

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Thursday, April 14, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Kathy Pearson
Dr. Carl Greco
Dr. Joe Moore
Dr. Jeff Robertson
Dr. Shelia Jackson

Mr. Ken Futterer
Dr. Brenda Montgomery
Dr. Trey Philpotts
Dr. Carey Roberts
Dr. Charles Busch

Dr. Kevin Mason, Ms. Darla Sparacino, Ms. Marti Wilkerson, Dr. Sid Womack, and Ms. Peggy Lee were absent. Dr. Robert C. Brown, Dr. Jack Hamm, Dr. Scott Kirkconnell, Ms. Susie Nicholson, Dr. Eldon Clary, and Mr. Phil Jacobs were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
REPORT BY
THE PRESIDENT

President Philpotts called the meeting to order and asked Dr. Brown for any comments. Dr. Brown reported that, as a result of action by the Legislature, Arkansas Tech University will receive \$4.2 million additional funding in the 2005-06 fiscal year. This represents a 19 percent increase in the state appropriation for the university. Funding per FTE student will be approximately \$4,500, assuming a flat enrollment. In the second year of the biennium, additional funds will be realized, and the funding per FTE student will be approximately \$4,850. Dr. Brown emphasized that this equity funding represents “the best allocation in the history of the institution” during a legislative session. He indicated that Arkansas Tech will also receive \$950,000 in General Improvement funds, one-time funds to be used for critical maintenance and the Library. Dr. Brown expressed his appreciation to the Governor and area and local legislators for their support of Arkansas Tech during the recent legislative session.

Dr. Brown announced that the Budget Advisory Committee had met earlier in the day to consider a proposed allocation of the additional funding. Part of the recommendation to be made to the Board of Trustees will be to decrease the basic undergraduate tuition rate from \$154 per credit hour for hours up to 12 and to increase the per credit hour from \$77 for hours 13 and up by establishing an across-the-board rate of \$143 per undergraduate credit hour. For those students taking less than 12 hours, the new rate will be a significant decrease in tuition costs; for those taking 15 hours, the rate will signify approximately a 3 percent increase. Approximately \$400,000 in additional tuition revenue will be generated by the new tuition rate structure. Dr. Brown emphasized that the majority of funds allocated would go for salary increases and into academics and noted that the Budget Advisory Committee had been unanimous in their support of this plan. Dr. Brown acknowledged Mr. Phil Jacobs, Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations, and expressed his appreciation to Mr. Jacobs for his work on behalf of Arkansas Tech during the legislative session.

Responding to a question, Dr. Brown noted that the formula for establishing appropriations for state institutions of higher education should assist Arkansas Tech in reaching par on funding per FTE student with other institutions by 2009. Dr. Kirkconnell expressed his appreciation to Dr. Brown on his efforts in this endeavor. Dr. Brown, Ms. Nicholson, and Mr. Jacobs excused themselves from the meeting at this time.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Philpotts asked for action on the March 10, 2005, minutes. Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Dr. Jackson, seconded by Dr. Pearson, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

REPORT BY
VICE PRESIDENT:
BUDGET

President Philpotts recognized Dr. Hamm and asked for his report. Dr. Hamm first spoke concerning the allocation of additional funding for academics. He reported that \$2.14 million will be distributed as follows, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees: promotions, \$35,389; supplies/services for computer services, \$39,450; faculty position upgrades, \$89,594; faculty positions to base budget (previously funded through soft money), \$206,863; new faculty positions (17), \$923,189; classified positions, \$120,469; supplies and services, other, \$86,800; travel, \$50,500; capital outlay, \$74,000; student and extra labor, \$32,058; graduate assistants, \$76,572; summer funds for Education, \$29,458; salary equity (faculty), \$125,547; Institutional Assistant adjustment, \$9,426; and funding for four faculty positions for two new master's degree programs, \$247,073. Dr. Hamm stated that details on the two new master's degree programs would be announced at a later time. He noted that many of the graduate assistant positions have also been funded on soft money in the past and stated that he was very pleased that these positions could now become part of the base budget. Dr. Hamm reported that faculty and professional staff will receive a 4 percent across-the-board salary increase and classified staff will receive 3 percent. He also commented that some course fees will be requested but only in areas where direct expenses related to the course should be passed on to students.

Dr. Hamm announced that the President had requested \$100,000 to be put into a Faculty Development fund. A new committee will be formed to assist in allocation of these funds each year. At this time, the proposed composition of the committee will include half of the members to be appointed by the Senate and half by Academic Affairs, similar to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Dr. Hamm stated that he will be working with the Senate during the next several weeks to form this committee and get procedures in place so that the committee can function with the beginning of the fall semester.

COMMON TEXTS
FOR LARGE
GENERAL
EDUCATION
CLASSES

Dr. Hamm indicated that he had asked a group of deans to review the issue of textbook use in courses with multiples sections when the issue had been brought to his attention in Deans Council. He distributed a report from this sub-committee outlining "observations" made by the deans regarding this issue. Dr. Hamm emphasized that he is not ready at this time to require anything regarding textbook selection; he stated that the last thing he "wants to do is pick someone's textbook." However, he indicated that complaints from students, faculty, and the Bookstore, even when "taken with a grain of salt," had prompted a review of this situation. He stated that he regards the report from the deans as rationale for continuing to review the issue.

Dr. Hamm expressed particular concern with this issue as it relates to assessment activities. He reported that he will ask the Assessment Committee to look into this issue this coming fall and announced that Dr. Carey Roberts would be the chair of this committee beginning with the fall term. Responding to an inquiry from Dr. Roberts as to which departments on campus do not utilize common texts for courses, Dr. Hamm stated that it appeared that only two or three departments have courses in which different textbooks are used. The courses with the largest enrollment in which this occurs appear to be HIST 1503, World Civilization I, and HIST 1513, World Civilization II.

Dr. Hamm commented that this issue goes beyond the scope of just general education courses and emphasized that courses are designed and delivered for the students' educational benefit. Responding to some Senators' comments that faculty were not consulted regarding this issue, Dr. Hamm noted that this is one reason that he is asking the

Assessment Committee, with its primarily faculty composition, to look into this situation and try to determine what is the academically correct thing to do.

HIRING PROCEDURES FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY

Dr. Hamm stated that the hiring of adjunct faculty is an issue which has received much discussion and consideration in the Deans Council, especially due to the number of adjuncts being utilized. He reminded the Senate that an orientation session is held at the beginning of the fall semester at which department heads sit down with their adjunct faculty and are able to discuss departmental issues with them one-on-one. He also noted that an Adjunct Faculty Guide is now posted on the website.

Dr. Hamm observed that he understood that the real issue is the employment of the adjunct faculty. This is currently handled within the departments and schools; however, Dr. Hamm stated that he is open to any discussion of changing the process. Enrollment growth in the past has many times necessitated the hiring of adjuncts at the last minute with only the department head having any interaction with the individual. He stated that many departments may now be able to plan their adjunct usage more carefully since enrollment appears to be stabilizing.

Mr. Futterer stated that his concerns included what appears to be a “mad scramble” to find someone to teach a class at the last minute and the less than “stellar” qualifications of some of the adjuncts being hired. Dr. Hamm stated that a master’s degree and 18 hours in the discipline are standard requirements for adjunct faculty and that exceptions are made but only in rare instances. Mr. Futterer commented that the pay that adjuncts receive is an issue when trying to recruit a qualified individual. Dr. Hamm responded that he believed that increasing the adjunct rate of pay should be a priority in future budgeting. He also noted that department heads can be encouraged to share the credentials of the adjunct faculty with the full-time faculty when possible; however, he also cautioned that many times the department heads are trying to hire adjunct faculty during the summer months when many full-time faculty are not available for consultation. In response to a question, Dr. Hamm reported that approximately 54 new full-time faculty would be needed to teach the sections currently being taught by adjuncts and faculty overloads.

PROBATION AND SUSPENSION

Dr. Hamm noted that the issue of probation and suspension as it related to athletes had been raised at the last Senate meeting. He reported that he had asked the Institutional Research office to compile data relating to probation and suspension by term for all athletes, football only, and all non-athletes for the past four years and distributed this chart. Dr. Hamm pointed out that football players account for the largest group in athletics. When looking at fall, 2004, the number of athletes on suspension/probation was 39, or 16.9 percent; football players only, 27 or 26.7 percent; all non-athletes, 724 or 13.0 percent. He acknowledged that the suspension/probation rate for the football players was twice the rate for the average student. However, Dr. Hamm also noted that the graduation rate for athletes is several percentage points higher than the graduation rate for non-athletes. He attributed much of this difference to the fact that athletes, in general, receive much more personal attention than other students.

Dr. Hamm reported that previous practice regarding the suspension and re-admission of a student involved the student appearing before Deans Council and appealing their suspension. Recent practice requires the suspended student to appear before the dean of the school in which they are a major and be re-admitted by that dean after “a talking to.” Many times the dean will only re-admit the student as part-time and only to take repeat courses in order to raise their grade-point average. He also stated his belief that a slight difference in NCAA eligibility rules and Tech’s suspension/probation rules may allow some athletes to continue to be eligible to play while on probation, although he stated that he was

not completely sure of this. Dr. Hamm emphasized that Tech will never knowingly violate any NCAA rules relating to student eligibility to participate in athletics.

CSP 1013:
PRINCIPLES OF
COLLEGIATE
SUCCESS

Dr. Hamm distributed copies of charts prepared by Dr. David Underwood for a recent conference Dr. Underwood had attended on retention. The charts represent that part of Dr. Underwood's presentation that applied to CSP 1013, Principles of Collegiate Success. Dr. Hamm reminded the Senators that improvement of retention on the Tech campus is a goal set by the President and commented that Dr. Underwood had been involved in many of the initiatives in this effort. After review of the charts, Dr. Hamm stated that there appears to be reason to be optimistic that this course is assisting with retention efforts in preparing students to succeed in their required academic coursework. He also stated that he is confident that for some of the students the class has meant the difference between their staying at Tech or giving up and going home. Mr. Futterer commented that the academic rigor appears to be equal to that of the freshman general education courses listed in the handouts.

Dr. Busch stated that he had several issues with the CSP course, namely the earning of three credit hours for the course, the legitimacy of a course on how to go to college while in college, and the offering of the course in the middle of a term to students who are flunking out. Dr. Hamm stated that, at the urging of the Advising Center, two sections of this course began at mid-term this spring and offered to those students who might otherwise lose their financial aid or a scholarship. He stated that the University should not apologize for trying to do something to try to save a student and get a graduate rather than a dropout. Dr. Hamm advised that his office will continue to evaluate the course and its effectiveness.

SALARIES

Dr. Hamm noted that salaries of administrators as a percentage of their line-item maximum salary had been discussed at a previous Senate meeting and that the information had apparently been sent to the state newspaper. He reported that he had some information on this topic. He then distributed a list of line-item maximum salaries for the two years of the current biennium and for the two years of the next biennium. Additionally, he distributed various charts comparing average salaries by rank on campus with the line-item maximum and others comparing Tech's average salaries by rank with the "market" salaries computed using SREB (i.e., Southern Regional Education Board) 3 and 4 institutions. He commented that Arkansas Tech participates in a CUPA (i.e., College and University Professional Association) salary survey each year and that the salary data was provided by CUPA. The salaries are reported by rank and CIP code. The SREB rating considers the number of programs at the master's level, the number of graduates, and the diversity of the graduates. He also stated that while Arkansas Tech is currently classified an SREB 5 school, the university has met all the requirements to be an SREB 4 school. As SREB has a delayed system in recognizing achievement of a different SREB level, it will be next spring before SREB officially recognizes Tech's new level 4 category. Dr. Hamm also reported that, with the addition of two more master's degree programs in two additional CIP code categories and graduates in these programs for three years, Tech can become an SREB 3 school which he stated would more accurately describe the institution that Arkansas Tech really is. He stated that the line-item maximum salary caps are set by ADHE and do not always reflect changes in market salaries. He stated that the line-item maximum salaries should change when the SREB rating officially changes and may more accurately reflect the market salaries with which the institution competes in recruiting faculty.

In trying to determine how salary equity funds should be distributed to faculty, Dr. Hamm stated that he wanted a method which didn't depend upon assessments by the deans and department heads, especially since these funds are for equity, not merit. The equity adjustments for 2005-06 were, therefore, determined by giving each full-time faculty member a 4 percent increase, adding in any applicable promotion funds, and then

comparing the resulting salary with the market salary by discipline and rank. If the resulting salary was less than 85 percent of the market salary, then equity funds were added so that the faculty member's salary was at 85 percent of market salary. All full-time faculty for 2005-06 will, therefore, earn at least 85 percent of their market salary.

Dr. Roberts expressed a concern of adding additional master's degree programs, noting that some existing master's degree programs are understaffed and underfunded. Dr. Hamm stated that the addition of the 17 new faculty positions should help with this concern in many of the affected programs. He also expressed his opinion that the addition of the 17 new faculty positions is a beginning to alleviating heavy faculty loads being carried in many departments.

President Philpotts thanked Dr. Hamm for taking the time to come and meet with the Senate. Dr. Hamm expressed his appreciation to the Faculty Senate for their hard work over this academic year; he and Dr. Clary excused themselves from the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:
STANDING
COMMITTEE
ELECTIONS

President Philpotts asked the Senators to review the ballot for the on-line standing committee elections and the proposed amendment to the By-Laws. He asked that any suggestions be forwarded to him as soon as possible. President Philpotts stated that he would be sending an email to all faculty about the balloting process, giving them instructions on when the ballot would be accessible and how to access it. He also indicated that he would send reminders throughout the election week.

President Philpotts reported that the election sub-committee had considered whether to have a computer set up in the Library for those faculty needing assistance with the balloting process and had decided instead to appoint one Senator in each school to assist faculty as needed. He asked for volunteers from each school for this duty and noted that he would send those names out in his email. President Philpotts stated that the sub-committee will be responsible for counting the votes.

OPEN FORUM

No items were presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

After discussion, it was determined that there would not be a meeting of the Faculty Senate in May.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Trey Philpotts, Ph.D., President



Jeff Robertson, Ph.D., Secretary