

# STAFF SENATE

February 14, 2020

*Meeting Minutes*

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Ozark Campus Staff Senate was called to order on Friday, February 14, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Conference Room 137 in the Ozark Health Science and Wellness Building.

## **ROLL CALL**

### **Senators Present:**

Jennifer Thomas  
Erin Brickley  
Alina House

Peter Clifton  
Julie Schmalz

**Senators Absent: None**

**Visitors: None**

**MINUTES:** The minutes from the January 17, 2020 Senate meeting were distributed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Senator Schmalz, seconded by Senator Thomas, and all approved, motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **• Report from President's Communication Committee:**

#### **- Dr. Bowen:**

- Please mark your calendars for November 9th and 10th as the HLC Visit. Please do not schedule anything on these dates. Please know you may have to be available on short notice. Also, take into consideration to have your offices covered in case you are asked to meeting with HLC members.
- Between now and November make sure ALL of your employees in your areas know the mission and vision of Arkansas Tech. Please think of ways to memorize both and share with other departments so they may use the same tactics.
- Once your department has memorized the mission and vision, then become familiar with how your department individually supports the mission and vision. Please prepare all employees to be able to answer questions that may be asked by the HLC members.

### **HLC Steering Committee:**

- A handout was given which provides links and feedback options.
- Please go through the assurance argument drafts and leave feedback. Try to focus on the two questions on the handout:

- Is the evidence appropriate, applicable, and convincing to you?
- Is there evidence that you are aware of in your area (or others) that you think should be included that has not been identified?
- There will be Faculty/Staff open forums for questions and answers. Each session will focus on a particular criteria. Please try to attend all, but especially sessions you are most familiar with.
- Members will also be coming to key offices where a majority of staff are located such as financial aid and facilities management. Members are wanting to spend at least 30 minutes to communicate and answer questions with Staff.

#### 5's

- Leadership Tech Nominations open February 3, 2020. Everyone is encouraged to apply.
- Time out for Tech is February 6th. 250 students more than this time last year are signed up.
- Don't forget to take to Communication Working Group's survey. The link is on Onetech and in the scoop e-mail. Closes January 29th, 2020 at 5:00 PM.
- Marcomm would like to thank everyone who participated in the new logo creation workshops and brand studies. The logo is not ready for use at this time. Marcomm will communicate with the campus ASAP when it is available for use.

#### 4's

#### NONE

#### 3's

- 3rd and Final Vice President for Advancement open forum will take place January 29, 2020 1:30-2:30
- Hull is currently under construction. Please keep all students away from the area, and please be patient as construction continues through September-October 2020.
- Hall of Distinction inductees were announced. The ceremony will be combined with the Scholarship Gala this year which will occur on Friday April 17, 2020. The inductees announced included:
  - **John Ed Chambers III**
  - **Benny Harris**
  - **Dr. Rose Clarke Nanyonga**
- NASPA will recognize two employees in Student Affairs in March 2020. (Did not catch names)
- January 31, 2020 Deadline for extra income statement.

- The National Council of Teaching Quality placed ATU in the Top 15 in the US.
- ATU is one of the top 5 most affordable institutions to earn an Emergency Mgmt. Master's Degree.
- ATU Athletics received the national award for 5,706 Hours of community service which made approximately \$150,000 economic impact on the community.
- February 5, 2020- @ 2:00 PM an open exhibit of photography taken from the mid to late 80s of WWII survivors of concentration camps who lived in Europe will be on display.
- The Governor will be on hand to speak at this event as well as the artist.
- February 7, 2020- the 65th Annual Miss Tech University pageant will take place.
- February 11, 2020- Norman Hall Thumbnails and Gestures display will take place in Norman Hall. Reception will begin at 2:30 PM.
- February 18, 2020 @ 7:00PM- ATU Choral Artists Performance at Witherspoon.
- February 19, 2020 @ 6:00 PM Interdisciplinary Research Series will continue with Dr. James Moses speaking on Before Brown: Culture, Society, and the Long Civil Rights Movement in America, 1944-1954. Located in RPL 300.
- February 20, 2020- Faculty/Staff Appreciation Night at the Basketball Games at Tucker. 175 Vouchers for free food and drink. First come first serve.
- February 24, 2020- Hosting Tech for Tech Event. Industry leaders will be visiting with STEM faculty to explore what is being taught in the degree plans and compare ideas to what is needed in the workforce/industry. This is not a public event.
- February 27, 2020- Diversity and Inclusion with host a keynote speaker for Black History Month. The speaker is Bryan Terrell Clark. Clark has appeared in such Broadway productions as "Hamilton" and "Fences." They have been given permission to live stream the event to other campuses such as Ozark Campus. Anyone who would like the live stream link will need to contact them. Event will begin at 7:00 PM with a meet and greet at 8:00 PM in Doc Bryan Student Lecture Hall.
- March 13, 2020- As part of Women's Week, the Women's Lunch will be that day.
- March 14, 2020- Annual Bash @ the Ballpark event.

## Report from Russellville Staff Senate Meeting:

- **Ms. Hinkle Update:** Ms. Hinkle updated the Senate on the following items.
  - Online form comment: An employee asked the question who is benefitting from salary savings since the jobs aren't being filled?
    - Ms. Hinkle explained there have been 4 years of declining revenue @ ATU and part of the issue is with the dynamics of Arkansas. Only 47% of HS grads in Arkansas attend college. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee which was just formed is a way for Arkansas Tech to be proactive. This committee is looking at ways for ATU to be able to deal with the decreases in enrollment in the next 3-5 years because everyone knows it is coming due to the number of current high school seniors. ATU does not want to be another Henderson or UALR, and Ms. Hinkle assured the senate ATU is not headed down that same path. Last year budgets were cut 4.5 million dollars with about 1.2 million of that being saved in salaries of jobs that were unfilled. The end goal would be to regain the positions but ATU cannot do so at this time. ATU has a very tight budget, and every position must be prioritized before filled.
  - After the drop for non-pay on February 18<sup>th</sup>, more information will be available for the current state of the budget this year.
  - One of the many issues at ATU is we do not have competitive pay for Skilled Trades. Some jobs are left unfilled for very long time.
  - A Senate member asked if Ms. Hinkle was thinking about replacing Admin 1 or 2 jobs with graduate assistants because the senate member had heard that rumor. Ms. Hinkle explained that she had not heard that rumor and that was not the case.
  - Ms. Hinkle explained there are a lot of things happening at ATU to be proud and excited about, but we must plan for the future of lower enrollment. The enrollment may get down to the 2007 year level instead of 12,000 students we may have 8,000 students. This is important for ATU to be working on this now instead of waiting for it to happen.
  - Ms. Hinkle reassured the Senate that Henderson State had major financial issues and ATU is NOT headed in the same direction. Henderson state had a roll over policy and students were never paying their fees. ATU only lets students roll over \$500.00 and only per semester not indefinite. Henderson State was in a horrible situation with only 15 days of cash on hand. ATU is in good shape because of the tight budgeting practices.
  - Fees for the next year were approved at the last Budget Advisory meeting, and will be recommended to Dr. Bowen.
  - Budget Advisory Committee worked on Scenario #10 for the Budget which included a substantial increase in tuition to balance the budget, 1% COLA, and promotions for Faculty.

- **Committee Updates:**
  - Insurance Committee:
    - Still in research phase.
    - BCBS said there will be another increase because ATU is in a deficient. Somewhere around 10% -15%
    - Laury Fiorello is now the head of the committee since Bob Freeman is leaving.
  - IT prioritization committee:
    - Need for Matrix
    - More Banner IP options.
  - University Communication Working Group:
    - Thank you to all who completed the survey. 273 surveys were completed and will be very helpful in the process.
  - Campus Space and Utilization:
    - Now combining into the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.
  - Green and Gold Cupboard:
    - Trying to find opportunities for senate members to volunteer at the cupboard to learn how it works.
- **Special Election- Admin and Finance:**
  - Marvin Vegara is taking on a new job and is resigning his position on the Senate. This seat will need to be filled since Marvin just started in November. The election committee will start this process for representation from Admin and Finance.
- **Vision and Mission Statement:**
  - HLC visit will be here this year and it is very important to be familiar with the mission and vision statement and how it applies to your job. Ask yourself how your job relates to the mission and vision of Arkansas Tech University?

**Open Forum:** The senate floor was open to any new discussions:

- Staff Senate online Form Submissions:
  - An employee asked why staff members were not allowed to use the wellness center just to check their blood pressure.
    - President Smith checked with Health and Wellness and was informed Staff and Faculty do not pay the health fee therefore cannot use the services. The nurses also informed President Smith there are liability issues for checking the blood pressure of a staff member especially if their blood pressure is abnormal, then the nurses are required to make sure the employee gets follow up care, and the nurses are such short staffed they do not have the time or ability to do so.

- A comment was sent it to request the filling of potholes between Brown and Caraway buildings.
  - Contacted Facilities Maintenance and was told gravel would be added.
- A comment was submitted stating the muddy tracks left on the grass by department's side by sides, golf carts, and FAMA vehicles are very distracting University employees should not be contributing to the "uglyfication" of campus. The comment stated if the employee was on a tour of the campus and saw the muddy tracks it would alter his/her decision or their child's decision to attend ATU.
  - President Smith forwarded the email to all departments who use the particular vehicles above.
- Dr. Eshleman from Faculty Senate commented on the following items:
  - Institutional Effectiveness Committee is a very good and necessary committee to not end up like Henderson State. Anyone who is on this committee and plans to be on this committee needs to remind others that the items talked about in this committee will affect all people and this is people's lives and jobs we are talking about and making decisions on.
  - Staff Senate and the discussion of shared governance is popular at this point. Dr. Eshleman realizes that staff senate does not feel empowered. He advised the ATU Staff Senates become familiar with other strong staff senates such as University of Arkansas, and look at the responsibility and respect their senates require.
  - Dr. Eshleman explained he believes the staff senate needs something they could have power over. Faculty Senate's is academics. It is hard for ATU to argue that Academics do not support the mission therefore Faculty Senate is giving a lot of responsibility and respect. Staff is a little bit harder to argue. Dr. Huss thought the Staff's power could be over procedures since staff are normally the ones who are working through all of the procedures and paperwork. Possibly Staff Senate could focus on this and gain more respect and empowerment.
- HR- Michelle Bishop- ATU needs some type of retention plan for employees and any recommendations would be welcomed. On average 11 employees leave monthly at ATU. Everyone is shorthanded.
- Registrar's office will be very short handed at graduation and if anyone could get comp time approved in their offices their help would be appreciated.
- A senate member asked if anyone knew of clarification on the trials of the varying work schedules announcement that was posted on OneTech. When is the end date? What were the results?
  - The senate concluded they did not know anything else about this issue and it was a leadership tech group who had started it.

## **New Business**

- **Birthday Cards:** Cards were presented for March Staff Birthdays to be signed.
- **Employee Spotlight:** Bethany Lucius was drawn as the March Employee Spotlight.
- **Staff Handbook Statement:** Tabled- Senator Clifton is going to speak with Chancellor Sikes on clarification on what will need to be listed in staff handbook.
- **Open Forum:**

-Staff Excellence Award nominations are coming up. Senator Thomas is sending to all senate for review. The nomination form will be electronically sent and submissions accepted March 13, 2020 through March 20, 2020.

-Senators spoke about coming up with some activities to do with staff during May, June, and July to decompress. Suggestions of maybe a yoga class, paint party, aerobics. Senator House is going to speak with the CFO (Laury Fiorello) on what the Staff Senate budget is and what type of spending/stipulation guidelines are involved.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **New Policy/Committees Update:** No update given
- **Staff Feedback Link:** Senator Clifton will speak with Chancellor Sikes about moving forward with website update and comments being emailed.
- **Staff Potlucks:** Next potluck is scheduled to be on March 20, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Staff Handbook is to be shared with all staff per Mr. Sikes that will filter through HR(Mitzi)
- November 9, 2021- November 10, 2021 Higher Learning Commission will be on site

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Schmalz motioned, Senator Brickley seconded, and all approve and motion carried to adjourn at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alina House, Secretary