

Staff Senate Minutes
February 5, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

President Charity Smith called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday, February 5, 2020 at 10:00 am in Doc Bryan Student Service Center 180.

ROLL CALL Senators Present:

Lydia Rogers	Angela Bell	Teresa Lutz	Susan Johnson
Rachel Broussard	Amber Meeks	Kaitlin Ennis	Judy Crouch
Karissa Webb	Brittany Reves	Andrea Eubanks	Brandi Duvall
Charity Smith	Shelly Handley	Michelle Bishop	Kelli Bates

Senators Absent:

Alan Parsons	Chris Pearson	Mervin Vergara	Belinda Martin
Alisha Williams			

Visitor(s):

Dr. David Eshelman	Janet Lee	Jennifer Thomas	Bernadette Hinkle
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Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the January 9, 2019 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Bishop filed a motion to accept the minutes. Senator Bates seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

EC Liaison Update

- Bernadette Hinkle reported a mobile kitchen was being delivered to 404 El Paso for the Hospitality Department use on the lunch/dinner series. Please avoid the parking lot until the unit is completed.
- Williamson has remained untouched since the fire. A contract is pending for architects to begin work on the East side of the building. Projected reopening for fall 2021.
- Hull project renovation has begun. The pool will be filled and turned into a temporary Student Union. The space will later be utilized as a large event space for the University.

Committee Reports

- **President's Communication** – minutes sent with February Staff Senate reminder e-mail
- **Budget Advisory** –
 - President Smith will provide minutes once those are updated; was unable to attend meeting herself.
 - Senator Eubanks wanted more details about the Budget Advisory Committee. Mrs. Hinkle mentioned Henderson States policy regarding student debt. Henderson State allowed \$4800 balances to be rolled over to the next semester, however they let it go past that amount. Henderson State had less than 15 days' worth of cash, they could not make payroll. Tech has a policy of \$500 balances that can be rolled over into the next

semester, then if unpaid they turn them over to collections. Tech participates in the State Income Tax Refund being used to pay back debt owed.

- Fee changes were recommended.
 - Athletics Fee – not a University priority
 - Hang Tag increase – pulled out because due to construction on campus, not right to charge more when less parking will be available. (Williamson/Hull)
 - Career Services – popular with students but Dr. Johnson pulled it for discussions
 - Technology Fee – Ken Wester says the need is there but the committee is unsure
 - Graduate Student Activity Fee – strongly recommended but divide it between undergraduate and graduate.
- **Scholarship** – President Smith read back a thank you from the Faculty/Staff award recipient, Tonya Curtis.
- **University Strategic Planning** – No report
- **Insurance Committee** – Senator Bell reported the committee is still in the research phase with The Stephens Group. If no changes are made to the University Insurance, you can expect to see an increase due to still being in a deficient. Bob Freeman is stepping down as chair of the committee and Laury Fiorello has filled the chair position. President Smith inquired about the % change to be expected. Senator Bell stated it would be 10-15% that is on track for what the increases have been in the past. The committee is looking into other options, more feedback will be provided, should the committee move that direction.
- **IT Prioritization and Impact** – Senator Bates reported a need for a Matrix and Technology budget. A Matrix is a grid to store/save data. There is some pushback on who would pay. Senator Bates welcomed anyone to reach out to her on the meeting minutes.
- **University Communication Working Group** – President Smith thanked all those who filled out the communication survey. The committee is pleased with the 273 people who completed the survey to 100%. A subcommittee has been formed to look over the data and provide feedback on improving communication on campus.
- **Campus Space and Utilization** – President Smith reported the committee will be turned into the Institutional Efficiency Committee, meetings to come. Senator Bell wants to know the goal of the group. President Smith clarified Dr. Bowen's campus meeting last month addressed the use of the committee. The University is anticipating a decline in enrollment and the effect it will have on the institution, how it can be offset and revenue changes.
- **Green and Gold Cupboard** – Senator Reves reported working with Lou Ann Reeves, Dr. Jenkins, and Dr. Jamie Stacey to meet and look around the facility. Looking into way to help/run shifts. Flyer routes are used in Student Services, it was proposed that more flyers be used to promote the Green and Gold Cupboard. Senator Reves suggested doing more food drives but the cupboard does not want to water down the drives they currently promote.

Old Business

Energy Policy

President Smith will follow up with Jonathan Collins once he has attended the Faculty Senate this month.

New Business

Special Election

President Smith received a resignation letter from Mervin Vergara, effective Friday, February 7th. A special election will be held for a Senator to represent Administration and Finance. The elections committee is comprised of Senators Eubanks, Reves, Meeks, Ennis, and Broussard, along with Vice President Duvall.

HLC See yellow Mission/Vision slips

President Smith reported the HLC will be on campus November 9-10, 2020. Visitors with HLC can stop anyone on campus and ask them how their job correlates with the Universities mission or vision. In an order to be prepared, please look at having an elevator pitch about the ways you can relate your job. President Smith provided the example of her work in Financial Aid relating to student access. Financial Aid provides access to student funding. If you are unsure on how to relate your job to the mission or vision, reach out to your supervisor or co-workers and work together.

VISION STATEMENT

Adopted October 19, 2016

Arkansas Tech University: where students succeed, innovation thrives, and communities flourish.

OUR MISSION

Adopted October 19, 2016

Arkansas Tech University is dedicated to student success, access, and excellence as a responsive campus community providing opportunities for progressive intellectual development and civic engagement. Embracing and expanding upon its technological traditions, Tech inspires and empowers members of the community to achieve their goals while striving for the betterment of Arkansas, the nation, and the world.

Open Forum

Senator Johnson inquired about the insurance questions asked about last meeting. President Smith stated that was not a Staff Senate matter due to the nature of the issue; it is a personal matter between the employees and HR regarding their personal insurance.

Dr. Eshelman stressed the importance of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. They are working on keeping the University from becoming Henderson State. The committee is formed by higher up's, talking theoretically about lower paying jobs. Recommended that Faculty/Staff Senate take a special watch for each other's jobs. It would be better to shuffle people into other open positions, than cut job positions. He gets the impression Staff Senate feels unempowered. Dr. Eshelman recommends looking at University of Arkansas and North Illinois Universities Staff Senates for effective methods. The Staff Senate purview is less clear than Faculty Senate (Academics), so come up with one, possibly procedures. President Smith suggested we find our purpose and make it clear.

Senator Bishop mentioned Mrs. Hinkle should consider the high turnover and if there is a plan for retention of Tech employees. The numbers do not look good; there is an average of 11 people per month leaving the University. Senator Duvall responded that is hard to keep employees at entry level jobs. They want to move up, so it creates a revolving door. Senator Duvall suggests hiring from within would be the most beneficial. President Smith stated Human Resources would need to work with Mrs.

Hinkle or the new Human Resources director, once hired about those numbers. This is not something Staff Senate is equipped to handle. If you have an idea regarding this topic send it to Senator Bishop or President Smith.

Senator Meeks brought forth a co-workers suggestion about a change to working four 10-hour days (office staff five days still). President Smith replied that there is a flex-schedule trial being tested. It depends on your department and reach out to your supervisor regarding that request. This is not an area for Staff Senate to review. Senator Eubanks stated this was not previously supported by Dr. Bowen for the flex hour scheduling. Senator Rogers stated the initiative is from a Leadership Tech cohort mission/project, and it is interesting that previous requests for flex-schedules were not supported by Dr. Bowen. Senator Bishop asked if anyone was aware of the outcome from this project. President Smith offered to find out the target end date.

President Smith provided the following questions, along with the answers, submitted via the feedback form on the Staff Senate website.

Q: Why is it at the wellness office they will not check a staff member blood pressure? How about getting an auto chair to do this if they can't? (My message included: That was a direct copy and paste from the message I received. My general understanding is that right now the Health & Wellness Center will only treat students is due to the fee that students already pay so that service is included for them. Whereas with an employee, we do not pay a fee and I am sure there is some legal aspects of why employees are not treated. Aside from the fee, can you "dig a little deeper" for me on a reason that I am sure you have given time and time again. I know this is probably a frequent question and issue, so I appreciate your time in addressing it once again. Also, please note the question about the auto-check chair.)

A. Brandye Bisek – Director of Health Services

1. The student health fee. Faculty/staff do not pay this fee and students do.
2. When we put a faculty/staff member in a nurse slot for blood pressure, it pulls them away from the Nurse Practitioner that they are working with. We have two Nurse Practitioners and two Nurses that are with them all day. The Nurse collects vital signs, medication list, medical history, do strep test, urine tests, etc. while the provider is seeing the last patient. If we have a student needing an allergy injection or flu shot it pulls the nurse away already. We are short staffed already. We are trying to hire another nurse just to triage the students we are having to turn away each day. This will allow us to check on these students so that we do not turn away someone really needing to be seen.
Hence, it takes up a slot that we could be giving to a student. By 9 am each day our entire schedule is booked for the day. We used to have more availability and could slide in other things but we can't anymore. We are having to turn students away every day.
3. Liability. If we check someone's blood pressure and it is elevated we are then responsible for being sure that person gets in somewhere for follow up. If it is high, the person could be at risk for a stroke. That takes time and since we do not see faculty/staff here, we cannot offer the kind of care and follow up that the Nurse Practitioner feel is appropriate. The auto check chair still sets us up for liability as we are a health clinic.

I know this isn't what is preferred, but Wal-Mart, Wal-Greens and Target sell blood pressure machines that one can use to check their blood pressure daily if needed. They are around \$40 and can be bought via a faculty/staff HSA if a provider writes a prescription for one.

I hope that one day we can see faculty and staff and I think that will happen eventually. I want to help them out and hate that we are limited. Unfortunately, we have to put our student's needs first and that

is why we had to make the decision to stop doing blood pressure checks and allergy injections for staff/faculty.

Q: I wanted to see if we could get the parking pot holes between Brown and Caraway fixed. It would make coming to and from work that much easier and the flow of traffic better. Instead you have people who wait so they can go on the clear side.

A: Brian Lasey

I do plan to add some gravel that will help but the ultimate fix will include digging that area out, improving the drainage and adding new asphalt in both lots. Anything other than gravel has been delayed as that route is being considered for the construction traffic for the Tech Plaza/ rec center building. Once that construction project is completed, or a new route selected we can add serious improvements to that lot to the long term parking maintenance plan.

Q: - I would like someone to ask Dr. Bowen who is benefiting from Salary savings. Departments & more importantly STAFF are suffering because positions are not being filled. Where is this money going and who is benefiting? And can you please let us know when we can expect it to stop.

A: Mrs. Hinkle stated the University has seen a decline in revenue for the last four years. This is mainly due to Arkansas challenges in demographics. Arkansas averages 40% of high school students are going to college, the national average is 68%. The University is working on a plan so we do not have to cut pay like over Arkansas Universities. Last year Tech's budget cut was 4.5 million, 1.2 million was empty/unfilled positions but budgeted. Those positions are no longer held. The goal is to regain those positions but in reality no one is benefiting. Already seeing a decline in fall enrollment. Last fall a process was established by the Executive Council that all vacant positions had to ask to be filled. Mission critical positions were approved. Executive Council has changed that to a subcommittee called the Position Review Committee comprised of Dr. Mary Gunter, Director of Human Resources, Mrs. Hinkle, and Dr. Barbara Johnson. Waiting on the drop for non-payment date (February 18) to see where we stand this semester. There are currently three open positions, but since the pay is competitive they have been open for an extended period of time. President Smith inquired about when and how often the Position Review Committee meets. Mrs. Hinkle stated the committee was meeting as needed. She is aware the committee needs to review positions such as custodial services, payroll and athletics. Senator Johnson inquired about cutbacks, heard that Administrative Assistants could be let go in the budget cuts and replaced with Graduate Assistants or student workers. Mrs. Hinkle said she has not heard that as an option. The University is projecting the next ten years there will be a decrease in enrollment to mimic 2007. (12,000 students now but that could drop to 8,000) However, Time Out for Tech participants show to be up, as well as 2020-2021 housing applications. Dr. Eshelman stated the Admin rumor was an old rumor.

Q: I would like to comment on the looks of the campus. We have, overall, a beautiful campus, lots of trees, open spaces, etc. However, there is one VERY distracting visual image that presents itself as you walk across campus. That is the muddy tracks through the grassy areas left by FAMA and Student Services side-by-sides and golf carts. There is a well-worn path going along the sidewalk in front of the old Roush Hall location. Today I saw tracks in front of the BC Brown building and another set south of McEver. We have hundreds of prospective students and their parents who will be on campus next week and what kind of impression do they get from a campus community who doesn't care to keep their campus clean and tidy? I know that, if I were bringing my high school student here for the first time that seeing these muddy tracks all over campus would be a minus in my decision making. It's bad enough

that we can't keep the students from wearing paths in the grass around the library, University employees should not be contributing to the "uglification" of campus.

A: This was sent to Brian Lasey (no response at this time)

Announcements

Senator Duvall reported the Registrar will be short staffed at graduation this spring. The dates are May 8-9, 2020. If you would be interested in working for comp time, reach out to Senator Duvall or the Registrar's Office.

Meeting Adjourned

Senator Bell filed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Eubanks seconded the motion. The Senate voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:15am.

Next Meeting

March 4, 2020 @ 10:00 am in Doc Bryan 180

Respectfully submitted,
Karissa Webb, Secretary