Staff Senate Minutes
October 1, 2026
RCB 355 and online

Welcome and Call to Order
President Melissa South called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday, October 1, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in a hybrid in-person and Webex virtual meeting and established quorum.

ROLL CALL
SENATORS PRESENT:

Hailey Addison	Kate Darr	Annie McNeely	Giselle Torres
Amy Anderson	Nichole Edwards	Austin Norman	
Joceline Argueta	Andrea Eubanks	Cody Parsons	
Megan Bell	Bonnie Freeman	Cesiley Rideau	
Jenna Bradley	Amanda Gardner	Nick Schluterman	
Madisyn Chance	Traci Halsted	Melissa South	
Lillyann Copeland	Connie Herring	Scott Tomlin	

SENATORS ABSENT:

Shelly Hall	Piper Orio-Dettling	Zachary Turney

VISITORS:

Brooklyn Bahena	Wendy Condley	Justin Keller	Tammy Rye
Harley Bell	Erin Conrad	Cara Knight	Lyndsay Scallion
Mary Billings	Pam Cooper	Daniel Land	Shanteal Scott
Andrea Brewer	Ilona Davidson	Chelsea Martin	Alexis Scrimshire
Dalton Brock	Shawna Davis	Kathleen Martin	Jayne Sewell
Rachel Broussard	Brent Drake	Melody Mayo	Kara Smith
Bethany Brown	Slade Dupuy	Kim McKown	Jamie Stacy
Marcia Brown	Brandi Duvall	Amber Meeks	Kim Tate
Ashley Bryant	Jennifer Fleming	Whitney Moore	Jennifer Taylor
Timothy Caldwell	Alexandra Flores-Lemus	Joey Morton	William Titsworth
Sean Carnahan	Stacy Galbo	Melanie Ewing	Elizabeth Underwood
Janet Carnahan-Lee	Hollie Gillispie	Michelle Price	Michelle Vardeman
James Carter	Kristi Higgs	Caitlin Nichols	Alisa Waniewski
Carly Chance	Susan Johnson	Tanda Patrick Morrison	
Justin Clark	Billie Jones	Julia Pope	Wyatt Watson
Marla Collier	President Jones	Lindsey Riedmueller	
Evalisbeth Garcia Diazbarriga			

Approval of Minutes
Minutes from the September 3, 2026 meeting were reviewed and approved. Cody Parsons motioned, followed by Nick Schluterman with the second.

President Jones and Wyatt Watson

Dr. Jones and Wyatt Watson attended to address Staff Senate and upcoming health insurance and pay changes. Tuesday, September 29th, Dr. Jones announced at the President's Communication Council, employees would receive a 2.5% bonus on November payroll. Current employees must have been employed with the University since September 1, 2025. This is for Russellville campus only. Employees on a PIP plan, will not receive this bonus. Employees who have received an increase greater than 2.5% for FY26-27, will also not receive this bonus. Employees in grant funded or auxiliary positions will receive the ATU contribution of the raise. The sale of the 404 El Paso building is funding this bonus. This bonus will go to the ATU Board for approval during the October Board meeting.

ATU is looking for funds to award raises effective for FY28. Faculty and Staff Senate's are working together, with Wyatt Watson in Institutional Research, on a funding formula. These raises will be individualized based on years of service with the University (50%), market gap from the CUPA benchmark, and compression. Of the latter two, the remaining 50% will be whatever is greater to benefit the employee. Academic Affairs has identified open positions that can be cut and there are staff position that will be reviewed to fund FY28 salary increases. Employees in grant funded positions will need to make sure the grant will allow for increases. These raises will go to the ATU Board for approval during the April Board meeting.

Insurance Premium Updates
Dental will increase by $5 per month.

Health Insurance premiums will increase for employees for the first time in three years. Stephens, Inc. helped the University negotiate down to about a 14% increase. The University will absorb about half the cost and the remainder will go the employees. The tiers are changing; $0-$40,000, with each tier increasing by $20,000 up to the over $125,000 tier. Employee only plans increased the least while employee and spouse plans increased the most. Exact premium numbers will be available October 9th. ATU is still exploring the self-funded model which would all for monthly premiums to be paid and housed with ATU but the University would need to hire a claims manager and a pharmacy benefits manager. This would be a long process.

Dr. Jones also talked to Staff Senate about the Strategic Plan goal to increase employee participation in volunteer roles and how to recognize those employees who take time to volunteer in the community. Dr. Jones suggested adding this as one of the staff awards given each spring. A new category could be created or the current rubric/guidelines could be updated to allow for consideration for those who volunteer.

Committee Updates
Nick Schluterman reported out regarding PCC. Homecoming is October 10 with activities throughout the week of 5th-10th. Active Shooter training will be conducted by Public Safety October 13th. Crystal Manning with Public Safety will be conducting self-defense trainings the month of October on the 6th, 13th, and 20th. October 14th 9 am – 2 pm and 20th 1 – 3 pm will be the flu clinic in Ferguson. Appeals on Wheels, where the Arkansas Supreme Court will be on campus to hear arguments for an appeals case, will be October 22nd in Ferguson. TOFT will be held October 27th. Sprout program is no being used for all social media and Madisyn Chance can provide training. Financial Aid for 2027-2028 is now open. Halloween Party to be held in Hull October 29th. Tech-O-Ween will be held October 29th at the Mullens Plaza. Advancement Scholarships are open for next year.

Campus Council will be chaired by Courtney Mayberry, who is SGA President; Vice Chair will be Dr. Jacob

Grosskopf, and Amanda Gardner will serve as Secretary.

Benevolent Fund has recently discussed how to grant employees funds as any payments made to employees need to be run through Payroll and this could cause delays if someone is in immediate need.

Survey Committee reported by Amanda Gardner. Committee reviewed survey results from 2024. Planning to work for a survey to launch in spring. There will be new areas of focus but 10 questions from the previous survey will move forward which will help with continuity. Dr. Jones will review and then head to Campus Council before being distributed.

New Business, Open Forum, Constituent Concerns

Staff Senate received a concern regarding the replacement fee faculty/staff ID's. The fee for replacement is currently $25 and applied to all faculty, staff, and students. Fees help with maintenance, supplies, and does not have to be paid immediately. If your old ID is damaged or no longer working, old IDs can be turned in and replaced for free. This also keeps the ID holder responsible.

Professional Development for FAMA employees for progression. The concern stated there was a OneTech announcement about training for faculty, with the focus on being for those moving into supervisor positions. HR reminded the group of the Faculty/Staff Tuition waiver and encouraged anyone who is interested in professional development opportunities to talk with their supervisor.

Announcements

Registration begins October 19th.

Benefits enrollment this year will be a passive enrollment, meaning unless an employe needs to make changes, then you do not have to make a selection and will be automatically reenrolled.

Meeting Adjournment

At 10:20 a.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Cecily Rideau, followed by a second from Connie Herring. President South concluded the October 1, 2026 meeting. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, November 5, 2026 in RCB 355 and Webex.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Eubanks, Secretary