

Staff Senate Minutes

July 13, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

President Kim Gray called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday July 13, 2023 at 9:20 a.m. in a hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual online meeting.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Sabrina Anwar
Peggy Ayers
Rachel Broussard
Deidra Dillard
Slade Dupuy
Joey Davis
Julie Ennis

Cindy Dixon
Kim Hilliard
Katie Hook
Kim Gray
Margie Link
Kacie Lopez

Krystle Manning
Amber Meeks
Whitney Moore
Cody Parsons
Miranda Senn
Kristian Thompson
Jamie Young

Senators Absent:

Natasha Branch

Karen Hall

Connie Herring

Visitor(s):

Alisa Waniewski
Amie Booth
Angela Westbrook
Brandi Tripp
Andrea Eubanks
Bryan Bramlett
Cary Wills
Christopher Duncan
Cole Hendrix
Deborah Brady
Dr. Keegan Nichols
George Brooks
Heather Taylor
Jennifer Fleming
Joceline Argueta
Julia Pope
Justin Clark
Kaylin Telford

Leigh Hill
Lisa Clark
Mackenzie Bray
Marcia Brown
MeKinzie Kyle
Michelle Price
Nicole Edwards
Niki Schwartz
Presley Thompson
Rhonda Ralph
Stephanie Swatzel
Suzanne McCall
Tammy Rye
Tanya Martin
Tracey Hale
Victoria Tomlin
William Tomlin

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the May 11, 2023 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Ayers filed a motion to accept the minutes. Senator Anwar seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

Special Guest

Dr. Keegan Nichols

Special Report

Dr. Nichols wanted us to know that she is not making any big decisions in Dr. Bowen's absence and is keeping a bulleted list of the actions she is doing as acting President. Anyone that would like to see this list is free to request it.

Dr. Nichols has invited everyone to attend the Back-To-School Welcome on August 18th. She is open to suggestions on what this should look like and how to get everyone excited for the return of students. Dr. Nichols also said that if anyone would like an update on the construction, please reach out to her and she will provide one.

Move in day is approaching and O Street will be opened for the day of move in but will be closed again after that. For more information regarding parking, please contact Drew at FAMA or Public Safety.

Dr. Nichols also spoke a bit on enrollment. She mentioned that when it comes to enrollment numbers, she uses housing occupancy and advising numbers to tell her where we're going to be. It is predicting a strong freshman class with it being only 1% down, as of now. The biggest area she is concerned about is junior and senior numbers. Returning students is where we are losing the most numbers.

As a solution to that, Dr. Nichols and her team have ran reports on students that were enrolled in the fall of 22 and spring of 23 but haven't yet enrolled for fall of 23. They distributed those names to the appropriate deans to make calls and emails to those students asking what their blockers were.

She addressed the new building over by FAMA and confirmed that that building is not owned by ATU and will not be used by us for housing.

Jones Hall is being renovated so it is offline for housing. It is expected to be back online spring of 24. Stadium suites was going to be offline due to the sewer issues it is having. However, we are putting it back online because we need it. We don't want to put students off campus because when we do that, even temporarily, retention rates drop.

Dr. Nichols is also very excited about the new pickle ball court that is going in around where Roush used to be over by Doc Bryan. She has extended the opportunity for anyone to play a round with her once it is ready.

President Gray asked about the food truck prospect and Dr. Nichols informed us that we were unable to secure that idea. It was going to be about 1.25 million dollars and that just wasn't something that we could make happen this year.

We also brought up the transportation for on campus students question/issue with Dr. Nichols. She said unfortunately there is no funding for ATU to provide transportation for these students. However, they are working with Yeti Scooters to see if we can bring back that service to the campus.

If any department or individual would like to speak to Dr. Nichols one on one as acting president, she has offered to visit with you. She said just to reach out to her or Kim Tate to schedule that with your department or if you'd like to meet individually, she can go get coffee with you.

New Business/Discussion

New senate members were introduced, and we are excited to have them onboard! Welcome!

Elections were held for President, Vice President, and Secretary. Nominations for President are as follows:

- Kristian Thompson
- Peggy Ayers
- Kim Hilliard
- Connie Herring

Senator Kristian captured the votes and is the new Staff Senate President! Next, we held elections for Vice President. Nominations were as follows:

- Kim Hilliard
- Katie Hook
- Peggy Ayers
- Connie Herring

Senator Herring captured the votes and is the new Staff Senate Vice President! Lastly, we held elections for Secretary. Nominations were as follows:

- Whitney Moore
- Rachel Broussard
- Deidre Dillard

Senator Moore captured the votes and is the new Staff Senate Secretary!

Congratulations to all! While we are thrilled to have our new officers, it is hard letting go of the past officers. You will be missed!

The idea of having a meet and greet with Faculty Senate was discussed. Also, the idea of a Staff Senate meet and greet has arisen.

Faculty Senate has also suggested a collaborative cookbook that we could make together. Senator Ayers is looking into the idea with "The Foundation" as a way to pay for the materials and the possibility of fundraising.

Concerns & Questions brought to Staff Senate

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| <p>My doctor recently tried to prescribe me Wegovy the weight loss shot, because I had previously had bad reactions to Adipex and I was prediabetic. It was denied by the insurance. The doctor told me that when that happens it's not the actual insurance it's the employer who has stipulated it to not be covered. She recommended if it was denied to suggest there is a need for it to be approved by our insurance.</p> | <p>Arkansas Tech's plan follows the ABCBS(Arkansas BlueCross BlueShield) pharmacy plan and it does not cover weight loss medications. The employee always has the option to speak to customer service as well regarding any claims or questions about our plan. The BCBS customer service phone number is 800-238-8379. We also discussed different options that individuals have to affordably access medications that insurance doesn't cover.</p> |
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Meeting Adjourned

President Gray adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Whitney Moore, Secretary

