

Minutes of  
THE FACULTY SENATE  
OF  
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2020-2021 Faculty Senate was held at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 on WebEx. The following members were present:

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

Absent: Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon

Guests: Dr. Barbara Johnson, Dr. Robin Bowen, Ms. Pat Chronister

**I. CALL TO ORDER** Dr. Clements called the meeting to order.

A. Dr. Bowen Address to Senate Dr. Robin Bowen, President of Arkansas Tech University, thanked those who were serving on Faculty Senate. She asked that senators help her in improving University communication by regularly reporting to their constituents what is discussed in Senate meetings and bringing the concerns of our constituents to the Senate. Dr. Bowen then addressed the following:

1. Safety: Dr. Bowen stated we are following CDC guidelines, including the requirement to wear masks and practicing social distancing. Any decisions to move to 100% online instruction will depend on a confluence of factors. These include both factors on camps and in the community.

2. Mental Health: Our health insurance provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield, is covering mental health services. According to a recent student, 25% of 18-24 year olds had seriously considered suicide in June 2020. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to fellow faculty and students about mental health services covered through our insurance provider and services offered to students at Tech.

3. Ideas: Dr. Bowen asked for input/ideas on how the University might support employees/faculty if the K-12 schools go virtual.

4. Strategic Plan: In a normal year, the University would be concluding the current strategic plan and developing the new strategic plan. Dr. Bowen suggested considering a stretch year and completing the plan in 2021-2022.

5. Agenda Item: Dr. Bowen asked Faculty Senate to consider a change to the length of appointment for the Senate chair to two years.

6. Budget: Dr. Bowen stated she is optimistic we will meet our Fall 2020 budget, but will not know for sure until September 2, 2020. The first and second drop dates are important. The 2021 – 2022 budget is being reviewed to know the exact amount of cuts necessary. The

University is not able to continue using long-term reserves to make up for budget shortfalls. The one-time money taken from reserves to address the current budget shortfall must be replenished. Administration will be looking institution-wide for cuts. Faculty Senate will be asked for input.

7. Early Retirement: The administration will present a proposal to the Board of Trustees for an early retirement incentive program.

8. Employee Meetings: Dr. Bowen will continue the practice of meeting with faculty and staff across campus.

9. Board of Trustees: The Board of Trustees wants to hear more about successful, effective programs and initiatives across campus.

## B. VPAA Update

Dr. Barbara Johnson, Vice President for Academic Affairs, stated administration would be using program performance metrics and external market data in making decisions about program viability. Markets would include metro areas within the region. They will look at growth potential for current programs. There will also be work done on developing a master plan for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Johnson stated a 48-hour plan for pivoting to 100% online instruction is being finalized in the event we have to close campus. The plan can be found on the CETL website.

Dr. Johnson asked for maximum flexibility during the Fall 2020 when working with students and each other. She stressed the importance of grace and patience as we navigate this stressful time.

## C. Minutes

Dr. Clements requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the April 29, 2020 and July 2020 Special Forum meetings.

Motion by Dr. Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Hilliard to approve the April 29, 2020 minutes. Motion carried.

Motion by Dr. Huss, seconded by Dr. Smith to approve the July 2020 Special Forum minutes. Motion carried.

## II. NEW BUSINESS:

### A. Faculty Senate Chair Address to Senate

Dr. Clements thanked Dr. Eshelman for the great job he did as Faculty Senate Chair. He stated the 2020-2021 academic year will be an interesting one with a lot to get done. Dr. Clements stressed the important role of Faculty Senate to support and encourage faculty.

All Senate meetings will be held via WebEx.

Dr. Clements stated his desire to continue Dr. Eshelman and Senate's charge to preserve education of our students at the number one priority and to hold academics as the primary aspect of the University experience.

### B. Election of Vice Chair/Chair Elect

Dr. Clements requested nominations for Vice Chair/Chair Elect.

Dr. Eshelman nominated Dr. Jamie Stacy for the Vice Chair/Chair Elect position.

Motion by Dr. Hilliard, seconded by Dr. Jacobs, to elect Dr. Stacy as Vice Chair/Chair Elect. Motion carried.

C. Election of Senate Secretary

Dr. Clements requested nominations for Senate Secretary.

Dr. Schwehm nominated Dr. Sean Reed for the Senate Secretary position.

**Motion by Dr. Stacy, seconded by Dr. Hanna, to elect Dr. Reed as Senate Secretary. Motion carried.**

D. Senate Advisory Committee

Dr. Clements requested volunteers to serve on the Senate Advisory Committee. The committee includes the Senate Chair, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Secretary, and several volunteers. The following Senators volunteered for the committee: Dr. Smith, Dr. Hanna, Dr. Huss, and Dr. Hilliard.

E. Every Student Counts Committee

Dr. Clements requested nominations for the Every Student Counts Committee.

**Motion by Dr. Hilliard, seconded by Dr. Huss, to nominated Dr. Carballo to the Every Student Counts Committee. Motion carried.**

**IV. OPEN FORUM**

Dr. Eshelman suggested the following initiatives be considered by the Senate: popular election of Senate chair, a Faculty Senate Choice Award to recognize administrators who support ATU's academic mission, and orientation for promoted faculty.

Dr. Hanna reported student issues with over one month wait times for a mental health visit. Dr. Carballo asked if faculty could refer students to mental health services outside of ATU. She reported that Counselling Services is currently providing free mental health services for students. Dr. Clements noted that a fixed amount of mental health visits in the Counseling Center are covered by tuition and coverage for an outside service would be dependent on the student's health insurance coverage.

Dr. Reed requested Senate add the Professional Development Grant guideline revisions to the next Senate agenda. Dr. Schwehm noted he would forward the revisions to Drs. Clements and Reed for inclusion in the next agenda.

Dr. Hilliard expressed concern over the varying application of release time/course releases among the different departments/colleges.

Dr. Huss reported he is working with Human Resources on revised language for the mask policy.

Dr. Smith asked if there would be training on the DPTC process. Dr. Huss suggested training be added to the Spring 2021 Professional Development. Drs. Schwehm and Huss will work with the committee revising the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines to deliver the revisions to Senate by the November meeting.

Dr. Clements announced appointments to various standing committees. Faculty appointed will be listed in the Standing Committees PDF available on the Academic Affairs website.

All Senate meetings will be held via WebEx. The November 30, 2020 meeting will be at noon. All other meetings will begin at 3:00pm.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Dr. Davis, seconded by Dr. Huss to adjourn. Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon F. Clements". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

**Jon Clements, D.M. President**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

**Sean Reed, D.M.A. Secretary**