

# STAFF SENATE

Friday May 3, 2019

*Meeting Minutes*

## CALL TO ORDER

The Ozark Campus Staff Senate was called to order on Friday, May 3, 2019 at 10:56 a.m. in the ATCC Computer Lab on the Arkansas Tech Career Center campus in Russellville, AR.

## ROLL CALL

### Senators Present:

Jennifer Thomas  
Stacie Harden

David Spicer  
Mike Bogue

### Senators Absent:

Erin Brickley

Julie Schmalz

### Ex-Officio Absent:

Beverly Nehus

**MINUTES:** The minutes from the April 2019 meeting were disbursed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Senator Harden and seconded by Senator Bogue, and all approved, motion carried.

## NEW BUSINESS

- **Report from President's Communication Committee:** President Spicer provided notes from the meeting on the follow items:
  - Dr. Robin Bowen gave an update on the scholarship in the name of Dr. Link. She stated they could not find any concrete evidence Dr. Link was a Holocaust denier or Anti-Semitic. She stated she would defend any employee of the institution until proof could be provided of wrong doing.
  - Josh McMillian reported there were approximately 500 people who attended a rally at 1:00 pm at the Hindsman tower where approximately 40 people were protesting the Dr. Link scholarship. There was a single white nationalist who also spoke at 2:00 pm. There were no incidents.
  - Sam Strasner reported numerous media outlets were on campus for the rally.
  - Dr. Gunter provided a fact sheet for the recent report on the economic impact of ATU on the region.
  - Kelly Davis reported Homecoming weekend will be on October 4th and 5th. The game will be a night game this year.
  - Bernadette Hinkle reported there were 11 different versions of the budget and a flat budget was proposed, including the closing of the Lake Point Conference Center. There is a proposed increase in undergraduate tuition of 2.54% and in graduate tuition of 2.73%. A new rec center fee will be on a sliding scale starting at \$6.25 per credit hour for freshman and \$1 per credit hour for seniors to fund the renovation of Hull into a student activity center. Library fees will increase by .25 cents and athletic fees will increase by .75 cents. Contingency funds for the Vice Presidents and the President's office

have been reduced to zero. There are 5.5 million in scholarships. A 1% COLA raise.

- Lou Ann Reeves reported the staff BBQ will be May 22nd at Tucker from 1:30 to 2:30 pm.
  - Jessica Holloway reported there were 10 acts passed by the legislature that affect procurement. They will be updating the rules and regulations to meet the new laws.
  - Bob Freeman reported under the supervisor's tab on One Tech is a "Hiring Process" reference materials. He asked that everyone have their mailing address up to date with the institution because new vision and dental cards are going to be mailed out. They are on the final draft of a supervisor's guide for FMLA. They are working on a spreadsheet for "required" to meet minimum qualifications for positions.
  - Kevin Solomon reported everyone should have received an e-mail to submit areas where employees are involved in the community. This is a Leadership Tech project.
  - Pat Edmunds reported ATCC received 4 medals at Skills in Hot Springs, and 4 qualified for nationals.
  - Bruce Sikes reported ATU Ozark won medals in all categories students competed in at Skills.
- **Report from Russellville Staff Senate:** Senator Thomas gave a report from the May 1, 2019 Russellville Staff Senate meeting on the following items:
    - New Business
      - Rebecca Lavaca- Human Resources
        - Blue Cross Blue Shield will be issuing new vision and dental cards around mid-May. These cards will be affective June 1<sup>st</sup>. Please keep addresses updated in Banner.
      - Matt Fraser-Leadership Tech Cohort 3
        - Small Team Project is recycling. There is currently a recycling committee that is focusing more on student dorms and residential areas. The team is looking at setting up a program for educational and academic buildings which will mainly focus on staff/faculty. This will require volunteers in all of those buildings. They are still working on the logistics of everything, but if anyone would like to be the contact person for an office of building call/email him for more information.
    - Committee Updates
      - Scholarship Committee- Decision was made. An e-mail with names will be sent out.
      - Insurance- No new update.
      - Official Function- No Update
      - Handbook sub-committee- Has met, and the draft was given back from EC with the exception of two sections that were changed by HR, and have not been given back at this time.
      - Medical Marijuana- Meeting Thursday May 2 @ 10:30
      - Free Speech- Met and have made changes to document. (See attached) Vote on document next June meeting.

- Thomas Pennington- All committees have been formed and are meeting. Thomas will keep senates informed with changes. Free Speech policy is due by August board meeting, to be in place by October 24, 2019. One of the major changes will be no specific area where it will occur. Free Speech will be allowed in all outdoor areas accessible to the general public. Also the policy will be changed to Freedom of Expression instead of speech. This will cover all types of speech and expressions such as interpretative dance.
  - A senator asked if employees were allowed to engage in free speech activities while on the clock. For example, could an employee go down to the bell tower and rally with other students and faculty? Mr. Pennington stated an employee is absolutely able to express their right to free speech, but he would advise the employee to do it on their personal time and not scheduled work time. Therefore the employee would need to take leave time to do so.
  - A senator asked if an employee is allowed to have political stickers on their office doors. Mr. Pennington was unaware if there was a policy against this but would advise all offices and state property to be kept neutral in all political and religious preferences.
- Faculty/Staff Tuition Waiver- The new waiver policies were announced and many employees believe these could be detrimental to the benefit of the program. One of the changes would be faculty/staff/and dependents would have to pay back a portion of tuition and fees for dropped or failed classes. Many staff members do not have the funds to do this. Many changes could happen in a person's life that are uncontrollable. It seems as though the benefit is punishing some employees instead of benefiting them. Also the limit of only being able to take 18 hours in a calendar year is very restraining for someone who is taking online classes and trying to finish a degree in a limited time. A motion was made to revisit this policy and submit any changes needed to Dr. Bowen. A subcommittee will be formed to work on this issue.
- Complaints from Senator brought to the Senate Floor
  - An employee asked about the strategic plan minutes not being updated since January 2019. This is not very transparent.
  - An employee asked how committee members are picked for committees on campus. Is it just random? Some employees would be better on committees than others depending on their expertise. President Reeves mentioned putting in a policy stating all committees must come to the Senate first and the Staff Senate will pick members from the Senate or other employees who may be interested or have expertise in the particular subject of the committee. President Reeves mentioned Faculty Senate was wanting to do this as well.
  - An employee complained that diversity is such a big issue right now that some employees who are of a diverse race are getting away with things they should not be just because the campus must

stay diverse. Some of the employees feel discriminated against just because they are not of a minority race.

#### Old Business

- Staff Senate Survey results are back. 120 hits on the survey. One of the big times were the faculty senates and staff senates working together and Senator Communications. This is currently in the works but the effectiveness of working together has not been easy. Another big issue is that some departments feel their senators are not communicating meeting items effectively. Draft Minutes and agendas will be posted on the OneTech announcements to help with timing issues and transparency.
- Paving Walkway at Brown- No new update.
- Summer hours/ Spring break hours- No new update. President Reeves will be speaking to Dr. Gunter on this issue to get more information.
- President Reeves sought feedback from the Senate regarding a Food Drive for the Green and Gold Cupboard again. Charity Smith decided to head the campaign, and will report back in June to get the food drive started.

#### Announcements

Staff Cookout is Wednesday May 22. Executive Council will be serving food, including the new Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Barbara J. Johnson.

#### Next Meeting:

June 5, 2019, 10:00-12:00 in Doc Bryan 180

- **Employee Spotlight for June:** Brenda Shoop was drawn for the employee spotlight for the month of June.
  - A discussion was brought to the Senate from President Spicer regarding the purchase of a second sign for the employee spotlight. President Spicer was asked by Chancellor Sikes to explain how the sign relates to the mission and success of ATU students. President Spicer opened the floor for discussion and the following items were discussed:
    - Staff members work for students, therefore supporting staff supports students as well.
    - The employee spotlight program is not a merit award, and it may cause animosity between staff members if it becomes merit based since we already have a staff award based on voting.
    - All staff members with at least one year at ATU will be spotlighted, and the second sign would allow the program to progress in a timely manner.
    - The spotlight program is a simple way to achieve recognition for staff members.
    - The sign is not a yearly cost just a one time cost, and it is not expensive.
    - The Staff Senate budget can be used to purchase the sign.

- **Birthday Cards:** Birthday cards were presented for June birthdays to be signed and delivered.

## OLD BUSINESS

- **Staff Senate By-laws Amendment (s)--Ratification:** Mr. Sikes took the changes to discuss with the Chief Officers and the following recommendations were formed:
  - Add to Position #3 the department of Chancellor's Office to allow fair representation.
  - Remove the requirement of ex-officio from the Senate.

President Spicer will type up a clean document to be voted on at the June senate meeting.

- **Ethics Policy/New Committee Updates:** Committees were formed and have the following updates:
  - Medical Marijuana- is scheduled to meet next week.
  - Ethics Policy- has been voted on and approved.
  - Official Function- No update was given.
  - Free Speech- Mr. Thomas Pennington presented to the Senate the following items:
    - Draft of the new Freedom of Expression policy was given out to senate members for review.
    - Name change of policy from Freedom of Speech to Freedom of Expression.
    - One of the major changes would be all outdoor areas where the public is allowed would be free expression areas.
    - The free expression activities could occur between 8:00 AM- 8:00 PM.
    - All speech is free speech, even if it is considered hate speech.
    - Students must be provided with a free speech area to post non-university materials/flyers such as bulletin boards.
    - Policy will be approved at the next June senate meetings. The policy will then be forwarded to executive council, and finally to Board of Trustees in August.

- **Staff Professional Development:** There is no new update at this time.
- **Staff Potlucks:** The next Staff Senate Potluck is tentatively scheduled for June 28, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Senator Harden announced the Career Service pay increase has passed and the new totals would go into effect beginning July 1. The new totals are as follows:
  - 10-14 years- \$800.00

- 15-19 years- \$1,000.00
  - 20-24 years- \$1,200.00
  - 25+ years- \$1,500.00
- Insurance Committee: Senator Harden stated the insurance committee is being proactive and has met with the hired brokers.

## **GOOD AND WELFARE**

The Staff Senate monthly meeting is presently scheduled for Friday, June 7, 2019 at 9:00 AM in the Conference Room 137 in the Ozark Health Science and Wellness Building.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Bogue motioned, Senator Harden seconded, and all approved and motion carried to adjourn at 12:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Thomas, Secretary