

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2022-2023 Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 11, 2022 in Rothwell 321A and WebEx. The following members were present:

Stan Apple
Dr. Michael Bradley
Dr. Rene Couture
Dr. Melissa Darnell
Dr. Michael Davis
Dr. Peter Dykema
Dr. David Eshelman
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. Arwen Taylor
Dr. Ellen Treadway
Dr. Erica Wondolowski

Absent: Dr. David Cullen; Dr. Bethany Swindell; Sherry Tinarella; Dr. Breanna Claire

Also present: Dr. Robin Bowen (President); Dr. Julie Furst-Bowe (VPAA); Dr. Tennille Lasker-Scott (DEI Guest Speaker; Ed Armstrong (University Counsel)

- I. **Call to Order:** Dr. Sean Reed called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.
 - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes from the September 13 meeting from Dr. Sean Huss, seconded by Dr. David Eshelman. Motion carried.
- II. **Update from Dr. Bowen:** A search committee is being convened for a Vice President of Academic Affairs, who will also serve as a University Provost. The committee will be chaired by Dr. Mary Gunter and include Dr. Sean Reed as a Senate representative, and aim to begin interviewing in January.
- III. **DEI Presentation:** Dr. Tennille Lasker-Scott presented an overview of DEI, emphasizing the practical and revenue stakes of effectively welcoming diverse populations, the benefits to students, faculty, and staff of doing DEI effectively, the necessity of focusing on specific policies, and the metrics by which DEI policies may be measured
- 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. Sean Huss. Following some clarification that the pre-law certificate does not need assessment justifications, as well as the change of the Bachelor of Arts in Rehabilitation Science to a Bachelor of Science, the **Motion carried.**

B. Standing Committees

1. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp): Committee held introductory meeting and discussed the role of the fee committee as well as the deadline for the submission of new fee proposals (Nov 23).
2. General Education Committee (Black [for 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 (Stacy [for Swindell]): No report.
8. Professional Development Committee (Dykema/Darnell): Applications for grants are ongoing, but the funds for this semester have nearly all been awarded; more will be available in the spring. The committee will likely review the application process, and would like more money, since funds were cut substantially by covid.
9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple): Discussed the approval and costs of large program purchases, maintenance of department-specific programs, and the timeframe for renewals of programs, coming up in 2024-5 especially.

C. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees

1. Faculty Workload Committee (Eshelman/Darnell): No report
2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis): Tech has renewed with BCBS, with the university absorbing the rise in premium; open enrollment begins in late October, and faculty need reminders to enroll.
3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski): No report.
4. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard): Academic Affairs will convene a group to evaluate and decide what changes may be made to policies, including alignment with CUPA.
5. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Darnell): No report.
6. Transfer Task Force (Stacy): A position in being advertised seeking a transfer advisor who will report to Academic Affairs.
7. Prior Learning Committee (Stacy [for Swindell]): Committee is preparing documentation show how peer universities do this; informational sessions will be held later in October.
8. Hiring Processes Committee (Dykema): No report.

9. Emergency Management Committee: New draft of emergency procedures has been prepared; RAVE panic buttons are being set up and every department should have a designated user. The committee is also expanding; Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon volunteered to join as a faculty senate representative.
10. Microcredentials Committee (Wondolowski): No report.

V. New Business

A. VPAA Update (Furst-Bowe): The proposal for a M-R teaching schedule has been tabled after conversations with various stakeholders, due to narrow window of time before the 2023-4 calendar must be submitted. It may be taken up at a later date. Dr. Nupp asked whether anyone had thoroughly explored the practical difficulties of creating this schedule in terms of departments' curricula.

B. University Council: Mr. Ed Armstrong: Mr. Armstrong said he was here to address the legal implications of "printing or publishing an anonymous letter . . . that might be unsavory, defamatory, what have you":

~ Faculty Senate meetings may be, by some legal theories still being tested in the courts, considered "open meetings." Dr. Stacy pointed out that this may be a non-issue, since Senate meetings are already advertised and posted online, i.e., treated as "open" regardless. Mr. Armstrong agreed that he was not present because the Senate was "in trouble," only to ensure the Senate is in compliance with open-meetings laws if necessary.

~Public records are records produced by state employees as a part of the discharge of their work, but there are privacy exceptions to FOIA. Mr. Armstrong clarified he was not present as a response to anything specific that had been posted by the Senate. Personnel records are exempt from FOIA, and exit letters may include content that cause them to count as personnel records.

~"Defamation" is a statement of fact that is false and harmful to a person's reputation.

~Electronic information can be FOIAed, including an IP address. This may mean that ostensibly anonymous feedback sent to the Senate or survey data could be subject to FOIA and tracked back to an author. This might violate the terms of use of an application such as QuestionPro. The Senate will move to address these concerns around anonymity as quickly as possible.

C. A request from Dr. Sarah Gordon for a liaison between the Faculty Senate and Grad Council was deferred to the Webex discussion; items related to adjuncts were tabled till next meeting.

VI. Old Business

Recycling: Dr. Swindell learned from Solid Waste Management District that there are two dumpsters for recycling on campus, by the cafeteria and the physical plant; the problem is getting materials transported from various buildings to the recycling dumpsters.

VII. Announcements and Information Items

- ~Emergency Management Student Association will host an evening with the FBI on October 27.
- ~The “Do Something” initiative is hosting a food drive through October 28.
- ~*The Crucible* will be performed by Tech Theater on October 27-29.
- ~The Library is hosting a series of “Tech Votes” talks, including Pamela Luker on ballot issues and several events with candidates.
- ~Safe space training will take place the first week in November.

VIII. Adjournment: Dr. Jaime Stacy moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Arwen Taylor. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Sean Reed, Chair



Dr. Arwen Taylor, Secretary