

## **CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS**

**JULY 2015**

Greetings Mr. Chairman, Board of Regents, Dr. Patillo, Dr. Bullard, Esteemed Colleagues, and Guests:

In May, my elected term as Chair of the Faculty Senate began and in the tradition of chairs past, I would like to begin with a brief introduction as to my background and current appointment at SFA. A native of IL, I am a transplant to TX, beginning my career as a bilingual educator in East Texas. In Marshall, TX, to be exact. In higher education, I have served as a faculty member and administrator at East Texas Baptist University and St. Edward's University. But it is SFA that has captured my intellectual passion and heart and has served as my academic home for over thirteen years.

Since 2009, I have served as a professor in the doctoral program in educational leadership where I teach courses in higher education administration, research methods, and supervise dissertation research. Today, I've prepared a few pictures to share recent highlights of my activities in teaching, research and service at SFA. (Start PPT slides)

Slide One: In April, following the Board of Regents meeting, I traveled to Chicago with third year doctoral students to give a research presentation at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting.

Slides Two through Five:

Then on June 30, I spent 13 days in country with 13 doctoral students in a cross-cultural leadership seminar in Costa Rica together with Dr. Neill Armstrong, Associate Professor of Secondary Education. One of the outcomes of this course is our partnership and a service-learning project with a rural, elementary school in Cahuita on the Caribbean side, a highly impoverished region of Costa Rica.

Slide Five: Another area at SFA in which I've been actively engaged for the past five years is serving as a Co-PI of T4, Talented Teachers for Training in Texas, a \$1.45 million dollar scholarship program funded by the National Science Foundation in the College of Sciences and Mathematics. This grant is particularly exciting work as we recruit high performing STEM majors to

a career in teaching. The leadership team consists of Dr. Lesa Beverly, Professor of Mathematics, PI, Dr. Keith Hubbard, Professor of Mathematics, Co-PI and T4 Director, Dr. Dennis Gravatt, Professor of Biology, Co-PI, and Dr. Ray Darville, Regents Professor as the external evaluator.

Now beginning our fifth year, we have successfully awarded all 20 \$30,000 dollar scholarships to prepare Texas high school teachers in mathematics, biology and chemistry. These T4 Scholars were not seeking a career in teaching, but were recruited from our STEM majors at SFA and Angelina College and then offered opportunities to glimpse a career in teaching through paid job shadow experiences with master teachers and at NASA. The Scholars have been a part of the STEM career awareness days and as part of the grant, they receive continual professional development, participate in national and state conferences in STEM, and are part of a nationally-recognized group of Noyce scholars within the National Science Foundation.

11 of our T4 Scholars are now in the classroom, including one in each of our early college high schools and Nacogdoches and Woden ISD. Also, through the grant, we will continue to support their success with mentoring during their first three years in the classroom.

In addition to the gratitude I hold for unparalleled collegial relationships, strong mentors, and professional opportunities that I have experienced as a faculty member at SFA, I also have inside knowledge of the Lumberjack experience as the proud parent of a Lumberjack, CPT Amber Mayo.

Slide Six: Amber is a 2009 graduate of the Lumberjack Battalion and the DeWitt School of Nursing at SFA. She is currently stationed at Tripler Medical Center in Oahu as a critical care nurse and officer in the US Army Nurse Corps. Last April, Amber, along with four other medical professionals from Tripler, accepted an invitation to teach a weeklong course in nursing in the capital city of Mongolia as part of military diplomatic relations. Receiving her nursing education at SFA, Amber was translating that education to teach other military nurses halfway across the globe, just six years later.

So, I use my personal story as an illustration of what it means to be a part of the Lumberjack experience. Founded as a normal school in 1923, the reality is we are all teachers and learners. As faculty, engaging with students

allows us to deepen our epistemological curiosity as they share in our research, inform our instructional practice while we, in turn, seek to prepare them for the professional opportunities they will encounter after they graduate from SFA, often opportunities that have not yet been imagined.

Which is why I gladly serve as a Senator representing the Perkins College of Education and as Chair of the SFA Faculty Senate. Established in 1970, the SFA Faculty Senate consists of 28 faculty members who are elected by their peers from their respective colleges. Representation on the Senate is proportional to the size of the faculty within each college. Sharing in university governance, our purpose as expressed in the preamble of our Constitution is to embody the full freedom of discussion, participation and examination of ideas by faculty, students, and administrators in the search for truth. Faculty service is volunteer, and we serve staggered terms so that roughly 1/3 of the faculty rotate off each year in May and are replaced with newly elected Senators.

Slide Seven: Incoming Senators and Officers

Left to Right:

Dr. Norjuan Austin, Chair Elect

Dr. Tammy Harris, Secretary

Dr. Ginger Kelso, College of Education

Dr. LeAnn Solmonson, College of Education

Dr. Paul Sandul, College of Liberal and Applied Arts,

Dr. Lauren Brewer, College of Liberal and Applied Arts,

Dr. Kenneth Austin, College of Education

Dr. Dennis Gravatt, College of Sciences and Mathematics,

Dr. Karen Embry-Jenlink, Chair, and

Dr. Joey Bray, Treasurer.

One vacancy in the College of Business will be filled when we return in August.

Also, at our meeting in May, the Senate approved of a proposal submitted by the Senate Ethics committee for an Ombuds position at SFA. Most public universities within Texas have an acting ombuds to serve faculty and staff concerns. The Provost following a report from the Ethics committee in April solicited the proposal appended in your notebooks. The committee's report included broad-based input from SFA faculty over an 18-month period that examined faculty relations at SFA, including input from a

previous survey on faculty incivility and a faculty coffee hosted by the Senate for discussion of the survey results. The report also included a snapshot of ombuds positions at other universities.

The Senate believes such a position will help to facilitate elements of our strategic plan Envision SFA, particularly in the area of promoting a university culture that is open, collaborative, and engaged and facilitating a workplace that is inclusive and promotes civility. This would not be a new position, but would require institutional resources, such as reassigned time for a one-quarter release for a faculty member and designated office space. The ombuds would serve both faculty and staff on our campus.

Last week, I carried the Senate's formal recommendation to Interim Provost Dr. Bullard seeking support from the Office of the Provost and the President to explore instating this position in the future at SFA.

Now, I would like to provide a brief update on Senate activity over the summer months.

Slide Eight:

We have concluded the redesign of McGee 483 as a Faculty Senate Multipurpose Room and have already begun to use this as a meeting space. Many individuals were involved in this effort led by former Senator, Dr. Leisha Bridwell. I would also like to express our appreciation to John Callahan and Dr. Todd Brown for their role in facilitating the completion of this project throughout the summer months.

Beginning at our September meeting, the Senate Communications subcommittee will begin video-recording and archiving the Senate meetings on our website with the intent of full live streaming by November.

New initiatives that the Senate will address in the coming academic year include seeking faculty input and working with the Student Government Association on a joint resolution for establishing SFA as a tobacco-free campus.

As directed in our Standing Rules, we will engage with Dr. Dana Cooper on developing a strategic plan for the Senate that will support the Envision SFA strategic plan. Dr. Norjuan Austin, Chair Elect, will chair this effort.

In closing, Senator Austin and I look forward to serving together to support the highest caliber of academic and co-curricular experiences for SFA faculty and students.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Regents, for the opportunity to present this report on behalf of the Faculty Senate.