

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, February 8, 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. V. Carole Smith	Dr. Bethany Swindell
Dr. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh	Dr. Cynthia Jacobs
	Dr. Pam Dixon

Absent: Dr. Asim Shrestha, Dr. David Cullen (adjunct representative)

Guest: Angela Black, \* Dr. Cheryl Monfee standing in for Dr. Melissa Darnell

- I. **Call to Order:** Motion to call the meeting to order from Dr. David Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Newt Hilliard. Motion carried. Dr. Jamie Stacy called the meeting to order at 3:01pm.
  - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** from the December 1, 2021 meeting. One change was made to the minutes: Dr. Cass is the lead on the Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee instead of Dr. Gunter. Minutes to approve the revised minutes by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm, seconded by Dr. Newt Hilliard. Motion carried.
  
- II. **Committee Updates**
  - A. **Standing Committees**
    1. Budget Advisory Committee (Stacy): An email asking for advice and information was sent out last week.
    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): Met several times since last fall with most discussion about reorganization in student affairs. Have not heavily discussed academic affairs yet. Will meet on a more frequent basis going forward.
    6. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): Reviewed sabbatical requests. Recommends that we should work with Dr Lasey in the fall to develop a workshop for those interested in pursuing sabbatical.

7. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): No report.
8. Professional Development Committee (Taylor): No report.
9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (TBA): Need a Senator to serve on this committee.

**B. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees**

1. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss/Darnell): Dr. Huss stepped down and Dr. Eshleman will now serve.
2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis/Stacy): Total claims were less than premiums last year. Pushing for a self-funded plan.
3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Smith/Huss) Dr. Smith is stepping down from this committee. Committee asks that a representative from Human Resources attend the next Senate meeting to answer questions and discuss any improvements/changes that ATU has taken to address diversity and inclusion.
4. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard): Received updated data. Committee will continue to move forward even with the instability in Academic Affairs.
5. Restructuring Committee (Stacy): Board of Trustees approved the final proposal in January 2022.
6. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Mikles-Schluterman/Couture): Dr. Monfee reported that a survey was distributed via email. Responses due by February 21, 2022. Next committee meeting is February 23.

**III. New Business**

**A. Library Updates:** Angela Black discussed the new library system and the changes. The new system does not allow suppression of records and 1/3 of items checked out are overdue by one year or longer. The fines/fees are also changing and any faculty will be charged the replacement cost plus \$10 for any item over 60 days late. The library asks for a change to the faculty handbook fines/fees language.

- Original Text, page 189 of 2021/2022 Faculty Handbook: “While fines and fees are not currently charged to faculty members, upon termination of employment at Arkansas Tech University, any outstanding materials must be returned. Otherwise, the costs of replacing those materials will be deducted from the employee’s final paycheck.”
- Proposed Revision: “While overdue fines are not currently charged to faculty members, faculty may be responsible for replacement costs and lost item fines for any material not returned within the timeframe specified by the library policy. For more information on faculty borrowing privileges and library policies, see the library’s website.”

Minutes to approve the proposed handbook language made by Dr. David Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Sean Reed. **Motion carried**

**B. Budget for Sabbaticals:** Dr. Newt Hilliard stated that Dr. Anglin will look into this and have more info in march.

**C. New Ad Hoc Committees and Working Groups**

1. **Committee Restructuring:** Dr. Cynthia Jacobs, Dr. Peter Dykema, and Dr. Rene Couture volunteered to serve on the committee.
2. **Elections:** Dr. Jeremy Schwehm is stepping down from elections at the university level. Need a Senator to take over.
3. **Working Group on AGB Report & Satisfaction Survey**  
**Recommendations:** In response to the recommendations in the report, representatives from ATU Faculty Senate will review the most recent surveys to identify and prioritize actionable recommendations that would improve communication, transparency, shared governance and campus climate. Dr. David Eshleman will co-chair with Dr. Michael Davis. Dr. Sean Huss, Dr. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh, and Dr. Pam Dixon will assist. The committee will present findings at the April 2022 Executive Council meeting.
4. **Mental Health Working Group:** National concerns over mental health for faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Sean Huss inquired about the goal of the committee. Dr. Sean Reed mentioned the positive ideas of the Well Being Committee but emphasized that the events are too difficult to find. Dr. David Eshelman suggested that the Well Being Committee be invited to speak to Faculty Senate. Dr. Sean Huss stated that the CARES team on ATU campus is great. Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman stated that Senate discussed many dimensions and need to be captured with the working group
5. **At-Large Strategic Planning Member:** Faculty Senate is charged with selecting a faculty member representative. Dr. Huss asked about appointments and the need for an election. Dr. Anglin stated that the timeline is quick as the plan goes to the Board of Trustees in June. Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman self-nominated.

#### D. Anonymous Letters

- Letter from staff member: Staff is not included in the shared governance definition. Asked for Faculty Senate assistance to include staff. Dr. Sean Huss stated that Staff Senate is a part of shared governance. Dr. Huss agrees that staff should be a stakeholder in everything.
- Laptop concerns: Faculty can continue to use desktops but they will be replaced with laptops when needed. If faculty need a special laptop, they should reach out to their Dean.
- What are "Senate plans going forward in regards to the Board declaring complete support for President Bowen and being unwilling to do anything": Dr. Sean Huss stated that the survey responses demonstrate that faculty was careful and deliberate actions. The Faculty Senate will follow thru with established procedures as we are the stewards of the university. Dr. David Eshelman inquired about posting the open-ended comments on Blackboard and sharing with the Board of Trustees. **Motion to publish the executive summary and quantitative data results on the Faculty Senate Blackboard**

shell and directly email to the Board of Trustees made by Dr. David Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Sean Huss. Motion carried.

- Funding two VPAA positions: There was no question or action needed by the Senate on this letter.

**IV. Old Business**

- A. Curricular Items Tabled from December 1, 2021:** Dr. Jamie Stacy stated, “In order to allow the changes to become effective prior to submission of the courses for Summer/Fall enrollment, It was necessary to review, discuss, and vote on the tabled curriculum prior to this meeting. After a discussion on process, a vote by the Faculty Senate was held via WebEx on January 13, where the faculty senate voted to approve the curriculum.”
- A. Concerns Related to the Primacy of Academics / Provost:** Dr. David Eshelman stated the importance of an environment of openness and to keep pushing for what matters.
- B. COVID Updates:** The Task Force continues to meet. Numbers going down.
- C. VPAA Update:** Dr. Anglin expressed thanks for the work by the Restructuring Committee. Dr. Tim Carter assisted with the final document submitted to ADHE. Dr. Anglin received assistance from Deans and OIS to determine space utilization for the new departments. Dr. Anglin announced that he is unable to continue as Interim VPAA due to family medical issues. Dr. Anglin will stay and help facilitate an Interim VPAA replacement. A permanent VPAA should be hired in late spring 2023.

**V. Open Forum**

- Dr. Swindell brought forth a constituent concern regarding general education assessment. The concern is being passed onto the General Education Committee.

**VI. Announcements and Information Items**

- Next Senate meeting is March 8
- Full professor happy hour at Marriot on Friday
- Theater program is doing a movie this semester with faculty members
- Survey responses added to the Blackboard shell

**VI. Adjournment:** Dr. Efosa Idemudia moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. Sean Huss. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Jamie Stacy, Chair



Bethany Swindell, Secretary