

Stephen F. Austin State University

SFASU Faculty Senate Faculty Senate Report to the Board of Regents

April 28, 2005

Dr. Gary Wurtz, Senate Chair

As always, thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the faculty. My time as chair of the faculty senate is almost finished, and this will be the last time I will enjoy this privilege. I have to say that I have enjoyed the position. I've learned a great deal about the way universities work, and I have especially enjoyed all of the people I have gotten to know. With me today is Dr. Brian Oswald, the next chair of the senate, who is a member of the faculty in the College of Forestry. He has been a pleasure to work with, and I'm sure you will be impressed by his dedication to SFA and to its faculty.

The last time I addressed this body I stated that in order to ensure that SFA is a place that is attractive to high-quality applicants for our openings, and that it remains a place that compels the good faculty that are already here to stay, SFA must be competitive in its salary offerings as well as the funding of other faculty related issues. After stating that our salaries are among the lowest in the state, I was told that if I were going to make statements like that I would be well-served to support it with data, and so that is what I will do today.

Before I present the data, however, I want to make something abundantly clear. I am not here to accuse anyone at SFA of being overpaid. Nobody. Not the administration, not the athletics coaches...not anybody. I offer up this comparative data simply to make a point about the ranking of faculty salaries. The Board of Regents has shown great interest in trying to keep SFA on level ground with our peer institutions in many respects. It was that kind of logic that led to decisions like the raising of our president's salary last year, or the decision to bring wireless internet capabilities to our campus just one meeting ago. I have to believe that you have the same concerns with regard to how the faculty salaries compare to our peer universities as well.

Before you is data compiled by the American Association of University Professors that compares faculty salaries at Texas public universities. I have separated the data to show how SFA compares by rank. On p.1 you can see that in FY 04-05 SFA ranks 24th out of 27 at the Professor rank, and 25th out of 27 schools in salary at the faculty ranks of Assistant and Associate Professor (shown on pp. 2-3.) Because not all schools are members of that organization, not all of our peers are included in the comparison. Blatantly missing, for example, is UT-Tyler, but some of the institutions with which we might easily compare ourselves are Sam Houston State, who pays an average of \$10,000 more annually to their full professors, \$7,000 to their Associates and \$5,000 to their Assistant Professors. Lamar University also pays full Professors \$10,000 more, while paying Associates and Assistants \$5,000 more on average.

Page 4 comes from the Coordinating Board. This one compares the salaries at 35 public universities by averaging the top 4 ranks (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Instructor.) In this study you can see that SFA ranks 31st out of 35 universities for faculty pay with only A&M Kingsville, Angelo State and the two Sul Ross campuses below us- all schools with significantly lower enrollment than SFA's. Page 5 shows a list of those same 35 Texas universities listed by enrollment numbers. Although our faculty salaries are ranked 31st, you can see that our enrollment is 15th highest in the state of those same 35 universities. In other words, MANY schools with lower enrollment than ours pay faculty better than SFA does.

As a matter of comparison only, I will point out that the next few sheets in your packets show that SFA is 18th in regard to percentage of the budget spent on administrative costs (p.6), 12th in regard to tuition costs to the student (p.7), 19th for our president's salary (p.8), 15th for the provost's salary (p.9), the average for our other vice presidents salaries is 11th (pp.10-11), the deans average out at about 10th (pp.12-13), and the data I saw showed our head athletic coaches earn an average salary that puts them at 9th in the state (p.14). I obtained all of this data from our own office of Institutional Research. To put it all in perspective, I have summarized the data in the line graph entitled "SFA's comparative rankings" on p.15 of your packet.

The bottom line, it would seem, is that SFA has done a good job of positioning our costs and salaries with our ranking in the state in terms of the size of the institution for all but faculty salaries. If the graph you hold were a report of the earnings on your stocks, I believe you would be dismayed. To bring us to the rank of 15th in salaries would mean an average raise of about \$9,000 per faculty member. Due to the wide gap between where we are and where we need to be it is logical to assume that achieving this goal cannot happen immediately, but it is nonetheless extremely important to the faculty that I deliver the message that we need and trust you, the regents, to champion this cause on our behalf and help to find the means necessary in the next few years to bring SFA's faculty salaries in line with our position in the state.