

Texas A&M University
58th Session of the Student Senate
Minutes

~~November 16, 2005~~ *January 25, 2006*

Governance Room
7:35 P.M.

I. Roll Call

II. Invocation – Senator Gage

III. Pledges of Allegiance – Ovidio Galvan

IV. Dr. Gates – Special Presentation

A. Spring Initiatives

1. Faculty expansion: in the past, 432 new faculty members were added, 245 positions created since September 1
2. Diversity: “sustain and build on new territory” (we are recruiting great rates of diverse peoples, all on based on merit)
3. New buildings: (groundbreaking will be during this May) Life Sciences Building and Physics Building, Emerging Technology Building, new Engineering Building, addition to the Texas Transportation, vet medicine research tower, and more. We will have 300 million dollars of construction starting this May.
4. All teaching graduate students are getting their tuition paid for.
5. Undergraduate task force has been making timely improvements in undergraduate education. They are trying to allow students to custom design their own degree plan (for example, students might be able to have 3 minors instead of one major).
6. Gates has sent a finance memo to the finance department to attempt to consolidate our buying agreements in Computer Products, so that we can consolidate the amount of companies that we buy from. This can save money by buying in bulk.
7. We are planning to replace the contract on the student information management system, which controls the software for students.
8. Athletic construction is about to begin on the indoor practice facility, which will be bounded by the area between wellborn and George bush.
9. We are trying to grow in number in transfer students (by 500), especially from community colleges. We are also speaking about expanding the freshmen class by about 100.
10. We will be finishing the faculty club. There is going to be a bar, revamping of the business plan, and open to all faculty (instead of being exclusive to paying members).
11. With the advent of the new construction, parking problems will increase heavily.
12. We are expanding our Qatar campus also and expand by 400 students.
13. 1st briefing of the Financial Legislative Board will be in August.
14. We are attempting to cause the corps to grow, academically and number wise. We are also attempting to grow the graduate student population, especially international students.
15. We are going to start planning to replace aging residence halls.
16. One spirit campaign reached its goal of 1 billion dollars, and we are continuing to get money.

17. We are talking about raising the number of students at Texas A&M by 2,500 in the next five years.

B. Questions (Answers to the questions are written immediately after the question)

1. Chair Smith – Will PA 30 be touched by the construction on Simpson Drilled? Some, especially by the parking lot behind the SCS (which will probably be closed off). He does not think that the ones that border on Welborn will be touched, but he can't make any promises
2. Senator Lawler – Over five years, we have had a about a seventy percent increase in tuition fees, do you feel that Texas A&M is becoming financially exclusive against those that can't find financial aid? I don't believe the numbers. We would not be successful as we are with recruiting minority students if we did not have financial aid setup.
3. Senator Gage – Will building a law school at Texas A&M be on the legislative docket for the upcoming year? No, the regents are interested in this issue, but this is a long term prospect.
4. Senator Clayton – What is your standard for measuring our progress? Graduation rates (we have the highest graduation rate in the state), retention rate, number of entry applications, amount of externally funded research, success in meeting our hiring goals, and sustaining our traditions. *Gates says that students must stop talking on cell phones and listening to head phones, so that we can bring back the sense of community at Texas A&M.* I don't measure our success on rankings every year, all we have to do is pay attention to ourselves and what we are doing
5. Senator Faulkner – What is your perspective on Differential Tuition? "I remain convinced that we have to go to differential tuition." Most of our peers have differential tuition. However, I still have questions about it. I need to know how the students will be advantaged and why one major should have to pay more than others. "The case has not been made yet." In a Tennessee study, Texas A&M University was the lowest in Administration costs out of peer universities. Next year, there will be an energy cost on student services. We will not be using designated tuition; we are going to have energy as a separate fee so that students know that they are going to be paying for it. However, the fact that we have over twenty percent of first generation college students shows that we haven't become like other Pier I institutions who have become financially inaccessible.
6. Senator Pontius – Will students who get three minors instead of one major be attractive to potential employers? Yes, it's sort of like a liberal arts degree in the past. A person with a number of hours in various fields should be very attractive to businesses.
7. Senator Nix – There's been a lot of concern over the two explosions over the past few years. What kind of precautions and safety standards will the university be implementing? We are doing a lot of things in risk management that we have not done before. There was some clear neglect in the university departments, so we have hired new employees to prevent the neglect. "There is nothing more important to me than the safety of our students and faculty."
8. Senator Lutz – To get into upper level engineering you have to meet certain requirements, and there is talk of moving the entry GPR requirement down, why is this happening? I don't know much about what is happening, but I'm sure the dean

is not going to do anything that will be reducing the quality of education. It's not about diluting the quality of students that are in engineering.

9. Senator Lutz – Students feel that they are not members of the community. Do you feel that there are enough pr members on your faculty to change the feelings of the community? I've watched these developments arise. I've thought about what I should do. I think that the relationship between the university and community is better than any other that I have seen. *I think that it would be better if the situation was addressed by neighbors talking to neighbors, instead of putting limitations on how students can live in a single family home.* Making students living accommodations affordable is extremely important, because it might draw away students who need financial assistance. *One student can make the same amount of noise that three or four individuals can.*
10. Does the administration have any plans on the Facebook stalking issue? You and your constituents are college students, and you all have to be aware that there are bad people out there ready to stalk. Students just need to be smart about what they post on the internet. Sometimes young people are naïve about the evil that is in this world. However, this is not something that we can control.
11. Senator Knezek – 346 new faculty members – is that going to have any effect on closing the residential halls? “No impact whatsoever.”
12. Senator Campbell – What is being done to connect the “other” education with undergraduate education? We are talking about a minor in leadership development, and eventually a major. This is just one example of our attempts to connect the other education. This was the sole subject of one of the working groups under the task force.
13. Chair Barat – Flat rate tuition – what's your thoughts on this? There is enormous pressure to increase our undergraduate graduation rate. Every student that stays here more than four years is taking away a spot for some other student. We want to get time spent at A&M down to 4.5 or 5 years. Students need to realize how much money they are losing, both for not getting a job and for paying for tuition. All the Aggies that I have met that graduated 15 years ago have never had an average of less than 15 years.
14. Senator Frenzel – at what level is the legislation for bonfire at now? I don't know. There is mediation under way, but it's not been successful. What about Ross street? Clearly Ross street needs to be fixed, but there is a huge amount of utilities running under the street. We must fix the utilities first, but that will take about 3 million dollars. Fixing the street will cost in total 6 million dollars.

V. Open Forum

A. Kristina Hoffman

1. Undergraduate specialist at the library – Search Now – there is a new service: it is a keyword search that searches all of our products at the TAMU Library in one search engine. We are encouraging students to start taking library instruction classes.

B. New members of Student Financial Services Advisory Board Recognized

1. We are simply trying to get feedback from students about financial services, especially about scholarships.
2. The Members were confirmed by a vote

VI. Special Presentation

A. Jennifer Faulkner

1. Operations Committee Presentation

- a. Powerpoint should be posted under the operations committee on senate.tamu.edu.

VII. New Business

A. S.B. 06(S) 1 – Fee Voting Methods Bill

1. Introduction – Senator Campbell and Senator Sears – Fees will be voted on just like we vote on everything else. We are taking care of a conflicting line, which makes a roll call vote necessary for fees.
2. Question: Pro Temp Lanning – Why is it conflicting? We wanted to make voting for fees just like everything else. This will lessen the complication.

B. S.B. 06(S) 2 - Operations and Constituency Affairs Committees SOPs Bill

1. Introduction – Senator Campbell and Senator Faulkner – This can be approved by internal affairs, but we just want to make you aware of what the Consistency Affairs and Operations committees are doing.
2. Can you sum up what the changes were? We provided more meaning and direction, but we did not change the duties of Caucus Leaders. On Operations, we completely overhauled it since its poor construction last year, yet we did not change the duties for the positions.

C. S.R. 06(S) 1 – Dr. Jan Winniford Thank You Resolution

1. Introduction – Chair Smith – she was the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs – we simply want to express our thanks for all of her hard work at Texas A&M, and to wish her good luck at Weber State in Utah.
2. Vote: Passed

D. S.R. 06(S) 2 – RA Early Registration Resolution

1. Introduction – Senator Van Meter – RA's are ineligible to register early on the basis of student employee early registration, because of their augmented work schedule. However, the RA's have extremely important tasks and should be able to get in the classes that they need to during the day, so that they can be able to serve in the dorm at the proper times. They will only get a one day in advance registration time over their other classmates.
2. Questions
- a. Senator Lutz – Do you think that allowing them to register earlier will really help with their work schedule? Yes, because the RAs need to have classes that are blocked together, so that they are able to have more consistent time in working in the dorm.
- b. Senator Pontius – What was the vote in RHA for this resolution? 32-16-1
- c. What do the RAs do during the day? They have more work than just making phone calls, they must serve on committees, make bulletin boards, and deal with student problems.
- d. Chair Nichols – What benefit does this have for the RAs? It allows the dorms to have an RA on duty at all times during the day.
- e. Senator Hill – Why should this be just limited to RAs and not student leaders? RAs are employees, student leaders are not.
3. Notable Debate

- a. Senator Lawler – We all have things that we have to do during the day, just like the RAs. Student workers register early because they have to work during the 8-5 day, yet RAs can work during the night. These student workers have to fit their work into their schedule, but RAs don't.
- b. Senator Mayfield – Registering early might allow the RAs to get a non eight o'clock class so that they can sleep in a little later. Then they will be more likely to serve better when they work during the night.
- c. Senator Haines – Is this just a perk or is it a need? I believe it is just a perk, because we all have things that we have to do during the day.
4. Vote: Failed.

VIII. Reports

A. Jim Carlson

1. Relay for Life, march 31, this is a new program for Texas A&M. This is a joint effort between the campus and the local community. I expect the Student Senate will be having a team for the event. We will have a kick off meeting in rudder 601 at 7:30 at Feb. 8.
2. There are several major events coming up this semester.
3. Save-a-Date – We are going to be promoting some of the major dates that are going on all around campus, not just in SGA.
4. SSFAB Chair Josh Peschel was just nominated.

B. Speaker Hailey

1. There is an upcoming TAMU concert this Sunday in the memory of Mozart.
2. If you want to be apart of what is going on this semester, make sure that you contact the appropriate people. Contact faculty, students, administrators, etc.
3. If you have any questions, talk to one of the officers.
4. Tuition Policy Advisement will be meeting this Friday.

C. Pro Temp Lanning

1. We have 4 or 5 vacancies, contact competent people to fill out an application.
2. Contact me about absence policy questions.
3. We will have the absences posted online.

D. Chair Nichols

1. The first RR meeting will be this Sunday at 4 PM at the SGA Couches.
2. We will be discussing the two SOPs that have been recently submitted. We will also be discussing a bill by Jennifer Faulkner.
3. We've met all of our goals last semester.

E. Chair Smith

1. SS meeting is at 3:30 on Super Bowl Sundays.
2. There's a bunch of issues that will be discussed.

F. Chair Barat

1. We will have an AA "gathering" on Sunday. The meeting is modified, because the Differential Tuition Bill is coming up, and we will be writing a report on it. The exact time will be sent out over email.

G. Chair Murray

1. EA will not have a meeting due to Super Bowl Sunday. We will be planning out goals over email. We are also dealing with the unrelated ruling in Bryan.

H. Jennifer Faulkner

1. We will have tables for filing upcoming. We will need people to volunteer for those.

I. Kristina Campbell

1. We will not have a meeting on Super Bowl Sunday.

IX. Open Session

X. Announcements

1. Planning and Zoning Commission did not take the Senate Advice. There will not be a finally say for another two months.

XI. Adjournment