



STAFF SENATE

Wednesday, November 2, 2016
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

President Collins called the Tech Staff Senate to order on Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 10:01 a.m. in Room 202 of Baswell Techionery.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Rachel Alexander	Margie Link
Sandra Anderson	Brittany Martin
Brandi Collins	Annie McNeely
Shawna Davis	Jeff Mumert
Andrea Eubanks	Jeff Nichols
Rhonda Fleming	Julia Pope
Lindelle Fraser	Heather Taylor
Tammy Guarino	Bettye Williamson
James Higgs	

Senators Absent:

Pam Cooper
Brittany Flippo
Tiffany Henry

Visitor(s):

Dr. Sean Huss, Associate Professor of Sociology and Faculty Senate, Chair
Jennifer Thomas, Ozark Campus Representative

On November 2, 2016, the minutes from the October, 5, 2016 meeting were distributed electronically and approved as corrected.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Sean Huss: Food Pantry, Because We Can, and Shared Governance
Faculty Senate Chair and lead organizer for the Because We Can Initiative, Dr. Sean Huss, visited the Staff Senate meeting to discuss the launch of a food pantry to benefit ATU students, faculty, and staff. The group hopes to complete a soft launch by Spring 2017. Presently, organizers are working to purchase coolers and renovate space designated for food pantry operations. At this time, Dr. Huss is eliciting support for a Holiday Food Drive. The collected items will be available to ATU students, faculty, and staff in need over the holiday season. A meeting will be held Friday, November 4th at 9:30 am in Dean 113. Senators were urged to reach out to their constituents in support of this effort.



Dr. Huss shared estimated numbers regarding the success of the Because We Can Food Recovery Program since its inception on January 13, 2016. He estimates over 16,000 pounds of food (roughly 74,000 servings) have been collected this year. Per a statement issued by Dr. Huss via email after the senate meeting, the Because We Can food recovery program has “collected just over 16,000 pounds of food since January 13th...[volunteers] are working on improving the estimation of our impact, so the 74,000 is a rough estimate based on what we see going out in pounds and the numbers we get from the pantries and missions. They get a lot of repeat business, so we haven’t really fed 74,000 individuals. We’ve just produced 74,000 servings of food that go out to people in need in our area...and there are a lot of people in need in our area.”

As chair for the Faculty Senate, Dr. Huss communicated the group’s desire to increase participation in shared governance at ATU. Dr. Huss asked senators to consider ways they might collaborate with Faculty Senate. On November 30th at 1:00 pm in the Doc Bryan Lecture Hall, the Faculty Senate is hosting a shared governance webinar delivered by the American Associate of University Professors (AAUP). Although many of the topics are faculty oriented, members of the Staff Senate are invited to participate.

Thank You for President Collins’ Service

In honor of her service to the Staff Senate, President Collins was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation. The senators wish to convey their deepest gratitude to President Collins for her leadership and hard work.

Election of Officers

The following nominations were received for officer positions:

President – Lindelle Fraser and Margie Link

Vice President – Shawna Davis

Secretary – ~~Brittany Martin~~, Tammy Guarino, Julia Pope

Reporter – Brittany Martin (Senator Martin declined nomination for the position of secretary upon receiving a nomination for reporter.)

A hand-written ballot and absentee ballot (phone and email submissions) were collected for the offices of president and secretary. The votes were counted and verified by President Collins and Vice President Williamson. The following officers were elected for the 2016-2017 term:

President – Lindelle Fraser

Vice President – Shawna Davis

Secretary – Julia Pope

Reporter – Brittany Martin



At this point in the meeting, new officers assumed their elected positions.

Tennis Courts

Senator McNeely brought forward a request from a representative about the university tennis courts. Prior to the new courts, public use was allowed, but now the new tennis courts are no longer available for public use. Recommendation was made to contact the athletic department for more information.

OLD BUSINESS

Safety Concerns

Senator Collins indicated that she was still waiting on a response from Josh McMillian, Chief of Campus Safety, and Heath Whorton, University Emergency Manager, regarding safety concerns from the August 2016 meeting.

Complaint about Water Quality in Brown Building

Senator Fleming gave an update on bottle filling stations in the new Brown Hall. Facilities Management reported back that the bottle filler station in Doc Bryan Student Services was purchased and installed by Student Government Association (or some student group). However, the upkeep for maintaining bottle filling stations by changing the filters monthly is a cost of \$100 per filter. As a result, it was decided not to install this type of bottle filling station in the future. Facilities Management confirmed that the water in the Brown Building meets current health department safety standards.

Sick Leave Cash-out

Senator Davis gave an overview on sick leave policies from other state colleges. Approximately ten, four-year colleges were used to collect data. Senator Davis indicated that the information was sent to Thomas Pennington, Legal Counsel. Results are listed below:

- 6 colleges have a sick leave cash-out policy for classified only employees
- 2 college have a sick leave cash-out policy for classified and non-classified employees
- 2 colleges did not respond

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Health Insurance

There were several comments/questions in regards to changes in the health insurance policy for all employees. Senator Collins and Senator Williamson represented the staff on the university insurance committee.

Senator McNeely asked how the insurance committee decided on the \$50,000 annual income cap for establishment of insurance premiums. Senator Williamson



told staff senate members and employees with questions to contact Brook Southard, Interim Director of Human resources.

Senator Higgs asked about the development of a state-wide university insurance consortium that was discussed in previous university staff meetings. Senator Williamson indicated that an insurance consortium would take a collaboration between all the different insurance companies, which is not likely, and that state regulations are not conducive to implementation. While there were several insurance companies who submitted bids, Blue Cross Blue Shield was the company with the lowest cost based on overall higher insurance claims over the past few years. Senator Williamson told staff senate members and employees with questions to contact Brook Southard, Interim Director of Human resources.

Senator Higgs asked about the one-time \$500 allowance for health savings plans. Senator Collins indicated that the university can't afford to continue the \$500 allowance annually.

Senator Collins pointed out that there is still one price for unlimited dependent coverage as part of the new insurance plans of which Tech is paying 10%. The question was raised as to the discrepancy in coverage for employees who do not have dependents.

Senator Pope voiced concern over the distribution of information regarding health insurance changes. While very appreciative of the administration's emphasis on transparency and shared governance, Senator Pope indicated that issues of such significance to the university community should not be posted on One-Tech for employees to interpret.

While precursory information about potential health insurance changes was mentioned in various university staff meetings and Staff Senate was represented by two senators on the health insurance committee, the university community was not prepared for a global announcement that many employees did not understand.

Many employees were already apprehensive about health insurance premium increases, especially as there have not been substantive changes in the health insurance policy in over 20 years. Initial conversations should have been had at the departmental or supervisory level prior to a global announcement on One-Tech.

Senator Pope suggested using Staff Senate as a facilitator in preparing employees for the announcement about health insurance changes once determined. While changes in health insurance are complicated in nature and it is impossible to accommodate every employee, having a little advance notice once the final decision was made could have gone a long way to manage an already challenging situation.



ARKANSAS TECH
UNIVERSITY

President Fraser indicated that she was meeting with President Bowen in the next few weeks and would express Staff Senate comments and concerns about health insurance changes.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Our next regular meeting will be Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Doc Bryan Senate Room 180.

ADJOURNMENT

President Fraser adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pope, Secretary

