

CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

JANUARY 2016

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

Thank you for this opportunity to present a brief update of Faculty Senate Activity since the last meeting of the Board of Regents. The work of the Senate this year is characterized largely through our activity in shared governance and the new strategic plan, SFA Envisioned.

Senators and Senate Officers are currently serving on the following University committees:

Academic Affairs, Campus Carry, Calendar, Core Curriculum, Undergraduate Curriculum, Distance Education, Employee Wellness Advisory Board, Honors, Financial Assistance and Scholarships, Institutional Assessment, Graduate Council, University Research Council, Policy, Attracting and Supporting a High Quality Faculty and Staff, and the Provost Search Committee.

In addition, internal senate committees and task forces have met with Interim Provost Dr. Steve Bullard and John Calahan to respectively examine faculty concerns related to assessment and classroom space scheduling. In November, the Faculty Senate voted unanimous support in reducing the hours of residency required for the RN to BSN degree. In December, we hosted a faculty forum with new faculty to assess their needs and concerns. In early January, Dr. Mary Nelle Brunson reviewed the Faculty Handbook recently updated by the Senate.

During the 15 years that I have served on the SFA faculty, I believe faculty are engaged at a record level of involvement. Much of this engagement is the result of the upper administration and SFA Envisioned, our new strategic plan. A recent example is the Town Hall meeting held last Friday.

This engagement is valuing and instills a sense of belonging and ownership in the decisions that affect the quality of the environment that we call our work home.

During the winter break, as I had time to read the daily paper, I was given pause by the tremendous contributions SFA faculty give to our community through activities related to their teaching, scholarship, and service.

A listing of these accomplishments provided in Tab XX illustrates a glimpse of our involvement in Nacogdoches and the region in ways that enhance the quality of life through the arts, education, history, business, agriculture, music, and social media. In a span of barely five weeks – during the winter break - 18 articles were featured in the local paper, *The Daily Sentinel*, describing internships and service learning projects with SFA students, faculty and student performances, programs to support local schools, assistance provided to non-profits, interpretive showings in local galleries, and presentations to civic clubs.

These articles showcase faculty and teaching staff engaged in high impact practices with our students. They reflect the transformative learning experiences we strive for and they are already a part of what we do. They speak to the SFA vision, which states: “People will know who we are, what we contribute to local, regional, and state communities, and what matters to us most as a university.”

In compiling this Senate Report, it dawned on me that not all of the strategic plan will be driven by change. Some of our goals as expressed are already a part of what we do, a part of the Lumberjack tradition.

In the spring semester, the Faculty Senate will continue its pattern of high engagement and shared governance. We will involve faculty in the review of changes to academic policies, support the transition to a smoke free campus, support campus safety with the implementation of the campus carry law, and we will continue to work with the Office of the Provost in seeking an ombuds position to support faculty and staff at SFA.

This concludes the January update from the SFA Faculty Senate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Regents.