Staff Senate Minutes

September 2, 2020

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Brandi Duvall called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 10:00 am in Webex virtual online meeting.

**ROLL CALL Senators Present:**

**Senators Absent:**

**Visitor(s):**

Jon Clements (Faculty Senate) Jennifer Thomas (Ozark)

Dr. Linda Birkner Dr. David Eshelman

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the August 2020 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Rogers filed a motion to accept the minutes and record the meeting virtually. Senator Lutz seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

**Special Report**

Vice President Duvall noted Dr. Linda Birkner would be in attendance for today’s meeting. Dr. Birkner stated no update at this time. Early retirement information has been sent out. Budget information will coming in the near future as well. Hull is nearing its remodeling end. Started with a 10,000 square foot plan that changed to 17,500 square foot due to the demand of the users for a catering kitchen, restrooms were not adequate, large shower room (35 showers) not in use, and elevator installed. Finishes and floor coverings are last and the courtyard is nearing completion. Pictures will be sent out soon. There was a small chemical storage building on the south side of Hull that was going to either need a roof or be torn down. The cost for roofing was higher than the demolition. So, it has been demolishing during this renovation. Construction should warp up in early October, then furniture will be purchased and placed. Williamson was previously approved with SCM architects. Phase 1 included shoring of the front façade, selective demolition, salvaging of historic items, and some remediation inside. Phase 2 contains the reconstruction and is currently out for bid. That will be discussed in early October as to who to use, then reconstruction can begin. That will include replacement of the roof over the middle section, interior areas. The goal is to be completed by August 2021. The only hold up would be rain delays.

**Committee Reports**

* **President’s Communication –** Walter Branson is serving as the VP of Finance and Administration, until the position is filled permanently. Christina Stolarz, Director of HR, talked about retirement program, and the guidelines for that being 60 years old by December 31st, with 10 years continuous service at voluntary. No one at ATU can advise on that, do not make any recommendations. We need to be sure there is no conflict of interested between the employees and retirement. HLC update: November 9-10 visit planned. Final draft for the 2020 HLC assurance agreement and argument/evidence is available for a two-week review. That began August 24. COVID testing available for faculty/staff and students, they will bill your insurance after. There is a 24 hour turn around on that test. Please submit your service excellence requests so they can be recognized.
* **Budget Advisory –** No report
* **Green and Gold Cupboard –** No report
* **Scholarship –** No report
* **University Strategic Planning –** No report
* **Insurance Committee –** Dr. Clements noted that it is currently with Executive Council to review and make recommendations.
* **IT Prioritization and Impact** – Senator Crouch met on August 31st to go over actions made over the summer (CARES ACT). 3.5 million Federal dollars awarded toward increased resources for faculty/staff and students. Over 65% of the phones moved over to the VOIP system. Executive Council asked for risk assessment for the fall semester from an IT standpoint. High confidence on course delivery lectures, capture videos, delivery computing with the firewall, virtual desktop, access in the bell system, video conferencing, IT’s ability to work remotely, support of training and use of home devices. Some areas of concern were security, the taking home of papers and flash drives, using different devices, mixed technology instruction, and e-signatures.
* **University Communication Working Group –** No report
* **Campus Space and Utilization –** No report
* **Staff Awards –** No report
* **Institutional Effectiveness –** Vice President Duvall stated the feedback received from comments submitted will be prepared into a report and posted.

**Old Business**

*Staff Senate Survey*

Vice President Duvall will do some research on the timeline for the next survey.

*Daily Health Screenings*

Vice President Duvall asked if there was any feedback on problems. Senator Eubanks noted it asks you to take your temperature but does not have a place for you to insert that information. Vice President Duvall talk with the Health Center about getting that added to the online form.

**New Business**

*Staff Senate Elections*

Vice President Duvall stated the at-large position will be added into the main election. Call for volunteers to work on the election process. Senator Eubanks volunteered. Senator Eubanks noted there would 4-5 positions that need to be filled.

**Open Forum**

Vice President stated one employee reached out to ask about why they did not receive a raise and had heard it was being voted on by the Executive Council. Dr. Birkner noted the only raises discussed were the faculty promotion and tenue. If move information can be provided about that position/employee she can look further into the matter.

Dr. Eshelman stated Faculty Senate they will be revisiting the tuition waiver policy. Two things stand out as a concern: punitively written in terms of, if you take a class and you fail/audit/drop, you must pay back the money. That can easily be solved by saying if you fail/audit/drop you must take a year off before you can enroll in another course. The way it is setup now discourages people from taking courses. The other issue is there is no official appeal process. Students have a process but not faculty/staff. Staff Senate could create a committee for appeals or kick that to the division heads. Jeremy Schwehm, Chris Kellner is interested in helping. Dr. Eshelman asked for volunteers for to read the information and work on these changes. Senator Bishop noted there was a committee formed for Faculty/Staff Waivers that included the HR director and someone from Financial Aid, she advised reaching out to them too. Student Accounts review the appeals but that has been removed. Senator Eubanks stated she was part of the starting the review process and it was supposed to be passed to the appropriate Vice President and then they would have the final say. When the final version of the process came out that was removed. Reach out to Dr. Eshelman if you want to be involved. Vice President Duvall volunteer to serve.

**Announcements**

**Meeting Adjourned**

Senator Eubanks filed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Rogers seconded the motion. The Senate voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:29 am.

**Next Meeting**

October 7, 2020 @ 10:00 am in Webex virtual online meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karissa Webb, Secretary