Staff Senate Minutes

May 6, 2020

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Charity Smith called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at 10:00 am in Webex virtual online meeting.

**ROLL CALL Senators Present:**

Lydia Rogers Angela Bell Teresa Lutz Susan Johnson Rachel Broussard Amber Meeks Kaitlin Ennis Judy Crouch Karissa Webb Brittany Reves Brandi Duvall Charity Smith Michelle Bishop Alan Parsons Alisha Williams

**Senators Absent:**

Chris Pearson Belinda Martin Shelly Handley Andrea Eubanks

Kelli Bates

**Visitor(s):**

Dr. David Eshelman Kelly Davis Jennifer Thomas Brent Drake

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the February 5, 2020 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Williams filed a motion to accept the minutes and record the meeting virtually. Senator Broussard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

**Special Report**

**Committee Reports**

* **President’s Communication –** No report
* **Budget Advisory –** No report
* **Scholarship –** No report
* **University Strategic Planning –** No report
* **Insurance Committee –** Senator Bell stated there are several bids (5 for medical, 6 for pharmacy). All details are not known yet, working on a presentation to go to Ms. Hinkle on Friday. They have an idea of who bid but details have not been released. Reports come back as bids look to be competitive. Moving forward with APERS – stop offering APERS as an option for new employees (Only TIAA option), currently employees would stay the same, unless they change anything themselves. President Smith inquired about difference between medical and pharmacy bids, what can you explain about the pharmacy aspect (direct order or how we have paid co-pays in tiers)? Senator Bell stated it would be different carries but assumes it would work the same as what we used. No proposal has been sent to committee as of today, looking for that to be available soon. Also, looking into Stephens group contract to make sure we are getting our monies worth.
* **IT Prioritization and Impact –** Senator Crouch stated she did not have any updates. Prior to the April 9th Budget Advisory meeting was the last time Ken Wester mentioned after said meeting he would get the committee together to discuss the information for 2020-2021.
* **University Communication Working Group –** President Smith stated data has been complied and sent back to main working group. Next meeting is May 13th. Waiting for results and to discuss results and she will send those out as soon as possible.
* **Campus Space and Utilization –** No report
* **Green and Gold Cupboard –** Senator Reves stated Dr. Jenkins is okay with food now and they are currently only open to appointments only.

**Old Business**

President Smith address Staff Picnic, there are no funds in the budget to allow for a picnic. Since we are not returning until August and looking at the safety of numbers, a picnic would not be ideal. President Smith is working with Jennifer Fleming to show appreciation another way. A pervious suggestion from the feedback forms was a free family photo during the holidays, looking into the possibility of making that an option. This is the time to think outside the box. No staff picnic will take place this year.

*Special Election -Administration and Finance Senator*

Senator Duvall stated there were a few nominations. Some declined and others did not respond. There was no acceptance of the nomination. They will continue to look and fill that position. Anyone can nominate someone; the nominee just has to be a part of the Administration and Finance division. Please be looking for employees who would be willing to step into this role.

**New Business**

*Staff Awards Committee*

President Smith noted in previous years, there was a discussion about creating a sort of an Employee of the Year. President Bowen wanted us to further that work and get the award created and awarded. It is being requested to form an official standing committee with 4-5 people on the committee to review the research and put things into motion. Senator Bell noted she was on the previous committee and submitted request and was told there was no money and it was dropped. It was presented to Ms. Hinkle and Dr. Gunter and it was rejected. Senator Bishop backed what Senator Bell outlined and was also a part of the committee. President Smith address mirroring what faculty awards look like with President Bowen, the monetary award portion. No budget has been created for that, so it was suggested to work with Advancement to see if any donors would be interested in staff morale improvement. Jennifer Thomas from Ozark Campus sent a chat stating that one staff excellence is awarded on campus. That includes a plaque, campus parking spot for a year, one-time cost and announcement at spring graduation. This is not a monetary award like faculty receives, but it is something to consider. Dr. Eshelman added that administration can only not give you money for awards. They cannot keep you from organizing the committee and offering the award. The funding should not be a reason to not move forward with creating this committee. It is within your power to give out the award year by year and funding may come with time. Senator Parsons made a motion to create the Staff Awards Committee. Senator Duvall seconded the motion. President Smith asked if anyone would be willing to serve on the committee, that would be 4-5 members to get started. Senator Bell agreed to serve, she has the proposal from previous request. Senator Bishop asked where the faculty get their budget. President Smith stated Academic Affairs has the funding worked into their information. Senator Bishop offered to serve on committee again. Senator Williams agreed to serve on the committee. Staff Senate voted unanimously to approve Staff Awards Committee creation.

*Welfare Committee*

President Smith included information about creating another new standing committee. The purpose is to work with Brittany Reves (Staff Senate liaison with Green and Gold Cupboard), co-lead with her and assist in food drives and other concerns of a welfare nature. It is currently hit or miss on the food funding with the Green and Gold Cupboard, may need a long-term plan. This committee would help find those donations and work the food drives. Senator Crouch made a motion to form the Welfare Committee. Senator Williams seconded the motion. Staff Senate voted unanimously to approve the Welfare Committee creation. Sentoar Crouch offered to serve on the committee.

**Open Forum**

**Announcements**

President Smith reminded all to read the OneTech announcements. The recent announcement about mental health resources for faculty and staff, free to charge for a limited time. There is also an emotional support hotline number. Group Life Insurance will also set up virtual visits on May 4th. Please, take advantage of any of the resources you might need during these trying times.

**Meeting Adjourned**

Senator Bishop filed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Crouch seconded the motion. The Senate voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:07am.

**Next Meeting**

June 3, 2020 @ 10:00 am in Webex virtual online meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karissa Webb, Secretary