



## 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, March 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. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh	Dr. Bethany Swindell
Dr. Asim Shrestha	Dr. Cynthia Jacobs
	Dr. Pam Dixon

Absent: Dr. V. Carole Smith

Guest: Wyatt Watson, Laury Fiorello, Christina Stolarz, Dr. Blake Bedsole, Dr. Jeff Cass, Dr. Erin Clair, Dr. Robin Lasey

- I. **Call to Order:** Motion to call the meeting to order from Dr. Newt Hilliard, seconded by Dr. Sean Huss. Motion carried. Dr. Jamie Stacy called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.
  - A. **Approval of the Minutes:** from the February 8, 2022 meeting. One minor typo correction was made to the minutes: “foal” to “goal”. Minutes approved as distributed.
  
- II. **Committee Updates**
  - A. **Standing Committees**
    1. Budget Advisory Committee (Stacy): Laury Fiorello is a guest and presented in new business.
    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): Next meeting is March 17 to address Young Building relocations. Begin looking at AA restructuring movements.
    6. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee (Hilliard): Reviewed sabbatical requests and made recommendations. One faculty member upset with results. This committee does not make final decisions so faculty member is taking issue up the chain of command.
    7. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell): No report.
    8. Professional Development Committee (Taylor): No report.

9. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Shrestha): Dr. Asim Shrestha volunteered to serve.

**B. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees**

1. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss/Darnell): No report.
2. Insurance Benefit Committee (Davis/Stacy): No report.
3. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Smith/Huss) Christina Stolarz is a guest and will answer questions.
4. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard): Wyatt Watson will order the newest CUPA data after spring break.
5. Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee (Mikles-Schluterman/Couture): Committee has met several times to discuss goals. Plan for open forums and surveys to receive campus input.
6. Committee Restructuring (Couture): Actionable items so no committee report.
7. Working Group on AGB Report and Satisfaction Survey Recommendations (Eshelman/Davis): Discussed observations, next meeting is March 9, 2022. Will prepare a document with more information for the April meeting.

**III. New Business**

- A. New Course Evaluation System (Stacy/Watson):** Dr. Jamie Stacy stated that she and Dr. Sean Reed met with Wyatt Watson last week to discuss concerns and changes made by Evaluation Kit, the group that runs the course evaluation program. Wyatt and OIS are working on an in-house system to run through Banner and are hoping to do a trial launch in summer or early fall. This would not be changing the questions of the survey, but could allow for courses or departments to add questions in the future. Discussion about how other universities complete end of course evaluations, in-house versus external sources. Dr. Stacy will provide more information as it is received.
- B. Budget Update (Fiorello):** Laury Fiorello presented on fiscal year assumptions and budget trends. Detailed information was emailed to Senators. Remember the additional data is externally confidential and should not be shared outside of ATU.
- Dr Davis asked about the insurance increases. Laury Fiorello stated that expenses were left the same as the insurance rates were received after the Board approved the budget. There is already a little buffer. The insurance/benefit committee will pursue lowest rate possible.
- C. Current Enrollment/Projections and Recruiting/Retention Efforts (Bedsole/Cass):** Dr. Bedsole presented on enrollment trends. ATU market share is mostly Arkansans; a smaller share of a smaller market equals less freshman. GPA based scholarships, instead of ACT score, take effect fall 2022.
- Dr. Cass, chair of the committee, discussed the draft report which includes recommendations and benchmarks. The report is open for feedback and received suggestions are being incorporated into the draft. Dr. Cass will send a revised plan out to the campus in the next few weeks. Dr. Cass thanked the committee.

- D. HR on Diversity and Inclusion (Stolarz):** A document with the submitted questions and provided HR answers was emailed to all Senators.
- Dr. Jeremy Schwehm asked about negotiating for promotion and tenure and allowing departmental promotion and tenure committees to have input into awarding years towards service and promotion. Stolarz answered that the process is all handled by Academic Affairs. Due to time restrictions, Christina Stolarz will come back and continue to answer questions at the April Faculty Senate meeting.
- DI. Mental Health and Personal/Professional Development (Clair/Lasey):** Dr. Stacy mentioned an article in the Chronicle and available report on campus mental health. Dr. Stacy asked Dr. Bowen to purchase the report since Faculty Senate does not have a budget.
- Dr. Erin Clair discussed the wellbeing committee, which is housed by CETL but not overseen. The committee began at the college level in 2018 and then campus wide in fall 2020. Members are volunteers, there are no elections or budget.
  - Dr. Robin Lasey clarified that CETL provides resources and only takes attendance at professional development for assessment.
  - Dr. Asim Shrestha commended the efforts of CETL and the faculty wellbeing committee. Dr. Shrestha addressed the stigma of mental health.
  - Dr. Peter Dykema reminded all that professional development attendance is a contractual requirement.
- DII. Committee Restructuring:** Motion to approve the recommendations put forward by Dr. David Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm. Motion approved. Dr. Stacy stated that Andrea Eubanks is working on placements and rotations with the new restructuring.
- DIII. Faculty Senate Constitution Change:** Dr. Jamie Stacy presented the proposed change for Senate membership. 285 full time faculty = 28 senators (16 academic departments, 4 colleges, 1 library representative, 1 adjunct representative, 6 at large senators). Motion to approve the changes made by Dr. Sean Huss, seconded by Dr. Jeremy Schwehm. Dr. David Eshelman asked about the at large positions being one year only. Dr. Jamie Stacy stated that it would allow for quick changes related to faculty fluctuations. Dr. Sean Huss said that one year isn't long enough for a Senate position. Dr. Jamie Stacy mentioned the changes will go to the full faculty for a vote and then to the Board. Dr. Michael Davis stated the need for options if faculty are voting. Senators discussed options. Motion amended to include propositions for a full faculty vote that will last Wednesday through Friday of this week. Amended motion approved.
- DIV. Anonymous Letters**
- Harvard Business Review Article, Dr. Stacy shared in the Senate chat.
  - CETL, addressed earlier in Senate meeting.
- IV. Old Business**
- A. Elections:** Dr. Jamie Stacy stated the Faculty Senate will produce a list of eligible, qualified and willing sitting senators as candidates to be included for popular election to Senate Chair during the March Faculty Senate meeting: Peter Dykema, Julie Mikles-Schluterman, Arwen Taylor, Efosa Idemudia, Rene Couture, Bethany Swindell, Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh, Melissa

Darnell, and Newton Hilliard. According to the Constitution, if a Senator believes that s/he cannot perform the job, s/he may ask to have his/her name removed from the slate before the faculty wide election. If anyone wants their name removed, contact Chair Dr. Stacy.

- B. Budget for Sabbaticals:** Dr. Anglin explained that AA receives the recommendations and the funds vary year to year since it is not a line item. The procedure is not changed and there is a consistent commitment to use guidelines.
- C. Concerns Related to the Primacy of Academics / Provost:** No report.
- D. COVID Updates:** The Task Force continues to meet bi-weekly. Mask mandate removed.
- E. VPAA Update:** Dr. Anglin expressed thanks for the two months at ATU. The Interim VPAA should be announced soon.

**V. Open Forum**

- Dr. Sean Huss asked for Senate to issue a statement of support for Ukraine. Dr. David Eshelman suggested the item be placed on the April agenda.
- Dr. Peter Dykema asked for clarification on election of Senate president. Dr. Jamie Stacy stated that Dr. Sean Reed was the first to be elected with a full faculty vote. Faculty Senate wants to give the faculty a choice in president and not just put forth one name.

**VI. Announcements and Information Items**

- Next Senate meeting is April 12
- Dr. Melissa Darnell shared student concerns surrounding the Ukraine invasion

- VII. Adjournment:** Dr. Sean Huss moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Dr. David Eshelman. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Jamie Stacy, Chair



Bethany Swindell, Secretary