

**Former Students Advisory Board Minutes**  
**Saturday, February 2, 2008**

Members present: Glyn Cook, Clint Hackney, Brian Smith, Alison Stevens, James Thurmond, Kathy Walker  
Ex officio: Dr. Mike Balog, Prof. Patricia Hurley, Prof. Misha Taylor-Robinson, Prof. Harvey Tucker

12:25 – meeting called to order (Hackney)

- Introductions
- Minutes of previous meeting – motion by Glyn Cook to approve, second by James Thurmond, minutes unanimously approved
- Board financial report (Hurley)
  - balance as of Aug. 1, 2007 of \$8,097.98
  - 27 sustaining members, 7 active members (full dues), 4 active members (reduced dues), 1 company match – total \$3,035
  - Expenditures of \$1019.16
  - Balance as of Jan. 2008 of \$10,217.47
- (Cook) Isn't there a standing resolution to give Pat permission to spend FSAB funds?
- (Hurley) Yes, but she would not spend a lot of money without asking the Board.
- Discussion of how much students benefit from study abroad programs and how the FSAB could help fund students
- (Hurley) If the Board could tell her that she could spend up to \$2000 as needed for Prof. John Robertson's European summer programs that would be useful, as those programs have become more expensive due to the poor exchange rate
- Board endorses this use of FSAB funds
- (Smith) It would be good if a student who receives FSAB funds for the European summer programs would write a journal/blog which could then be posted on the FSAB webpage.
- (Walker) This could be a way to interest recent graduates in taking part in the FSAB as they could see that their donation was helping students to take part in study abroad – they could see what their donation did.
- (Tucker) The student's facebook page could be linked up to the FSAB webpage
- (Hurley) We will talk to Prof. Robertson about getting a student to do the journal/blog
- (Cook) Would it be necessary to monitor the blog for appropriate content?
- (Smith) Providing this journal/blog for the FSAB could be something the student could list on their resume.

- News from the Department (Hurley)
  - Honors and awards
    - graduate student Claudia Avellaneda received the Brian Jones award
    - graduate students Ashley Ross and Jason Smith received the Sky David Memorial Scholarship for fieldwork in Mexico and Europe respectively. This is a one time award that was set up by the Dallas area Aggie Club to honor Sky David who earned his Ph.D. in the Department.
    - Prof. Kim Hill received the Outstanding Instructor of a Writing Intensive Course award, and also the College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Research Award
    - Prof. Guy Whitten is serving as the Interim Director of the European Union Center on campus. The Center is funded by the EU and is one of a small number of such centers at universities around the United States.
  - Recruitment -- the Department has made two new assistant professor hires for Fall 2008: Eric Godwin (Ph.D. from Univ. North Carolina) will be hired for a bureaucratic politics position; Min-Hua Huang (Ph.D. from Univ. of Michigan) was hired for a comparative politics position and to run the China Survey
  - Prof. Harvey Tucker is the new Associate Department Head
  
- New officers (Hackney)
  - (Hackney) Nomination of Kathy Walker to be Chair-elect
  - Unanimously approved
  
- Discussion items:
  - *how to get "remote" former students (particularly recent grads) involved with the Board* (Walker and Hackney)
    - (Taylor-Robinson) What about remote participation via teleconference at Career Day?
    - (Smith) They could be asked to participate in an FSAB blog or to vote on FSAB issues
    - (Walker) Getting "remote" former students plugged into the FSAB would be a way to bring new ideas to the Board
    - (Cook) What about creating a pool of contacts in other places (e.g., DC, California) that current students could contact for things like networking?
  - *what can we do to improve the mentoring of students program* (Hackney)
    - (Hackney) This discussion also relates to the topic of getting remote former students involved in the FSAB.
    - (Hackney) As the FSAB mentoring program currently works there appear to be 2 problems. One is that students don't appear to contact mentors because they heard about them through the FSAB's program. Two is that when a current student e-mails a mentor there is often just a single exchange of e-mails and no on-going mentoring relationship develops because the current student does not continue the contact.

- (Stevens) Her experience with mentoring is that the mentee needs to be the one to take the lead, and also that a true mentoring relationship is unlikely to develop unless the mentor and mentee can meet face-to-face
- (Hurley) Maybe the program is less “mentoring” and more serving as a resource person who can answer “frequently asked questions” for the student
- (Smith) A way to get a professional lead
- (Cook) Students have asked him to review their resume
- (Smith) Maybe the mentoring program should be reorganized by the career background of the (potential) mentors, or maybe mentor is the wrong label
- (Walker) The program could be renamed a Resource for Information
- (Taylor-Robinson) Newly involved remote FSAB members need to be alerted that serving as a “mentor” is unlikely to produce an ongoing mentoring relationship
- (Stevens) But we don’t want to discourage a student from pursuing a mentoring relationship
- (Smith) The FSAB website could say that this is a way to get a career question answered or a way to look for a longer-term mentoring relationship
- (Stevens) We should look at the format of the website of the TAMU Former Students
- (Cook) Maybe once a semester there could be a conference call for 2-3 students who are interested and, say, a few lawyers from the Board. That way they could get several people’s input and perspectives at once.
- (Hackney) Appoints an informal committee to design the website change: Kathy Walker, Brian Smith, Alison Stevens, Misha Taylor-Robinson
- *update on efforts to secure more political science internships in the Brazos Valley* (Smith)
  - City of Bryan has found funds for an intern
  - Judge Chad Jones is setting up an internship
  - The Council of Governments in Brazos Valley, which includes smaller surrounding towns, is considering an unpaid internship
  - (Smith) Expects soon to deliver to the Department formalized information about these internships and then the Department can advertise them to students
  - (Walker) It might be useful for the first few years for the Department to hand pick the students who are the interns to make sure that the new programs are a good experience for the people hiring the interns
- *next FSAB fieldtrip* (Hackney)
  - Various ideas suggested at the last meeting included attending a public hearing on a contentious issue, visiting a government agency, visiting the local offices of members of Congress
  - (Thurmond) A challenge of organizing a fieldtrip to a public hearing is finding out when it will be held enough in advance to set up the fieldtrip,

and also there is a problem that at very contentious public hearings there may not be room to seat everyone.

- (Taylor-Robinson) Board member John Boerstler, who was unable to attend the meeting today, had expressed an interest in possibly helping to organize a visit to offices of various members of the Houston delegation to Congress
- (Hackney) Visits to district offices could be done on a Friday when the Representatives are likely to be in town. The fieldtrip could go to 2-3 offices. Note that Congress is in recess from March 16-30.
- (Thurmond) Will contact Boerstler to see what he thinks might be feasible and whether spring or fall semester would be better
- General agreement that there did not have to be a spring fieldtrip if logistically it would be better to have the next fieldtrip be in the fall, and noting that a fall fieldtrip could be another trip to the state capital
- (Smith) The Brazos Valley Council of Governments has a monthly Homeland Security Board meeting (approximately 1 ½-2 hours) and we might be able to get students to that.
- (Thurmond) For any type of fieldtrip it is important at the end of the planned event to have somebody critique for the students what they saw and discuss what really happens in that type of government venue.
- (Hackney) Asked James Thurmond and Misha Taylor-Robinson to send to all the Board members the results of James's conversation with John Boerstler about the feasibility of a fieldtrip to visit several Congress members' district offices

- research presentation by Dr. Claudia Avellaneda

2:10 -- adjourn