



Faculty Senate

Minutes of THE FACULTY SENATE OF ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2021-2022 Faculty Senate was held at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 on WebEx. The following members were present:

Dr. Jon Clements	Dr. Sean Reed
Dr. Michael Davis	Dr. Jeremy Schwehm
Dr. Pam Dixon	Dr. Asim Shrestha
Dr. David Eshelman	Dr. Masanori Kuroki
Dr. V. Carole Smith	Dr. Jamie Stacy
Dr. Newt Hilliard	Dr. Peter Dykema
Dr. Efosa Idemudia	Dr. Arwen Taylor
Dr. Cynthia Jacobs	Dr. Rene Couture
Dr. Sean Huss	Dr. Melissa Darnell
Dr. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh	Ms. Bethany Swindell

Absent: Dr. Julie Mikles-Schleterman

Guests: Dr. Barbara Johnson, Dr. Randy Kelley

- I. **Call to Order:** Dr. John Clements welcomed Dr. Jamie Stacy as the new Chair of the Faculty Senate.
- A. **Address by Chair and Introductions:** Senators introduced themselves. Dr. Stacy stated that she was contacted by Mrs. Duffield and was informed that the Board had three bids and would be able to move forward in the remediation process. Dr. Stacy stressed the importance of building trust with our constituents, especially with the restructuring process.
- B. **Remarks by VPAA Dr. Johnson**
 - The standing committee for Shared Governance will need representation. Dr. Stacy and Dr. Schwehm will work on having a special election for this.
 - Restructuring: We have been charged to restructure the colleges to improve structure and support the departments. Dr. Johnson is going to be looking for creative problem-solvers (outside the box). Dr. Johnson will work with our deans to secure recommendations from each college (there will not be any Deans on the committee). If you are interested in serving, let your deans know. There will be at least 2 opportunities for faculty to give feedback on college restructuring.
 - Questions from Senators
 - Degree Audits: Dr. Sean Huss addressed the fact that there is a rumor that Degree Works will be replacing the traditional Degree Audit forms. Dr. Johnson indicated that she would investigate this. Dr. Johnson received an

update from Tammy Weaver (during this meeting), indicating that the old paper degree audits were being phased out – hopefully by this spring.

- Vaccination Rates in Higher Education: Dr. Rene Couture inquired about faculty vaccination rates. Dr. Stacy stated that she is on the COVID Taskforce and the rate is around 50%. Dr. Stacy explained how the Department of Health determines the vaccination rates through state vaccination records. The student vaccination rate is around 40%.
 - STEM College Restructuring: Dr. Rene Couture inquired about the STEM College. Dr. Johnson stated that there will be a STEM College.
- C. **Approval of the Minutes:** from April 26, 2021. Motion to approve from Dr. Jeremy Schwehm, seconded by Dr. Sean Huss seconded. Motion carried.

II. New Business

- A. **Election of Secretary:** Dr. David Eschelmann moved to nominate Ms. Bethany Swindell, seconded by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm. Motion carried.
- B. **Meeting Format for Fall – WebEx or In Person:** the discussion led to a consensus that we should continue to meet via Webex for now. The topic will be revisited towards the end of the semester.
- C. **Curriculum Committee Agenda:** Distributed to Senators. Agenda was sent in advance for informational purposes.
- D. **Proposed Changes to Constitution:** Dr. Jeremy Schwehm will review meeting notes that reflect votes on Adjunct Faculty senate representation. We will work that out in Teams and send it to Andrea Eubanks in order to update the Senate Constitution.
- E. **Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases:** Dr. Barbara Johnson believes a standard amount could be beneficial for professor and instructor tracks. She indicated that was the norm in institutions where she has worked before. We may need to look for data from other institutions regarding their processes. If interested in serving on this committee, contact Dr. Newt Hilliard.

III. Old Business

- A. **Faculty Handbook Updates:** Dr. Schwehm indicated that we can remove this from old business for now. When new items are presented, this item can be introduced as new business.
- B. **Concerns Related to the Primacy of Academics / Provost:** Dr. Eschelmann indicated that, as we don't have an academic Provost now, we have not accomplished that goal.
- C. **COVID Updates:** Dr. Stacy indicated out vaccination rates are low. We have Senate representation on the COVID Taskforce. We have a mask mandate in force. Dr. Johnson indicated that she suggests that we don't bring up vaccines with students. The mask mandate is another issue – suggesting that students comply with the mandate is allowed, but having a debate about them in class is ill-advised. When/if outside class trips/internships and the

outside source has a requirement that students/faculty be vaccinated, check with VPAA to find out what the ramifications of asking students to participate in those types of events might be.

IV. Open Forum

- Dr. Sean Huss and Dr. V. Carole indicated that the Senate Committee on Diversity and Inclusion has met twice. Another meeting will be called again.
- Dr. Jeremy Schwehm indicated that the committee that deals with handbook edits has been around for a long time and that we might consider taking this out of ad hoc status in the Senate and make this a university-wide standing committee.
- The standing committees are not listed in the Faculty Handbook anymore. Dr. Johnson stated that Ms. Pat Chronister was told to remove those as every change required Board approval.
- Dr. Huss indicated that we need a procedure for archiving or a repository of the standing committees, and Dr. Stacey agreed to work with him on creating some sort of repository/record keeping for documentation of standing committees.
- Dr. Cynthia Jacobs asked about clarification on standing committees and inclusion in the Faculty Handbook and Academic Affairs website. Discussion about approval dates and membership tracking of committees.
- The Faculty Handbook is still the 2020-2021 version on the website.

V. Announcements and Information Items

A. Standing Committee Appointments

- Dr. Arwen Tayler will represent the Senate for the Professional Development Committee
- Dr. Newt Hilliard will represent the Senate for the Faculty, Salary, and Benefits Committee
- Ms. Bethany Swindell will continue to represent the Senate for the Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee

B. Dr. Newt Hillard stated that the new faculty lounge in BazTech would be opening soon.

C. Dr. Sean Reed reminded the Senate that there are understaffed offices and to have grace and patience with everyone. He also announced the death of a colleague in the Music Department.

D. Meeting Dates 2021-2022 (second Tuesday at 3:00)

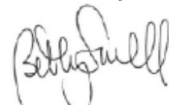
- Fall: 9/14/21, 10/12/21, 11/9/21, 12/1/21* (*Reading Day time TBA)
- Spring: 2/8/22, 3/8/22, 4/12/22, 4/27/22* (*Reading Day time TBA)

VI. Adjournment: Dr. Sean Reed moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Sean Huss. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Jamie Stacy, President



Bethany Swindell, Secretary