

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2020-2021 Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, 2021 on WebEx. The following members were present:

Dr. Alejandra Carballo	Dr. Sean Reed
Dr. Jon Clements	Dr. Scott Jordan
Dr. Michael Davis	Dr. Randy Kelley
Dr. Pam Dixon	Dr. Jeremy Schwehm
Dr. David Eshelman	Dr. Asim Shrestha
Dr. V. Carole Smith	Dr. Jamie Stacy
Dr. Newt Hilliard	Mr. Steven Junker
Dr. Efosa Idemudia	Dr. Brendan Toner
Dr. Cynthia Jacobs	Dr. Masanori Kuroki
Dr. Sean Huss	Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon

Absent: Dr. Shellie Hanna

Guests: Dr. Barbara Johnson, Mrs. Pat Chronister, Dr. Erin Clair

I. Call to Order

A. Approval of the minutes - from the November 30 meeting. Motion to approve from Dr. David Eshelman **Seconded by** Dr. Newt Hilliard **Motion Carried.**

II. New Business

A. Curricular Items

<https://www.atu.edu/registrar/2021CatalogCurriculumProposals.php> - Dr. Clements indicated there wasn't anything on the website at this time, so there is nothing to discuss.

Dr. V. Carole Smith made a motion to amend the agenda to include the **Gen-Ed Committee** discussion, seconded by Dr. Jamie Stacy **Motion Carried.** Dr. Erin Clair indicated that the Gen-Ed Committee voted, on January 21st, to add two courses to the General Education Curriculum: LEAD 1003 – *Introduction to Leadership*, and Finance 2013 – *Personal Finance*. Motion to approve these changes by Dr. V. Carole Smith, Seconded by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm. **Motion Carried.**

B. Registration Waiting List (Davis)

Dr. Michael Davis indicated that students sometimes inquire about the existence of registration waiting lists at ATU. It is his understanding that we have a waiting list, but it has not been activated. Dr. Jamie Stacy indicated in the back of Banner, under ‘course creation’, waiting lists can be set up. She suggested communication with Tammy Weaver (Registrar) might be in order to enable this in Banner. Dr. Jon Clements indicated that he would reach out to Tammy.

C. Student Evaluations Process (Reed/Schwehm)

Dr. Jeremy Schwehm indicated that his communications with Wyatt Watson gleaned that the two issues with course evaluations involve when they are deployed, and who can complete them and when. The issue stems from the question of whether or not students who drop the course can still complete evaluations. Both of those things fall under the purview of Academic Affairs. (*Communication with Wyatt Watson is included at the end of these minutes, and his opinions on use of Evaluation Kit may be of interest*). If the Senate wants to make recommendations to Academic Affairs regarding this, Senators can communicate with Dr. Sean Reed or Dr. Jeremy Schwehm regarding this for inclusion as a possible recommendation to Academic Affairs for the next Senate Meeting.

II. Old Business

A. VPAA update

Dr. Johnson is not feeling well today, and will not be giving the usual update, but Dr. Johnson is here in case we need important questions asked.

B. Faculty Handbook Edits (Huss/Schwehm)

Dr. Jeremy Schwehm will have these materials to the Senate in advance of the March meeting.

C. Budget Process/Letter to Dr. Bowen (Clements)

Dr. Jon Clements indicated that Dr. Bowen has written a letter to the Senate in response to the Senate’s request that she communicate budget restructuring plans to the Senate between meetings with the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees. She has indicated that she is unable to meet with the Senate as requested. Dr. Jon Clements sent the letter, written by the Senate Budget Advisory Committee to Dr. Bowen, requesting that meeting. Dr. Bowen sent a letter back last week (Dated January 29). Dr. Clements summarized the letter (* This letter is included in these minutes*).

D. Shared Governance Standing Committee Update (Eshelman)

Dr. David Eshelman indicated that he has nothing to report at this time.

E. Concerns related to the primacy of academics / Provost (Eshelman)

- Vote on Faculty Choice Award

The Senate voted to present the inaugural Faculty Choice Award to Dr. Barbara Johnson.

Motion Carried.

IV. Open Forum

A. Input from anonymous emails

Dr. Jon Clements read a few anonymous e-mails.

These e-mails reflected opinions about various levels of leadership, the promotion and tenure process, course scheduling, restructuring and other themes.

Dr. Jamie Stacy indicated that the *Covid taskforce* for the university has asked what the Senate might recommend in order to support students who experience side-effects of Covid Vaccines. After some discussion, Dr. Clements indicated that he would mention vaccination, possible side-effects, and possible ramifications on student attendance in the Faculty Senate Snapshot, with an emphasis on compassion on the part of faculty with respect to attendance and accountability.

Dr. Jamie Stacy indicated the anyone who has had the vaccine administered elsewhere should let the university to know that so their name can be taken off of the list.

Dr. Jon Clements inquired about events including summer camps. Dr. Stacy indicated that, at this time, the Office of Events is still handling that. A memo has been drafted, the Covid Taskforce is recommending that we go forward with camps and conferences this summer, but it is going to recommend day camps, but not overnight camps and events. That will be reevaluated in March, then again in April. As far as on-campus, internal events, that would follow the campus guidelines (less than 30, social distance, room, etc.). Dr. Clements asked about special events, citing student recitals as an example. Dr. Stacy indicated that approval for something on-campus would start with the Office of Events, and that it would have to follow ADH guidance. She emphasized that the taskforce does not see itself as a deciding body, and referred events to ADH guidelines and the Office of Events.

Dr. Jamie Stacy indicated that she has received several letters from students, outlining different levels of experience with faculty and classes as they have adjusted for the pandemic. Dr. Stacy wants to explore **support for faculty** who may need encouragement and resources as they attempt to be supportive of students. Mixed technology or F2F classes that have had to make adjustments for quarantine. She emphasized the there are resources (i.e. Health and Wellness group counseling for Covid many may not be aware of). Dr. Stacy cited the importance of finding support for students, and helping students who have been forced into virtual learning environments, but have not been prepared for that.

Dr. Clements indicated that he has also heard from students who want to request a **retroactive change in the grading policy** for fall 2020. He indicated that he met with the SGA mid-semester, and encouraged them to work through the SGA.

Dr. Newt Hilliard gave an update from his participation on the restructuring committees. He indicated that subscription to some automatic workflow applications might not be renewed, so those processes might have to be done manually, making things work a little slower in some offices. On the academic side, there was a feeling that academics have been cut a lot in previous year, and that cuts will have many unintended consequences.

V. Announcements and Information Items

Dr. David Eshelman CETL Presentation (March 2) *Improving the Full Professor Experience.*

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Dr. Michael Davis, seconded by Dr. Jamie Stacy **Motion Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Jon Clements, D.M. President



Sean Reed, D.M.A. Secretary



Faculty Senate

No problem, please share as you feel appropriate.

Thanks,
Wyatt

John "Wyatt" Watson
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From: Jeremy Schwehm
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 5:09 PM
To: John Wyatt Watson <wwatson@atu.edu>
Subject: RE: End-of-Course Evaluations

Thanks for this additional information Wyatt. Do you mind if I share this email with Senate?

Thanks again,

Jeremy

From: John Wyatt Watson <wwatson@atu.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 4:56 PM
To: Jeremy Schwehm <jschwehm@atu.edu>
Subject: RE: End-of-Course Evaluations

Dr. Schwehm,

We have found out a little bit more about the capabilities of our current version of EvaluationKit.

1. We could turn on a feature that would send 'Certificates of Completion' to students as soon as they complete an evaluation. This email can only go to students – not faculty though. This could be used if a faculty wanted a student to prove they completed the evaluation for extra credit for example. This feature is either on or off for the entire University. I have no recommendation either way on certificates of completion.
2. We have available version 2.0 of report builder. The current report builder used by faculty, department heads, and deans is very clunky. The new version is more user friendly and seems to flow better with more initiative features than version 1.0 which we are on currently. I do recommend that we move towards report builder version 2.0.
3. This next one would take a bit more investigation. We should be able to implement BlackBoard notifications if we choose. This feature shows a student an immediate pop-up window if the student has outstanding evaluations. This pop-up shows every time they log into BlackBoard for any reason. I would highly recommend this to help with our response rates. We even have the ability to force an evaluation before a student can proceed in BlackBoard but I think that is going too far. I do recommend that we further investigate this and if no problems are found that we implement BlackBoard notifications.
4. This would take considerable more investigation but it is our current belief that we can integrate Banner and EvaluationKit to synchronize which students get to evaluate which classes. This system would link course registrations in Banner to their surveys in EvaluationKit. The big change here would be once a student dropped a class then they are no longer eligible to evaluate it. Currently, if a student drops a class late enough then they still might have the ability to evaluate the class. This would need to be investigated more to make sure that we can implement it but I believe that we should be able to do this with our current system if the policy changed to align registrations with evaluations. I do recommend more investigation on this but I did not want to invest too much time in this until I could hear back from Faculty Senate.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Wyatt

John "Wyatt" Watson
Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
Arkansas Tech University



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From: John Wyatt Watson
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 11:45 AM
To: Jeremy Schwehm <jschwehm@atu.edu>
Subject: RE: End-of-Course Evaluations

Dr. Schwehm,

We are currently investigating new features of EvaluationKit and we plan on presenting what we find to Academic Affairs. We hope to be able to integrate more with Banner or at least BlackBoard to remove a lot of the manual process that we have now. Hopefully we can use some of the new features to assist with any change in policy. With that said, the course evaluation policy/procedure is owned by Academic Affairs, IR&E just helps to implement it. Any changes would need to be recommended to Academic Affairs. I do also want to point out that what you describe below is actually two separate but related issues. First, we have when the survey physically opens and secondly we have who is allowed to participate in the survey. For example, we can open the survey days after last day to drop but we could allow dropped students to participate. Each time frame would need to be determined separately. The two time frames could be the same but they do not have to be the same.

Depending on what we find and what any changes may be, I might recommend that we change software and move away from EvaluationKit. I have not been well pleased with this software



Faculty Senate

compared to what their sales team told us it could do. I do wonder sometimes if we would be better off building our own evaluation system internally than purchasing a package to do it.

Did this address your issues for now?

Thanks,

Wyatt



Faculty Senate

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January 29, 2021

Dear ATU Faculty Senate members,

Thank you for your communication dated January 20, 2021.

I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the time, thorough deliberations and thoughtful feedback provided by both our ATU faculty and staff as they have participated at different points throughout our restructuring process. The budget advisory committee has been involved from the beginning. Faculty and staff have engaged in open forums hosted by Mr. Walter Branson. We have met with the senates representing faculty, staff and the students to gain their input. Each of these opportunities for dialogue has provided valuable insight and input.

Members of the executive council solicited information from their departments and colleges through conversations held to discuss possible efficiencies and reallocations as well as opportunities for enhancement and innovation. Faculty and staff are currently involved in reviews of budget proposals so we can obtain the perspective of each operating area at the university through the representatives they have provided to the academic committee and the university support committee. I too have worked to keep ATU faculty and staff informed about the status of our progress through weekly e-mail communications and our fall 2020 and spring 2021 start-of-semester university updates.

I recognize the restructuring initiative is a challenge. Knowing that cuts are forthcoming is disheartening. Please know that no one wants to have to endure a restructuring process, yet given the current state of higher education in the nation and our own financial projections, we must.

The ATU Board of Trustee members are fully aware of our restructuring process, have been briefed on actions to date and plans for decision making moving forward. The Board applauds the transparent manner in which we have operated. They have asked that I communicate their appreciation of your input and participation throughout the process. The Board members have also communicated that they prefer to be the first ones to receive the restructuring recommendations, given the position that they hold and their responsibilities.

Although I am not able to provide the presentations you have requested prior to the March Board of Trustees meeting, please know I will take all of the information I have received into consideration when developing my recommendations and that those recommendations will reflect the best interests of our students and our mission.



Faculty Senate

It is important to note that March 18 is not the end of the process. There will be more than two months between that meeting and the May 20, 2021, meeting when the ATU Board of Trustees will review the final budget proposal for fiscal year 2022. Decisions will need to be made regarding enhancements and innovations the university should employ moving forward. Executive council members will be meeting with their respective areas and the budget advisory committee will continue to meet during that period between board meetings. As you have these past months, please continue to provide your insights regarding these areas as well. And know that I will be working to carry out the will of our board, prioritizing our mission of student access and success.

I appreciate your continued support as we work together for the future of Arkansas Tech University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin E. Bowen".

Dr. Robin E. Bowen
President
Arkansas Tech University