

## Staff Senate Minutes

May 2, 2024

### CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Connie Herring called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday May 2, 2024 at 9:02 a.m. in a hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual online meeting.

### ROLL CALL

#### Senators Present:

Peggy Ayers  
Bethany Brown  
Rachel Broussard  
Deidra Dillard  
Slade Dupuy

Connie Herring  
Kim Hilliard  
Kacie Lopez  
Katie Hook  
Amber Jacimore

Whitney Moore  
Tanda Morrison  
Tammy Rye  
Miranda Senn  
Scott Tomlin

#### Senators Absent:

Sabrina Anwar  
Julie Ennis

Krystal Manning  
Cody Neal

Kristian Thompson

#### Visitor(s):

Amber Meeks  
Andrea Eubanks  
Angela Westbrook  
Ashley Bryant  
Brittany Rotenbury  
Eric Rector  
Kaylin Telford

Kim McKown  
Kimberly Turner  
Kristie Moore  
Leigh Hill  
Michelle Price  
Shanteal Scott  
Victoria Tomlin

### **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the April 4, 2024 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Hilliard filed a motion to accept the minutes. Senator Ayers seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

### **Special Guest**

VP Dr. Adolfo Santos and Suzanne McCall

### **Special Report**

For this meeting we invited Dr. Santos on to be able to introduce himself. Dr. Santos joined our Tech family in March as the VP of Academic Affairs. Dr. Santos was previously in an Assistant Provost role at Texas A&M University. During his time at Texas A&M, he helped start a campus that started with about 39 students and increased to almost 300 before his departure. Before his time in Texas, he was Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at Georgia Gwinnett College. However, he started his higher education career at the University of Houston.

With all of that said, Dr. Santos spoke about how thrilled he was to be joining us at ATU. He said that everyone has been so nice and overall, so committed to our university. He thinks that will be instrumental to this upcoming year as we develop a new strategic plan. He said that there will be committees formed soon to start the development of that plan and that he also has ideas of his own. However, he mentioned what he thinks is the most important step, will be to get input, feedback, and collaboration from our faculty, staff, students, the community, and hopefully, putting all of that together we will find our next strategic plan that will guide our institution into the future.

Dr. Santos is hoping to bolster our academic programs and maybe even develop some sort of mentoring program for our students so that we may retain them more effectively. This way, they feel, from the very beginning, that they have champions among our faculty and staff. He is also hoping to develop opportunities for our faculty to reinvent themselves in ways that might help with the broader community, outside of the classrooms.

Dr. Santos said that one of our problems he hopes to solve or at least aid in, is our declining enrollment numbers. While this is certainly not unique to ATU, he believes we have an advantage and possibly have access to some growing segments of the population. As he mentioned in his interview, one demographic he is hoping to grow at ATU, is the Hispanic population. However, that is not the only enrollment growth he is wanting to see. He has been diving into our, fairly large, number of international student numbers and he believes there is an opportunity for growth there as well.

One of Dr. Santos' favorite things about Tech is the culture of hospitality and generosity of spirit and kindness that he has seen. He would love to see us hold onto that as much as possible, and part of this is being able to provide support to our staff so that they are successful. He understands that the past few years have been challenging while navigating our financial constraints. However, he believes there is plenty of room to allow us to work together to move forward to grow and prosper.

Next, we had Suzanne McCall speak in Laury Fiorello's absence. She wanted to remind us that summer hours start on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Office hours will be Monday through Thursday 8am-5pm and Friday 8am-12pm. Make sure your offices have coverage while we are open. Speak with your supervisor on how you'd like

to navigate your schedule to still get 40 hours in. Which Wich is closing May 10<sup>th</sup> with Taco for Life renovations can start shortly after. The deadline for performance evaluations have come and gone but there are individuals who have not completed that yet. Suzanne mentioned that you are still asked to go ahead and get those completed so that they can be filed.

Summer projects have been approved by the board of trustees so we will start seeing those take place as students go home. One of those projects is with the chiller. There is a little bit of a lead time with that as we get new parts in but we do have someone onsite trying to get the temperatures down. We may see more issues pop up over the next few weeks as the temperatures climb. However, we are hoping it won't be long before we get the chiller worked out. We actually have been having staff sit with the chiller overnight even to keep an eye on it until the problem is resolved. Thank you FAMA staff for doing what you can to keep us cool!

Doc Bryan will be getting some exterior cleaning, Crabaugh is signed up for some exterior painting, and Doc Bryan is also getting a replacement chiller system as well. The board also approved some OIS upgrades. There will be 17 lab upgrades, which includes 275 computer systems and up to 6 new presentation and control systems in our classrooms.

Lastly, Suzanne mentioned that they are trying to get everything entered into the budget system to hopefully be able to reach out to everyone at the middle to end of next week to let them know to go in and check all of the inputted information and ensure it's accuracy.

### **Senate Discussion**

We have 4 senators rolling off. Our June meeting will be our last meeting with Julie Ennis, Tammy Rye, Deidre Dillard, and Krystal Manning. July will be our first meeting with our new officers and new senators. With the members that are rolling off and with the new positions we were granted, we will need a total of 8 new senators. We will hold elections until Wednesday May 8<sup>th</sup> and will hold elections after that if more individuals accept nominations than we have positions. If elections occur, they will be held via Blackboard to allow for everything to be anonymous.

Thank you to everyone that helped organize and/or attended the Staff Senate Luncheon. It was wonderful to be able to get together and enjoy each other's company while also recognizing our inaugural Staff Senate Award winners.

### **Committee Updates:**

- Budget Advisory
  - Hasn't meet again yet so no update
- Campus Space & Utilization
  - No update
- Emergency Management & Safety
  - No update
- Access and Equity Committee
  - No update
- International Travel Advisory Council
  - No update
- Technology Prioritization
  - No update

- Insurance, Benefits, & Wellness
  - We are still going over some items for the wellness program we are wanting to introduce on campus. Melissa and Angela from HR are wanting to join our next meeting since they will have met with Healthcare 360 and will have more information on it to discuss.
- Presidential Communication
  - Suzanne really touched on the majority of the big things that were discussed. Senator Herring said she really encourages everyone to watch it on the last Tuesday of every month at 3:30

**Concerns & Questions brought to Staff Senate**

I would like for working hours to change. We could still do summer hours but once that is over, I would like to see us shift to closing offices at 3pm on Fridays but everyone still works their 40 hours a week.	Dr. Jones got an answer on this. He is unable to change working hours on his own. However, if individuals would like to propose an alternative schedule, they can fill out a flexible work arrangement request to adjust their working hours.
The air in Browning has been off and the repair has been on hold. With warmer temperatures coming, we are worried about the temperatures inside climbing as well.	The part for this has been ordered and came in. The repair was made on April 22 <sup>nd</sup> so you should see temperatures returning to normal. Employees are encouraged to reach out to FAMA directly if you have questions about the status of a repair.

**Meeting Adjourned**

At 9:35 am Senator Ayers made a motion to adjourn, and Senator Hilliard seconded. Vice President Herring concluded the May 2, 2024 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Whitney Moore, Secretary