

MSU Faculty Senate

August 2015 Minutes

The 2015-2016 MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 PM on **August 20**, in **Dillard 189**. Senators present included Ben Atkins, Laura Fidelie, Jennifer Anderson, Lauren Jansen, Jeff Killion, Victoria Sanders, Charles Watson, Ray Willis, Jonathan Price, Sheldon Wang, David Carlston, Jeremy Duff, Greg Giddings, Lucy Schultz, Beverly Stiles, Kim Acuña, Suzanne Lindt, Charles Bultena, Philip Wilson, Andrew Allen, and Bradley Wilson. Also in attendance were, University President Suzanne Shipley, University Provost Betty Stewart, and Associate Vice President of Facilities Services, Kyle Owen.

Current Business:

1. New University President, Dr. Suzanne Shipley, addressed the Senate.

Dr. Shipley began by stating that the most important thing she wanted to convey to the Senate was that she strongly believes in governance. She will try to balance faculty governance with shared governance. She believes that chain-of-command is very important and will defer people to the appropriate offices before she will intervene in a situation. She believes that not following chain-of-command disempowers the chairs and deans who are placed in positions to handle almost all situations that might arise. She emphasized that she does not want faculty or staff to believe that she is being “unfriendly” when she defers them to a chair or dean, but that this is for the “betterment of the people who are leaders, and allows them to do their job well.”

She also emphasized that the “biggest help” the Faculty Senate could give to her, during this time of transition, is communicating frequently with the people that the Faculty Senate represents.

She also stated that, in the near future, she will be visiting each of the colleges. However, this will not be in the form of large meetings. Instead she will be touring each college and visiting with faculty and staff as they do their jobs.

Her main impression of the University so far is that there is a great deal of pride in the institution. She stated that MSU has beautiful facilities and massive opportunities. “It is time for a place as unusual as MSU to make a difference.” The University needs to more clearly understand what it means to be a Public Liberal Arts University.

Faculty Senate Chair, David Carlston, briefly discussed Dr. Shipley’s meeting with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In that meeting it was determined that Dr. Shipley would meet monthly with the Executive Committee. She also stated that she has asked all the University Vice Presidents to look into “best practices” for each of their respective areas.

2. University Provost, Dr. Betty Stewart, addressed the Senate.

Dr. Stewart thanked the faculty for the work they have done the past year dealing with two core curriculums and the challenges associated with implementing them. She challenged the faculty to look at best practices, and emphasized that there will be a number of policy reviews this academic year. The Faculty Senate will be the “first reviewers” for these policies.

For example, Dr. Stewart has been charged by the MSU Board of Regents to review and make recommendations to revise the policy on Emeritus Faculty. She plans to establish a faculty committee with representatives from different ranks and colleges to evaluate the policy. The Board would like to see a “weightier” policy.

She emphasized that she will be looking at modifying other policies, as well, and will look to the Faculty Senate for guidance on these.

She also stated that she plans to look at the results from the HERI survey. This should provide us with information on areas where the University can improve and also, since this was the first survey, it can provide us with a baseline for moving forward. There will be another round of the survey in three years.

Additionally, there will be some catalog changes, and the students, through the SGA, have asked for a fall break. The administration will be looking into this.

Dr. Stewart commended the faculty on developing three new minors that are starting this fall.

Finally, she stated that she will be meeting with the College Councils to deal with some changes coming from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

3. Associate Vice President of Facilities Services, Kyle Owen, addressed the Senate on the recent “outsourcing” plan.

The University decided not to outsource Facility Services although Facilities still needed to contribute \$300,000 in budget to avoid having to outsource. This same amount of money is generally used to run maintenance throughout the year. Kyle and his staff have developed ways to maintain services at a reduced. For example, custodians are now emptying trash only twice a week and are cleaning the buildings more efficiently by purchasing some new equipment. They have shifted the majority of custodians to working from 3pm until midnight. He stated that common areas, including classrooms, will not be affected. However, if the faculty do see problems, please report them. He said that we will see reduced services, but “this will still be better than outsourcing.” Also, increased enrollment will help by providing funding to alleviate some of these issues. He emphasized that the outsourcing plan offered “a lot” more money than the \$300,000 he was asked to give up in order to prevent it. Overall, facilities lost nine Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTEs), and one individual shifted their salary funding to another University department. The loss of nine FTEs includes, five custodians who

have left the University, the elimination of five part-time custodians (2 FTEs), one custodian was moved/added to CSC since they are staying open until 2 AM, and the future loss of one grounds keeper position that will not be replaced when one leaves the University. Kyle stated that he greatly appreciated the support from faculty during this period.

4. The Faculty Senate discussed the Faculty Senate visitors schedule for academic year 2015-2016. The Executive Committee will create a calendar of visitors and will present it at the September meeting. Additionally, it was determined that each college would appoint a “point Senator” and would notify the Executive Committee about who this is by the September meeting.

5. *Committee and Other Reports:*

Administrative Council (Carlston): The University administration is working on developing a policy to deal with Faculty and Staff Consensual Relationships. There is no policy currently in place. They would like to take this policy to the MSU Board of Regents in November. It was asked that three Senators volunteer to meet with University Council Barry Macha to work on the development of this policy. The aim is to draft a policy, then present the policy at the September Faculty Senate Meeting. The policy would then be shared with the Faculty, and the Faculty Senate would vote on the policy at the October meeting. The following Senators agreed to serve on the committee:

1. Ben Atkins
2. Victoria Sanders
3. Beverly Stiles
4. Laura Fidelie

Chair Carlston asked that the Senate create a committee to revise the Faculty Grievance Policy. He would like for the committee to meet with University Council Barry Macha this fall to develop a policy, and then vote on it by the January Faculty Senate meeting. The following Senators agreed to serve on the committee:

1. David Carlston
2. Lauren Jansen
3. Suzanne Lindt

Chair Carlston asked Senators to discuss with their colleges recommendations for members to serve on the committee to revise the Emeritus Policy. Recommendations will be made to the Executive Committee before the September Executive Committee meeting.

The Faculty Senate is tasked with filling a number of committee assignments across campus. Chair Carlston will email a list of these assignments to the Faculty Senate and asked that recommendations be made by the September 3, Executive Committee meeting so that they can be voted on at the September regular meeting.

Board of Regents (Duff): Jeremy Duff attended the August MSU Board of Regents meeting. At the meeting the Board indicated that bids for the new dormitory had come in higher than expected. However, they have made adjustments in the plans and expect the dormitory to be finished for the Fall 2016 semester. It will house 500 students. The Board passed the University Budget. Enrollment for this budget was based on an increase of one student (5,875 total). The budget is balanced and includes salary increases for both the faculty (as the final installment of the Faculty Salary Enhancement Plan) and staff (which will be provided at the half-way point). The Board also approved the Academic Lecturers plan. At the meeting, Vice President for Business Affairs and Finance, Marilyn Fowlé, indicated that spending on faculty and staff is the highest it has been in the last seven fiscal years. 52% of the budget is spent on salaries, wages, and benefits. HEAF money will increase to \$5 million in Fall of 2017. There is a net increase of ten full-time equivalent positions across campus. 6.5 of these are faculty and 3.5 of these are staff. The Board also discussed the new campus carry policy and will be working to develop a University wide policy to address this.

Student Affairs (Lindt): There are fewer transfer students this year, and more freshmen. The committee meets September 8.

First Year Seminar: Chair Carlston asked that members of the committee on the First Year Seminar to regularly report to the Faculty Senate. They meet again on September 18, and will hopefully have a report for the Faculty Senate at the October meeting.

Finances (Bultena): The Faculty Senate has \$1730.00

New Business: There was an issue in Spring 2015 with Disability Services not being available for students taking final exams on Saturday. Chair Carlston has spoken with Disability Services about this and plans to follow-up.

Old Business: None

The meeting adjourned at **4:14 pm**.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Duff
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

David Carlston
Chairman of the Faculty Senate

Next Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting: September 3, 2015, in PY Staff Lounge
Next Faculty Senate Meeting: September 10, in Dillard 189