I. CALL TO ORDER
The Cameron University Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, April 19, 2006. Chair Lambert called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in Howell Hall, Room 106.

II. ROLL CALL
Present: James Lambert, Linda Wright-Smith, Jason Duan, Sylvia Miller, Lori Sawyer for Sherry Reynolds, Sue Fuson, Joe Jones, Antonio LaVerghetta, James Heflin, Mike Davis, John Hodgson, Douglas Catterall, Suzanne Crawford, John Moots, Phil Schroeder, Gabriella Adam-Rodwell, Chao Zhao, Sharon Christensen, Major Armstrong, Jr., Abbas Johari, Ted Snider, Barbara Pickthorn for Jeanne Gaunce, Phil Adrian, Edna McMillan, Maxwell Kwenda for Harrison Watts, David Fennema, Todd Raborn

Absent: John Bachelo, Mary Penick

Guests: President Cindy Ross, VP Gary Buckley, VP Glen Pinkston

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Heflin moved to approve the Faculty Senate minutes from April 5, 2006 and Hodgson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. REMARKS FROM OFFICERS
Chair Lambert noted that this was a special Faculty Senate meeting called today with President Ross to discuss state higher education funding. Lambert handed out article from the Wednesday, April 19, 2006, issue of the Lawton Constitution (page 5B) entitled, “Teacher raise sent back to Senate.” He indicated in his remarks that many newspaper articles have some of the agendas of the state legislature buried in their content; hence, we as informed voters need to be aware of the facts that Oklahoma does have a comfortable surplus of budgetary funds to allocate to higher education, but this does not necessarily mean that higher education will receive its required needs financially. He quoted part of the above-mentioned article in paragraph five regarding the potential use of “…surplus revenue for big tax cuts instead of using the money for education.” He then welcomed and introduced President Cindy Ross.

V. NEW BUSINESS
Dr. Ross handed out data to show what is being proposed for the Higher Education appropriations.
There was a massive budget cut when she arrived at Cameron and Cameron still has not been funded at the FY-02 level. The first page of the handouts summarizes budget data over the past five fiscal years and provides a reminder of where higher education is at in receiving funds. Mandatory higher education cost increases during this same period is just under two million dollars.

Page two shows four proposals. The Regents requested a total of $123,100,000 increase in funds which the Governor recommended $85,496,000, the Senate under HB 2177 recommended $87,000,000, and the House G. A. Bill recommended a total of $24,958,236 increase in higher education funding.

The third page of the handout shows possible scenarios for Cameron's state appropriation amount. Under the estimated FY2007 budget there is a projected increase of $1,918,054 costs which would include a 3% Salary Plan but the actual increased monies proposed that Cameron is significantly less than the estimated expense increase. We would receive anywhere from 600 to 940 thousand. OLAP will be fully funded before any other institution.

The Senate voted twenty-seven to ten to pass HB 2177 in the Senate. The House leadership put in their General Appropriation Bill and passed it at $24,958,236. The Senate left the title on the bill (HB 2177); therefore, the bill can be voted up, down or buried in a committee.

We have two issues of what the state regents allocate and what the legislature allocates. We do need a dedicated funding for OHLAP but not on higher education budget. At present, ten million dollars is dedicated to OHLAP from the higher education bill.

During this election year, tax cuts are seen more favorably than the appropriate funding of higher education. The surplus revenues have been chipped away. We do need help with roads, bridges, and corrections; but a big chunk goes to a tax reduction (about 6.25% to 4.9%). That will cost over 400 million dollars in the 2nd year. The repeal of the estate tax will also eat up much of the surplus.

Yet, the growth of Oklahoma depends on the higher education of its citizens. The Governor and the Senate have indicated a willingness to increase the budgetary numbers if the Bill is passed through the house. The bill must be passed by the last Friday in May (May 26, 2006), so time is of the essence--if as individuals we want to contact our representatives. Students have received tuition raises of 7.99% last year, 19% the year before, and 8.5% the year before that. These students have really been hit with significant tuition increases. We will be denying education to some if we have to increase it again.

Dr. Ross thanked the Senate for providing a forum to present factual information on proposed higher education funding.
Chair Lambert thanked President Ross for her remarks and noted that the faculty could use their sphere of influence (if they so desired) to assist getting the message out concerning higher education funding but not on school time nor using school equipment.

Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting and Fennema seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wright-Smith
Faculty Senate Secretary

P.S. May 3rd will be last Faculty Senate meeting of this semester. It will be in Shepler at noon in the form of a retirement luncheon to honor this year’s retirees. We also need a quorum to approve the elections.