



## Faculty Senate

### Minutes of THE FACULTY SENATE OF ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This meeting of the 2023-2024 Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, in Rothwell 456 and via Webex.

The following members were present:

Mr. Stan Apple  
Dr. Michael Bradley  
Dr. Jon Clements  
Dr. Rene Couture  
Dr. Melissa Darnell  
Dr. Peter Dykema  
Ms. Jasmine Greer  
Dr. Jacob Grosskopf  
Dr. Newt Hilliard  
Dr. Virginia Jones  
Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon

Ms. Tara Malone  
Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman  
Dr. Tom Nupp  
Dr. Michael Rogers  
Dr. Kuldeep Singh  
Dr. Bethany Swindell  
Ms. Sherry Tinerella  
Dr. Ellen Treadway  
Dr. Erica Wondolowski  
Ms. Susan West  
Dr. Azin Sanjari Pirmahaleh

Also present: Dr. Russ Jones (Interim President); Dr. Jeanine Myers (Associate VPAA); Tammy Weaver (Registrar)

1. **Call to Order** (Dr. Newt Hilliard)
2. **Approval of December Minutes** Motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting from Dr. Swindell, seconded by Dr. Bradley. Motion carried.
3. **Special Guest – Dr. Russ Jones**
  - Dr. Jones reported that funds have been set aside for faculty merit pay raises and Jones asked Faculty Senate to set up a committee to help determine a merit pay formula.
  - Dr. Jones also asked Faculty Senate to create a salary equity committee to assist in creating a formula for addressing salary compression. The formula would be longitudinal and dependent on yearly budgets.
  - Dr. Jones suggested that a shorter schedule for applying for promotion and tenure would benefit faculty who currently wait an extended period for a final decision to be communicated. A committee will be formed to explore a shorter timeframe.

- The remote faculty work policy has been discussed at the college level. The consensus at this time is that remote faculty should be non-tenure track and teach at a reduced rate.
- No budget cuts are anticipated for fall 2024 due to favorable interest rates and tuition from concurrent credit students, among other one-time savings. While this means that more money will go toward salaries, we need to continue to recruit and to retain students, as we will have a smaller freshman class in fall 2024.
- Finally, the proposed Faculty Retrenchment Policy will be discussed once faculty have had the opportunity to meet and to provide feedback.

#### **4. Committee Updates**

##### **a. Standing Committees**

- i. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp)
  - Dr. Nupp reported that departments will receive a balance sheet of expenses to determine gains and losses as part of the differential tuition model to determine fees at the department or program level. Program and department budgets will be determined based on fees reduced or charges.
- ii. General Education Committee (Tinerella)
  - Ms. Tinerella reported that gen ed assessments will be scored at the end of this semester.
- iii. Institutional Aid Committee (Taylor) No report
- iv. Shared Governance Committee (Hilliard) No report
- v. Campus Space and Utilization Committee: (Singh) No report
- vi. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee: (Hilliard) No report
- vii. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell) No report
- viii. Professional Development Committee (Dykema)
  - Dr. Dykema reminded Faculty Senate that university professional development grant proposals are due on February 21. Questions may be addressed to Dr. Tribble, chair.
- ix. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple) No report
- x. Emergency Management and Safety Committee (Laffoon) No report

##### **b. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees**

- i. Faculty Workload Committee (Darnell) No report
- ii. Insurance Benefit Committee (Clements)
  - Dr. Clements reported that no budget changes are anticipated for 2024-2025.
- iii. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski)
  - Dr. Wondolowski reported that a new plan for access and equity will be written for 2024-2025.
- iv. Exploratory Committee on P&T Salary Increases (Hilliard) No report
- v. Prior Learning Assessment (Mikles-Schluterman) No report
- vi. Micro-Credentials (Bradley) No report
- vii. Rules Committee (Dykema) No report
- viii. Recruitment and Retention (Laffoon) No report

## **5. New Business**

### **a. VPAA Update – Dr. Jeanine Myers**

- Dr. Myers reported that the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) equity and access survey is underway.
- Classes scheduled for Friday, Monday, and Tuesday will be held online during the great eclipse in April 2024.
- The Research Symposium is scheduled for April 18, 2024:  
<https://www.atu.edu/gradcollege/symposium.php>
- Open Educational Resources grant information is available at <https://libguides.atu.edu/OER/grant>.
- Currently, Dr. Santos is onboarding and will be on campus in March. Dr. Santos is set to attend our next Faculty Senate meeting.

### **b. Curriculum Changes - Ms. Tammy Weaver**

- College of Arts & Humanities - Department of Art
  1. Delete the Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art. NOTE: The BFA in Fine Art will remain in the curriculum.
- College of Arts & Humanities - Department of English & World Languages
  1. Cross list FR/GER/JPN/SPAN 4991-4: Special Problems with LANG.
- College of Education & Health- Department of Teaching & Educational Leadership
  1. Change the course number for MLED 3012: Research Foundations, to MLED 3013

### **c. Adjunct Conference report –Dr. Erica Wondolowski**

- Dr. Wondolowski reported that planning for a second annual adjunct conference at ATU is underway. Call for papers and presentations will go out soon. She asked Faculty Senate to encourage adjuncts and students to attend.

### **d. Eclipse update —Ms. Susan West**

- Ms. West reported that many groups are assisting with campus events, including NASA, which will arrive on April 4 for planned talks. She asked that faculty remind students not to sublet their dorm rooms. Campus security is confirmed, and glasses are available for free in the library.  
<https://www.atu.edu/eclipse/index.php>

### **e. Academic Calendar report-Dr. Carey Ellis Laffoon**

- Dr. Laffoon reported that a discussion is ongoing among ATU Russellville and Ozark leadership regarding possible changes to the academic calendar that will take different program schedules and commitments into consideration, such as internships with community entities.

### **f. Faculty Senate Choice Award-Dr. Virginia Jones**

- Dr. Virginia Jones asked Faculty Senate to recommend and to choose a university administrator for the Faculty Senate Choice Award for 2023-2024 that is based on support of academic goals. Faculty Senate will vote via Webex Teams and present the award at a future meeting. Please see the attached award information.

## **6. Old Business**

### **a. Committee for reduction in force policy update – Dr. Michael Rogers**

- Dr. Mike Rogers shared a draft of the proposed policy, which were discussed

at two open forums: February 20 and 21 in RPL 300AB, 3-4 PM. The timeframe for faculty review and feedback is short, with a target of a March vote by Faculty Senate, after which the policy will be reviewed at the executive level before sending the proposed policy to the ATU Board of Trustees for final approval.

**7. Open Forum**

- Dr. Dykema commended the geography program for their immediate program changes in response to lithium mining in the state. Dr. Grosskopf remarked that media coverage has been positive: <https://www.kark.com/news/education/atu-adapting-geology-degree-for-lithium-industry-coming-to-arkansas/>.

**8. Announcements and Information Items**

- Dr Nupp invited the ATU university community to the ATU Fish and Beast Feast on February 17 at the Yell City Federal Building.

**9. Adjournment** Motion to adjourn by Dr. Michael Rogers at 4:41 p.m. Seconded by Dr. Arwen Taylor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Newt Hilliard*

Dr. Newt Hilliard, Chair

*Ellen Treadway*

Dr. Ellen Treadway, Secretary