

Minutes of  
THE FACULTY SENATE  
OF  
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Wednesday, February 11, 2004, at 4:00 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Annette Holeyfield	Mr. Ken Futterer
Dr. Sid Womack	Mr. Ron Robison
Dr. Joe Moore	Dr. Kevin Mason
Dr. Scott Kirkconnell	Ms. Darla Sparacino
Dr. Carl Greco	Dr. Trey Philpotts
Ms. Marti Wilkerson	

Ms. Peggy Lee, Dr. Charles Busch, Dr. Jeff Robertson, and Dr. Kathy Pearson were absent. Dr. Bob Allen and Dr. Joe Stoeckel were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER  
of  
APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

President Sparacino called the meeting to order and asked for action on the minutes of the December 9, 2003, meeting. Motion by Dr. Mason, seconded by Dr. Womack, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. President Sparacino asked for any amendments or corrections. There being none, motion by Dr. Womack, seconded by Ms. Wilkerson, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:  
SUB-COMMITTEE  
TO REVIEW

President Sparacino asked Ms. Wilkerson, chair of the Senate's sub-committee for review of the elected standing committee structure, for a report. Ms. Wilkerson stated that the sub-committee (i.e., President Sparacino, Mr. Futterer, and Ms. Wilkerson) had met with

COMMITTEE  
STRUCTURE

Dr. Biller on February 3 to discuss issues relating specifically to the Student Affairs Committee and distributed a list of discussion points considered during the meeting. Ms. Wilkerson briefly reviewed these points which included possible confusion of the roles of the elected Student Affairs Committee and the appointed Student Personnel Committee, a belief that the Student Affairs Committee could serve a valuable purpose particularly in the area of information exchange, and a consensus that the Student Affairs Committee should include the Vice President of Student Services as an ex-officio member to facilitate meetings and allow for the Vice President to address concerns in Student Services with the committee. Mr. Futterer stated that Dr. Biller had noted that this committee could help him understand certain issues in Student Services from the faculty point of view. It had also been determined that the sub-committee would appoint a chair for the Student Affairs Committee for the spring semester, and Ms. Wilkerson announced that Dr. Penny Willmering had agreed to serve and convene the committee.

Ms. Wilkerson reported that the sub-committee had also discussed issues relating to other elected standing committees and described the results of an informal survey she had designed to gather information. Surveys were sent to faculty in Behavioral Sciences, Social Sciences and Philosophy, and English. Out of 43 surveys, 14 were returned with one telephone response. Comments noted from the surveys included statements relating to conflicts of interest in some chair positions, the need for development of mission statements for committees, committee work being ignored by the Faculty Senate, and that the promotion and tenure committee should be elected. Ms. Wilkerson noted the sub-committee's particular concern with the Director of the

Library serving as the chair of the Library, Instructional Materials, and Equipment Committee.

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Mr. Futterer observed that changing both the composition of the Student Affairs Committee to include the Vice President for Student Services as an ex officio member and the designation of the chair of the Library committee may require final action by the Board of Trustees. President Sparacino stated that these issues would be researched and a report made to the Senate in March.

**GRADE INFLATION** President Sparacino asked Dr. Kirkconnell to address this item. Dr. Kirkconnell reported that he, Dr. Eldon Clary, and Dr. Chris Kellner had met to discuss the issue of grade inflation and whether conclusions drawn by Dr. Clary's study and discussion within the Faculty Senate had settled the issue. Dr. Kirkconnell stated that the group had concluded that this issue was a significant one with many extraneous factors to consider and which required additional study and focus. He also commented that the institution could be held accountable by an outside entity (e.g., accrediting body) if it is found that no comprehensive review of this issue has been made. Dr. Womack volunteered to assist in a study effort which would include sampling of the student population for data elements relating to grades, ACT scores, and high school ranks. If so directed by the Senate to engage in this study, Dr. Womack asked that funding for a graduate assistant be found to support the endeavor.

When questioned by Dr. Philpotts whether the data already received and analyzed was not sufficient, Dr. Kirkconnell responded that the data currently available to the Senate receives very different reactions and analyses by different individuals. He also noted that should a study determine that grade inflation exists, the Senate will then need to determine "how much is too much and what to do about it." Dr. Kirkconnell asked that discussion be held with Dr. Hamm before any further actions by the Senate are undertaken. After it was noted that Dr. Hamm plans to address the Senate in March concerning promotion, tenure, and evaluation procedures, President Sparacino stated that discussion of this issue will be continued at the next meeting.

**OPEN FORUM** President Sparacino asked for any comments at this time. Dr. Allen asked to address the Senate and reported that the campus AAUP is currently preparing the fifth annual evaluation of campus administrators. He noted that 40 percent of the faculty had responded to last year's survey. Dr. Allen stated that faculty who would like to have additional questions asked as part of the survey should send those questions to him.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/ INFORMATION** President Sparacino reported that a University Elected Standing Committees website has been created and that she had requested committee chairs to post minutes to this site. The

**ITEMS** website can be accessed under the Quick List on the university's home page.

**ADJOURNMENT** The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darla Sparacino, M.Ed., President

*Scott Kirkconnell*

Scott Kirkconnell, Ph.D., Secretary