

Faculty Senate Chair's Report
Jason Reese, Ph.D., Faculty Senate Chair 2018-19
Address to Board of Regents
July 23, 2018

Greetings Madam Chair, Board of Regents, Dr. Pattillo, Dr. Bullard, Colleagues, and Guests:

First, Dr. Pattillo and the Board, thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. Normally the Chair of Faculty Senate does not present until Tuesday. However, I was selected to represent SFA at the Texas Academic Leadership Academy this year and our opening session is tonight and runs until Wednesday afternoon in The Woodlands. I appreciate Dr. Bullard recommending me to the leadership academy and you all accommodating me.

Opening

Before I begin telling you a little bit about myself and the Faculty Senate, I want to say thank you. As the representative of faculty at SFA, I want to make sure you know that we understand how important your job is. The primary purpose of Faculty Senates across academia is to strive to provide input into university decisions. I believe this means sharing in SFA's successes and our challenges. Meaning, we want to be a part of positive change. And as the chair of Faculty Senate, I want you all to know that I am here to be a part of that positive outcome.

With that being said, today I would like to talk to you about three things: 1) A bit about myself and our new chair-elect, 2) the Faculty Senate activities from last year and our vision for next year, and 3) highlight the accomplishments of our faculty.

Introduction

My name is Dr. Jason Reese. I am an Assistant Professor of Marketing in the Nelson Rusche College of Business. My primary area of teaching and research is in the area of Sports Business, specifically Sports Marketing. Prior to SFA, I taught at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, my alma mater. At the end of my undergraduate work, I worked for the Round Rock Express, the Triple-A Affiliate of the Houston Astros at the time, in marketing and sales. Following my time in professional baseball, I attended Texas A&M University for my Masters and PhD.

My time at SFA started four years ago, in July 2014. Shortly after my hire, I began working with colleagues in the Nelson Rusche College of Business to propose a new major, Sports Business. The BBA and minor in Sports Business was approved in November 2015 and now has approximately 160 majors and about 30 minors. The growth will hopefully continue as we expand this fall to the University Center on the campus of Lone Star College in The Woodlands.

I am looking forward to working with you and serving the SFA Faculty.

In our last meeting of the academic year, the Faculty Senate elected Dr. Jeremy Stovall as the Chair-Elect. I am excited to be serving along with Dr. Stovall, as he takes over as Chair one year

from now. Dr. Stovall is an Associate Professor of Silviculture in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. I would like to congratulate Dr. Stovall on being awarded the 2018 Teaching Excellence Award for The Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. In addition to his many service activities at SFA, one of the more fun activities, in my opinion, is that he serves as faculty advisor of the SFA Sylvans, SFA's timbersports team winning four of the past five Annual Conclaves.

Faculty Senate Activities for 2017-2018

Over the past academic year our Senators did a great job of representing their colleagues on university committees, as well as internal Faculty Senate committees. I want to say thank you to the Vice Presidents and Dr. Pattillo for including Faculty Senators on many important committees and working groups. It truly shows that our administration cares about the opinion of our faculty leaders. We want to continue to provide input for important decisions made at SFA.

Internally, the Faculty Senate worked on several projects this past academic year. For example, our Academic Affairs committee worked on creating recommendations for the teaching effectiveness evaluations conducted on campus. The Administration and Finance Committee held a Financial Forum at the beginning of the spring semester. During this forum, Dr. Gallant discussed the SFA budget and how decisions are made regarding the budget. He was kind enough to answer questions from faculty. The Faculty Governance and Involvement committee held another forum, the Recruiting and Retention Forum. This forum shared best practices for faculty to engage in helping bring new students to SFA and providing a positive atmosphere for our current students. The Professional Welfare committee awarded the annual Faculty Senate Teaching Award as well as proposed an initiative for providing a Career Ladder for Non-Tenure Track Faculty. We are very excited about moving this initiative forward and I believe it fits well within the pillar of the strategic plan of "Attracting and Supporting High-Quality Faculty & Staff."

Before I begin to talk about next year, I want to you to know we are encouraged to see you're considering the proposed merit salary adjustments in the upcoming annual budget. We appreciate your consideration. This shows the faculty that you care about our efforts.

Faculty Senate Goals for 2018-2019

During my time as Chair-Elect of Faculty Senate, I decided I wanted to meet with each returning Senator, as well as each new Senator, to get a feel for what they wanted to accomplish moving forward, and what they wanted Faculty Senate to be. I have met with all but seven of the 30 Senators for the upcoming academic year. When asked the question, "what do you want the collective goal(s) of Faculty Senate to be next academic year?" their answers fell within four themes. I would like to share each of these with you today and address how I think they overlap with SFA Envisioned.

1. Communication and Transparency
 - To summarize our Senators: "Communication between administration and all faculty at every level is important."

- I believe this fits very well with the aspirational vision statement of SFA. At the end of the 6th paragraph of the statement, it states that “Communication will be robust, transparent, and trusted.” We believe in that goal and are committed to being a part of it.
2. Shared Governance with Faculty
 - To summarize our Senators: “Faculty Senate needs to work on creating a positive voice across campus. We also need to strengthen the connection between faculty and administration.”
 - In the same paragraph of the vision statement, it says that “Our campus culture will be open, collaborative, and engaged.” We want to collaborate and be involved. As I mentioned before, the Vice Presidents and Dr. Pattillo have done a great job of including faculty across campus in decision making. We want to continue this positive working relationship.
 3. Strengthen the Academic Mission of SFA
 - To summarize our Senators: “Faculty Senate should be the voice of supporting the Academic Mission of SFA.”
 - We want to be the voice of the mission of SFA. This mission states that “Stephen F. Austin State University is... dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment...”
 4. Be Intentional & Focused
 - To summarize our Senators: “Faculty Senate should help form more unity among faculty. The Senate should not be a place for checking boxes or political agendas.”

It is my hope that regardless of the task placed in front of Faculty Senate, we will look back at these four areas to guide our decisions and our campus wide input.

Faculty Accomplishments

As you all know, we have wonderful faculty here at SFA. This is not only seen in their research and service productivity, but more importantly with their interactions with students. Every two years SFA surveys our students using the widely utilized National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). While there are many points in this data that are important to highlight, I want to take a moment to brag on our faculty. In the most recent survey (2017), the measure for Student-Faculty Interactions among First-Year Students and Seniors was significantly higher than at other Texas Public Universities, SACS Level V Public Universities Nationally, and other NSSE 2016 & 2017 schools. These results suggest our faculty do a better job than most in talking about careers with students, discussing academic topics outside of the classroom interacting with students outside of the classroom with activities not related to coursework, and discussing student academic performance. This continues to show our faculty take retention and student success seriously.

Every time I come to meet with you over the next academic year I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments of our Faculty. In your packets you will find a list of Outstanding Faculty Accomplishments since your last meeting in April. Please look through these and see how productive our faculty in each college have been just in the past four months.

In addition, I would like to highlight a faculty member from each college throughout the year that represents the positive student engagement that happens all over our campus, every day. Each of these faculty have shown their passion for the recruitment and retention of our students. Today, I would like to introduce you to Dr. Dan Bruton from the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

Dr. Bruton is a Professor of Physics at SFA. He teaches courses in engineering, physics, and astronomy and conducts research at the SFA Observatory. He received his Ph.D. in Physics from Texas A&M University and has a bachelors and master's degree in Physics from SFA. Currently, he is an Associate Dean of the College of Sciences and Mathematics. One of the reason I would like to highlight him today is that he led the development of the new Engineering Physics degree program for SFA students. This program will receive accreditation this August. Developing innovative and high demand programs like this shows our faculty's commitment to recruiting students.

With the help of many students, Dr. Bruton has discovered eleven asteroids wandering through our solar systems. Three of these minor planets have now been officially names and three others are now ready to be named. The neatest part of all is that one of those minor planets between Mars and Jupiter is named after the university. Its name is SFASU. Several master's theses and over 60 publications in the Minor Planet Electronic Circulars have resulted from minor planet research at SFA to date.

Engaging students in these activities shows Dr. Bruton's commitment to creating a student centered learning environment. In addition to this research, Dr. Bruton helps retain our students by providing viewing sessions at the Observatory, and interactions with students at Freshman Convocations and student organizations.

Most recently Dr. Bruton has spent countless hours working on the planning of the Ed and Gwen Cole STEM Building. His leadership in working with Kirksey and Kingham has been instrumental in what you all will get to see tomorrow. In fact, Dr. Childs and Dr. Bruton will be the ones walking you through the building tomorrow.

It is without a doubt that faculty like Dr. Bruton represent the student centered activities occurring on this campus every day. Faculty like Dr. Bruton should be commended for their hard work in recruiting and retaining our students.

I would like to talk about something a bit different. I believe a lot of faculty are attracted to SFA because of the family atmosphere that is created here. Many departments and colleges are very close. Dr. Pattillo addresses all new faculty and staff every year in August and welcomes them to the SFA family. We celebrate our SFA family success, but we also mourn with the passing of one of our own. For many, it is like losing a family member. As many of you know, we lost one

of our beloved faculty members this past May. Dr. Sarah Canterbury was an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology in the College of Sciences and Mathematics. Dr. Canterbury received the College of Sciences & Mathematics Teaching Excellence Award at this year's Convocation in April. She was the faculty advisor for several clubs, including the Tri-Beta Biological Honors Society and Women in STEM. Her colleagues speak very highly of her passion for students. One colleague mentioned to me that she was one of the most innovative faculty members they've known. She spent a great deal of time "flipping" her classroom; engaging her students by bringing in outside video content to her students. It is without a doubt that she was beloved by her family, friends, colleagues, and students. Please continue to keep Dr. Canterbury's family in your thoughts and prayers.

Conclusion

As I conclude my remarks, I want to leave you with one last comment. At the beginning of each of my individual meetings with Faculty Senators I mentioned the same thing. Everyone enters a leadership role with some bias or agenda. Sometimes we know what our bias are and have our agendas set. My agenda for the next academic year is simple. I want to be positive. I want Faculty Senators to be a positive voice for faculty. I do not want us to spin our wheels on things that are negative and are not in line with the mission of SFA. It is my goal to be a positive leader and voice for SFA Faculty.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.