership will meet more often with Dr. Guerrero and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and we look forward to working with them to make SFA better and stronger.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your service to the university and, as a means of continuing this dialogue, invite any and all of you to be special guests at a Faculty Senate meeting of your choice. Mr. Wilhite's attendance at a meeting in 2000 helped senators better understand the work and interests of the Board and hopefully helped Mr. Willhite better understand the work and interests of the faculty. Again, thank you for the opportunity to give this report.