Minutes of

THE FACULTY SENATE

OF

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The March meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:00PM on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, in 456 Rothwell. The following members were present:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dr. Glen Bishop | Dr. Joshua Lockyer |
| Dr. Pam Carr | Dr. Johnette Moody |
| Dr. Jon Clements | Dr. Asim Shrestha |
| Dr. Michael Davis | Dr. Jeremy Schwehm |
| Dr. Carey Ellis | Dr. V. Carole Smith |
| Dr. David Eshelman | Dr. Sarah Stein |
| Ms. Holly Ruth Gale | Dr. Bruce Tedford |
| Dr. Shellie Hanna | Dr. Brendan Toner |
| Dr. Newt Hilliard | Dr. Jack Tucci |
|  | Dr. Susan Underwood |
|  |  |

Dr. Scott Jordan was absent.

Dr. Robin Bowen, Dr. Phillip Bridgmon, Ms. Jennifer McNeely, Ms. Kayla Chambliss, Mr. Joshua McMillan, Dr. Sean Huss, Dr. James Stobaugh, Dr. Jacob Grosskopf, Ms. Pat Chronister, Mr. Thomas Pennington, Ms. Lou Ann Reeves, were visitors.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CALL TO ORDER | Dr. Johnette Moody, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. |
| APPROVAL OF MINUTES | Dr. Susan Underwood moved, Dr. Jeremy Schwehm seconded approval of the minutes of the April 9 meeting. Minutes were approved. |
| NEW BUSINESS1. Change order of agenda
 | Dr. Jack Tucci moved that item k (faculty survey) and item g (parking hang tags) on the agenda be moved forward. Dr. Shellie Hanna seconded the motion. The motion carried. |
| 1. Faculty Survey
 | Dr. Tucci informed the Senate that he had volunteered to coordinate a survey of the faculty during the April 9 meeting. He then passed out a draft of the survey instrument. The survey could be sent as early as this afternoon if the Senate approves. Dr. Underwood moved that the survey be approved with corrections. Dr. V. Carole Smith seconded. Motion passed. |
| 1. Parking Hang Tags
 | Mr. Joshua McMillan, Assistant Dean of Public Safety, rose to take questions about parking hang tags. Common questions received by his office concern the issuance of two hangtags to the same member of the faculty or going to stickers in place of hangtags. Issuing two hang tags would result in unqualified motorists parking in the red zones and a shortage of spaces for faculty and staff. The problem with stickers is that they sometimes damage vehicles. Parking is relatively cheap and plentiful at ATU. Faculty with a problem or question should call the office to discuss the situation. |
| 1. Curricular Process
 | Dr. Phillip Bridgmon (VPAA) offered to answer questions about the curricular process. Dr. Schwehm asked for an overview. Dr. Bridgmon offered that the process could be improved. That it now takes 1.5 to 2 years for a new program to be approved from conception to being in place. The process could be streamlined through the use of technology and a more efficient process. The process also involves the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. After faculty committees approve a proposal it then goes to the VPAA, the ATU Board of Trustees, and then the Department of Higher Education. Dr. Bridgmon acknowledged that a better job could be done in communicating with the originators of proposals the status of a proposal. In some cases, the process is delayed as the administration is waiting for sufficient resources to support the new program once it is fully approved. Also when there is an interim VPAA, there may be some reluctance to make major changes. Making sure resources are available for a quality program and change management are concerns. |
| 1. Promotion Increments
 | Dr. Bridgmon also addressed this issue. He said there should be a standard expectation of an increased in salary as faculty are promoted. In the past the increment varied substantially from year to year depending on available resources and the number of promotions. Also, the university must become very good at setting entry level salaries at Assistant Professor to avoid the need to provide large increases to bring people up to where they should be upon promotion. There is a need to benchmark salaries by looking at similar universities and tie predictable increments to the benchmarks. Dr. Bridgmon asked for help setting the increments. Dr. David Eshelman suggested that this would be a good task for the Salary and Benefits Committee. |
| 1. Class Length
 | Dr. Bridgmon also addressed this issue. He saw no problem with experimenting with alternative class lengths and schedules in the College of Business. In response to a question he stated that other colleges could also experiment. |
| 1. Degree Audits
 | Dr. Tucci brought up that other universities that have purchased the Degree Works software do not seem to have such a complicated and time consuming degree audit process as ATU. Dr. Bridgmon asked for volunteers to chat about streamlining the process with him and the registrar. Dr. Schwehm, Dr. Joshua Lockyer, and Dr. Michael Davis agreed to do this. |
| 1. Policy Website
 | Mr. Thomas Pennington, University Counsel, addressed this issue. The university policy website has been set up, but it has not been made public. |
| 1. Free Speech Policy
 | Ms. Holly Ruth Gale moved to place this item into new business. Motion was seconded and approved. Mr. Thomas Pennington, University Counsel, addressed this and distributed a draft of the new Freedom of Expression Policy. Protests such as what took place yesterday, in keeping with recent legislation and Supreme Court rulings will not be restricted to certain free speech zones under the new policy. Freedom of expression will be permitted anywhere on campus as long as the mission of the university and university activities are not disrupted. The policy needs to be approved and in place within 90 days of October 24th to meet legislative requirements. Dr. Tucci moved to approve the policy. Dr. Glen Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed. |
| 1. Medical Marijuana
 | Mr. Pennington also addressed this area. The university has three options: 1) do nothing, 2) designate positions as safety sensitive, 3) designate positions that have access to sensitive information. If options 2 and/or 3 were to be adopted, faculty and/or staff in designated positions would be restricted in their use of medical marijuana. Mr. Pennington asked for two volunteers to assist with developing the policy. Dr. Carey Ellis and Dr. Asim Shrestha volunteered. |
| 1. Ensuring Course Quality
 | Dr. Eshelman moved to approve the language that had been distributed via email before the meeting. Dr. Tucci seconded the motion. Dr. Davis suggested several changes. The changes were accepted. The motion passed. |
| 1. VPAA Classification
 | Dr. Eshelman moved and Dr. Shellie Hanna seconded a motion to change the order of the agenda and discuss the VPAA classification. Dr. Tucci moved and Dr. Eshelman moved to table this issue until after the new VPAA arrives. Motion passed. |
| 1. Promotion and Tenure Committee
 | Dr. Schwehm stated that further work would occur in the summer and would be ready for discussion in the fall. |
| OLD BUSINESS1. E Portfoilo Guidance
 | Dr. Underwood provided a handout of language to be changed in the faculty handbook. The subcommittee with Dr. Bridgmon had arrived at two tracks. One track for those who are planning to apply in the future for promotion and/or tenure and the other track for those who are not planning to apply for promotion or tenure. Faculty pursuing the first track would limit their application to a 10 page argument plus supporting documentation. The supporting documentation would be contained in a separate folder. Those on the second track would only need to submit annual student evaluations for review. Dr. Lockyer suggested that language be added that requirements be conveyed to faculty in a timely manner. Dr. Jon Clements moved that the language be approved. Dr.Eshelman seconded. Motion passed. |
| 1. TIAA/CREFF Early Access to Retirement Funds
 | Dr. Sean Huss asked for and was given permission to speak as he was involved in changing this policy when he served on the Faculty Senate. Access to TIAA/CREFF funds can be obtained in the form of a loan. TIAA/CREFF and IRS regulations limit access to retirement funds to this option. Faculty should keep in mind that accessing funds early even if through a loan will have an adverse impact on funds ultimately available for retirement. Faculty should visit with the TIAA/CREFF representative on campus on an individual basis if there is interest in obtaining access to retirement funds in this manner. |
| 1. HLC Update
 | Dr. Underwood provided an update of the HLC process. Draft arguments are now due and will be reviewed, edited, and revised over the summer. Input from the campus community will be sought during the fall semester. On October 20 the argument will be locked and no further alterations will be permitted. |
| 1. Dr. Bowen on Dr. Link
 | Dr. Bowen was invited to address the Senate on the Controversy over the Dr. Link Scholarship. Dr. Bowen stated that she was proud of our students during the protest yesterday. They engaged in vigorous discussion while being respectful to one another and to campus visitors. She went on to reiterate the University position on the matter that had previously been published on OneTech and in various news outlets. Although citizens, faculty, and the Anti-Defamation League claim that Dr. Link was a holocaust denier and an anti-Semite, the university has seen no direct evidence of that being the case. What evidence there has been has been words taken out of context. Dr Bowen would like faculty to know that the University would also defend them were they to come under similar scrutiny if evidence were lacking of their culpability. The University does not condone anti-Semitism nor the denial of the holocaust. The University position has nothing to do with money and the university does not benefit from the scholarship. Only a student awarded the scholarship benefits. The University looks at intent. The intent of Dr. Link to deny the holocaust or to be anti-Semitic has not been determined. Dr. Hanna stated the faculty would have liked to have had more information in a more timely way about the protest stimulated by the Dr. Link controversy. It is likely under the new freedom of expression policy that less information and warning about activities will be possible. Faculty can be the eyes and ears of campus and report observed protests or other activities. Members of the Faculty Senate provided emotional statements about their deep concern and how the holocaust and anti-Semitism has affected themselves and family members. |
| 1. Resolution
 | Dr. Hanna moved, Dr. Schwehm seconded a resolution to encourage Dr. Bowen to meet with the executor of Dr. Link’s estate to see if the name of the scholarship could be changed to only that of Dr. Link’s mother. Both names are currently attached to the scholarship. |
| 1. Dr. Bowen

Budget | A budget cut is anticipated to be smaller this year than last. It is anticipated faculty will receive a 1% COLA across the board raise. State mandated raises for classified employees was not accompanied by additional funding. Also there is the change in the state minimum wage law. |
| 1. Dr. Bowen

Williamson Hall | The decision of what to do with the building is tied up in legal issues and insurance matters. It will likely take 2 to 3 months for decisions to be made about the future of the building. |
| 1. Dr. Bowen Pool
 | The pool will become a student union area. Research indicates that students who do not choose ATU often do so because of a lack of a student union and a student recreation center. Once a student union and recreation center are built the area will be available for meetings requiring a large room. |
| OPEN FORUM | Members of the Senate expressed thanks to Dr.Bowen for her visit. Dr. Bowen replied she would be willing to attend more often but it needs to be put on her calendar early.Dr. Carey Ellis expressed frustration at the high cost of food and drink from Chartwells. The high cost has meant that group meetings have been moved off campus and have become more difficult to organize. |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION ITEMS | Dr. Tedford announced that he was going off the Senate and that he had enjoyed his three year term. |
| ADJOURNMENT | Dr. Eshelman moved and Dr. Smith seconded adjournment. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned 4:30 pm. |

Respectfully submitted,



Johnette Moody, D.B.A., President

Glen R. Bishop, Ph.D., Secretary