



Faculty Senate

Minutes of THE FACULTY SENATE OF ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2021-2022 Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12, 2022 on WebEx. The following members were present:

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

Absent: none

Guest: Wyatt Watson, Christina Stolarz, Dr. Jeff Cass

- I. **Call to Order:** Motion to call the meeting to order from Dr. Jeremy Schwehm, seconded by Dr. Newt Hilliard. Motion carried. Dr. Jamie Stacy called the meeting to order at 3:02pm.
 - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** from the March 8, 2022 meeting. Minutes approved as distributed.

Motion to suspend the rules was adopted to allow agenda item A from old business and items A and B from new business to go first.

- II. **Old Business**
 - A. **HR on Diversity and Inclusion (Stolarz):** Christina Stolarz discussed the diversity difference in faculty. Dr. Sean Huss referenced emails in which the senders were offended with the "hidden diversity" comment as it reflected unawareness. Christina Stolarz stated that was not the intent and apologized. Dr. Schwehm inquired about efforts the university is making to ensure search committee diversity. Christina Stolarz is the chair of the diversity committee and that committee is working on a draft strategic plan with new guidance to address the issue.
- III. **New Business**
 - A. **New Course Evaluation System (Watson):** OIS has begun working on the infrastructure for the evaluation system within Banner and would like to run a pilot phase in summer. Discussion on changing the questions, student ability to evaluate after the drop date, and the parameters of the availability. The new system will begin with the same rules as the current evaluation

system. Wyatt Watson asked for 3-6 representatives from Faculty Senate to assist with the process and provide guidance. Dr. Sean Huss, Dr. Asim Shrestha, Dr. David Eshelman, and Dr. Jeremy Schwehm volunteered.

- B. SERC Update (Cass):** The draft plan was distributed. Dr. Nichols is assuming the co-chair role. Discussions are ongoing to determine feasibility and monetary requirements. Dr. Cass stated that he has asked Dr. Keegan Nichols for data supporting the One Stop Center since there was a lot of feedback regarding the new center, as well as an anonymous Faculty Senate letter.

IV. Committee Updates

A. Standing Committees

1. Budget Advisory Committee (Stacy): No report.
2. General Education Committee (Taylor): No report.
3. Institutional Aid Committee (Reed): No report.
4. Shared Governance Committee (Stacy): Will kick off next year.
5. Campus Space and Utilization Committee (Hilliard): March meeting was rescheduled to April 14.
6. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): Contacted Dr. Robin Lasey, CETL, and asked for a time to present on tenure procedures during professional development. Senate supports this initiative.
7. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): No report.
8. Professional Development Committee (Taylor): No report.
9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Shrestha): Committee has not met but will soon.

B. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees

1. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss/Darnell): Met once since last FS meeting, draft of workload policy is forthcoming and will be sent to Senate for review.
2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis/Stacy): Continue how it has been in the past.
3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Smith/Huss) Reference the AGB Report response.
4. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard): Received the newest CUPA data, which is intellectual property and cannot be shared externally. Reviewing the data to see if ATU aligns with best practices. There is a university and state cap on how large of a raise an employee can earn in a year. Discussed issues include lack of transparency and not receiving regular raises which creates compression issues.
5. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Mikles-Schluterman/Couture): No report.
6. Committee Restructuring (Couture): No report.
7. Working Group on AGB Report and Satisfaction Survey Recommendations (Eshelman/Davis): No report.

V. **New Business**

- A. **Strategic Plan (Darnell/Mikles-Schluterman):** The plan includes stretch goals with action items. Open forums schedule with details in email. Diverse group worked on the plan and included community members. Of note was the action item to develop and implement a compensation plan.
- B. **Faculty Senate Choice Award (Eshelman):** Dr. Stacy asked for nominations to be open. Dr. Schwehm moved, Dr. Huss seconded. Dr. Stacy read the award criteria. The following nominations were accepted: Angela Black, Ken Wester, Tammy Weaver, Dr. Jeff Cass. Dr. Hilliard made a motion to close nomination, seconded by Dr. Reed. Vote conducted over WebEx
- C. **Faculty Satisfaction Survey (Schwehm):** Recommend follow same process as in the past. Survey opens April 13 and closes April 22.
- D. **Senate Report of Action Items Related to the AGB report and Faculty Satisfaction Surveys:** Senators have been providing feedback. The report is due to Executive Council on April 13. Dr. Eshelman identified two wording changes. Dr. Hilliard moved to support and submit working draft as official response to EC and Board, second by Dr. Reed. Motion carried.
- E. **Statement of Support for Ukraine:** Dr. Stacy read the draft statement. Discussion and edits related to the symbolic nature of statement. Dr. Stacy read the updated statement: The faculty of Arkansas Tech University stand in solidarity with the citizens of Ukraine and their democratically elected government as they seek to resist the unlawful and brutal invasion of their sovereign nation. In addition, we recognize and support the Russian citizens who, at great peril to their own well-being, are protesting the invasion. The tyranny of this unprovoked attack on a peaceful country is an affront to world order and cannot be allowed to prevail. We encourage all parties to immediately establish a ceasefire and negotiate a peaceful resolution. We offer our support to the faculty, staff, and students of the ATU community affected by this act of aggression. Dr. Huss moved to accept the statement, seconded by Dr. Smith. Motion carried.
- F. **Anonymous Letters:** One letter regarding SERC which was addressed earlier.

VI. **Old Business**

- A. **Mental Health:** Mental Health – Dr. Bowen purchased the request Chronicle materials which were then shared with the counselors on campus. Dr. Darnell suggested to include this topic with the professional development time. Dr. Schwehm pointed out the need for resources including access to counseling and mental health providers.
- B. **Elections (Jacobs):** The election process is in place and voting will occur via Blackboard. The elections will close on reading day with results publish before end of contracts. Reminder of the Faculty Senate chair elect vote during this election. Due to restructuring, the Senate is unbalanced. Dr. Stacy discussed the placement of Senate representatives was based on service. Besides for the new Emergency Management, Professional Studies, and Student Affairs Administration, which will have 3 serving representatives, there should now be a balance with college and departmental representatives and time left on Senate.

- C. Concerns Related to the Primacy of Academics / Provost:** No report.
- D. VPAA Update:** Dr. Furst-Bowe provided background on her path to ATU. Stated that she will be here about 1 year and Dr. Anglin left multiple notes and folders for guidance. Dr. Furst-Bowe announced the internal search for the hiring of an Associate VPAA and asked for a Faculty Senate representative to serve on the hiring committee. Dr. Hilliard will serve. Dr. Furst-Bowe asked for information on events so she can meet the campus community.

VII. Open Forum

- Dr. Hilliard discussed concerns coming from faculty, staff, and students related to being blocked for moving “forward and upward”. Most common complaint is chain of command issue. Recommend the individuals address specifics via anonymous email or the satisfaction survey.

VIII. Announcements and Information Items

- Next Senate meeting is April 27. Dr. Bowen providing lunch at noon and meeting starts at 12:30
- College of Business speaker

IX. Adjournment: Dr. Schwehm moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Huss. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Jamie Stacy, Chair



Bethany Swindell, Secretary