

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The organizational meeting of the 2017-18 Faculty Senate was held at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 22, 2017 in the Williamson Dining Room. The following members were present:

Dr. Molly Brant	Dr. Johnette Moody
Dr. Jon Clements	Dr. Jason Patton
Dr. Melissa Darnell	Dr. Michael Rogers
Dr. David Eshelman	Dr. Jeremy Schwehm
Dr. Marcel Finan	Dr. Monty Smith
Ms. Holly Ruth Gale	Dr. V. Carole Smith
Dr. Debra Hunter	Dr. James Stobaugh
Dr. Shelia Jackson	Dr. Bruce Tedford
Dr. Chris Kellner	Dr. Jack Tucci
Dr. Joshua Lockyer	Dr. Susan Underwood

Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman and Ms. Pat Chronister were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER

President Clements called the meeting to order, and invited Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman, Vice President for Academic Affairs, to address the Senate.

**REPORT BY VICE
PRESIDENT**

Dr. Abdelrahman thanked the Faculty Senate for working with him over the past year. He expressed appreciation for the Senate's discussions and input on initiatives such as Interstate Passport, CPGE system, and online curriculum review. Dr. Abdelrahman stated he looked forward to another productive year, noting preparations for the HLC visit were underway. He reported the Senate subcommittee met with two Deans over the summer to work on promotion and tenure revisions, addressing feedback from the academic leadership.

Dr. Abdelrahman requested the senators address a few issues this year. He reported receiving complaints from students who were not provided feedback/grades in a timely manner, and did not realize they were failing the class until the final grade was posted. He asked for advice on how to address this, within academic freedom. He noted one Dean had asked the faculty in the college to use Blackboard to post grades, and questioned if that should be required of all faculty. He also asked for feedback on how to encourage faculty to learn and use the resources and software purchased by the university, such as DegreeWorks and ADVISE. Dr. Abdelrahman stated the new student course evaluation from the Faculty Senate subcommittee should incorporate a method to measure the success of faculty advising. He also noted the online Adjunct Academy is available in Blackboard to all instructors, and asked the Senate to encourage all faculty to take the course. He indicated Dr. Jeff Woods, Dean of Arts and Humanities, was working with Dr. Jason Warnick, Assistant Vice President for Student Success, on a course for faculty on advising.

Dr. Tedford stated, although DegreeWorks was an intuitive program and relatively simple to use, there was little training provided to faculty. Suggestions from the senators included training department heads, training faculty ambassadors in each department, or holding a series of trainings for which individual faculty could opt-in.

Dr. Kellner questioned if the student complaints on faculty feedback were wide spread or pertained to a few faculty. Dr. Abdelrahman indicated he could survey students for a better idea, noting he had received a few complaints, but believed it was a broader issue. Dr. Darnell reported the Department of Nursing has a policy requiring faculty to provide feedback to all students by the tenth class week. Senators expressed concern with requiring

Blackboard to provide feedback, as it could create duplication for those using other programs for data entry, and it could not guarantee faculty would provide more timely feedback. Dr. Patton stated a lack of feedback is an indicator of low quality teaching and should be addressed in the individual faculty member's annual evaluation. Dr. V. Carole Smith suggested using mid-term grades to provide feedback, and Dr. Abdelrahman asked if there were any drawbacks for requiring mid-term grades for all students, rather than only freshmen and sophomores. Senators noted many general education courses have large class sizes, and upper division courses often have more content shifted toward the end of the course, but generally did not have reservations with requiring mid-term grades for all students.

Dr. Abdelrahman thanked the senators and excused himself from the meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS AND ADDRESS BY CHAIR

President Clements asked the senators to introduce themselves. He stated the September agenda would be heavy, noting some items of discussion had been brought up over the summer. He stated the previous Faculty Senate chair, Dr. Sean Huss, would be following up on some outstanding items from last year, such as the promotion and tenure revisions and eTech curriculum changes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Clements called for a motion in regard to the minutes of May 3, 2017.

Motion by Dr. Stobaugh, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President Clements asked for nominations for the position of Faculty Senate Vice Chair, who will be the chair-elect for 2018-19. Dr. V. Carole Smith nominated Dr. Moody for Vice Chair; Dr. Rogers seconded the nomination.

Motion by Dr. Stobaugh, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to cease nominations and elect Dr. Moody by acclamation. Motion carried.

President Clements asked for nominations for the position of Faculty Senate Secretary. Dr. Moody nominated Dr. Tucci. Hearing no other nominations, President Clements called for a motion.

Motion by Dr. Rogers, seconded by Dr. Stobaugh, to cease nominations and elect Dr. Tucci by acclamation. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Kellner suggested moving the December Senate meeting (on Reading Day) to January, since the end of the term was a hectic time for faculty. Dr. Tucci indicated if any time sensitive items arose for December, such as curriculum, it could be handled electronically via email or Blackboard. Dr. Stobaugh suggested moving the meeting to the following Wednesday, on the grading deadline, and holding the Senate meeting at 1:00pm.

Motion by Dr. Stobaugh, seconded by Dr. Tucci, to reschedule the Faculty Senate meeting on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 to Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at 1:00pm. Motion carried.

Dr. Rogers announced Constitution Day would be September 17th, and there would be a public reading at the football game on September 16th at 4:00pm. He invited volunteers to read sections of the constitution during the event, and encouraged the senators to invite students to volunteer at Sequoyah and Dwight Elementary for lesson planning.

Dr. Patton reported he and President Clements were part of the insurance committee, and had expressed the faculty's concern with the salary tiers for premiums. He stated any changes to the tiers would likely not take effect until the next fiscal year at the earliest.

President Clements reported he had met with Dr. Abdelrahman regarding the Curriculum Committee and the work over the summer on the process for vetting and approving online courses. He stated the Curriculum Committee may recommend forming departmental/college level curriculum committees, which would review proposals prior to moving through governance. He indicated the Registrar had been working with departments to correct errors in proposals, but those with expertise in the subject matter should be the ones to vet the proposals. Dr. Kellner suggested the Curriculum Committee write a summary of each proposal as part of the review process, rather than sending the Senate full proposals.

President Clements stated the only difference in vetting an online course and a face-to-face course should be the creation of a Blackboard shell as part of the review process. Dr. Underwood expressed concern with the vetting of online courses, indicating the online courses she developed had been reviewed for course content, including the number of questions in an exam. She also indicated if she developed an eTech course and a colleague was assigned to teach the class, the colleague would be expected to use her content, not develop his or her own. Dr. Schwehm noted one disadvantage to requiring faculty to use content developed by another faculty member was the loss of different perspectives and approaches to the same topic. Dr. Rogers responded that should not be the case moving forward, and the review should shift to the departments to review content. He stated the additional vetting for online courses was primarily about SARA compliance and ensuring rigor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Clements announced the following standing committee appointments:

- Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee: Dr. Johnette Moody
- Campus Space and Utilization Committee: Dr. Michael Rogers
- Equity and Diversity Committee: Dr. Alejandra Carballo, Dr. Erin Clair, and Dr. Alaric Williams
- Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee: Dr. Eric Lovely
- Professional Development Committee: Dr. Nicholas del Grazia
- Technology Prioritization Committee: Dr. Debra Hunter
- University Promotion and Tenure Committee: Dr. V. Carole Smith
- Technology Committee: Dr. Loretta Cochran, Ms. Elizabeth Gray, Dr. Christine Austin, Mr. William Reeder, Dr. Michael Davis

Dr. Finan asked if the other senators taught classes in various buildings across campus, and why there was no standardization for scheduling. Dr. Stobaugh indicated AdAstra would optimize course scheduling, and Dr. Rogers added it could increase instances of classes being spread across campus. President Clements indicated the intention was to use the best and newest buildings on campus the most often, to provide the best environment for both learning and teaching.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Clements, D.M., President



Jack Tucci, Ph.D., Secretary