

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The organizational meeting of the 2006-07 Faculty Senate was held at twelve o'clock noon, Monday, August 21, 2006, in the Private Dining Room of Chambers Cafeteria. The following members were present:

Dr. Cheryl Smith	Dr. Tim Smith
Dr. Carey Roberts	Mr. Rick Ihde
Dr. Jeff Robertson	Dr. Sammie Stephenson
Dr. Jeff Mitchell	Dr. Trey Philpotts
Ms. Pat Buford	Dr. Robert Fithen
Dr. Scott Kirkconnell	Ms. Sarah Robison
Dr. Brenda Montgomery	Dr. Andrew Cannon
Dr. Shelia Jackson	Dr. Hanna Norton

Ms. Marti Wilkerson was absent. Dr. Robert 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 Jackson called the meeting to order and asked Dr. Brown for any comments. Dr. Brown first asked that each senator or guest introduce themselves. He expressed his appreciation and admiration for the Senate's work during the 2005-06 academic year and noted Ms. Wilkerson's excellent performance as the past chair. He thanked Dr. Jackson for her willingness to serve as chair and commented that his office is ready at any time to assist with the work of the Senate as called upon. Dr. Brown also observed that he would be willing later in the year to host another lunch for the Senate.

Dr. Hamm welcomed the new members of the Senate and emphasized his willingness to work with the Senate on any issue that arises during the upcoming year. Dr. Underwood congratulated the Senators on their willing to serve the University in this capacity.

Dr. Jackson commented that both the President's Office and Academic Affairs have "open door" policies and expressed her appreciation to Dr. Brown, Dr. Hamm, and Dr. Underwood for the lunch and their comments. At this time, Dr. Brown, Dr. Hamm, and Dr. Underwood excused themselves from the meeting.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Jackson asked for action on the minutes of the May 2, 2006, meeting. Motion by Ms. Robison, seconded by Dr. Montgomery, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Dr. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Robison, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:
ELECTION OF
OFFICERS

President Jackson asked for nominations for the position of Chair Elect. Dr. Roberts nominated Ms. Robison, seconded by Dr. Montgomery. Ms. Robison respectfully declined the nomination due to pressing accreditation issues in her department. Dr. Philpotts nominated Dr. Tim Smith, seconded by Dr. Roberts. Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Robison, to cease nominations and elect Dr. Smith to the position of Chair Elect by acclamation. Motion carried.

President Jackson asked for nominations for the position of Secretary. Dr. Roberts nominated Dr. Kirkconnell, seconded by Dr. Montgomery. Motion by Dr. Cheryl Smith, seconded by Dr. Norton, to cease nominations and elect Dr. Kirkconnell to the position of Secretary by acclamation. Motion carried.

MEETING TIME,
DAY, AND PLACE

After discussion, the regular meeting time, day, and place for the fall semester were set for 3:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month in Pendergraft 300 South (if available).

APPOINTMENTS TO
ACADEMIC
APPEALS
COMMITTEE AND
UNIVERSITY
PROMOTION AND
TENURE
COMMITTEE

President Jackson distributed a list of individuals she had contacted who were both eligible and willing to serve on the Academic Appeals Committee and the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Motion by Dr. Philpotts, seconded by Dr. Roberts, to approve the recommendations as follows: *Academic Appeals Committee*: Dr. Linda Bean (School of Business), Dr. Carole Smith (School of Education), Dr. Jan Jenkins (School of Liberal and Fine Arts), Dr. Thomas Nupp (School of Physical and Life Sciences), and Dr. Kathy Pearson (School of Systems Science); *University Promotion and Tenure Committee*: Dr. Deborah Wilson. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Mitchell noted that the sexual harassment policy recommended by the Faculty Senate last spring differed from that approved by the Board of Trustees. He stated that the Faculty Senate had recommended that a faculty member who believes they have been sexually harassed would contact a tenured member of the Faculty Welfare Committee rather than the Affirmative Action Officer. The policy approved by the Board of Trustees notes that the faculty member should contact the Affirmative Action Officer and may also contact their school's representative on the Faculty Welfare Committee. President Jackson reported that she and Ms. Wilkerson had met with the President concerning this policy and that this was discussed. She stated that Dr. Brown and the University Counsel considered the possibility of allowing faculty members the option of having issues affecting them go first to a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee, rather than to the Affirmative Action Officer. President Jackson noted that she did not have either the recommendation or final policy memorized, so that she would review both and be prepared to discuss them at the next meeting. Dr. Mitchell commented that the policy does not state this and asked for clarification.

Dr. Philpotts questioned whether students are being made aware of the policy and its procedures during student orientations. President Jackson stated that she would check the *Student Handbook* to make sure the new policy is included.

Dr. Kirkconnell noted that the policy as approved gives faculty the option of having a copy of the complaint given to a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee. He stated that one concern of having complaints only go to members of the Faculty Welfare Committee dealt with having records "floating around" as members change each year on this committee. Since the original complaint will be housed in the Affirmative Action Office, he noted that concern no longer exists.

Dr. Roberts requested a report from Ken Wester concerning technology on campus at the next meeting.

Ms. Buford questioned what action had been taken on the Convocations and Programs Committee. It was noted that this committee is now "inactive" as Dr. Hamm and Dr. Brown would like additional time to consider a possible function or use for this committee.

Dr. Kirkconnell noted that the Faculty Senate is the “committee on committees” and the “most influential committee of faculty we have.” He stated that the Senate should focus on issues of general concern to faculty and observed that he had two issues he wished to discuss briefly, the first being grade inflation. Dr. Kirkconnell reported that the Senate had looked at this issue a few years ago, and very little progress was made. He commented that the issue is significant and should be addressed.

Dr. Kirkconnell emphasized that the hiring of new faculty is a critical function of the University and faculty. He noted that hiring policies and federal regulations have not allowed questions relating to the applicant’s commitment to health and wellness, which could affect the University’s health insurance premiums, nor their personal philosophies. He questioned whether Governor Huckabee’s initiatives relating to health and wellness and his concern with the long-term economic impact on the State had altered those regulations. Dr. Philpotts stated that the Senate should find out what the law is concerning allowable questions along these lines, if any, and then make a determination whether hiring policies can be altered. President Jackson asked if the Affirmative Action Officer should be invited to a future meeting; Dr. Kirkconnell noted that he was certain the Affirmative Action Officer would respond by saying no questions are allowable of this nature to applicants. He commented, however, that the Governor’s rhetoric concerning issues of health and wellness appears to support the hiring of individuals with a commitment to their own personal health and wellness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

Dr. Roberts distributed an example printed from the new Elected Standing Committees website (<http://uesc.atu.edu/>) to illustrate the format of the new site. He reported that a graduate assistant had assisted with designing and implementing the site over the summer. Once the Elected Standing Committees list is finalized, Dr. Roberts stated that he would include the membership of all committees on the site. He stated that two issues relating to the website are prevalent. One, there appears to be confusion on what happens to the webpages when Luminis is fully implemented and whether webpages will have to be redone. He also questioned whether the Senate had intended for the webmaster and the Secretary to be the same individual as the webmaster’s term runs for a calendar year as opposed to an academic year. It was suggested that this was deliberate so that the webmaster and Secretary did not have to be the same individual; additionally, it would allow the current webmaster time to initiate a new webmaster in the fall semester before the current webmaster’s term ends.

Discussion was held concerning the various new technology and software implementations going on around campus. Dr. Philpotts and Dr. Cannon both noted issues concerning the Blackboard upgrade. Dr. Philpotts indicated that many initiatives appear to be underway that faculty are not aware of. Dr. Fithen suggested that a small committee of faculty be formed who would attend meetings of a policy nature and report back to other faculty. After discussion, President Jackson stated that she would also ask Dr. Underwood to report in September on the various technology initiatives being undertaken by the University, including the Banner and Luminis projects.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Shelia L. Jackson in cursive script.

Shelia Jackson, Ph.D., President

Handwritten signature of Scott Kirkconnell in cursive script.

Scott Kirkconnell, Ph.D., Secretary