

Minutes of  
THE FACULTY SENATE  
OF  
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Called Meeting

The Faculty Senate met in a called meeting on Thursday, March 2, 2006, at 4 p.m. in the East Dining Room of Chambers Cafeteria. 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. Brenda Montgomery	Dr. Joe Moore
Dr. Robert Fithen	

Dr. Sid Womack was absent. Dr. Robert Charles Brown, Dr. Jack Hamm, Dr. Bob Allen, Dr. Gill Richards, Dr. James Gadberry, Dr. Micheal Tarver, and several students/community guests were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER

President Wilkerson called the meeting to order and welcomed Dr. Brown, Dr. Hamm, and audience members to the meeting. President Wilkerson stated that the purpose of the called meeting is to hear a report from Dr. Brown and provide an opportunity for discussion. To facilitate the discussion, meet time constraints, and be inclusive of the audience, she announced the following structure for the report and discussion. Dr. Brown's report will be limited to no more than 45 minutes after which time the Senators will be allowed five questions to be discussed and answered within a time allowance not to exceed 20 minutes. At that time, the audience will be allowed three questions with a time allowance not to exceed 15 minutes. President Wilkerson stated that Dr. Jackson would monitor the times allowed and noted that the meeting should adjourn at approximately 5:30 at which time a meal would be served for the senators, hosted by Dr. Brown and Dr. Hamm. She requested that those wishing to be recognized for questions address their requests to the Chair and asked audience members unknown to the Chair to introduce themselves.

NEW BUSINESS:  
REPORT FROM  
PRESIDENT  
BROWN –  
PROMOTION AND  
TENURE POLICY  
HISTORY

Dr. Brown expressed his appreciation to President Wilkerson for convening the meeting and his appreciation to the Senators for taking time to attend. He stated that, after reviewing the membership of the Senate, he noted many of the current senators were either not on faculty or were in junior status at the time that the current promotion and tenure policy was adopted in 1995 and proposed that it was an appropriate time for a review of the history of the policy and its formation. He observed that the institution operates on the principle of shared governance and commented that he knows of no public university that is successful where there is not a system of shared governance in place.

Dr. Brown distributed a memorandum dated February 28, 1995, which contains the original charge given to the Special Advisory Task Force on Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure System and noted that part of the impetus for formation of this policy was the strategic planning exercises ongoing at that time. The task force consisted of the following faculty members: Mr. Bobbie Taylor, Dr. Eldon Clary, Dr. Hans Johnson, Dr. Tom Tyler, Dr. John Krohn, Dr. Theresa Herrick, Dr. Joe Stoeckel, Dr. Mostafa Hemmati, Mr. Ken Futterer, Dr. Kirk Bane, Dr. Linda Christian, and Dr. Annette Holeyfield. Dr. Brown stated that none

of these individuals were serving as deans or department heads at the time of their service on this task force.

Dr. Brown referenced the university-wide accreditation visit by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities (now, The Higher Learning Commission) in 1991 prior to his undertaking the position of President in 1993. The report by the visiting team had included a recommendation that a new system of promotion and tenure to include faculty input be implemented by 1996 or the accreditation of the university could be jeopardized. In addition, Dr. Brown reported that the State of Arkansas at that time was sponsoring legislation to make a change in the faculty evaluation system, and the Tech Board of Trustees had dictated that the promotion and tenure process be changed to a more modern system. Dr. Brown stated that the most important reason for changing the policy was because it was the “right, fair, and equitable thing to do.”

Dr. Brown stated that he then hired Dr. Ed Penson, a retired chancellor of the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh and an expert in the field, to serve as a consultant to the task force. Dr. Penson had reviewed the policy in place at the time and had indicated that Tech was “unique” in not having a “modern” process in place for promotion and tenure that included faculty input. Dr. Brown emphasized that the charge to the task force included the caveat that the resulting policy had to be one acceptable to all parties, including the Faculty Senate, the administration, and the Board of Trustees. Dr. Brown distributed the memorandum sent to him by Mr. Bobbie Taylor and Dr. Eldon Clary indicating that the policy developed by the task force received a positive vote from all members of the Faculty Senate except two. Dr. Brown then distributed the memorandum dated June 15, 1995, sent to the Board of Trustees for consideration of the proposed policy and noted that the memorandum summarizes minor changes made to the proposed policy primarily for the purposes of clarification. The Board of Trustees adopted the policy as amended on June 15, 1995.

The resulting policy includes a number of “layers” to promote checks and balances in the process: department, school, Promotion and Tenure Committee, Vice President for Academic Affairs, President, and Board of Trustees. Dr. Brown reported that the consultant had indicated that it was his experience that the faculty committee of peers was generally more demanding than the administration in promotion and tenure review.

Dr. Brown asked Dr. Hamm to distribute summary information concerning the promotion and tenure requests received since the policy’s implementation. Dr. Hamm noted that, from 1995 through 2005, 91 requests for tenure were received, of which 87 received positive recommendations from the Promotion and Tenure Committee and 87 received positive recommendations from the Vice President and the President. Two requests for tenure were recommended by the Promotion and Tenure Committee but not by the Vice President and President, and two requests for tenure were not recommended by the Promotion and Tenure Committee but were recommended by the Vice President and President. For the same time period, 123 requests for promotion were received, of which 89 were recommended by the Promotion and Tenure Committee and 93 were recommended by the Vice President and President. Four requests for promotion were recommended by the Promotion and Tenure Committee but not by the Vice President and President, and eight requests for promotion were not recommended by the Promotion and Tenure Committee but were recommended by the Vice President and President. Dr. Brown noted that the results on promotion bear out the prediction by the consultant that the faculty committee is somewhat more demanding when it comes to promotion and tenure.

CONSENSUAL  
RELATIONS AND  
SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT

Dr. Brown noted that the University has a gender and sexual harassment policy which was approved in 1987 and that a consensual relations policy does not exist. He asked that the Senate assist with the revision of the harassment policy and the formation of a consensual relations policy, both of which he proposes to take to the Board of Trustees in May for

## POLICIES

consideration. Dr. Brown distributed a copy of the AAUP's (American Association of University Professors) statement on "Consensual Relations Between Faculty and Students." He noted that the statement "basically says that consensual relations are bad" but does not prescribe a policy. He then distributed wording that includes the AAUP's statement verbatim but with an added paragraph which defines a consensual relationship and prohibits employees, faculty and staff, from engaging in any relationship where the employee has a "position of authority" with respect to either a student or another employee. Dr. Brown asked that the Senate provide a report to his office by May 1 on this issue.

Dr. Brown distributed the present policy on sexual and gender harassment as printed in the *Faculty Handbook* and stated that the policy was inadequate. Dr. Brown emphasized that the purpose of these types of policies is to protect the faculty and staff and provide a means by which to handle accusations made.

Dr. Brown distributed information from the University of Central Arkansas's website on a consensual relationships policy, information from the AAUP entitled "Sexual Harassment: Suggested Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints," and a suggested policy on sexual harassment compiled by the University Counsel. He asked that this issue also be reviewed by the Senate with a report to his office by May 1. Dr. Brown stated that his office is available to the Senate as an additional resource.

Dr. Montgomery questioned the difference in two of the documents presented (i.e., one from the AAUP on sexual harassment and the suggested policy written by the University Counsel). Dr. Brown stated that they are similar but that the appeal process is different in that the AAUP policy includes an appeal procedure of Faculty Welfare Committee before Vice President for Academic Affairs. He stated that the policy written by the University Counsel suggests that the appeal to the Faculty Welfare Committee should come after the appeal to the Vice President. Dr. Philpotts questioned whether the documents presented were to be interpreted as suggestions for policies. Dr. Brown stated that the documents presented were for information purposes. At this time, Dr. Brown ceded the remaining of his time and ended his remarks.

## DISCUSSION

President Wilkerson asked for questions from the senators and the audience, and a question and answer period followed.

Senators and guests asked several questions related to the tenure process particularly with regard to feedback provided to faculty who are denied tenure and what recourse faculty have when charges of misconduct are levied against them. Further questions were asked regarding ambiguities in the *Faculty Handbook*, the role of administrative recommendations in the Board of Trustee's decisions to grant tenure and promotion, and issues related to student privacy.

Dr. Brown emphasized that faculty and administration only make recommendations in the tenure and promotion process. He noted that while he strongly supports tenure and AAUP guidelines related to shared governance and the tenure review process, only Arkansas laws are binding upon the institution and the Board of Trustees. He stated that state and federal laws also restrict what private, student information can be provided to faculty.

Dr. Brown expressed his appreciation again to all those present for taking part in the meeting and discussion. He stated that he was always available and would be pleased to visit with any faculty about any subject that had been discussed during the meeting. Dr. Brown also thanked the Senate for their willingness to give input into the two policy issues discussed earlier.

President Wilkerson thanked Dr. Brown for his report and Dr. Hamm and all present for

attending. She stated that the Senate would certainly provide input into the two policy issues and have reports to his office by May 1.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marti Wilkerson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M".

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 prominent initial "C".

Carey Roberts, Ph.D., Secretary