

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Thursday, September 9, 2004, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Joe Moore	Mr. Ken Futterer
Dr. Carl Greco	Ms. Darla Sparacino
Ms. Peggy Lee	Dr. Trey Philpotts
Dr. Jeff Robertson	Dr. Sid Womack
Ms. Marti Wilkerson	Dr. Carey Roberts
Dr. Shelia Jackson	

Dr. Kathy Pearson, Dr. Charles Busch, Dr. Kevin Mason, and Dr. Brenda Montgomery were absent. Dr. Jack Hamm and Dr. Lucia Galleno were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Philpotts called the meeting to order and asked for action on the August 16, 2004, minutes. Motion by Ms. Wilkerson, seconded by Dr. Womack, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Ms. Sparacino, seconded by Ms. Lee, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

Explaining that Dr. Hamm had been held up at another meeting, President Philpotts asked to suspend the order of the agenda and proceed with the report on the faculty standing committee elections process.

REPORT BY SUB-
COMMITTEE ON
STANDING
COMMITTEE
ELECTIONS

President Philpotts asked Dr. Greco to report for the sub-committee reviewing the faculty standing committee election process. Dr. Greco noted that there were essentially two issues reviewed by the sub-committee: the campuswide elections and the school elections. Participation in the campuswide election has been "slim" over the past several years with those faculty voting in this past spring's election numbering 54 out of approximately 200 full-time faculty. He noted that the timeframe for the election is currently set at one day and for only four to five hours on that day. Dr. Greco reported that Dr. Robertson has developed a potential electronic solution and asked Dr. Robertson to elaborate.

Dr. Robertson stated that the sub-committee's discussion had centered on finding a way to increase participation but also guarantee participant anonymity and allow only one vote per eligible faculty member; the sub-committee had concluded that the use of Blackboard as a voting tool could accomplish these goals. A mock election with a ballot has been set up on Blackboard, and Dr. Robertson stated that he had emailed the Senators with information needed to access this site, noting that the mock ballot is set up utilizing multiple choice and ranking as tools for electing candidates to committee positions. The electronic format could allow an election to run for a week, if desired, and faculty could vote at their leisure. Additionally, position statements by the nominees could be posted on the Blackboard site. Dr. Robertson stated that accommodations could be made for faculty uncomfortable with using Blackboard.

At this time, Dr. Philpotts noted Dr. Hamm's arrival and asked that this discussion be continued after Dr. Hamm's report.

REPORT BY VICE
PRESIDENT

Dr. Hamm stated that he had several updates he wished to relay to the Senate. After meeting with the Faculty Salary, Benefits, and Awards Committee, Dr. Hamm reported that his office had distributed information to the full-time faculty concerning applications for faculty research grants and sabbatical assignments. He noted that the Faculty Salary, Benefits, and Awards Committee will review the faculty research grant applications which is in keeping with their function as stated in the *Faculty Handbook*. As for the review of sabbatical applications, Dr. Hamm stated that the *Faculty Handbook* defines membership of the Sabbatical Committee as consisting of three members from the Faculty Salary, Benefits, and Awards Committee and three members chosen by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. As this is the first year of applications utilizing the new application guidelines, Dr. Hamm reported that he had asked the Faculty Salary, Benefits, and Awards Committee (consisting of six members) to serve as the Sabbatical Committee for this year to preserve continuity in the awarding process. Next year's committee membership will most likely be selected according to the *Faculty Handbook* guidelines.

Dr. Hamm reported that he will meet on September 13, 2004, with the Admissions, Academic Standards, and Student Honors Committee, and the committee will hold elections for the positions of chair and secretary. Dr. Hamm indicated his wish for this committee to become more active and stated that there are a number of issues he is going to ask this committee to review, including the current probation and suspension policy, retention efforts, and the improvement of instruction. He noted that he would like this committee to give input to the Center for Teaching and Learning concerning activities the Center can engage in to assist in the improvement of instruction.

Dr. Hamm stated that several construction projects are in various stages across campus. Planning for a new residence hall and an Academic Advising Center is on-going. The residence hall will be similar to Summit Hall but will not be as large or elaborate. The location for this building has not yet been determined. The Center will house the Advising Center, the Office of Multicultural and International Student Services, the English Language Institute, and remedial mathematics and will reside where Massie Hall is currently. Dr. Hamm reported that the English Language Institute is currently serving students from Japan and Taiwan with instruction in English. In answer to a question, Dr. Hamm stated that the Institute hopes to add enough staff to eventually be able to assist all international students and possibly be available to employees of business and industry.

Dr. Hamm noted that the initial bids for the new art building had exceeded available funds and that this project had been rebid after minor revisions to the design. The new bids are to be opened in October, and pending the award of a successful bid, construction should begin soon thereafter.

Dr. Hamm stated that, as of 11th class day, enrollment stood at 1,350 freshmen with 6,182 total on-campus students and 301 students at the Ozark campus. He noted that the Admissions Office had stopped offering scholarships earlier than normal, but that this had not apparently affected the entering freshman count. Dr. Hamm stated that the scholarship program is now funded where it needs to be in order to maintain an enrollment of about 6,000 on-campus students.

Dr. Hamm noted that other building needs do exist on campus, and discussion is continuing relating to these issues. President Philpotts expressed his appreciation for Dr. Hamm's report, and Dr. Hamm excused himself from the meeting.

CONTINUATION
OF REPORT BY
SUB-COMMITTEE

President Philpotts asked Dr. Greco and Dr. Robertson to continue their report relating to faculty elections. Dr. Greco asked that the Senators look at the site set up by Dr. Robertson and be prepared to talk about any issues or problems they see at next

month's meeting. President Philpotts asked that the sub-committee also be prepared to give a video presentation of the Blackboard election site, which will assist in next month's discussion.

Dr. Greco stated that the second issue relating to the faculty election process concerned school elections. He noted that there does not appear to be uniformity in how nominations for positions are made and how elections are held in the various schools. Dr. Greco distributed a set of "Guidelines for Faculty Standing Committee School Elections" which he then read to the Senators as follows:

The full-time faculty from each school are eligible to represent their colleagues by serving as an elected member on several standing committees as stipulated in the *Faculty Handbook*. These guidelines are provided to afford each eligible faculty member the opportunity to participate in the annual election from their respective schools.

- All eligible faculty should be allowed and encouraged to participate in the electoral process as candidates and as voting members.
- Nominations should be open and scheduled to allow a slate of candidates to be available and delivered to the faculty at least one week prior to the election.
- Candidates should be given the opportunity to present a position statement.
- The election process should be held in a manner to allow all eligible faculty the opportunity to participate.
 - If the election is to be scheduled as part of a school meeting, then absentee ballots should be made available to faculty members who are unable to attend.
 - The election process should make provisions for open nominations from the faculty.
 - The election process should preserve the anonymity of each voting member.

Dr. Greco stated that an electronic method might eventually be used for school elections also. Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Womack, that the Faculty Senate pursue the structure and need for official guidelines for standing committee elections within the schools to be included in the *Faculty Handbook*. Motion carried. President Philpotts stated that he would communicate this action to Dr. Hamm.

Motion by Dr. Womack, seconded by Ms. Sparacino, to table action on the first issue relating to a process for the campuswide election until next month to give all the Senators a chance to review the Blackboard mock election site. Motion carried.

UPDATE ON GRADE INFLATION

President Philpotts asked Dr. Greco to give an update on the issue of grade inflation. Dr. Greco reported that the data needed for analysis had just recently been received by Wyatt Watson, the Institutional Research Officer, and that only a preliminary view of the data can be distributed at this time. He noted that the information shown on the graphs does indicate a strong correlation between the students' ACT composite scores, ACT math scores, and high school GPAs and Tech's cumulative GPA. Dr. Greco indicated that he would have additional analysis for the next meeting.

OPEN FORUM

President Philpotts asked if other items needed to be addressed at this time. Dr. Robertson expressed a concern relating to the faculty and staff email addresses being displayed on the website directory, noting that this allows those email addresses to be "harvested" by outside entities. He suggested that a search function could be used instead which would

make a user enter the name of the individual they are seeking an email address for, and only that individual's email address would then appear. President Philpotts asked Dr. Robertson and Dr. Greco to put together a request to Computer Services to look into this issue.

Dr. Greco reminded the Senate of a request made last year for Mr. Moseley to appear before the Senate to talk about health insurance coverage, and noted that this had not occurred. Motion by Dr. Greco, seconded by Dr. Roberts, to ask Mr. Moseley to attend a Faculty Senate meeting and report on the status of health insurance prior to a health insurance contract being awarded for next year. Motion carried.

Ms. Wilkerson stated that a letter to the editor in the local newspaper on August 18, 2004, reported that the Faculty Senate, by action taken in 2000, had requested that the "collegiality clause" be removed from the *Faculty Handbook*. She asked if this issue should be followed up on in a "fact finding way." Dr. Greco stated his belief that other issues had been forwarded to the Administration with no feedback being received. President Philpotts stated that he would check into these issues and report back.

Dr. Womack noted that recent student complaints at the University of Central Arkansas concerning an administrator on paid sabbatical should be taken into account by the Tech Sabbatical Committee this fall when considering sabbatical assignments.

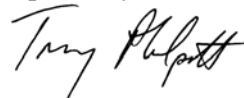
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Philpotts noted a recent email announcement concerning an educational session on promotion and tenure issues being sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning. He stated that, as a past member of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, he will be a participant in this session and encouraged faculty interested in applying for tenure and/or promotion to attend. This session will take place on September 21, 2004, from 3 to 5 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Trey Philpotts, Ph.D., President



Jeff Robertson, Ph.D., Secretary