

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2021-2022 Faculty Senate was held at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 27, 2022 in Rothwell 321A, with WebEx streaming. The following members were present:

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

Absent: Dr. Pam Dixon, Dr. Cynthia Jacobs, Dr. Michael Davis

Guest: Valerie Hardesty, Tammy Weaver, Margie Link, Angela Black, and ATU students: Jason Kennedy, Hannah Stone, Marquis Vazquez, Emily Bolden, and Paula Gonzalez

- I. **Call to Order:** Motion to call the meeting to order from Dr. Sean Huss, seconded by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm. Motion carried. Dr. Jamie Stacy called the meeting to order at 12:33 pm.
 - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** from the April 12, 2022 meeting. Minutes approved as distributed.

Motion to suspend the rules was adopted to allow new business agenda items to go first.

- II. **New Business**
 - A. **Curriculum April 2022:** Motion to approve the April curriculum items from Dr. Jeremy Schwehm, seconded by Dr. Sean Huss. Motion carried.
 - B. **New Curriculum Management System (Weaver):** Software is needed; don't know of a college in the state that doesn't use a curriculum management system. Looking for support on this initiative and moving forward. Motion to support the registrar moving forward with a curriculum management system from Dr. Jeremy Schwehm, seconded by Dr. Sean Huss. Motion carried.
 - C. **International Travel Policy (Stacy/Haulmark):** There is a need for guidelines/policy for official ATU international travel. Dr. Peter Dykema moved to create a committee to develop a policy, Dr. Sean Huss second. Dr. Stacy pointed out that any policy would come through the FS before becoming official. Motion carried. Dr. Swindell will serve on the committee.

- D. First Day Program (Hardesty-Bookstore):** 22% of fall adoptions are not submitted yet. The First Day program at Barnes & Noble allows students to have course materials billed onto student account and the digital materials are posted into the LMS. Students can opt out of the program. The ATU student guests expressed interest in the program. Valerie Hardesty will come back and discuss the program in more detail.
- E. Library (Black):** The ATU budget was lowest among peer institutions; however, now we are 2nd to last. Library fees offset inflationary costs/cuts. The library did not ask for increase in library fee as some students do not understand the purpose of the fee. Have to educate on the fee before increasing any fees.
- F. Faculty Senate Choice Award (Stacy/Eshelman):** Faculty Senate established the Faculty Senate Choice Award for Support of ATU's Academic Mission by an Administrator. Eligible administrators include but are not limited to the president, vice presidents, deans, and heads of key offices such as the Office of the Registrar, the Library, or the Office of Information Systems. The 2022 winner of the Faculty Senate Choice Award is Angela Black.
- G. Staff Senate AGB Recommendation Update (Link):** 2021 was the last survey. Staff feels underrepresented and not valued. Most staff felt confident in departments but do not feel valued by administration. Morale is high within individual departments. Staff survey points to a direct correlation between faculty/staff leaving and student retention. Dr. Schwehm emphasized the increased collaboration between faculty and staff. Ms. Link announced a \$1000 grant to reestablish the green and gold food pantry. Dr. Stacy stated that the only cost is electricity and pest control.
- H. Anonymous Letters:**
- From a faculty member, Department Heads are using their positions. No action taken.
 - From a faculty member, need to review the final exam schedule as almost 2 weeks between last class and final exam time. Students don't like the final exam schedule and having to wait. Dr. Couture and Dr. Swindell will work with the registrar on the final exam schedule.
 - From a student, lives in a dorm and went 1.5 months without air conditioning and feels disregarded by residence life. Stress is making impact on retention and recruitment of students. Dr. Stacy reached out to res life and they acknowledged the issues with no sugar coating. Can't help some of the issues due to supply chain/demand.
 1. Dr. Huss asked to hear from the student guests. Students state they feel not appreciated, no communication with higher ups, and "pass the blame". They pay too much and care too much to not have a voice. Dr. Huss read the April 15 State of the Union from Dr. Bowen to emphasize.
 2. Dr. Schwehm suggested to add an addenda item for an SGA report.
 3. ATU students shared concern over mental health visits being cut from 10 to 4.
 - ATU does not have money to maintain classroom but there is money for a carnival? SAB funds are used to put the event on.

- I. **Faculty Satisfaction Survey (Schwehm):** Summary available and posted. Evidence supports everything that staff and students discussed. Low in morale and trust. Lowest response rate with 127 responses.

III. **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): No report.
5. Campus Space and Utilization Committee (Hilliard): No report.
6. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): One session on tenure procedures during professional development.
7. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): No report.
8. Professional Development Committee (Taylor): No report.
9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Shrestha): No report.

B. **Ad Hoc & Senate Committees**

1. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss/Darnell): The committee met and no final draft due to sticking points on graduate faculty teaching graduate and undergraduate. Sarah Gordon provided comments to the committee.
2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis/Stacy): Working on getting proposals for insurance renewals, possible wellness program incentives, and a discount through Planet Fitness where they waive enrollment fee.
3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Smith/Huss): No report.
4. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard): No report.
5. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Mikles-Schluterman/Couture): Open forums went well.
6. Committee Restructuring (Couture): No report.
7. Working Group on AGB Report and Satisfaction Survey Recommendations (Eshelman/Davis): No report.

IV. **Old Business**

- A. **Mental Health:** Dr. Huss discussed burn out and that we are not given the resources to do anything. Dr. V Carole asked how faculty could assist staff. Ms. Link stated that part of the problem is the staff handbook stating that staff will be at their desk 8-5. Dr. Huss stated that Covid amplified the problems, not create them.
- B. **Elections (Stacy):** College elections are complete and university elections are underway. STEM college elections are included in the ballot. Need to reword and clarify instructions so college elections are at the college level and not university. Academic Affairs facilitates the elections in an administrative role and Faculty Senate is thankful.

- C. **Concerns Related to the Primacy of Academics / Provost:** The satisfaction survey details this concern. This is the number 1 recommendation to EC.
- D. **VPAA Update (Furst-Bowe):** May 5th is virtual professional development with an afternoon AA update and university update. Commencement is May 6-7. Dr Cass will be interim VPAA in May when Furst-Bowe is out of country.

V. **Open Forum**

- An anonymous email received the morning of the meeting concerning professional development (PD). It would be helpful to have the day/time blocked earlier, maybe 3-4 weeks notice. Also discussed how PD used to not be as much, it was just first of the semester.
- Dr. Dykema discussed concerns related to the job search process and the difficulties with forms and HR interactions. Asked for Faculty Senate support for an ad hoc committee that would address concerns and the process. Dr. Huss, Dr. Dykema, Dr. Taylor, Angela Black, a staff representative, and an HR representative will comprise the committee.
- Dr. Huss asked for clarification on the rubrics for the faculty excellence awards.

VI. **Announcements and Information Items**

- Dr. Huss received the SGA faculty of the year award

VII. **Adjournment:** Dr. Schwehm moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Couture. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Jamie Stacy, Chair



Bethany Swindell, Secretary