

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2022-2023 Faculty Senate was held at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, in Rothwell 456 and on Webex. The following members were present:

Mr. Stan Apple
Dr. Michael Bradley
Dr. Breanna Clair
Dr. Rene Couture
Dr. David Cullen
Dr. Melissa Darnell
Dr. Michael Davis
Dr. Peter Dykema
Dr. David Eshelman
Ms. Jasmine Greer
Dr. Newt Hilliard
Dr. Efosa Idemudia
Dr. Masanori Kuroki

Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon
Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman
Dr. Tom Nupp
Dr. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh
Dr. Sean Reed
Dr. Jamie Stacy
Dr. Kuldeep Singh
Dr. Bethany Swindell
Dr. Arwen Taylor
Ms. Sherry Tinarella
Dr. Ellen Treadway
Dr. Erica Wondolowski

absent: Ms. Sherry Tinerella [check attendance]

also present: Dr. Jeanine Myers, Mr. Kevin Solomon, Dr. Shellie Hanna, Dr. Jeremy Schwehm

- I. **Call to Order:** Dr. Sean Reed called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.
 - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** Following correction of a budget typo, motion to approve the minutes from the April 11 meeting from Dr. Michael Davis, seconded by Dr. Newt Hilliard. Motion carried.
- II. **Guest Speakers**
 - A. **Enrollment:** Mr. Kevin Solomon reported on enrollment data, which he sees trending in a good direction. Tech has offered all available levels 3 and 4 scholarships; admitted students are up, and 380 more accepted scholarships than at the same time last year. More than 1500 have been accepted; last year, 71% of those accepted attended, which gives us the anticipated matriculation rate for this year. Recruiters are working on emphasizing regions where we draw a lot of students, rather than trying to recruit everywhere in the state. We have three recruiters currently and positions posted for three more. A question was asked about background and diversity of recruiters; Mr. Solomon agreed that it would be helpful to

hire recruiters of diverse backgrounds, but it's difficult to even get candidates right now. In particular, Tech is looking to hire a transfer recruiter and a recruiter for NWA specifically.

- B. **Faculty Athletics Success Team:** Drs. Hanna and Schwehm described some Athletics Committee projects from this year, including resolving inequities in scholarships and awards, changing the criteria to remove so internal bias. The committee has also developed a plan to better support both faculty and student athletes: Going forward, each department will have a faculty member who is trained in compliance with NCAA requirements and understand issues such as how incompletes should be resolved. This person can serve as a resource for both athletes and other faculty, and can also serve as the point of contact with Amy Anderson (Director of Student-Athlete Success). In the past we've lost students to other schools because advising errors put them out of NCAA compliance, so this system will be important for athletic retention.

III. Committee Updates

A. Standing Committees

- i. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp): The upshot of last week's meeting was the response to a few proposals for fee increases, which were passed from the fee committee into the budget committee. One was approved, the other two tabled for further discussion. The Board seems hesitant to approve fee and other tuition increases. There's been some discussion of all students paying a music fee and effect of fee increases on grad students, whose tuition waivers don't cover them.
- ii. General Education Committee (Tinerella): NTR
- iii. Institutional Aid Committee (Hilliard): NTR
- iv. Shared Governance Committee (Eshelman): Look forward to us taking shared governance into the future.
- v. Campus Space and Utilization Committee (Singh): NTR
- vi. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): NTR
- vii. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): NTR
- viii. Professional Development Committee (Dykema): NTR
- ix. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple): NTR
- x. Emergency Management and Safety Committee (Laffoon): NTR

B. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees

- xi. Faculty Workload Committee (Eshelman/Darnell): NTR
- xii. Insurance Benefits Committee (Davis): ATU employees will be able to use the Health and Wellness Center, starting this summer. This only applies to those with insurance through the university, i.e., not to adjuncts.
- xiii. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski): The diversity vision statement is now on the website. It would be helpful if senators could go back to constituents and get a sense of their views on requiring job candidates to submit a diversity statement, and bring that back in the Fall.

- xiv. Exploratory Committee on P & T Salary Increases (Hilliard): Dr. Huss posted an updated form to the Webex; we're soliciting feedback. Drs Reed and Hilliard recently met with the President, so more on this soon.
- xv. Strategic Planning Steering Committee (Darnell): NTR
- xvi. Hiring Processes (Dykema): NTR
- xvii. Prior Learning Assessment (Swindell): NTR
- xviii. Transfer Students Committee (Stacy): NTR
- xix. Micro-Credentials (Wondolowski): NTR
- xx. Ad-hoc Committee on Course Evaluations (Laffoon): A number of want the certificate for completing course evals turned back on. It's too late to do that this semester, but can be turned on for the fall. Grad faculty are also curious why their students in small classes don't get an opportunity to evaluate; it would be helpful to make this clear for low-enrollment classes.
- xxi. Rules Committee (Huss): NTR, except that this committee should remain on the agenda going forward.

IV. New Business

A. VPAA Update (Furst-Bowe/Meyers): No update on VPAA position. The VPAA's office also wants to thank those who put on the Research Symposium. A question was raised about the prevalence of students using AI to do their homework, alongside previously discussed concerns about students giving their work to CourseHero. An ad-hoc subcommittee will pick this up and start recommending policy language in the fall. Sean Huss, Arwen Taylor, Jasmine Greer, Efosa Idemudia, and Jeanine Myers volunteered.

B. Elections for the Senate chair elect and other at-large positions are running this week, so remind your constituents. A suggestion was made that because sometimes first-time Senate members are surprised to learn they're automatically nominated for this, it might be useful to discuss this earlier in the year, and solicit plausible candidates who are actually interested in doing it.

C. Discussion of the Faculty Satisfaction Survey: Dr. Efosa Idemudia raised concerns about the survey, noting that a faculty member could potentially complete the survey an unlimited number of times, and that its questions sometimes seem to assume the faculty can compare this administration to previous administrations. His view of the survey is that it should be used to improve decision making on campus. A few senators reminded the Senate that the survey is designed by professors with some expertise in qualitative survey design and prioritizes anonymity over achieving the standards that would be in place for an academic project. A concern was raised that some faculty may avoid taking the survey because they feel it's negatively skewed. Dr. Sean Huss pointed out that the FSS arose because the faculty had wanted a mechanism in place to evaluate administrators, the administration had said no, and so the survey was the best the Senate could do. A question was asked about whether the Board ever sees the results of the FSS; Dr. Jaime Stacy noted that the facilitator in the previous year had requested that items extrapolated from the survey be presented to the EC.

Some discussion of the purpose of the survey ensued, whether it's to serve as the basis for decisions, or to assess faculty concerns. Dr. Jeremy Schwehm further addressed the origins of the survey, the fact that it is not put to the Board as a mechanism for decision-making (though the faculty would love to see that happen), and the more realistic function of the survey as a way to give voice the faculty and assess the overall mood and health of the institution.

V. Open Forum

- A. Dr. David Eshelman left some advice for Senate members, including a reminder to defend and support the faculty foremost, and a recommendation to think creatively about how a university should be structured and funded.
- B. Dr. Erica Wondolowski announced the October Adjuncts Conference, which will be the first of its kind, and invite adjuncts from around the state.
- C. Dr. Newt Hilliard asked faculty to be a little bit available during the summer, since decisions that have to be made will be made without us if we don't check our email
- D. The question was raised of when fall semester's Blackboard shells will be available; the answer given was to ask Alex Manly.

VI. Announcements and Informational Items:

Fall courses will be created this week or early next week.

VII. Adjournment: Dr. Efosa Idemudia moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Sean Reed, Chair



Dr. Arwen Taylor, Secretary