

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Tuesday, March 14, 2006, at 4 p.m. in Room 300 south of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

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

Dr. Brenda Montgomery was absent. Mr. Ed Leachman, Dr. Bob Allen, Dr. Richard Smith, Dr. Robert Schwartz, and student/community guests were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Wilkerson called the meeting to order and asked for action on the February 14, 2006, minutes. Motion by Dr. Knight, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. Dr. Kirkconnell referenced the section of the minutes relating to a tenure denial and questioned why more of the discussion was not included. Dr. Philpotts noted that the Senate had discussed the presentation of the minutes a few years ago and had decided at that time that the minutes should be a summary of discussion and actions taken in order to encourage candid and open dialogue. Dr. Roberts stated that the February meeting had proven a difficult one to provide minutes for. He noted his concern with legal ramifications and stated that he had sought advice from both the University Counsel and outside counsel on what to include. He indicated, however, his willingness to modify the minutes at the wishes of the Senate. Dr. Kirkconnell stated that he would "like to continue to see the minutes constructed in a fairly inclusive fashion." As no specific modifications or amendments to the minutes were stated, motion by Dr. Greco, seconded by Dr. Philpotts, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

President Wilkerson asked for permission to deviate from the printed agenda and allow Dr. Smith representing the Curriculum Committee to speak. Motion by Dr. Robertson, seconded by Dr. Mitchell, to allow Dr. Smith's presentation at this time. Motion carried. Dr. Smith reported that the Curriculum Committee had started the process of reviewing the general education goals as listed in the catalog. The committee has asked for input from the departments and will take feedback received into consideration as work continues. He noted that the committee will then work with the Assessment Committee on appropriate assessment methods for assessing the revised goals. The Curriculum Committee will report to the Senate in April on their recommendations.

OLD BUSINESS:
REPORT FROM
ELECTION SUB-
COMMITTEE

President Wilkerson asked Dr. Greco for a report. Dr. Greco expressed his appreciation to the members of the sub-committee for their work and noted that Dr. Robertson had made some final changes to the sample voting ballot that made it a "workable ballot." Dr. Robertson will compile the elected standing committees ballot from the results of the school elections.

ADMINISTRATORS/

President Wilkerson noted that, after the February 14 meeting, she had met with the

NON-TENURED
FACULTY ON
ELECTED
STANDING
COMMITTEES

Executive Committee on February 20 to discuss issues raised at that meeting. As a result of their discussion, she had appointed two sub-committees to study the issues. The sub-committee to review the issue of administrators and non-tenured faculty on elected standing committees is composed of Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Moore, Ms. Robison, and Dr. Philpotts with Dr. Mitchell as chair. Dr. Mitchell reported that the committee had formulated two motions for consideration of the Senate. The first motion would amend Article II, Section 3, Paragraph B of the Constitution of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Mitchell stated that the motion would revise the wording of this paragraph to read (the inserted text in italics): No Dean of a School *or Head of a Department* shall be eligible for membership in the Senate. This motion requires approval by two-thirds of the membership of the Senate (i.e., eleven members) and subsequent approval by a majority of the faculty and by the Board of Trustees. Dr. Mitchell stated that the second motion would amend the section of the *Faculty Handbook* where the elected standing committees are listed by adding the following statement: *No Dean of a School or Head of a Department shall be eligible for membership on an elected standing committee.* This motion would require approval by a simple majority of the Senate and by the Board of Trustees. Dr. Mitchell reported that the sub-committee had also discussed the issue of non-tenured faculty on elected standing committees but had not formulated a motion on this issue. Dr. Philpotts reminded the Senators that the motion to amend the Constitution requires written notification of the motion ten days in advance of the meeting at which the motion is to be presented.

Discussion centered on issues relating to the definition of an administrative appointee, the role of the Senate in restricting membership on committees when many of the positions are elected by the schools, the role of department heads and their teaching responsibilities, and the current administrative structure of “department heads” as opposed to “department chairs.”

Motion by Dr. Knight, seconded by Dr. Philpotts, to accept the report of the sub-committee. Motion carried. President Wilkerson stated she would place on the April agenda motions sent to her in writing by the sub-committee.

NEW BUSINESS:
PROMOTION AND
TENURE PROCESS/
FACULTY
WELFARE
COMMITTEE
COMPOSITION

President Wilkerson reported that the second sub-committee was appointed to study the issues relating to giving justifications to faculty denied tenure and the composition of the Faculty Welfare Committee. This sub-committee consists of Dr. Greco, chair, Dr. Knight, Dr. Womack, Dr. Robertson, and Ms. Lee. Dr. Greco reported that the sub-committee had first looked at the *Faculty Handbook* to review what was written relating to termination of a probationary appointment. He noted that page 13 of the current *Faculty Handbook* (section B, paragraph 4) states that a probationary faculty member can request a reason for termination and read aloud this section. Dr. Greco stated that the implication of this paragraph is that it may only apply during the probationary period. He then referred to the promotion section of the *Handbook* (page 30, paragraph F) which states that a faculty member not receiving a favorable recommendation may submit “an appeal statement rebutting reported deficiencies.” Dr. Greco noted that the tenure section of the *Handbook* states that the review process for tenure is the same as that for promotion, with the implication that the section noted above for promotion could also apply to cases of tenure denial. However, he stated that no statement in the *Handbook* specifically requires that a statement of deficiencies be provided to a faculty member in the case of tenure denial. Dr. Greco indicated that the sub-committee had drafted a change to the *Handbook*, page 30, and distributed the change for review [see Attachment A]. Dr. Greco reported that the sub-committee had reviewed policies from other schools and read from sections in the handbooks of the University of Central Arkansas and Henderson State University [see Attachment B].

Dr. Greco reported that the sub-committee had then reviewed the composition of the Faculty Welfare Committee. He read a section from the grievance procedure outlined in the

handbook of the University of Arkansas [see Attachment C] and then distributed a modification of the membership composition of the Faculty Welfare Committee for discussion [see Attachment D]. The change would restrict membership to only tenured faculty and to those “who do not concurrently hold an administrative appointment.”

Dr. Jackson began discussion by stating that she would not serve on a promotion and tenure committee where reasons for denial were required as this would place the committee members at risk for personal lawsuits. Dr. Roberts commented that the third year review should be “enforced” and provide a forum for constructive comments between faculty members and their department heads. It was noted that this discussion had been held by the Senate before and the administration had not agreed to change the *Handbook*; Dr. Greco stated that even though this might be the case that the Senate should continue to strive to make the process “fair and equitable” regardless of whether the administration would agree to the changes proposed. Dr. Kirkconnell noted that the AAUP “Redbook” “places the onus on tenured faculty” in many issues relating to promotion and tenure.

Dr. Roberts questioned the removal of non-tenured faculty from the composition of the Faculty Welfare Committee. Discussion centered on the “awkward position” the untenured faculty member could be placed in as a member of the committee. Motion by Dr. Greco, seconded by Dr. Mitchell, to approve the recommendation of the sub-committee to change the composition of the Faculty Welfare Committee. Dr. Roberts called for a secret ballot; Dr. Moore assisted Dr. Roberts in counting the ballots. Motion failed.

Motion by Dr. Greco, seconded by Dr. Mitchell, to approve the changes to the promotion and tenure policy as drafted by the sub-committee. Dr. Greco called for additional discussion on this issue and read from the “Notice of Reasons” section of the AAUP’s *Statement on Procedural Standards in the Renewal or Nonrenewal of Faculty Appointments*. Dr. Greco reported that this document goes on to say that the faculty member’s request for the reasons of non-reappointment to be provided in writing should be honored. Dr. Mitchell noted that in the peer review process committee members could also be open to legal ramifications;

Dr. Jackson responded that peer review is a formative process, not a summative process and very different from promotion and tenure review. Dr. Philpotts questioned what would be an adequate explanation to give to a faculty member denied tenure. Dr. Roberts called for the question and a secret ballot. Dr. Greco requested a roll call vote; Dr. Roberts withdrew his request for a secret ballot. Motion by Dr. Greco for a roll call vote; no second was forthcoming. Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Dr. Moore, for a secret ballot. Motion carried. Dr. Moore assisted Dr. Roberts in counting the ballots. Motion failed.

President Wilkerson thanked the sub-committee members for their reports. She stated that she would speak with Dr. Hamm concerning the discussions held on these issues.

CAMPUS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

President Wilkerson asked Mr. Ihde to speak to this issue. Mr. Ihde expressed his appreciation to the Senate for their interest in this project spearheaded by the Department of Emergency Administration and Management. He asked Mr. Ed Leachman from the department to make a presentation. Mr. Leachman reminded the Senators of the \$500,000 grant received by the University to establish a campus Emergency Operations Center. This Center has been established in Dean Hall with two primary functions: as a teaching facility and as an active operations center in the event of a real emergency. He stated that a campuswide taskforce was formed to assist in the development of a campus emergency preparedness plan and presented a powerpoint presentation outlining the plan’s development. Mr. Leachman stated that the plan is very close to completion; exercises will be held to assess the plan after which modifications would most likely be made to ensure that the plan is as comprehensive as possible. He indicated that the plan will be a “living document” which will need to be updated constantly as situations change. He noted that

faculty could review the progress of the taskforce on the Tech website (i.e., <http://commed.atu.edu/EAM/default.php?menu=Emergency%20Task%20Force&link=Preparedness/TaskForce/emergency.htm>). President Wilkerson thanked Mr. Leachman and Mr. Ihde for the information.

OPEN FORUM

President Wilkerson reported that she had formed a sub-committee to study the policy issues (i.e., revision of the gender and sexual harassment policy and formation of a consensual relations policy) raised by Dr. Brown at the March 2, 2006, called meeting. Dr. Jackson will chair the committee, and President Wilkerson asked for volunteers to serve. Dr. Roberts, Dr. Womack, Mr. Ihde, and Dr. Philpotts volunteered. Dr. Jackson stated that the committee will meet after spring break and review the information provided by Dr. Brown on the two issues. She noted that the committee would also solicit feedback from faculty around campus on these issues. President Wilkerson reminded the Senators of the May 1 deadline of recommendations to the President and observed that it was “critically important” to get feedback from the faculty at large.

President Wilkerson asked for other issues to be discussed at this time. None were presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ INFORMATION ITEMS

President Wilkerson reported that Dr. Hamm met with the Deans Council and presented the proposed changes to the student evaluation form. Those changes met with approval; however, as many of the schools have forms already in stock to last through the fall, 2006, semester, she stated that the modified form will not be implemented until spring, 2007.

President Wilkerson reminded the Senators of the luncheon on April 18 in the Chambers Cafeteria East Dining Room with the Student Government Association.

President Wilkerson stated that she had not received volunteers to serve on the Retention Taskforce being formed by Dr. Hamm, and reported that she had asked Mr. Phil Parker, Dr. Jim Collins, and Ms. Chris Merle to serve as the Senate’s representatives.

President Wilkerson reported that she had met with Dr. Hamm and he had explained that the budget for next year will be set after one more Budget Advisory Committee meeting and subsequent approval by the Board of Trustees. She stated that he mentioned some one-time monies that will be used for purchasing classroom and office furniture and upgrading labs. Dr. Hamm also indicated that the University is proposing to purchase a classroom building for the Nursing Department and that this would be presented to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting. Dr. Hamm reported good success with filling vacant faculty positions; he also indicated that there would be more students next year wanting on-campus housing than there would be spaces available. President Wilkerson stated that Dr. Hamm’s office was also busy preparing the catalogs and the 2005 Faculty Accomplishments booklet.

President Wilkerson reported that the Student Affairs Committee and the Convocations and Programs Committee had met.

Dr. Roberts stated that he is still working on the Senate website and that he does not yet have access to post minutes for the other elected standing committees.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marti Wilkerson, M.R.C., President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carey Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carey Roberts, Ph.D., Secretary