

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The meeting of the 2019-20 Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 in Rothwell 456. The following members were present:

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| Dr. Glen Bishop | Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon |
| Dr. Pam Carr | Dr. Joshua Lockyer |
| Dr. Alejandra Carballo | Dr. Jeremy Schwehm |
| Dr. Jon Clements | Dr. Asim Shrestha |
| Dr. Michael Davis | Dr. Jamie Stacy |
| Dr. Pam Dixon | Dr. Brendan Toner |
| Dr. David Eshelman | Dr. Alaric Williams |
| Dr. Newt Hilliard | Dr. Joe Stoeckel |
| Dr. Scott Jordan | Dr. Shellie Hanna |

Absent: Dr. Jack Tucci; Ms. Holly Ruth Gale

Visitors: Dr. Barbara Johnson, Dr. Penny Willmering; Dr. Peter Dykema, Dr. David Blanks, Ms. Pat Chronister, Ms. Charity Smith, Ms. Brandi Duvall, Ms. Karissa Webb, Mr. Mike Rivas, Mr. Yasu Onodera, Mr. Brent Hogan, Mr. Matt Frasier

- I. CALL TO ORDER Dr. Eshelman called the meeting to order and requested a motion to approve the October meeting minutes.
- A. Approval of the Minutes **Motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Lockyer to approve the minutes. Motion carried.**
- II. NEW BUSINESS: Dr. Eshelman explained to Senate that curricular items could be voted on individually or as a block.
- A. Curricular Items **Motion by Dr. Clements, seconded by Dr. Stacy to vote individually and approve the College of Business curricular items. Motion carried.**
- Motion by Dr. Lockyer, seconded by Dr. Stacy, to approve the College of Arts and Humanities curricular items. Motion carried.**
- B. International Student Admissions Dr. Eshelman noted receiving questions about the English proficiency of international students and invited individuals from the offices of International Admissions and International Student Services to speak to Senate. Mr. Onodera, Associate Dean for International and Multicultural Student Services, mentioned services provided to international students have both a student affairs and admissions component. Mr. Rivas, Assistant Director of International Admissions, talked about the admissions process for international students. Mr. Rivas explained that admissions standards, including requirements for English proficiency on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), PTE (Pearson Language Assessment), and others have not changed. Additionally, international transfer students have proficiency exams waived if they complete English Composition I and II with a grade of C or better.
- Mr. Onodera explained the shifting demographics of our international student body, noting that the majority of international students now come from China and Japan. In the past,

students from Saudi Arabia were the largest group of international students. Students from Saudi Arabia had more training in English, whereas students from China and Japan are prepared for passing English proficiency exams, but not necessarily using English in practice.

Mr. Rivas and Mr. Onodera discussed the impact that raising proficiency exam requirements would have on international student recruitment and retention, as well as voicing concerns that raising proficiency exam requirements would not sufficiently address the problem. The past use of the English Language Institute (ELI) was discussed as a possible model to use in the future. Dr. Stacy asked if the current proficiency exams did an adequate job of measuring English skills necessary to succeed. Dr. Stoeckle suggested scores on the TOEFL and other proficiency exams be tied to participation in the ELI. Dr. Hanna mentioned that at one time, all international students participated in the ELI.

Dr. Shrestha asked if Tech's proficiency exam requirements compared to other schools. Mr. Rivas stated the exam requirements are set by Academic Affairs and are comparable to other schools in the region. Dr. Clements suggested we use the Early Warning System as a way to identify students who would benefit from using the English Language Institute. Dr. Lockyer asked if the English Language Institute had the resources to handle a potential increase in students. Mr. Hogan assured the faculty that the ELI had the necessary resources in place to handle an increased load.

C. General Education Committee Changes

Dr. David Blanks, Department Head of History and Political Science and current chair of the General Education Committee, introduced a proposal to restructure the General Education Committee. Dr. Blanks informed Senate that the proposal was developed over the course of two years. The development process included members of the General Education Committee attending various conferences and visiting with peer institutions to identify best practices in General Education. The current General Education curriculum at Arkansas Tech is dated, but renewal of the curriculum, as well as meaningful assessment and oversight, are difficult under the current structure of the General Education Committee because of the lack of continuity of the chair. Additionally, the General Education Committee requires more expertise from individuals who develop and teach in general education curriculum and those who are fully vested in the process.

Dr. Davis asked why the physical and biological sciences were considered under one area in representation. Dr. Blanks said a change could be made to the proposal to add one representative each from physical and biological sciences. Dr. Clements asked if the new structure of the committee would make it more difficult to add more general education courses to the curriculum. Dr. Blanks stated the purposes of the committee change were to revise the view of general education on campus, help educate students and faculty on the purposes of general education, and promote the general education curriculum using the concepts of college (tools for success), career (career readiness), and community (engaged citizens).

Dr. Hilliard asked if there should also be representatives from the arts and languages and Dr. Stacy asked why some departments were included and not others. Dr. Eshelman stated the committee worked to find balance between representation and a realistic membership for the committee. It was noted that colleges retain membership on the committee through the nomination and voting process. Colleges are encouraged to vote individuals on the committee who come from areas not represented by appointed positions.

Dr. Schwehm noted that the General Education Committee had worked over the last few years to develop a process that would work for the institution, including sending multiple faculty to conferences to learn about best practices for general education program development and assessment.

Motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Carr, to approve the General Education proposal with the amendment to include one representative each from physical and biological sciences. Motion carried.

D. Verifying Student Identity

Mr. Pennington, University Counsel, discussed the need for a statement on the verification of student identity in online courses. Student identity is verified through the use of the username and password used to log in to the University system. Mr. Pennington asked for feedback on the appropriate place in the student handbook to include a statement on verification of identity and suggested looking at sections on class absence, academic dishonesty, or creating a new section. Dr. Stacy requested if the information on student identity was a stand-alone section that it be tied back to academic dishonesty.

Motion by Dr. Stacy, seconded by Dr. Williams to include a statement on the verification of student identity in the academic dishonesty section of the student handbook. Dr. Hilliard made an amendment to the motion to create a stand-alone section for the statement, but to include wording to tie misconduct to the academic dishonesty policy. Motion, with amendment, carried.

E. Caps on Adjunct Teaching

Dr. Eshelman stated that Ms. Chambliss could not be in attendance and could report at the next Senate meeting. He then asked Ms. Chronister, Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, for information on limits on adjunct teaching load. Ms. Chronister stated that Affordable Care Act and Department of Labor guidelines require health benefits be provided to employees who average over 30 hours/week of work over a 12-month time period. As applied to faculty, this comes to an average of less than 12 credits taught per term. The teaching cap on adjunct faculty is in place to remain under the 30 hours/week threshold. Adjunct faculty are limited to teaching loads in the Fall and Spring term that do not go over the 30 hour/week average.

REPORT BY VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Barbara Johnson, Vice President of Academic Affairs, reported a committee is working to formalize the alternate credentials policy. The alternate credentials policy will cover individuals who do not meet traditional qualifications, such as completion of a terminal degree. Dr. Johnson noted that Dr. Stacy had shared the policy with department heads and deans. The department heads and deans had made minor requests for changes. The plan is to present the alternate credentials policy at the next Faculty Senate meeting for a vote. The alternate credential policy is a requirement for HLC.

Dr. Johnson stated the need for a formal credit hour policy. The policy will outline what constitutes a credit hour. Currently, the University uses federal policy. Dr. Robertson, Dean of the College of Natural and Health Sciences and Interim Dean of the Graduate College, led the deans in development of the policy. The policy will be brought to Faculty Senate.

The HLC steering committee continues to collect evidence to prepare the assurance argument for the upcoming HLC review. The Executive Council is working with the HLC steering committee to identify and collect all necessary data. The plan is to finalize the arguments in enough time before the visit to complete a mock review. The HLC steering committee will hold a poster session on January 8 to present the HLC criteria. Faculty will have the opportunity to review the criteria and the evidence. Faculty are encouraged to provide feedback and help identify additional information relevant to the arguments. Additionally, the HLC steering committee will hold weekly Friday sessions to allow feedback from faculty and staff.

Dr. Johnson provided an update on the ongoing dean searches for the College of Arts and Humanities and the Graduate College. She stated the CVs for candidates appearing on campus will be made available two business days in advance of the visit.

Dr. Johnson stated she was asked to talk about a master's program that was approved by the Graduate Council but not allowed to move forward to the Board of Trustees for approval. She stated the program was stopped because of concerns with faculty workload and expressed concern with faculty offering to teach uncompensated courses. She also mentioned issues that might arise with college reorganization in the future. The department proposing the degree is in a college that might undergo reorganization.

Dr. Schwehm stated it was a proposal from his department that was stopped. He pointed out that the current number of faculty in his department is the same as when the administration and the Board of Trustees approved the white paper in May 2018 and when the program was approved through the faculty governance process in October 2018. He also shared that full-time faculty load at full implementation of the program would be the same as if the program did not move forward based off of enrollment projections for the graduate and undergraduate enrollment in his department. He stated it is common for faculty proposing a new program to offer to teach low enrollment courses as a service to the department/institution for a fixed amount of time.

Dr. Schwehm also expressed concern as to how a program that meets the University's stated need for more interdisciplinary, online master's degrees could be stopped after going through the curricular process. The proposed degree program is a collaborative effort involving all colleges on campus. He also questioned why it took a year after Graduate Council approval for a reason to be articulated as to why the program was not allowed to move forward, particularly because the department was asked to complete additional steps to provide support for the program during that year. Dr. Eshelman stated this would be a good topic for the Shared Governance Committee to address.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Recycling

Drs. Hanna, Dykema, and Mr. Frasier discussed their efforts to increase recycling on campus as part of their project for Leadership Tech. Their goal is to help educate the academic and administrative offices on campus about what possibilities already exist that many employees do not know about. One objective is to help some of the different groups, committees, and offices better coordinate recycling efforts. The group, through extensive research, found that there are actually a lot of recycling initiatives going on, but no one has coordinated them. They are working to coordinate this process. The group chose to work with offices because they discovered that there are several highly organized plans already occurring for the students on campus.

B. Salary Compression Proposal

Dr. Clements spoke with Mr. Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources, about the salary compression proposal drafted by committee and submitted to Ms. Hinkle, Vice President of Administration and Finance, and Dr. Gunter, Chief of Staff. Dr. Clements suggested Senate invite Ms. Hinkle and/or Dr. Gunter to the next Senate meeting to speak about the salary compression proposal. Dr. Eshelman stated he would send an invitation to Mr. Hinkle and Dr. Gunter to speak on the proposal.

C. Graduate Council Changes

Dr. Schwehm stated any changes made to the Graduate Council structure would have to go through Senate because it would require a change in the faculty handbook. The committee recommends any changes to the Graduate Council structure originate in the Graduate Council. The committee identified the areas in the handbook that would need to be addressed if any changes are proposed.

- D. Faculty Satisfaction Survey Dr. Schwehm informed Senate that the Faculty Satisfaction Survey ad hoc committee plans to present the draft survey to Senate at the February meeting for feedback with the intent to distribute the survey to the general faculty in February 2020. The survey results will be presented to the Senate for review and distribution in March 2020. Dr. Eshelman requested a question be added to the survey asking if the results of the previous survey were sufficiently addressed.
- E. Alternative Credentials Policy Discussed as part of the VPAA update.
- F. Faculty Excellence Awards Members of the committee who worked on the policies and procedures of the award will work with Dr. Johnson on December 11, 2020 at 4:00pm to review the budget implications of the awards. The members of the committee are Drs. Lockyer, Schwehm, and Tucci.
- G. Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee Dr. Schwehm said the committee plans to submit a draft of changes to Senate at the February Senate meeting. The intent is for Senate to vote on the changes at the March Senate meeting.
- IV. OPEN FORUM
- Dr. Eshelman reported that we will not be required to get physicals as part of our 2020 health insurance coverage.
- Tegrity lecture capture software is ending and being replaced by Kaltura.
- Dr. Eshelman read an email received through the Faculty Senate website requesting information on David L. Eddy and payments paid to the name. Dr. Eshelman notified Senate that David L. Eddy is the name of an LLC and payments were for attorney services used by Arkansas Tech in the purchase of property.
- The Shared Governance Committee plans to have a speaker at the January professional development day, as well as forums and workshops on shared governance for faculty.
- The response rate for department head and dean evaluations was 45%. Dr. Eshelman expressed concern that this shows a measure of apathy among the faculty. He also requested everyone respond to the Shared Governance Committee survey by the November 15 deadline. Dr. Hanna noted that the normal pop-up that appears in Blackboard to complete evaluations would be helpful in reminding faculty to complete the dean and department head evaluations. A request was made to extend the evaluation period.
- Dr. Eshelman stated the Executive Council is not a formal organization, although it is listed in the organizational chart in the faculty handbook. Dr. Bowen, President of Arkansas Tech University, uses the Executive Council for consultation and guidance. However, initiatives do not stop in the Executive Council, but with the President.
- Dr. Shrestha asked about the design of online courses and about how content was created and delivered. He received a course shell for an online course that had limited instructional content. He asked about expectations for content in an online course, including creation of instructional videos, assignments, and additional course content. Dr. Johnson stated that online courses are reviewed based on outcomes and the amount of peer-to-peer and faculty interaction. Dr. Schwehm recommended faculty work with instructional design to help build a quality online course and that there is a voluntary certification process faculty can utilize. He stated that currently, non-certified online courses should be vetted at the departmental level in the same manner that face-to-face courses are evaluated.

Dr. Stoeckel reported concerns with search committees being asked not to rank candidates or report strengths and weaknesses of candidates. He stated some faculty on search committees have been told to put forward a specified number of candidates, usually three, but not to rank the candidates or rate them based on strengths and weaknesses. Drs. Lockyer and Schwehm both stated they had not experienced this on faculty searches. Dr. Schwehm stated he was part of a dean search committee where they were asked not to rank the three recommended finalist. He said they were able to convey strengths and weaknesses to the search chair. Dr. Johnson stated she would be asking for information on strengths and weaknesses of candidates from the search committees.

Dr. Stoeckel stated some concern among faculty that individuals applying for positions are listing publications from sham, pay-to-publish journals.

Dr. Carballo asked if Arkansas Tech had explored joining with other colleges/universities in the state to help lower the cost of healthcare. Dr. Clements stated that this option has been explored, but that other institutions do not want to partner with Tech because it is not cost-beneficial for them.

V.
ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND
INFORMATION
ITEMS

Dr. Ellis Laffoon said the Stop-the-Bleed initiative has certified 290 students. Faculty can contact Dr. Ellis Laffoon to visit their classes and facilitate Stop-the-Bleed certification. Facilitation requires one training for every 10 students.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dr. Stacy, seconded by Dr. Hanna to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



David Eshelman, Ph.D., President



Jeremy Schwehm, Ph.D., Secretary

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

The Faculty Senate Chair in consultation with previous the General Education Chair will appoint the Chair of the General Education Committee to a 3-year term, from a faculty member that is currently a member of the committee.

A representative from each of the Departments that teach large numbers of general education courses will be appointed by their respective deans: English, Math, Physical or Biological Sciences, History and Political Science, and Behavioral Sciences.

The rest of the committee and elected membership will remain the same, viz.

Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness (ex officio)¹
One appointed member from Student Government Association (ex officio)

One appointed member from Academic Affairs²
One appointed member from Faculty Senate
One appointed member from Assessment Committee
One appointed member from Student Government Association (ex officio)
One appointed member from the Adjunct Committee

One elected member from College of Arts and Humanities³
One elected member from College of eTech
One elected member from Ozark Campus
One elected member from College of Natural and Health Sciences
One elected member from College of Education
One elected member from College of Business
One elected member from College of Engineering and Applied Science

¹Ex officio members remain on the committee by virtue of their positions.

²All appointed members serve three year appointments.

³All elected members serve three year terms.

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE PROPOSAL (Addendum)

The Faculty Senate Chair in consultation with previous the General Education Chair will appoint the Chair of the General Education Committee to a 3-year term, from a faculty member that is currently a member of the committee.

If approved, the new committee structure will go into effect in 2020-2021. The new chair will be appointed for a three-year term that will begin in fall 2020.

A representative from each of the Departments that teach large numbers of general education courses will be appointed by their respective deans: English, Math, Physical or Biological Sciences, History and Political Science, and Behavioral Sciences.

It is felt that the committee as it now stands is too small for the volume of work it is undertaking, especially as this will increase both in the run up to and in the aftermath of the HLC visit. Moreover, the committee feels that the departments that teach the bulk of the general education courses should be represented. It is hoped that by appointing (as opposed to electing) a proportion of the committee members that those chosen will be people who are uniquely qualified and who have a vested interest in general education. It should be noted that the elected members of the committee will still outnumber those appointed from departments and that the committee will still report to the faculty senate.

Finally, it should be noted that the General Education Committee voted unanimously to propose this restructuring at its meeting on April 11, 2019.