



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Date: September 8, 2021

To: Dr. Scott Gordon, President, Stephen F. Austin State University, Austin Building, Nacogdoches, TX 75961

From: Faculty Senate, Stephen F. Austin State University

Re: Recap of Senate Deliberations re: Executive Leadership at the University

Whereas the actions and policies of President Gordon in 2020 led to heated conversations concerning a potential vote of No Confidence in his administration by members of the Faculty Senate and the Chairs Forum in early December, 2020, and

Whereas the most recent campus crisis concerning the substantial raise accepted by the President—in a time of financial crisis that was well known among the Deans, Chairs, Faculty Senate, Cabinet, senior University executives, and members of the Board of Regents—continues to inflame sentiment and raise serious questions about the President's temperament and character, regardless of his having returned the raise, and

Whereas in his time at SFA, the President has embarked on a number of large-scale initiatives—including the aborted analysis regarding combining colleges as well as the multiple Lumberjack Innovation Teams—initiatives that generally have failed outright and/or produced little to no tangible results, all despite the exceptional burdens these initiatives placed on faculty and staff during the clear and present stresses of developing and adapting student services and course offerings during shifting COVID 19 modalities and protocols, and

Whereas the President's poor judgement has been exhibited on multiple occasions, including his drive to implement hundreds of courses using wholly new modalities (i.e., eight-week & online) without consulting the faculty—a conversion burden heaped on top of the faculty and staffs struggling to provide online and socially-distanced versions of courses designed for 16-week deliveries during COVID, and

Whereas the President now claims responsibility for bringing Shared Governance to the campus, despite the fact that the Shared Governance document still being developed (and not yet approved by the Board of Regents) represented a concession by the President to the Senate and the Chairs as a result of their dissatisfaction with his performance and his lack of transparent operations raised during the initial No Confidence discussions in late November and early December 2020, and

Whereas the lack of self-awareness in accepting a raise in April 2021—despite the ongoing financial stresses the University faces, for which the President has failed to take full responsibility for during his term here, and in light of the fact that not only have faculty and staff failed to receive raises of any significance in several years, but also the fact that the Senate and the Chairs generally considered the President's overall performance more deserving of a significant pay cut, and

Whereas this pay raise has now angered a student population whose social media communications include rumors of imminent on-campus protests, and





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Whereas in his time at SFA, the President has on several occasions exhibited bullying and unreasonably impatient behavior both in public and in private—behavior that is unsuited to an individual hoping successfully to lead this institution out of its current distress, then

Be it unanimously resolved by the full Senate body this day, 08 Sep 2021, that:

- 1) The Faculty Senate hereby votes to indicate its position of No Confidence relative to the President's potential effectiveness at SFA, both now and in the future
- 2) The Senate plans to share this finding with the Chairs Forum, the Provost, the faculty, the Deans of the six colleges and the graduate school, the Staff Council, and the Board of Regents
- 3) The Faculty Senate requests that the Board of Regents revoke the President's contract for cause under the dual conditions of a failure to achieve the goals of the office, and for subjecting the university to poor publicity, scorn and ridicule, and
- 4) The Senate reserves the right to communicate this vote (and the rationale behind it) to local, regional, and national media outlets, as well as through national academic organizations like the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as deemed necessary.

Brian Uriegas, Chair, Faculty Senate

Christopher J. McKenna, Chair-Elect, Faculty Senate

