Staff Senate Minutes

June 4, 2020

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Charity Smith called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 10:02 am in Webex virtual online meeting.

**ROLL CALL Senators Present:**

Angela Bell Michelle Bishop Rachel Broussard Judy Crouch Andrea Eubanks Teresa Lutz Amber Meeks Brittany Reves Lydia Rogers Charity Smith Karissa Webb Brandi Duvall Alisha Williams

**Senators Absent:**

Kelli Bates Shelly Handley Kaitlyn Ennis Belinda Martin Alan Parsons Chris Pearson Susan Johnson

**Visitor(s):**

Dr. David Eshelman Jennifer Thomas Ms. Bernadette Hinkle

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the March, 2020 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Crouch filed a motion to accept the minutes and record the meeting virtually. Senator Eubanks seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

There was not Staff Senate meeting in April 2020.

The minutes from the May, 2020 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Bell filed a motion to accept the minutes and record the meeting virtually. Senator Williams seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

**Special Report**

**Committee Reports**

* **President’s Communication –** President Smith stated communication going out via OneTech, nothing new since last month.
* **Budget Advisory –** President Smith stated minutes sent out to Senators today, no questions during Staff Senate. Next meeting has been cancelled. June was the meeting the proposal was to go to President Bowen and then to the Board of Trustees.
* **Scholarship –** No report
* **University Strategic Planning –** No report
* **Insurance Committee –** Senator Bell had no updates. Meeting has not taken place, no date for next meeting. Waiting to hear detailed information from presentation (Stephens Group) to Ms. Hinkle. No recommendation has been made to remove Stephens Group at this time. If we shift to insuring ourselves, Stephens Group would stay on to help Human Resources to assist. If we do not self-insure, then the committee will review the need to retain Stephens Group further. There were two candidates for interview as Human Resources Director, no update on those interviews.
* **IT Prioritization and Impact** – Senator Crouch sent in the following information via email:
  + We have not yet had a meeting. Ken did send out a message on Webex discussing the cuts to the University Technology Budget, 4.2% cut with an additional 4.2% hold in account amount. Will need to use Technology Reserves to make the budget overall.
  + IT also cut significantly from its other budgets in support of meeting the University need
  + Plans to set a meeting for this month to discuss these various items.
  + They are continuing working with various task forces to find additional cost savings and possible contract re-negotiations into 20/21 and 21/22.
  + They submitted a good bit of requests to the Task Force on Cares Act Funding and believe we will see some of these come to pass.
* **University Communication Working Group –** No new meeting since last month.Information from subcommittee report was presented to Dr. Jenkins to review and then take to Dr. Bowen.
* **Campus Space and Utilization –** No report
* **Green and Gold Cupboard –** No report
* **Staff Awards –** President Smith will send out a committee meeting invitation this week. Will be looking at what information we already have and how we want to move forward.

**Old Business**

*Special Election -Administration and Finance Senator*

Senator Duvall stated Sam Strasner will be contacted this week to put out a blast on the Scoop and the OneTech announcements. Looking to accept nominations until June and having that individual start in July. If a run off occurs, that will take place in July and then that member will start in August.

*Ms. Hinkle*

Board will meet June 18th. Presenting a balanced budget for FY 21 with no tuition increase, course fees that have been approved by the fee committee and Vice President. $6.25 Student Union fee that will be implemented. 1.6-million-dollar reduction on the state level. The state has released 28 million dollars for ATU, that is about a 5-million-dollar difference than what is normally allotted for FY 21 budget. Campus Reserves will use 4.5 million dollars for the upcoming budget. Departmental budgets are included in the reduction of costs to the budget. Believes there will be a 7.5% reduction in undergraduates, 10% reduction in graduates, 50% reduction in International students, and 20% reduction in summer school program hours. There is also a worst-case scenario strategy in case those numbers do not reach those percentages, or if the state cuts more. Possible voluntary furloughs for the first quarter of this year – remain employed at 100% salary and benefits but would be a leave without pay set up. Option for reduce time contracts, all voluntary – 75% time that would adjust your sick and annual hours to 6 each month, instead of 8. Early retirement incentive will be looked at by the board in August. The Institution Effectiveness committee is looking at a long-range goals. They have 4 subgroups to look at budget suggestions and which are priorities and what can be done. Budget Advisory main goal is the human core. Senator Bell inquire about the early retirement and if that position would be rehired. Ms. Hinkle stated if budgeted for a whole position in July, and the person take the early retirement in December, the savings would be from December to June. Senator Bell inquired if the others in the office would take the slack if that person left, until another is hired. What is the incentive. Ms. Hinkle stated the final plan has not been reviewed. Incentives such as the University would pay your insurance until you are 65 years of age. Another incentive is a 25% bonus of your salary and then after a certain amount, based on years you worked for the University you could add on a percentage a year afterwards. Ms. Hinkle stated the work the Taskforce is doing is important for our safety. Senator Eubanks had feedback about the suggestions for revenue, is there any movement on that information. Ms. Hinkle said the feedback has been sent to the Budget Advisor committee and the Institutional Effectiveness committees, and they ranked them to be investigated and reviewed. The output of the committee’s results will be distributed to the campus, when completed. An example of something being implemented through the distributed leadership committee, in June the Board will see a proposal that those on APRS remain, but due to the high cost it will not be offered to new hires beginning July 1st. That is one of the cost savings that has come out of these committees. August 3rd is the return date for faculty/staff on campus. You should be in discussion with your departments about retuning to campus. President Smith added will there be clarification about how offices will obtain the supplies needed. Some of the bulk purchasing being done for PPE so offices are not duplicating efforts or what FAMA is doing with providing certain equipment and supplies. Ms. Hinkle stated there will be sanitizers/wipes in individual offices and in common areas until further notice. There will be masks provide to each employee. Gloves will be provided, unsure if there is enough to everyone but they will have been ordered. The parodical for custodial workers will be to close water fountains, wipe down doors, and railing. Areas will be marked 6 feet apart of large areas and classrooms. No movement forward with the New Student Recreational Center, Young will be still be online this Fall. Hughes will now be used for student living. The Student Union construction project will continue, there are already student fees in place. The city has asked ATU to tear down old houses on 901, 903, and North Denver this summer. Williamson will continue being renovated. ARDot and the city are working with us to improve O Street pedestrian crossing, storm water drainage (5.3 million dollars awarded to ARDot for project), summer projects with Residence Life and the new main entrance to campus. Ms. Hinkle questioned morale. Senator Eubanks appreciates the new Friday time, but feels like the work hours are fluid. Senator Broussard state the days run together. Senator Eubanks included that the ability to go paperless has been easy and effective. Ms. Hinkle would like to streamline business practices, the use of electronic signatures has been one way of moving forward.

**New Business**

*Staff Senate Survey*

President Smith stated in previous meetings a discussion was brought up to look over questions that should stay, add, or be removed from the survey. This would be feedback from fellow staff members to find areas to approve. Timing needs to be considered, now while working from home or sending out when we return to campus in August. Senator Eubanks suggested keeping all the original questions. However, she suggests removing questions that no longer need to be asked, staff picnic, since we did not host the event this year. Senator Eubanks also suggests adding working from home feedback information and do you know where to find at home work resources. President Smith agrees that information about working from home would be beneficial for future changes, feelings and the resources needed. Senator Rogers stated the timeline for when we send out the survey needs to stay consistent, but there may be need a need to postpone the summer survey. President Smith explained that due to COVID-19, it would be smart to consider sending out survey during the summer to include the questions regarding working from home, how that could be better, and what was done right. Senator Rogers suggests that the survey really be more of an outreach to find out what Staff Senate can do to make things better. Review the survey, and send any feedback to President Smith. The goal is to get the survey out in the next few weeks. Senator Eubanks inquired about a feedback section for those taking the survey. President Smith stated any question rated a 2 or lower, will allow you to respond back and place your suggestion to the question.

*COVID-19 Recovery Framework*

President Smith sent the attachment in an email today. Keep 6 feet apart, elevators will be 2 people only, wear your mask in public areas, wash your hands and avoid touching your face.

There are 5 phases:

0 is a shelter in place

1 gatherings limited to 30, meetings should be conducted virtually

2 gatherings limited to 50

3 gatherings limited to 90

4 phase out

Senator Eubanks inquire about a Staff Senate member as a part of this committee. President Smith said no, a member was not requested. Senator Rogers was disappointed to hear Staff was not represented in the committee; much of what faculty decide, affects staff as well. President Smith stated if it was not being held as a top priority, she would feel more compelled to step in. Heath Horton will be contacted to inquire as to why a Staff Senator member was not present or see if someone can be added to future meetings. Senator Rogers stated it does not follow our policies to be inclusive. Senator Eubanks stated in the Academic Affairs meetings this framework is based by individual offices. They will be staggering their office, so not all members are there at the same time. For example, the Registrar is doing a one-way entrance and exit. Not all offices can do this, so the framework is flexible to fit your needs. Senator Bishop has a high traffic area, they are discussing placing a table outside of the office with common forms to be picked up to reduce the flow. President Smith stated Senator Broussard with events will be updating room capacities for future events in Ad Astra. Dr. Eshelman added in the chat box that a faculty representative from emergency management was selected for the taskforce, but the Faculty Senate does not have a representative. He was invited to one meeting. Senator Bell included custodial staff in the chat box, regarding new procedures to sanitizing offices and classrooms. Senator Bell inquired as to whom will be supplying the protective equipment. President Smith suggested that departments would be overseeing that and receiving communication from Ms. Hinkle in regards to what can be purchases can be made. Senator Eubanks said talks were for the plexiglas, masks, face shields would be supplied by to the university. Then it became are they providing one, what kind (medical grade/cloth). It was encouraged by her division to get our own cloth mask made to be able to bring into work. FAMA was overseeing cleaning supplies and sanitizer for the University as a whole. Senator Bell inquire about how will this be enforced in a classroom/office with visitors and students. Senator Bishop stated much like church, it was highly encouraged them to wear a mask, you will not be turned away but maybe you need to wash your hands and sanitize after the encounter. Senator Duvall stated that as soon as they hand you a from, you have their germs, so the mask won’t keep that form happening. This would be a University wide decision. Senator Rogers is worried one building could say one thing and another say the opposite. This could become a very big issue if we are not giving consistent information out to students and constituents.

**Open Forum**

Senator Broussard stated non-conventional spaces have been offered to the Registrar’s Office for classroom spaces to adhere to social distancing requirements. For example: Young Ballroom, Doc Bryan 242, Doc Bryan Lecture Hall, Witherspoon Auditorium. Senator Eubanks inquired if she had been asked to adjust capacity for rooms on campus. Senator Broussard has been asked by Alexis in the Registrar’s Office has placed a ticket to make those adjustments. There is a test site, looking at the date. When that data is finalized, Broussard will manually update that rooms in the production site.

**Announcements**

President Smith stated online feedback is always available of you wish to send information or suggestions back without a name attached.

**Meeting Adjourned**

Senator Broussard filed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Lutz seconded the motion. The Senate voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:57am.

**Next Meeting**

July 8, 2020 @ 10:00 am in Webex virtual online meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karissa Webb, Secretary

**Webex Chat Box Details**

from sjohnson (privately):

Good morning.

from sjohnson to everyone:

The faculty in the art department have formed a safety and traffic flow committee to make a plan on how to exit and enter the classrooms and how often to meet, everyday or every other day. In class or online. Faculty were also asked if they had rather teach face to face or online.

from Andrea Eubanks to everyone:

I agree with Lydia 100%

from David Eshelman to everyone:

There is a faculty rep from Emergency Management on the task force. I’m not sure how she was selected. Faculty Senate has no designated rep, though I was invited to one meeting.

from sjohnson to everyone:

As for me, I feel i have been included in my department. They have included me in all their meetings and discussions.

from Rachel Broussard to everyone:

I have been asked by Heath to develop guidelines for events and I have also worked in conjuction with Heath, the Registrars Office, and Ad Astra to start updating room capacities. I have also offered up non-academic rooms to the Registrar's Office to use for classes in the Fall to help with social distancing.

from Jennifer Thomas to everyone:

Sorry!!!!! :)

from sjohnson to everyone:

So true, each department will have to tailor their rules to their specific department.

from Angela Bell to everyone:

Yes, No blame to you Charity, but I also completely agree with Lydia as well. Staff will play a huge role in all of this, so they should be asked their thoughts. Staff are frontline workers and might be able to give some valuable insight as the best way to do things. (Especially the custodial staff who are implementing a lot of new procedures.)

from sjohnson to everyone:

Acadmic Affairs also contacted me regarding putting up a plexiglass barrier.

from Andrea Eubanks to everyone:

It may have not been his decision to make either...

from Angela Bell to everyone:

Have we heard who is suppling all of this personal protective equipment?

from sjohnson to everyone:

Yes, I would think that Purchasing has already begun the process of purchasing needed supplies.

from David Eshelman to everyone:

Unfortunately, I have to leave for a prior commitment. Let me know if I can help in any way.

from Angela Bell to everyone:

Have you heard how all this will be enforced?

from sjohnson to everyone:

We definetly need to coordinate purchases so we don't over order.

from sjohnson to everyone:

I have been told that the students do not have to wear masks, but we will be required to wear masks.

from Andrea Eubanks to everyone:

One way to look at it, is students can be asked to leave if they are being disruptive in calss, so this could be another example. The University needs to communicate clearly to the students what is expected of them.

from sjohnson to everyone:

My department head has addresses these concerns with both me and the faculty. Have the other department heads, deans not contacted their faculty, staff?

from Rachel Broussard to everyone:

I am high risk, so I will have to politely ask them to leave and tell them to call, email, or they can come back with a mask on.

from Andrea Eubanks to everyone:

Rachel, that is your right. We have discussed this about high risk faculty and they will need to work with their supervisor to be flexible.

from Andrea Eubanks to everyone:

Clear communication, which is not ATU's strength, needs to happen.

from sjohnson to everyone:

I'm high risk also and plan on protecting myself as best that i can. What others do or do not do is their business. As for me I will do my job as asked and make sure I just protect myself. We can not make others do anything they do not feel comfortable with. If they do not feel they need to wear a mask that's up to them.

from Andrea Eubanks to everyone:

That sounds great

from sjohnson to everyone:

Right now we all need to be working at keeping the University open so we can all have a job. If this means taking on more workload so be it. There are many who don't have a job at all.

from sjohnson to everyone:

I'm grateful that the University is working hard to keep all of our jobs and not just furloughing us all.

from sjohnson to everyone:

Thank you Ms. Hinkle and Dr. Bowen for all that you are doing.

from Angela Bell to everyone:

Yes, but once you show that your office can work without that person the position often gets taken away permanently.

from sjohnson to everyone:

Not necessarily. This is a very different situation. Other Univesities are furloughing staff for up to a year without asking them.

from sjohnson to everyone:

second