

Staff Senate Minutes

March 6, 2019

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Lou Ann Reeves called the Arkansas Tech Staff Senate meeting to order on Wednesday, January 2, 2019 at 10:00 am in Doc Bryan Student Services Center 108.

**ROLLCALL Senators Present:**

Kelli Bates Angela Bell Michelle Bishop Pam Dixon

Brandi Duvall Andrea Eubanks Megan Green Dona Kirkpatrick Braxton Lay Chelsea Martin Marvin Mashburn Michelle McMinn

Lou Ann Reeves Tera Simpson Charity Smith Hope Vilavanh

Denise Wallis Karissa Webb

**Senators Absent:**

Josh Carey Chris Pearson

**Visitor(s):**

Dr. Jamie Earls Thomas Pennington

**Visitor Presentation**

Representing the Green & Gold Cupboard, Dr. Jamie Earls presented information about the Cupboard’s greatest needs, who uses the Cupboard, and information regarding donations. Dr. Earls stated that the areas of greatest need are Canned Chicken, Canned Fruit, Crunchy Peanut Butter, Cooking Oil, Sugar, Flour, Pasta, Ramen Noodles, and Boxed Meals. A full list of needs was given in a handout and can be found on the Green and Gold Cupboard’s [website](https://www.atu.edu/foodpantry/neededitems.php). Dr. Earls also reported that staff are the biggest demographic that use the Cupboard, and that sustainability is an issue for the organization. The organization can make great use of donated money because they have the ability to buy food at a more cost-effective rate than the average person. The Green and Gold Cupboard cannot accept expired food items.

Thomas Pennington, University Counsel, also addressed the Senate. Mr. Pennington stated that employees will now have the ability to anonymously submit instances of ethical violations to Human Resources and University Counsel. Mr. Pennington asked that submitted instances be specific to the violation, including check numbers or other details since attachments cannot be made in the form and it remain anonymous. Mr. Pennington stated that this initiative is part of our re-accreditation process with the Higher Learning Commission, specifically Criterion 5A. This initiative will go before the Board of Trustees at the May board meeting. Mr. Pennington requested that the Senate vote to approve the Ethics Policy as is.

Senator Martin moved to approve the Ethics Policy as is. Senator Kirkpatrick seconded the motion. The motion was voted on by the Senate and approved.

Mr. Pennington also requested that Staff Senate supply two Senators to sit on new committees being formed, one to review a Medical Marijuana policy and one to review a Free Speech policy.

Mr. Pennington stated that the Executive Council review of the Staff Handbook is proceeding and the Senate will have edits back to review soon.

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the February 6, 2019 meeting were distributed electronically to the Senate and at the meeting. Senator McMinn filed a motion to accept the minutes and Senator Martin seconded the motion. The Senate voted to approve the minutes.

**Committee Reports**

* Scholarship Committee – No Report
* Insurance Committee – No Report
* Official Function Committee – No Report
* President’s Communication Committee –
  + All Senators have reviewed the notes that President Reeves distributed electronically following the most recent meeting of the President’s Communication Committee
* Budget Advisory Committee –
  + President Reeves reported that there would be a $4.3 million budget cut for this fiscal year. Most of that cut was made in the fall, but some will still be cut from this spring.
  + The administration is looking at additional salary savings and will maintain the current reserve, rather than adding funds to that account.
  + The Budget Advisor Committee asks offices to be conservative with their budgets for the remainder of the fiscal year.

**Old Business**

President Reeves asked the Senate to report on the feedback they had received from their areas regarding the Staff Update done by Dr. Bowen every semester. The feedback was:

* Host the update after the 11th class day so offices aren’t as busy and it is easier for more staff to attend
* Host the meetings earlier or later so they do not run into lunch hours

President Reeves reported on issues surrounding the internal hiring policy being explored by the Senate. President Reeves stated that diversity improvements have been made due to the current hiring practices and therefore the internal hiring policy will not be changed. Senator Lay asked what the diversity goal was for the university and President Reeves stated that was unknown at this time.

President Reeves asked the Senate for a motion to disband the Internal Hiring Sub-committee.

Senator Web moved to disband the Internal Hiring Sub-committee. Senator Bishop seconded the motion. The motion was voted on by the Senate and approved.

President Reeves reported that she had submitted the proposal from Staff Senate to pave the walkway between the Public Safety/Caraway/Browning parking lot and Brown Hall. President Reeves has not yet received a response to that proposal.

President Reeves opened the floor for discussion of the Faculty/Staff Tuition Waiver. In the course of the discussion it was noted that Senators appointed to serve on Standing Committees often roll off of Staff Senate in the middle of serving on a Standing Committee. It was noted by the Senate that research needs to be done to determine the need and scope for a bylaw amendment concerning this transition of Senators and reporting back to the Senate body from Standing Committees. During this discussion it was also noted that the Tuition Waiver due date is not in line with other drop dates expected of students. It was determined that more information is needed regarding the Tuition Waiver before a motion can be made to move the due date of the Tuition Waiver.

President Reeves presented her findings to the Senate regarding the growth of the total number of staff since the founding of the staff senate. It was determined by the Senate that the number of staff had grown sufficiently to require an amendment to the Staff Senate constitution increasing the number of Staff Senators from 20 to 21 to ensure proper representation of the Russellville Campus Staff.

Senator Vilavanh moved to accept President Reeves’ count of current Russellville Campus staff. Senator Martin seconded the motion. The Senate voted on the motion and the motion was approved.

Senator Martin moved to amend the Staff Senate Constitution to state that the number of Staff Senators shall be 21. Senator Lay seconded the motion. The Senate voted on the motion and the motion was approved.

President Reeves tabled the discussion and voting on constituency redistribution in a 21 senator model until the June Staff Senate meeting.

**New Business:**

President Reeves reported on the research and development from the Staff Senate Constitution & Bylaws Committee. The Committee brought a resolution to the Senate to consider an amendment to the Staff Senate Constitution editing the Staff Senate Mission.

The proposed Mission Statement reads: “The mission of the Staff Senate is to represent the Arkansas Tech University Russellville Campus’ staff to university administration.”

Senator Bishop moved to accept the proposed mission statement as is. Senator Kirkpatrick seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and the motion was approved.

President Reeves, on behalf of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee also brought forward a resolution to amend the Staff Senate Constitution by adding a Function Statement.

The proposed Function Statement reads: “The function of the Staff Senate is to represent the Russellville Campus staff:

1. Acting as an advisory body to the President
2. Initiating or reviewing policies and programs affecting the welfare of the staff and university
3. Serving as the staff committee on committees for the selection of staff member for university standing committees
4. Recognizing staff excellence”

Senator McMinn moved to approve the proposed Function Statement as is. Senator Martin seconded the motion. The Senate voted on the motion and the motion was approved.

President Reeves sought feedback from the Senate regarding a Food Drive for the Green and Gold Cupboard for the Spring or Summer semester. President Reeves proposed a giving campaign through the ATU Foundation. Senator Green volunteered to speak with the Office of Advancement to get their giving calendar to make sure we don’t overlap with other giving campaigns.

Senator Smith moved to do a Staff Senate-sponsored giving campaign to benefit the Green & Gold Cupboard in the spring semester. Senator Wallis seconded the motion. The motion was voted on by Senate and the motion was approved.

President Reeves reported on the outcomes of the Great Colleges to Work For survey. The identified issues passed along to us by administration are:

* Senior Leadership communicating openly
* Senior Leadership provides clear direction

President Reeves called for feedback on these issues. The Senate provided the following feedback from their areas:

* Offices are no longer able to have staff meetings during work hours due to having to keep the office open and stagger their workforce
* Items are announced on the news website or social media without being communicated to the staff and faculty internally beforehand
* Staff would like Senior Leadership to provide the strategy behind decisions and explain why things are the way they are
* Staff would like actions to align with words from Senior Leadership and noted that the use of buzzwords and jargon often lead to a lack of understanding

**Announcements**

Staff Cookout is May 23. Senators are to get feedback from their areas regarding what activities they would like to see at the cookout.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

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

**Next Meeting:**

April 3, 2019, @ 10:00 am in Doc Bryan 180

Respectfully submitted,

Tera Simpson, Secretary