

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, November 30, 2022 in Rothwell 312 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

Also present: Dr. Julie Furst-Bowe (VPAA); Mr. Wyatt Watson; Ms. Tara Malone

- I. **Call to Order:** Dr. Sean Reed called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.
  - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes from the November 8 meeting from Dr. Sean Huss, seconded by Mr. Stan Apple. Motion carried.
- II. **Report on course evaluation software:** Mr. Wyatt Watson reported the university's new platform for student course evaluations has been successfully piloted. The system has multiple levels of anonymity: individual evaluations are never linked to individual students, classes with fewer than three students are not surveyed, and no evaluation data will be released for a class unless there are at least three responses. The Senate discussed whether faculty should be able to see which students specifically have filled out an evaluation, and agreed to endorse a change making that information unavailable to faculty. (Mr. Watson pointed out that this change will likely remove the option for students to get a certificate for having completed their course evaluations.) The Senate also discussed the availability of course evaluations before the final drop deadline. Dr

Furst-Bowe agreed this question is worth revisiting, and recommended a taskforce be convened to address it. The taskforce will also consider strategies for increasing response rates which, according to Mr. Watson, are currently around 37%. Dr. Arwen Taylor, Dr. Sean Huss, and Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon volunteered.

- III. **Items concerning adjuncts:** Ms. Tara Malone addressed the Senate to request a few cosmetic changes to the Faculty Handbook: clarifying first that the Adjunct Committee has seven members and four full-time faculty members, and second that staff members who also teach as adjuncts may serve on the committee. Ms. Malone also expressed, and the Senate shared, concerns about the pay schedule and pay rate of adjunct professors at Tech. Dr. Arwen Taylor, Ms. Jasmine Greer, Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman, and Ms. Sherry Tinarella volunteered for an ad hoc committee to explore options for resolving the delay of adjuncts' first Fall paychecks until the end of September. The Adjunct Committee has also requested a seat on the Curriculum Committee; Ms. Malone agreed to develop a formal request for this with justification.

As a digression from matters directly relevant to adjunct welfare, the Senate engaged in some discussion of the definition and boundaries of the Faculty Handbook, its relevance to the creation and charge of particular committees, and the possibility of establishing a meta-committee or handbook committee to direct the creation and management of other committees.

Ms. Malone wrapped up by pointing out that adjuncts make approximately \$15/hour, assuming 140 hours/course/semester, which is \$0.15 below the living wage for a single person with no children in Arkansas.

IV. **Committee Updates**

- A. **Curricular Items** (<https://www.atu.edu/standingcommittees/curriculum/2023-24/Summary%20Proposals%20Aug%20CC%20Sept%20FS.pdf>)

Motion to approve the curricular proposals from Dr. Michael Davis and seconded by Dr. David Eshelman. Motion carried.

- B. **Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Huss/Hilliard):** The university has no set policy on how we draw down CUPA or adjust salaries in response, which is part of what creates leapfrogging and salary compression effects. The committee recommends this get codified as a part of the new Strategic Plan, and invites faculty to look over the data they have available to make recommendations.

**C. Standing Committees**

1. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp): No report.
2. General Education Committee (Tinarella): No report.
3. Institutional Aid Committee (Hilliard): No report.
4. Shared Governance Committee (Eshelman): No report
5. Campus Space and Utilization Committee (Singh): No report.
6. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): No report.
7. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): The appeals committee has developed an online form that will appear in One Drive next semester. A question was raised regarding the situation for students who enroll in an 8-week class to meet scholarship requirements, if the class ends up not making.
8. Professional Development Committee (Dykema): With an extra fifteen thousand dollars, the committee was able to fund three more applications; they'll take up new applications starting in January, and plan for rolling deadlines after that. A question was raised about July and August conferences, since money can't be allocated till June 30 (when the committee is done meeting); Dr. Dykema clarified that money could be approved during the Spring semester to come from the Fall's budget.
9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple): No report.

**D. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees**

1. Faculty Workload Committee (Eshelman/Darnell): No report
2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis): No report.
3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski): The University committee met; they are working to preserve the Martin Luther King walkway during construction.
4. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Darnell): No report.
5. Transfer Task Force (Stacy): No report.
6. Prior Learning Committee (Swindell): No report.
7. Hiring Processes Committee (Dykema): No report.
8. Emergency Management Committee: No report.
9. Microcredentials Committee (Wondolowski): No report.

**V. New Business**

- A. The Faculty Senate Choice Awards nominations are open. Senate members nominated Andrea Eubanks, Tammy Weaver, and Ken Wester. A motion was made by Dr. Newt Hilliard to keep nominations open for another week and seconded by Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman. Motion carried.
- B. On the ongoing revisions to the General Education curriculum: Dr. Greg Michna will address the Senate next semester to explain the Gen Ed model we are adopting and answer questions. Dr. Newt Hilliard made the point that as criteria are revised, some classes may need to be moved out of Gen Ed as well as into it.
- C. On New Faculty Academy: Concerns include the frequency of meetings, the workload, the consistency of course releases across departments; participants would like more ATU-specific practical advice rather than pedagogy, and appreciate the opportunity to build a cohort with other new faculty. The Senate plans to revisit this next meeting with feedback from the directors on our feedback.
- D. Dr. Bowen asks faculty who are off-contract and unavailable during the summer to make some provision to re-direct students seeking advising, e.g., adding that information to your email signature.

#### VI. Old Business

The Senate continued discussion of the proposal for a Standing Committee for the Center for Undergrad Research. Dr. Hilliard expressed appreciation for the work put into the proposal, but reservations about both its internal consistency as a document, and about the overlap of such a committee with existing programs, in particular under Research and Graduate Studies. What would distinguish this committee from existing bodies, and might the CUR's goals be better met by putting it in touch with the student research resources already on campus?

The possibility of a Committee on Committees was raised again, with Dr. Dykema, Dr. Huss, Dr. Hilliard, and Dr. Davis volunteering to form a committee to evaluate the need for such a committee.

#### VII. Open Forum

Dr. Swindell reiterated the problem of 8-week classes not making, both for student scholarships and faculty pay; Dr. Reed said he would reach out to Tammy Weaver to find out how many students this affects.

Dr. Wondolowski suggested the Senate might create a standing committee on adjunct needs. Dr. Huss suggested that could simply be standing line item, if the Adjunct Committee wants to send a representative. Dr. Eshelman suggested a regular invitation could be sent to various groups including Staff Senate, student government, the Adjunct Committee, etc. to participate in Faculty Senate anytime they'd like to come with a report.

Dr. Nupp raised the recurring problem of classroom temperatures and the need for better communication when classroom space is too cold (or warm) to be usable. Dr. Huss pointed out that this is a problem for retention and that the university should be wary of the perception that the university can't manage its facilities.

**VIII. Announcements**

In the Spring, the Senate will, happily, return to meeting in Rothwell 456, newly technologied-out.

**IX. Adjournment:** Dr. David Eshelman moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Arwen Taylor.  
**Motion Carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Sean Reed, Chair



Dr. Arwen Taylor, Secretary