

Stephen F. Austin State University

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Faculty Senate
Gary Ford, Secretary
College of Liberal Arts
1994 - 1995

TO: Members of the Faculty Senate
FROM: Gary G. Ford, Secretary
DATE SUBMITTED: March 30, 1995
SUBJECT: Minutes for Meeting No. 246
Wednesday, March 8, 1995

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Meeting #246 of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Chairperson C. P. Barton at 2:30 PM, in the Mildred Wyatt Room of Steen Library.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion

A motion to approve the minutes for Meeting #245 (February 8, 1995) was made by Senator DiNucci, seconded by Senator Griffith, and was approved unanimously.

III. Announcements

Chairperson Barton reported that he had received a communication from Larry Judd of the University of Houston on the Texas Faculty Listserv regarding the apparent indifference of faculty to the 2.5% reduction in the state's contribution to ORP being proposed in the legislature. Senator Dahmus commented that he has information from TACT that the cost of such a reduction over the career of a 25-year-old faculty member making \$35K would be over \$100K. Chairperson Barton indicated that the matter requires Senate attention.

Chairperson Barton also reported that Senator Wright has agreed to serve on the Elections Committee to assist in their work in the coming months.

IV. Remarks by President Angel

President Angel apologized for having missed the last two Senate meetings. He was in Austin on both occasions. He provided a briefing on the budget process currently proceeding in the legislature. Significant positive elements for SFA currently contained in House Bill 1 are: 1) the level funding bill pattern will not punish those institutions that have experienced a recent decline in enrollment; 2) the "hold harmless" clause, protecting institutions hurt by the switch from base funding to all funds, has been retained; and 3) income from a tuition increase will be retained by the institution. However, those benefits are more than offset by budget riders--old and new--that will cost SFA money. The net result is that SFA could lose one million dollars each year of the biennium. One of these riders stipulates that if an employee leaves for any reason, the state recaptures the funds for that individual's salary for the remainder of the budget biennium. This would mean that faculty lost could only be replaced using local funds. The state would reclaim an estimated \$150 million if this rider passes.

Another major potential problem for faculty arising from the budget process is ORP funding. The state has already reduced its funding of ORP from 8.5% to 7.31%. The difference had to be made up by the institution. The state now proposes to reduce its contribution to 6%, mandating that local funds could not be used to augment this contribution, at least not for new employees.

The Chancellor or President of every affected university has signed a letter pointing out the injustice of the riders to educational institutions and making a case for the need for funding to provide salary increases for faculty and staff.

SFA's budget "Wish List" includes a request to issue revenue bonds funded by the state (which provided \$300 million for the South Texas Initiative in the last legislative session).

A budget bill will be passed by the House Appropriations Committee and by the House (which generally sets the bottom limit for debate). The budget is then taken up by the Senate (which generally increases funding). Ultimately, a conference committee from both houses will hammer out a final version. President Angel believes that our concerns have received a sympathetic hearing in the Appropriations Committee. The major question will be how much money is actually available--higher education is not one of the Governor's priorities this year.

Senator Daley asked what the practical implications of the anticipated \$1 million cut in next year's budget would be. President Angel responded that we would have to consider increasing revenues by enacting additional fee increases, along with cutting costs. He said that our distaste for fee increases would have to be weighed against the implications of further cuts. In response to a question from Senator Turner, President Angel indicated that the budget does not currently contain funds for a salary increase for state employees.

President Angel was asked about the status of the insurance escrow fund by Senator Gobel. He responded that an independent counsel has been hired to explore the university's options in resolving the matter. The major question is whether the money belongs to the employees, the institution, the state, or some combination. The counsel will cost approximately \$5,000. Senator Ford asked why faculty haven't been involved earlier in this process, given that one possibility is that some or all of the money belongs to the employees of the university. President Angel responded that not much action has been taken on the matter. The options are simply being explored at this point. Senator Turner pointed out that we should seek an early solution. The faculty has become quite impatient about the delay. Senator Daley asked what questions were being posed to the counsel. President Angel said that he would have to consult the attorney before providing such information. The Attorney General will not be asked for an opinion on the matter at present.

In response to a question about enrollment projections for Fall 1995, President Angel said that weekly projections seem to indicate an upward trend at the moment. He said that he is interested in ideas about new recruiting strategies. He also urged the Senate to meet Roger Bilow, the new Admissions Director.

Senator DiNucci asked if there were any contingency plans in the event that enrollment continued to decline. President Angel said that cost cutting strategies are being discussed, such as: going to a 4.5 day Summer School week (not this year), closing a dormitory, installing a system that would turn lights off automatically when there is no activity in a room.

Senator DiNucci asserted that the faculty seemed to be bearing the brunt of the 8.3% cut in the Summer budget. President Angel pointed out that \$300K has been added to the Summer budget and that there was no longer an Assistant to the President (a savings of \$45,000). Chairperson Barton reported that the faculty's perception that budget cuts are targeted primarily against instructional costs was supported by the report that within days of the announcement of budget cuts for Summer, SFA had hired a new assistant football coach.

Senator Dahmus asked why the President had rejected the Senate's recommendations regarding greater faculty participation in the evaluation of administrators. He asserted that this seemed inconsistent with the SFA '98 focus on downpowering. President Angel asked VPAA Ashley how faculty are currently selected to participate in the evaluation of deans. Dr. Ashley said that she asks those who report directly to the dean as well as faculty who have commented to her about the dean, but that all faculty had input through their Chair. She asserted that most faculty are not aware of dean's activities. Senator Lowry responded that all faculty are affected by their dean's policies and are well aware of the dean's level of performance.

Chairperson Barton asked if it wouldn't be easier to have all faculty participate as part of the regular evaluation process. Dr. Ashley felt that such a process would be unwieldy. Senator DiNucci suggested a compromise position that a random sample of the faculty of a College be asked to evaluate the dean. There was considerable support for this idea from other senators. Dr. Angel suggested that the issue be addressed in a direct meeting with him, rather than through another resolution.

Senator Wright pointed out that the resolution regarding evaluation of deans in their first year was viewed by the Senate as an extremely important feedback mechanism for the deans. VPAA Ashley responded that faculty could not meaningfully evaluate a first-year dean. There was general disagreement from the Senate about this statement.

Chairperson Barton asked President Angel about his reaction to the Senate's resolution regarding the merit pay policy revision being discussed in the Academic Affairs Council. President Angel responded that deans could not be removed from the process. Chairperson Barton assured him that the resolution was not intended to remove the deans from the process, but to have the guidelines for merit set at the departmental level. VPAA Ashley said that the Senate committee that had considered the issue should meet with the Academic Affairs Council committee dealing with the matter. Dean Kitterle invited Chairperson Barton to attend the AAC subcommittee meeting.

V. Officers' Reports

The Treasurer, Senator Dahmus, reported that he had finally received a financial statement from the Controller's Office that contained several errors, which he had been able to resolve. He reported a current balance of \$2,688.00 in the Senate account.

Chairperson Barton reported that the Spring 1995 Council of Faculty Governance Organizations meeting will take place in Austin at the end of March. Both he and Chair-elect Berry will be unable to attend. He requested that any senator interested in representing SFA at the meeting contact him as soon as possible.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Faculty Government and Involvement

Senator McDonald distributed a handout (see Attachment) of the committee's recommendations regarding the university's Faculty Development Leave Policy (E-23A). (The recommendations were discussed in the Old Business portion of the meeting.)

B. Administration and Finance

Senator Turner reported that he had discussed the \$1.3

million insurance escrow fund issue with Ms. Yvette Clark, University Counsel. Of the five other universities involved in similar situations (Texas Tech, UNT, TWU, Lamar, and Houston) only the University of Houston has refunded money to faculty; however, their situation differed from the other universities involved because their insurance fund was organized as a trust, which had been legally dissolved. In fact, each university's circumstances are somewhat different.

Ms. Clark had informed Senator Turner that the fund is still subject to claims. The principal and accumulating interest have not been used for any purpose. Ms. Clark estimated that the issue would not be resolved until Fall 1995 at the earliest. She did not anticipate that the Attorney General would be consulted on this issue.

C. Elections

Senator DuFrene reported that 10 new senators are to be elected this year. Self-nominating ballots will be distributed to all faculty prior to Spring Break to encourage participation.

D. Professional Welfare Committee

Chairperson Barton reported that Senator Mueller had been unable to attend the Senate meeting. He had informed Chairperson Barton that the SGA had taken no further action on the Faculty Disclosure issue. The committee will not pursue the matter further at present. Student evaluations will continue this semester as in the past.

VII. Old Business

A. Faculty Development Leave Policy

Motion

Senator DiNucci made a motion that the Senate accept the recommendations of the Faculty Government and Involvement Committee report (see Attachment). Senator Daley seconded the motion.

Discussion concerned the first of the committee's further recommendations: "Faculty leave should not be used to gain teaching/research release time while remaining on campus for other assigned duties." Several senators objected that such a restriction would effectively eliminate full year, half-time leaves, which is the most appropriate model for bringing many types of research projects to completion. Senator Dahmus, who was on the Faculty Development Leave Committee last year, reported that he and other members of the committee did not feel that an individual on half-time leave could do justice to a research project due to the demands of half-time teaching obligations. Senator DiNucci asserted that such judgments should be made by the committee on a case-by-case basis.

Motion

Senator DiNucci moved that his original motion be amended to accept the FGI committee report with the exception of Further Recommendation #1. Senator Lowry seconded.

The amendment passed with one opposed.

VPAA Ashley pointed out that the committee's first recommendation made no mention of the tenure status determining eligibility for a Faculty Development Leave. Senator McDonald reported that the recommendation should have read: "Faculty residency for eligibility to apply for leaves should be full time, **tenure track**, but changed from"

The report, as amended, with correction, was approved unanimously.

B. Evaluation of Administrators

Senator Dahmus stated that he would prefer that the entire Senate participate in a meeting with President Angel regarding the policy on the evaluation of Deans.

Chairperson Barton asked for a show of hands from those interested in serving on the committee to meet with Dr. Angel. Those appointed to the committee were Senators Dahmus, Daley, DiNucci, DuFrene, Ford, Gobel, Hearrell, Lowry, D. McCune, McDonald, McKaig, Price, and Wright.

VIII. New Business

A. Mobile Telephone Availability

Chairperson Barton assigned the Professional Welfare Committee to investigate the possibility that mobile telephone service could be made available to faculty, who would be responsible for all fees pertaining to calls and equipment, without monthly service fees, if service is obtained under the auspices of the university.

B. Northeast Texas Study

Chairperson Barton indicated that many faculty have serious questions and reservations about statements made in the report, A Study of the Higher Education Needs of Northeast Texas. He suggested that the Senate might want to discuss the implications of judgments presented in the study. Senator Daley raised the point that the study indicated the need for Master of Social Work programs in the region, but supported funding for such a program at East Texas State University and not for the program being developed at SFASU.

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Senator Dahmus and seconded by Senator Lowry. It passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Attachment

Faculty Government and Involvement Committee Report on Faculty Development Leave Policy

Visitors

Janelle Ashley
Rachel Cockrell
Frederick Kitterle
James Standley

Attachment

Faculty Government and Involvement Committee
Faculty Development Leave Report
Faculty Senate Meeting #246
8 March 1995

The following recommendations are suggested to the Faculty Development Leaves Policy (Index E-23A) last revised 10 October 1987:

2. Faculty residency for eligibility to apply for leaves should be full time as stated but changed from "2 consecutive years" to a phrase of "**3 consecutive years except for extreme circumstances**" at SFASU.
12. Faculty eligibility to apply for subsequent leaves should be changed from "*after the expiration of six years*" to "**after the expiration of four years.**"

Further the committee recommends that the following issues worked out by the Faculty Development Leave Committee last year be moved forward for adoption:

1. Faculty Leave should not be used to gain teaching/research release time while remaining on campus for other assigned duties.
2. Faculty Leave should not be used as a mechanism to assist faculty in completing work for the terminal degree.
3. All Committee member should stand for college wide election; the college dean should appoint an appropriate substitute on occasions when the elected member **can not serve.**
4. The format recommendations approved by the Committee will be used by **all** applicants.
5. Upon completion of leave, each applicant will present to the Vice President a brief report on accomplishments resulting from the leave.

Background information:

1. The Faculty Development Leaves Policy is funded at the Department level. It is signed off on at the Department and College level. It is reviewed at the University level to insure compliance with a maximum number of 6% of University faculty out at one time.
2. There is University Faculty Research funding for faculty research: the funding allocation varies and salary stipends tend to be for summer application.
3. There is no sabbatical program at Stephen F. Austin State University.