

Stephen F. Austin State University

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2003 Meeting #320

(Tabled at September 2003 meeting. Subject to approval at October 8, 2003 meeting.)

Excused absences: Tom Houston, Roy Joe Harris, Peter King, Sam Copeland.

Unexcused absences: Ann Doyle-Anderson

Visitors: Dr. Kandy Stahl, Dr. Bob Herbert

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m. by Dr. King.

Announcements

Guests

Dr. Tito Guerrero reported on his trip to Austin and developments in the state budget crisis. He had a good discussion with Senator Bob Doule, a freshman senator from Greenville. Senator Doule's daughter is a freshman at SFA. The senator is upset about the hit in Senate funding to SFA. Dr. Guerrero needs talking points to help him lobby for us. Senators Staples and Doule aren't on the conference committee. Dr. Guerrero was reminded of our friends on the Senate side. SFA administrators held an emergency meeting to help produce information for him. The Senate's budget appears to be kinder than the House. The House maintained the "hold harmless" clause that won't punish us for an enrollment drop. We need to highlight that we're an underserved region. Dr. Guerrero distributed a handout, "Talking Points for Conference Committee," and a handout of an analysis that Dr. Roland Smith did of FY 2004 funding.

The House shortfall is \$2.5 million on top of the 7% reduction, which is the worst case scenario. The Senate side is the better case scenario. That would amount to a half million dollar shortfall. Lines 14 and 15 (under SFA Revenue on the FY 2004 Funding handout) estimate losses based on a possible 3% enrollment decline. The initial enrollment figures looked really bad (40-43% decline), but it looks much better now. The increase in graduate enrollment is continuing. There are more initiatives to improve retention.

The Legislature will expect no merit increases for state employees. Salary equity may help with this if we're on the positive (Senate) side. The pessimistic side would be "slash and burn."

Dr. King asked, "What plans do we have if it turns out bad?" Dr. Guerrero said we will have to rely on the vice presidents, deans, and chairs for advice. He doesn't want to make changes that will shoot us in the foot. Summer 2004 is a base year for us.

Dr. McDonald asked about out-of-state travel. Dr. Guerrero indicated it should be essential and come only from non-state funds.

Senator Williams asked about "closing the gaps." Does the Legislature know we are doing the right thing, and we may be paying the price for it? Dr. Guerrero responded that bringing in more minority students doesn't have to mean that we are losing white students.

Dr. King asked about summer school 2004. Will we go to a stipend if we have a major shortfall? We need to exercise caution; it will make us even lower paid if we do.

Dr. McDonald asked about the twelve hour minimum for financial aid. Could we require fifteen to increase the student credit hours? Dr. Guerrero said we are governed by the feds. We could encourage them to take heavier loads.

After talking to Dr. Smith yesterday, Dr. King wondered if the FTE cap may catch us in the next biennium. Dr. Guerrero is not as worried as the vice presidents are about it. Other university presidents are doing it and not getting in trouble.

Dr. Guerrero concluded by saying he is asking for a certain amount of tolerance. He can't give definitive answers at this point.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of Meeting #319 were approved.

Senator Zinn said that a link on the Faculty Senate website is not working. Senator Mercer is the webmaster. She will fix it.

Chair's Report

Dr. King communicated the Senate's resolution from the last meeting to the Director of the Library. The Library Academic Advisory Council said that the matter (concerns raised about the change in reference services which included the removal of the reference desk and staffing of the Info Desk by librarians) will be handled internally. Dr. King had not heard from the Library Committee. Senator Frantzen reported that the Library Committee felt it was out of its jurisdiction and didn't handle the complaint. Senator Caffery wanted to know if that decision was unanimous. Senator Frantzen responded that the vote was not unanimous. She said the Committee chair reviewed its charge. The Library Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Library Director. Senator Frantzen feels that we need to make sure that people who are upset have an avenue. Dr. King feels that he is getting stonewalled on a response from the Library Director. He will forward the Library Director's responses to the emailed questions that the Senate asked to the senators. Mr. Cage declined to come to this meeting.

Dr. King reported to the Board of Regents at their last meeting. Dr. King distributed a copy of his final report to the Board of Regents. He has given them a brief update since that last meeting.

The Faculty Senate's Executive Committee met with the President and Vice President. They discussed resolutions passed and the university budget.

Chair-Elect's Report

Dr. McDonald attended the Graduate Council meeting. There was no new business. It was a brief meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Senator Caffery passed out a copy of the budget. There is a balance of \$2,361.00. He asked if Senate needed to spend the remaining balance. Dr. King said, no, but it would be spent over the summer.

Secretary's Report

Senator Scamman said she would resume the numbering of resolutions and add resolution numbers to the minutes taken while she was gone. She needs to get the previous minutes from Senator Mercer who was the interim Secretary.

Committee Reports

Academic Affairs Committee

Senator Pickard said he had to leave before the end of the meeting. His committee had two resolutions to discuss.

Resolution on changes in GPA calculation.

The committee was against any change in the calculation of the GPA and presented the following resolution to that effect:

Resolution on Maintaining Academic Standards (GPA Calculation) (Resolution 2002-03.11)

WHEREAS, Discussion continues regarding the manner in which grade point averages for students at SFASU are calculated, and

WHEREAS, Some administrators have advocated changes in current policy that in the view of the Faculty Senate weaken academic standards,

WHEREAS, The Faculty Senate expressed an opinion on this matter in passing the Resolution on GPA Calculation on November 10, 1999, in Meeting # 288 and in affirming said Resolution on March 19, 2003, in Meeting # 318; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate vigorously opposes any revision of the manner in which GPA is calculated that would result in a weakening of academic standards, including computing GPA based on the best grade or last grade earned in a particular course when the course has been taken more than twice.

The resolution passed on a voice vote with 18 in favor, 1 abstention and 0 opposed.

Resolution on Student Honor Code

Changes to the wording of the resolution were proposed. Senator Williams suggested "breaches of student honor" in place of "miscreants." Chair-Elect McDonald proposed the remaining changes. They were accepted as friendly amendments by Senator Stovall. The text with amendments follows:

RESOLUTION ON STUDENT HONOR CODE (Resolution 2002-03.12)

WHEREAS, All members of the University community hold responsibility for academic integrity;

WHEREAS, Cheating and plagiarism by students creates difficulties in the academic process for faculty and students alike;

WHEREAS, The Faculty Senate believes that a well-conceived student honor code would serve to uphold and promote academic honesty among students;

WHEREAS, Promulgation of a student honor code that includes provision for dealing with breaches of student honor could complement University Policy A9.1;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Faculty Senate urges the Student Government Association to consider the creation of a student honor code that is acceptable to the University.

The resolution passed on a voice vote: 18 for, 1 against, 0 abstentions.

Proposed changes to Policy A9-1: Cheating and Plagiarism

Senator Stovall reported on proposed changes for Chair Pickard. Some changes will come with new procedures. The new Dean of Student Development would serve as a warehouse of offenses. After a faculty member made a determination that academic dishonesty had occurred, they could check to see if it was a second or third offense. The faculty member would then report back to the University Committee on Academic Integrity. It was Dean Hallman's suggestion that such a committee would meet once a semester to hear cases.

Senator Alexander asked about adding back in the language about using the work of another student

Senator Stovall stressed that this was just a committee report and not an action item this day. The committee welcomes advice and input. Senator Jackson wants to see action on it before the next academic year. Senator King said it's still in draft. Senate can't take action on it today. It will be deferred until next year unless Academic Affairs Council acts this summer. Faculty should forward comments to the committee.

A draft of the policy on Academic Integrity A 9.1 was discussed. They would like to encourage students to come up with their own honor code. It would help with Policy A 9.1 to have one. Senator Zinn asked if the purpose of a student honor code would be to match Policy A 9.1 or to replace it. Senator Williams responded that many students at other schools have an Honor Court. We couldn't do away with Policy A 9.1 without one.

Administration and Finance

Report on review of Policy B-2: Use of Academic Space

They recommended no changes in Policy B-2.

Elections

An election was held for new officers. The nominees said a few words, secret ballots were marked and Senators Scamman and Jones left to count ballots and returned to report the following results:

For Chair-Elect the votes were Alyx Frantzen (6), Jere Jackson (1), and Gary Wurtz (12). Vi Alexander received 16 votes for Treasurer and Roy Joe Harris 4. For Secretary, Dixie Mercer received 16 votes and Lisa Mize 4. The new Faculty Senate officers for 2003-2004 are:

Chair-Elect: Senator Gary Wurtz

Treasurer: Senator Vi Alexander

Secretary: Senator Dixie Mercer

Senator Scamman said she would insert a copy of the Election Committee's report into the minutes (below):

2002-2003 Faculty Senate Elections Committee Report
Submitted by Carol Scamman, Elections Committee Chair

May 7, 2003

Senator Carol Scamman (Library) and Senator Terry Jones (Sciences and Mathematics) served on the committee.

The first Adjunct Faculty Representative, Mr. Stephen Jeffcoat (Communication), was elected and seated this academic year. Mr. Jeffcoat was reelected by email election for a second one-year term in April.

Elections were held in April in the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Sciences and Mathematics, Business, Forestry, and Education.

The following senators were elected:

College of Forestry—Brian Oswald
College of Sciences and Mathematics—Cody Edwards (Biology)
College of Business—Parker Ballinger (Economics & Finance) and David Gundersen (Management and Marketing)
College of Liberal Arts—Troy Davis (History), run-off winner Kelly Salsbery (English)
College of Education—Leisha Bridwell (Human Sciences) and Linda Stark Bobo (Kinesiology). There was outstanding participation in the College of Education election, with approximately 98% voting.

Senator Scamman asked preliminary questions of ITS concerning the possibility of online voting through mySFA. She reported to the Executive Committee that secure, anonymous online voting and surveys could be implemented if desired, but several things would need to be investigated and worked out first. Chair-Elect, Dr. McDonald, has indicated that the Executive Committee would look into it over the summer.

New officers were elected at the May 7 meeting by secret paper ballot.

Unfinished business for next year's committee:

1. Fill a one-year term in the College of Liberal Arts for the incoming chair, Dr. Darrel McDonald.
2. Fill one one-year term in the College of Business.

Suggestions for next year's committee:

1. If funds permit, purchase email distribution lists of faculty by college and edit them to include names of voting members. Use these to send nomination forms as attachments, announce when ballots are being sent to boxes, etc. Alternately, create distribution lists with assistance from the department chairs and secretaries.
2. Have requests for nominations ready to be sent prior to March 1.
3. Send dated test ballots through campus mail this summer or fall to establish how much time to allow for receipt and return of printed ballots.

4. If the Faculty Senate Chair requests, consider implementation of online voting through mySFA.
5. Update guidelines for the committee (committee chair discovered a set that was last done in 1998).
6. Consider rewording Sections 3, 6, and 9 of the Constitution and have discrepancies between the online and printed versions of the Constitution corrected.
7. If the Chair thinks it's appropriate, we suggest that there be three members on this committee.

Faculty Government and Involvement

The committee reported on what they had been doing and recommended no changes in anything.

Professional Welfare

Senator Williams explained that the university has a new policy, "E-Mail for University Communications," that makes e-mail the official means of university communication. A resolution was presented concerning e-mail.

Resolution on new e-mail policy

Resolution Concerning E-mail (Resolution 2002-03.13)

WHEREAS, the University has proposed a policy making e-mail the official means of communication between the University and faculty, and

WHEREAS, several problems exist with the current system; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the new e-mail policy should contain a provision for faculty to opt out of e-mail lists, solicitations, announcements, and mailings that are not the necessary business of the University; and therefore also be it

RESOLVED, that because of the tremendous amount of unsolicited e-mail received by faculty from off campus sources, the University should take all appropriate measures to reduce unsolicited e-mail (spam). Such measures might include allowing faculty to select their own e-mail address.

Discussion

Senator King said internal distribution lists would be available to a limited number of people. The university has to sell the lists, since we're a public institution. If they sell it to one person, they have to sell it to all.

Senator Caffery made a motion to refer the resolution back to committee. Senator Wurtz seconded. Senator Mercer would like to hear what the university's Legal Counsel has to say.

The vote was unanimous (18 in favor) of referring the resolution back to committee.

Resolution on Changes in Employee Health Insurance

The wording was changed to read, "lower than the state and national average."

**Resolution Concerning Health Insurance Changes
(Resolution 2002-03.14)**

WHEREAS, Faculty salaries and benefits at SFA are already substantially lower than the state and national average, and

WHEREAS, Recent revisions to group health insurance coverage will shift costs to faculty and other University Employees; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate wishes to go on record as being opposed to these recent changes in health insurance coverage.

The resolution passed with 13 in favor, 5 opposed, no abstentions.

Strategic Planning

No report.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Other

A plaque was presented to Chairman Larry King in appreciation of his leadership and hard work from Chair Elect Darrel McDonald.

Dr. King made a few closing remarks. He had asked the President to meet with the Executive Committee monthly. Dr. Guerrero met with the committee whenever he was in town, and Dr. King felt it was very positive. He thanked the Executive Committee. He also thanked Senator Mercer for serving as the webmaster and interim Secretary. Dr. King reiterated that the President has met and communicated with us. He thanked all the senators for their service.

The Senate stood adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Scamman, Secretary