

Staff Senate Minutes

May 1, 2019

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Lou Ann Reeves called the Arkansas Tech Staff Senate meeting to order on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 10:00 am in Doc Bryan Student Services Center 108.

**ROLLCALL Senators Present:**

Angela Bell Josh Carey Pam Dixon Brandi Duvall

Andrea Eubanks Megan Green Braxton Lay Chelsea Martin

Marvin Mashburn Lou Ann Reeves Tera Simpson Charity Smith

Hope Vilavanh Denise Wallis Karissa Webb

**Senators Absent:**

Kelli Bates Michelle Bishop Dona Kirkpatrick Chris Pearson

Michelle McMinn

**Visitor(s):**

Thomas Pennington Matt Fraser Rebecca Lacava Sara Bailey

**Visitor Presentations**

Rebecca Lacava visited the Senate to represent Human Resources and report that Blue Cross & Blue Shield is moving the dental card to an MOV number. Each member of a family that is covered by the policy will receive a dental card. Please update your address with Human Resources to ensure that you receive your family’s new cards. Human Resources can also assist with requesting new cards and printing temporary cards. If you have issues or questions regarding your cards, please contact Human Resources.

Matt Fraser visited the Senate on behalf of a Leadership Tech group that is doing a recycling-based project. The project intends to build upon the current Recycling Committee’s work by adding recycling support for administrative and educational buildings. This project is still in the planning process. Mr. Fraser requested that the Senate communicate this information to their constituents and that anyone interested in this project can contact him.

Thomas Pennington visited the Senate to report on the work of the Free Speech Committee, Medical Marijuana Committee, and Handbook Committee.

*Free Speech Committee*

Mr. Pennington presented the Senate with a revised draft version of the Free Speech policy that has been edited to comply with Arkansas Act 184. Under Act 184, all outside areas on campus that are freely accessible to the public will be considered free speech zones. Mr. Pennington asked the senators to review the draft policy and asked the Senate to vote on it in the June Senate meeting. The policy is anticipated to go before the Board of Trustees at the August board meeting. Senator Carey asked Mr. Pennington how this policy would affect speech such as stickers on doors. Mr. Pennington answered that employees cannot use state property to support political candidates or to display political communication. Mr. Pennington gave an example of an executive order signed by Governor Mike Huckabee that made it so that vehicles bearing political stickers, decals, or other communication could not be reimbursed for mileage by state employees.

*Medical Marijuana Committee*

Committee will meet tomorrow, May 2, 2019.

*Handbook Committee*

The committee has met and is considering recent changes made to the handbook draft. The committee is expecting to receive the 100 and 700 set of policies from Human Resources and will review them upon receipt.

*Official Function Committee*

Committee will meet once some of the other committees have finished their tasks.

Mr. Pennington concluded his report by thanking the Senate for its work during the 2018-2019 school year.

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the April 3, 2019 meeting were distributed electronically to the Senate and at the meeting. Senator Carey made a clarification to the Insurance Committee report concerning the role of the committee in choosing an insurance advisor. Senator Martin filed a motion to accept the minutes with Senator Carey’s clarification added and Senator Duvall seconded the motion. The Senate voted to approve the amended minutes. The amended minutes can be found in the April 3, 2019 minutes at <https://www.atu.edu/staffsenate/minutes.php>

**Committee Reports**

* **Official Function Committee** – No Report
* **Insurance Committee** – Senator Carey reported that the committee had narrowed down the insurance advisory firms to two and Executive Council chose Stevens .
* **Scholarship Committee** – No Report
* **Awards Committee** – No Report
* **Elections Committee** – No Report
* **Constitution & Bylaws Committee** –No Report
* **Staff Handbook Committee** – President Reeves reported that the committee will meet again after the Human Resources policies are received.
* **Medical Marijuana Committee** – Vice President Eubanks reported that the committee will meet tomorrow, May 2, 2019.
* **Free Speech Committee** – Secretary Simpson reported that the committee met on April 30, 2019, and made edits to the existing Free Speech policy. The committee determined to adjust the policy to one of Free Expression. Thomas Pennington brought the draft policy to the Senate for review.

**Old Business**

*Green and Gold Cupboard*

President Reeves opened the floor for discussion of a tabled item from the last meeting. The Senate discussed doing a food drive for the Green and Gold Cupboard. Senator Smith volunteered to chair the committee with Senator Bell and Senator Green volunteering to serve. Senator Smith will present more on this initiative at the June Staff Senate meeting.

*Faculty Staff Tuition Waiver*

President Reeves re-visited an item from the April Staff Senate meeting concerning the Faculty/Staff Tuition Waiver policy. At the April meeting the Senate voted to move the due date for the waiver to the 11th class day. After additional information was gathered, President Reeves recognized Senator Smith to give a report on the information.

Senator Smith reported that the new version of the Faculty/Staff Tuition Waiver included a policy for classes failed or dropped after the 80% reduction deadline. The new policy states that those covered by the waiver be required to pay back the full amount of the waiver upon dropping a class after the 80% reduction deadline or failure of the course. The old waiver policy did not require those covered by the waiver to pay back the amount of the waiver for dropped or failed courses.

Senator Bell noted that this could create undue financial burden on employees due to unforeseen circumstances requiring employees or dependents to withdraw from class. Senator Bell suggested allowing three grace withdrawals before requiring the full amount of course be paid back.

Vice President Eubanks asked if the committee still meets to make edits to the policy. President Reeves answered that she did not believe the committee still met.

Secretary Simpson filed a motion to revisit the Faculty/Staff Tuition Waiver and form a sub-committee to suggest edits. Senator Duvall seconded the motion. The motion was voted on by the Senate and approved. The sub-committee was formed and Senators Smith, Duvall, Webb, and Reeves volunteered to serve.

*Staff Survey Summary*

President Reeves reported that the Staff survey received over 100 responses and provided useful feedback for the Senate. An overview of the quantitative survey report was distributed to the senators. The qualitative portion is still being reviewed and categorized.

Feedback indicated that Staff Senate elections are difficult to navigate and confusing for voters. The Elections Committee will work to address this for the next Staff Senate election.

Feedback indicated that Staff Senators need to communicate more effectively with their constituents. President Reeves encouraged senators to reach out to their constituents and provide a report of each meeting. In addition, the Senate will now be posting draft minutes on the website so employees do not have to wait a month to see what was discussed at Senate meetings. It was also reiterated that the Staff Senate meetings are open to the public and staff are encouraged to attend. The time and location are posted on the home page of the Staff Senate website: [www.atu.edu/staffsenate](http://www.atu.edu/staffsenate)

**New Business:**

No new business.

**Open Forum**

Senator Duvall reported that a staff member had asked her why the Strategic Planning committee has not posted meeting minutes since January. The staff member also asked how membership for campus committees were chosen because it appears as though there is not a clear method for choosing membership on these committees. She also reported that she had been made aware of employees who worry that the increased focus on diversity and inclusion will lead to an environment of hostility toward non-minority employees. Senator Duvall reported that staff had noted that not all campus committee have a place to post minutes of their meetings and for employees to review who serves on those committees.

Senator Vilavahn asked President Reeves about the status of the Senate’s request to pave the walkway between the Public Safety parking lot and Brown Hall. President Reeves reported that she will ask at her next meeting with Ms. Hinkle.

Senator Green reported that a staff member had asked about summer hours. Senator Duvall reported that she had received negative feedback regarding reduced or staggered hours because it would heavily affect the ability of employees to take multiple days off in a row due to staggered coverage. President Reeves stated that she would bring this issue up to Dr. Mary Gunter at their next meeting.

Senator Lay requested more information from President Reeves regarding the 1% COLA in the current FY20 budget. President Reeves stated that bonuses would not be a part of this current budget scenario as it appears now.

**Announcements**

Staff Cookout is May 22 at 11:30am – 1:30pm in Tucker Coliseum. Executive Council will be serving hotdogs, chips, and drinks.

Dr. Johnson, the new Vice President for Academic Affairs will be on campus May 22 and 23. Welcome her if you see her.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Senator Martin filed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Web seconded the motion. The Senate voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:31am.

**Next Meeting:**

June 5, 2019, @ 10:00 am in Doc Bryan 180

Respectfully submitted,

Tera Simpson, Secretary