

Staff Senate Minutes

September 7, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

President Kristian Thompson called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday September 7, 2023 at 9:03 a.m. in a hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual online meeting.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Sabrina Anwar
Peggy Ayers
Rachel Broussard
Deidra Dillard
Joey Davis

Slade Dupuy
Connie Herring
Kim Hilliard
Katie Hook
Amber Jacimore

Kacie Lopez
Whitney Moore
Tanda Morrison
Cody Neal
Tammy Rye

Miranda Senn
Kristian Thompson

Senators Absent:

Julie Ennis

Krystle Manning

Visitor(s):

Amber Meeks
Angela Westbrook
Ashley Bryant
Billie Jones
Brandi Tripp
Brittany Reves
Brooklyn Meeks
Bryan Bramlett
Caroline Kitchens
Chelsea Martin
Cody Parsons
Cole Hendrix
Evalisbeth Garcia Diazbarriga
George Brooks
Jamie Young

Janet Carnahan-Lee
Jennifer Taylor
Jennifer Warren
Kerri Threlkeld
Lisa Gibson
Lydia Rogers
Mackenzie Bray
Marcia Brown
Margaret Link
Melissa Riffle
Maranda Marin
Scott Tomlin
Suzanne McCall
Sylvia Cooper
Vonda Dvorak

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the August 3, 2023 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes by the Senate.

Special Guests

Jason Geiken, Jamie Young, and Jessica Holloway

Special Report

Mr. Geiken gave us an opportunity to talk about the upcoming Family Campaign. The giving campaign is running from Mid-September through the 1st of October. Individuals from the Advancement office will be coming to all of our buildings to distribute their special campaign gift to all faculty and staff that are contributing a minimum of \$25 per year. That could be per pay period as a deduction from individual's pay checks or as a one-time gift. Their gift this year will be a lovely insulated bag and a clear tumbler with a straw and Tech logo.

If you'd like to contribute via a payroll deduction, there is a \$3 minimum and you are able to specify where that money goes if you'd like. If you were previously contributing via payroll deduction, you may want to check with Senator Peggy Ayers to verify that your contribution is continuing. There is a chance that the way it was set up was only for one year.

If you are interested in contributing to a specific area but they don't currently have an account that you can contribute to, you can also turn to Senator Ayers to point you in the right direction on the information needed to set up that account.

Mr. Geiken also mentioned that he knows moral is a little low at the moment but wanted to give everyone a bit of encouragement and remind us that all of our jobs are important to our university and wanted to give us all a big thank you.

Next, we had Ms. Jamie Young on to talk about the Staff Senate book club. Jamie started the book club during her reign on the Senate. For the time being, she is going to continue the book club for the semester. In the meantime, the Senate will need to either find a member that would love to continue the book club, or find another committee that would like to take it over. The book club is currently designed to examine different cultures that come through Tech as employees but even more so as students. In the past, the club has been able to partner with student organizations on campus that have been able to teach us what we need to know about their culture or from their frame of reference. These organizations want to share what it is like leaving their homes and coming to Arkansas Tech University.

The book club will start up again in October and will be hosted by the Dream Club. This group is our undocumented students and they will be sharing what it is like, living without permanent residency and being a college student, means to them.

For more details on the Book Club, please reach out to Jamie Young. If you are interested in being part of the Book Club or potentially even leading the club after this semester, please reach out to any of our officers to express this interest.

Lastly, we were happy to have Ms. Jessica Holloway with us to represent Ms. Laury Fiorello. Jessica spoke about one of the ongoing projects that are happening, which is the CUPA project. Recently, the university shifted from a mix of Classified and Non-Classified positions on campus, to only Non-Classified. (On the staff side) Those positions that changed were then shifted to CUPA titles. We also have had some restructures within departments.

With all of that being considered, many individuals on campus are now doing different tasks, or a mix of different tasks, than what their title indicates. The CUPA project will be reevaluating these staff members current duties and finding the appropriate job title for them. As simple as this may sound, there are regulations that must be followed, lots of red tape to go through, and we have a large number of staff that will need to be considered

Secondly, Ms. Holloway wanted to give us some good news regarding our insurance. Our insurance rates will not be increasing for staff members this coming enrollment year. This is in part, thanks to all of our employees keeping themselves healthy and keeping our rates down.

Jessica also wanted to remind everyone about the reduced hours in Student Accounts. QR codes have been created and placed outside of their office in order to try and assist anyone that shows up outside of those hours. Jessica also mentioned that if other departments think they can utilize QR codes, please reach out to her.

Jessica shared that Laury is also looking into how to make summer hours possible all year long. However, that is easier for some departments than others so they are looking at various ways to make it happen. President Thompson mentioned if there is anything that we can think of that we'd like brought to Laury regarding mural or ideas of how to make aspects of our jobs easier, let him know. He wants Tech to get back to being the place everyone would love to work at, like it used to be. So please don't be afraid to bring ideas to him. Ms. Holloway said that just because you've been told no in the past, doesn't mean that it would be a no again. Laws change, situations change, so don't be afraid to ask again.

Thank you all for joining us at our September meeting!

New Business/Discussion

We have an "At Large" Staff Senate position open that we will be trying to fill. Please start sending in nominations for that.

There was a constitution update that we have not taken to the board yet. This update was approved by the Senate in our August meeting. This was to increase the numbers of our representation. President Thompson is working with Laury to get that to the October board meeting to be finalized. They will also be looking at some of the by laws to see if there is anything we need to adjust.

Another item that was discussed in the meeting that President Thompson and Vice President Herring had with Laury and Dr. Jones, was the possibility of giving out a Staff Senate award similar to the award that Faculty Senate gives out at graduation. The hope would be that, like Faculty Senate, all staff would vote for one person and they would be awarded and also receive a stipend.

The next item was the Staff Senate survey. Once it rolls out, we will make a big push to make sure that everyone takes the survey. Unfortunately, as surveys sometimes tend to go, the only individuals that fill

out the form are those that are very upset. We want everyone to fill out the survey in order to get an accurate view of how staff feels. So, getting a large sample size is the biggest goal with this survey. We'd like to pick one or two individuals at random that completed the survey to be awarded a prize as incentive to do the survey. One of the prizes being considered is a gift card to the bookstore. If you can think of a good prize, let President Thompson know! With that comes concerns on how to keep staff identities anonymous for their survey answers but being able to identify them for the award.

We also had a constituent concern via email that we didn't have time to research and get information gathered in time to answer it for this meeting. We will be getting with Laury to work on addressing this concern. We just didn't want you to feel ignored.

If you have any upcoming events that you'd like mentioned in our meetings, please let us know what they are and we can add them to our next meeting.

We also discussed the Staff Senate cookbook. We are getting ready to start collecting recipes for it. We are discussing how to submit those. The idea of sending a dollar in with your recipe so that we can have seed money is being tossed around. You would then get that dollar taken off your purchase of the cookbook. If you have any additional ideas for this, let us know!

Upcoming Events

TBD

Meeting Adjourned

At 10:03 am a motion to adjourn was made and seconded and President Thompson concluded the September 7th, 2023 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Whitney Moore, Secretary