

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The organizational meeting of the 2005-06 Faculty Senate was held at twelve o'clock noon, Monday, August 22, 2005, in the Private Dining Room of Chambers Cafeteria. The following members were present:

Ms. Peggy Lee	Dr. Joe Moore
Dr. Sid Womack	Dr. Carey Roberts
Dr. Richard Knight	Dr. Jeff Robertson
Dr. Shelia Jackson	Dr. Jeff Mitchell
Dr. Carl Greco	Dr. Trey Philpotts
Ms. Marti Wilkerson	Dr. Scott Kirkconnell
Ms. Sarah Robison	Dr. Brenda Montgomery
Dr. Robert Fithen	Mr. Rick Ihde

Dr. Robert C. Brown, President, Dr. Jack Hamm, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. David Underwood, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER

President Wilkerson called the meeting to order and asked Dr. Brown for any comments. Dr. Brown first expressed his gratitude to those who served last year for the "orderly and professional way" in which they had carried on their business. He then asked each individual present to introduce themselves.

Dr. Brown reminded the Senators that, as part of the budget enabled by equity funding received from the Legislature for this academic year, a new pool of funds totaling \$100,000 for faculty development purposes has been set up. Dr. Brown reported that a committee with six members, three selected by the Faculty Senate chair and three by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, will work this fall to develop a set of guidelines for application for the funds; this group will also serve as an advisory committee to oversee the orderly and fair expenditure of the monies. Dr. Brown emphasized that he hoped to have the guidelines for expenditure in place no later than the end of the fall semester so that the funds could be spent before the end of the current academic year. He also noted his hope that the pool of monies will grow over time, assuming receipt of additional equity funds from the Legislature.

Dr. Brown commented that he had invited the Senate to have lunch "on him" in previous years and extended the same invitation to this group. President Wilkerson stated that she would contact his office at a later date concerning setting a luncheon date. Dr. Brown then recognized Dr. Hamm for any remarks.

Dr. Hamm stated that he was looking forward to working with the Senate another year and observed that he would be available for discussion as needed.

Dr. Brown then asked if anyone had any questions. Dr. Kirkconnell observed that he and his colleagues are "increasingly encountering educational difficulties that are derivative of a culture of entitlement;" he stated that one result of this "culture" is that many students are not as prepared as they think they are. He asked Dr. Brown for his reflections on this issue. Dr. Brown stated that he heard this in his office from students and parents, noting that the calls are complaints that the students are being unfairly challenged. He commented

that he does not see parents as appearing to be as supportive of the goals of higher education as they have been in the past. He also advised that he is not seeing “the level of intensity in the high schools” as there once was. Dr. Brown stated that he recently read where the ACT composite scores for the state have actually declined for the immediate past year of graduates. He then commented that it is the institution’s responsibility to try to help with the situation in higher education in the state, and he also noted that he was very proud of the Admissions staff and their ability to continue to attract some of the best students to the institution. Additionally, he complimented the faculty and staff for the job being done on improving retention. Dr. Roberts questioned what the optimum enrollment for the institution is. Dr. Brown replied that enrollment for fall 2005 will increase about 2 percent over last fall and that this would be “about right” as a small increase each year should be expected.

Dr. Brown expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to speak with the Senate and thanked them for their willingness to serve. Dr. Brown, Dr. Hamm, and Dr. Underwood excused themselves from the meeting.

ADDRESS BY CHAIR

President Wilkerson reported that the School of Community Education had elected its first representative and welcomed Mr. Ihde. She then expressed her appreciation to Dr. Philpotts for his service as chair last year and to the committee which worked on the faculty standing committee elections. She stated that there was an approximate increase of 100 percent participation by faculty due to the electronic voting method. President Wilkerson reported that Dr. Robertson will keep a record on the Faculty Senate website concerning participation in the faculty elections.

President Wilkerson announced that she would ask the elected standing committee chairs to report to the Faculty Senate at the September meeting. She stated that she had received the AAUP’s *Policy Documents and Reports* from Dr. Philpotts and that she had purchased a copy of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, both of which she will pass on to next year’s chair.

President Wilkerson reported that she had spoken to Dr. Hamm concerning the formation of a consortium of Faculty Senate chairs across the state. The initial meeting of this group will be held on October 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Academic Affairs will provide a lunch. President Wilkerson stated that the consortium’s purpose will be to share information and resources. She noted that she may establish a committee to look at the “continuity” of Faculty Senate chairs.

President Wilkerson advised her intention to promote faculty fitness through encouraging the use of Tech Fit. She commented that she would also like to assess how many faculty are driving from some distance to campus and if there are transportation issues that might need to be addressed. She stated that there are many issues that the Senate may need to take up throughout the year.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Wilkerson asked for action on the minutes of the April 14, 2005, meeting. Motion by Dr. Roberts, 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. Womack, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President Wilkerson asked for nominations for the position of Chair Elect. Dr. Philpotts nominated Dr. Roberts. Dr. Roberts respectfully declined the nomination due to his status as an appointed member of the Senate. Dr. Roberts nominated Dr. Jackson, seconded by Dr. Greco. Motion by Dr. Roberts, seconded by Dr. Knight, to cease nominations and elect Dr. Jackson to the position of Chair Elect by acclamation. Motion carried.

President Wilkerson asked for nominations for the position of Secretary. Dr. Kirkconnell nominated Dr. Roberts, seconded by Dr. Robertson. Motion by Dr. Knight, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to cease nominations and elect Dr. Roberts to the position of Secretary by acclamation. Motion carried.

MEETING TIME, DAY, AND PLACE

After discussion, motion by Dr. Womack, seconded by Dr. Robertson, to set the regular meeting time for the fall semester at 4:00 p.m. Motion carried. Motion by Dr. Womack, seconded by Dr. Greco, to set the meeting date for the second Thursday of each month. Motion carried. Meetings will be held in Pendergraft 325.

APPOINTMENTS TO ACADEMIC

President Wilkerson announced that five faculty members need to be named to the Academic Appeals Committee by the Faculty Senate. She presented the following names to

APPEALS COMMITTEE

the Senators for consideration based on their qualifications, availability, and willingness and noted that all five had served as the Senate's representatives on this committee last year: Ms. Laurie Lucas (School of Business), Dr. Byra Ramsey (School of Education), Dr. James Gadberry (School of Liberal and Fine Arts), Dr. Chris Kellner (School of Physical and Life Sciences), and Ms. Sarah Robison (School of Systems Science). Motion by Dr. Robertson, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to approve the recommendations for appointment to the Academic Appeals Committee. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT TO UNIVERSITY PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE

President Wilkerson stated that she had been asked by Academic Affairs to present a name to the Faculty Senate for appointment to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. She stated that Dr. Paula Pendergrass met the qualifications for this appointment, had served previously on this committee, and was willing to serve again in this capacity subject to the Senate's consideration and approval. Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Lee, to appoint Dr. Pendergrass to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

President Wilkerson stated that the agenda item "Open Forum" is on the agenda to promote open discussion and allow for other issues to be brought up. Dr. Robertson stated that he had been asked by Dr. Cohoon during the summer to submit items for discussion at the Deans Council. One issue he had submitted involved curricular issues only being submitted and discussed during the fall semester. He reported that he had asked if the Curriculum Committee could meet year round which would allow curriculum proposals to come in "at a leisurely pace" and would alleviate the fall Senate meetings being dominated by curricular issues. He also stated that he would like for a member of the Curriculum Committee to be present at the Senate meetings to explain actions taken on the proposals. Dr. Montgomery suggested that some of the departments do not adhere to the deadline dates set by Academic Affairs for submission of curricular items and that this contributes to the backlog of proposals each fall semester. Motion by Dr. Montgomery to request that the deadlines established be adhered to. Due to the lack of a second, the motion failed. Motion by Dr. Greco, seconded by Dr. Robertson, to request that a representative of the Curriculum Committee be present at Senate meetings where curricular items are addressed. Motion carried. It was noted that the issues brought up by Dr. Robertson were on the Curriculum Committee's agenda for their meeting on August 23, 2005; any actions taken would be reported to the Senate at a later meeting.

Dr. Philpotts reminded the Senators of the issue relating to textbook usage in multiple section classes; he stated that it appears that the requirement of common texts now extends to all departments and all multiple section courses, whereas the initial concern had appeared to be general education classes. Dr. Philpotts stated that Dr. Hamm had reported that he will ask the Assessment Committee to look at this issue during the fall semester.

Noting that the members of the Assessment Committee are appointed, Dr. Philpotts expressed his concern that the Senate send a message to the Assessment Committee that this is a faculty issue and that the Senate supports the right of the instructor to choose their own texts where it is appropriate. Discussion was held as to when requiring common texts is appropriate (e.g., physical science, mathematics), when it may not be appropriate (e.g., philosophy, literature), and the need for common core competencies in multiple section, general education courses. Support for this position was expressed by several senators. Motion by Dr. Philpotts, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to communicate the following message to the Assessment Committee: *In order to promote the principle of academic freedom, the Faculty Senate hereby supports the prerogative of the faculty to select their own texts.* Motion carried. President Wilkerson stated that she would communicate this in writing to Dr. Roberts, who is the incoming Assessment Committee chair. Dr. Philpotts asked that this also be communicated to Dr. Hamm.

Dr. Roberts stated that the information given to the Senate last year in a report by Mr. Ken Wester had been very helpful. He asked if President Wilkerson would invite Mr. Wester to attend a meeting this fall to update the Senate on issues relating to Computer Services and technology issues on campus. President Wilkerson stated that she will invite Mr. Wester, through Dr. Underwood, to an upcoming meeting.

Dr. Greco expressed his appreciation to both Dr. Philpotts and Dr. Robertson for the work done on electronic voting last spring. He asked if they could meet again this fall to work out issues noted during the spring elections. President Wilkerson stated that the group might also look at instituting the electronic voting method in the school elections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS Dr. Kirkconnell commented on the clarity of the minutes, noting that changing the content to include more discussion allowed those not attending the meeting to understand more clearly what had occurred. Motion by Dr. Kirkconnell, seconded by Dr. Robertson, to commend Ms. Pat Chronister, Recording Secretary, for her contributions each month to production of the minutes. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Marti Wilkerson, M.R.C., President


Carey Roberts, Ph.D., Secretary