

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Wednesday, September 13, 2006, at 3 p.m. in Room 300 South of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

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

Ms. Marti Wilkerson was absent. Dr. David Underwood, Mr. Ken Wester, Ms. Connie Zimmer, and Ms. Tammy Rhodes were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Jackson called the meeting to order and asked for action on the August 21, 2006, minutes. Motion by Dr. Cannon, seconded by Dr. Norton, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Ms. Robison, seconded by Dr. Montgomery, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:
COMPUTER
SERVICES UPDATE

President Jackson asked Mr. Wester to address issues and initiatives in Computer Services of concern to faculty. Mr. Wester reported that approximately 50 million emails had been received since the first of the year. In the month of August alone, 8.2 million emails were received, 95 percent of which were spam. Viruses were contained in 2,666 of these. For the month of September so far, 3.5 million emails have been received with 94 percent of these spam and 1,339 containing viruses. Mr. Wester noted that the Help Desk had been moved to Pendergraft and was being manned from 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. each week day. He is still working on the weekend scenario. He also indicated that the process for requesting assistance from Computer Services was being improved; there should be an email acknowledging that a request has been received and a subsequent email indicating the resolution of the problem.

Mr. Wester reported that 300 new computers have been installed campuswide since last spring; 200 of the old computers were redistributed, some in establishing a lab for Parks, Recreation, and Hospitality due to accreditation issues. Over 50 new projection systems have been installed throughout the campus. He stated that Computer Services and affected offices on campus were continuing with Banner implementation. He reported that a new email system will be available with Banner which will be implemented at a later date. Mr. Wester referenced the update from Blackboard 6 to version 7 and noted that the reason for the upgrade was to allow the Blackboard system to integrate with the Banner system through the Luminis portal once the student information module in Banner comes online. This will also allow for single signon capability through the Luminis portal. He stated that some initial problems seen by instructors with the Blackboard upgrade were due to a change

in servers where the Blackboard files are stored. He observed that some initial import and export problems resulted from the server upgrade, but stated that he believed these issues were now resolved. Mr. Wester reported that Rob Mullins, the Blackboard coordinator, has created a document indicating the significant differences between Blackboard 6 and Blackboard 7, which will be sent out soon. Dr. Kirkconnell stated that he has seen a “qualitative improvement” in Blackboard since the upgrade.

Dr. Kirkconnell questioned how often faculty computers should be upgraded and what process to follow to request a new computer. Dr. Underwood stated that many requests for new faculty computers are received during the budget process each spring and that faculty should let their department heads know if their computers are less than Pentium IVs. As funds are identified, Dr. Underwood stated that Academic Affairs tries to buy a certain number of computers each year. Mr. Wester encouraged faculty to let his or Dr. Underwood’s offices know when they have problems with the technology they use in their offices or classrooms.

BANNER AND LUMINIS UPDATE

Dr. Underwood reported that the Banner implementation project, called One Tech, is proceeding as scheduled and distributed an approximate timeline. He reminded everyone that the reason for the upgrade is because the current “mainframe system” will no longer be supported by SCT after 2010. After looking at various systems, the decision was made to go with another SCT product which is server based and for which SCT will work with the University for training, transfer of data, and implementation. Banner is the name of the software for the financial, human resources, and student information systems that will replace those currently being used. The majority of the finance system was brought online beginning July 1, 2006; financial aid and parts of admissions processing will be brought online this fall. He noted that Banner assigns unique IDs to all users, whether faculty, staff, or students. Dr. Underwood stated that two servers were purchased and placed in separate buildings to ensure the security of data and allow for uninterrupted service should one server go down for maintenance. Dr. Underwood pointed out that much of the “training” conducted thus far were really information sessions for individuals in key offices to learn what the new software can and can’t do. At a certain point, policy decisions will need to be made; and Dr. Underwood assured the Senate that faculty would be involved in making those types of decisions. As the student information component of Banner will come online early in spring, 2007, he noted that actual training to use the new software will be done in the spring semester “just in time” for the April pre-registration for summer and fall 2007 classes.

Dr. Underwood gave a visual presentation of the implementation calendar on the web at <http://blog.atu.edu/onetech/> which anyone can access and see what meetings or training sessions are being held each month. Dr. Underwood invited members of the Senate to attend the meetings of the One Tech Committee for up-to-the-minute discussions and updates.

Dr. Underwood then logged in to <http://onetech.atu.edu/cp/home/loginf> which is the access point for the Luminis portal. Once a user name and password are entered, the user can then access the Luminis portal, which is merely a website from which the user will eventually be able to go to the student information system, Blackboard, finance, and other areas simply by clicking on tabs. The user’s role at the University will determine what access they have. Currently, only the finance tab is active for those individuals who have any budgetary responsibilities. Dr. Underwood emphasized that this portal will only be for University employees and students to use; the Tech website will continue to exist and provide information to the general public. He noted that an email system being implemented may

allow the University to require students to use this system for official email communications between the University and the student. Faculty and staff will still be allowed to use Outlook or whatever email software they are currently using. Dr. Underwood reported that there is a calendar function in Luminis which will allow individuals in the same office to share calendars if they so choose. He stated that the Luminis portal may not open up until spring for everyone as the only significant tab or access available right now is for finance.

Dr. Underwood stated that another component of the Luminis system is the ability to manage the content of the Tech website. This capability will not be active until next April, but will allow for easy update of text on the website by use of a text editor. The site's webmaster will no longer have to know HTML. Cascading style sheets will be used for the first few layers of the website; in other words, the home page, the school pages, and the departmental pages will all look similar. Beyond that, the University will not require uniformity in the appearance of the web pages.

Dr. Cannon questioned whether the integration of Blackboard and Banner will allow for grades posted in Blackboard to automatically be posted in Banner. Dr. Underwood stated that it would.

Dr. Mitchell questioned the accuracy of an article he read stating that only 48 percent of the students who applied to Tech for fall, 2006, were admitted. Dr. Underwood stated that he was unsure of where that statistic came from.

Dr. Fithen questioned whether adjustments to processes and procedures in Banner could be made once the implementation is "complete." Dr. Underwood stated that any of the processes in Banner could be changed or adjusted as needed over time.

When asked whether Computer Services had received additional personnel to assist with this implementation, Dr. Underwood stated that two positions were added last year.

Dr. Underwood reiterated that as part of the process for making policy decisions related to Banner he would contact the Senate for input. Dr. Underwood and Mr. Wester excused themselves from the meeting at this time.

REPORTS BY
ELECTED
STANDING
COMMITTEE
CHAIRS

President Jackson asked Ms. Zimmer to speak for the Faculty Salary, Benefits, and Awards Committee. Ms. Zimmer commented that her committee is also part of the University's Insurance Committee and reported that the Insurance Committee had met recently. Blue Cross and Blue Shield has announced that insurance premiums for calendar year 2007 will remain the same with no increase. She stated that the committee had asked the Human Resources representative to look at a stand alone vision policy. Dr. Roberts asked if the committee had information relating to how many employees had individual plans, family plans, etc. Ms. Zimmer stated that only Human Resources has that information.

Ms. Rhodes reported that the Admissions, Academic Standards, and Student Honors Committee had not yet met; however, she noted that there are pending issues which will necessitate a future meeting at which time a chair will be elected.

Ms. Rhodes reported that the Curriculum Committee had met and elected officers. The committee is working on the general education goals issue as directed by Dr. Hamm last year and hopes to finalize this soon.

President Jackson distributed the minutes of the Faculty Welfare Committee organizational meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:
DISCUSSION ON
SEXUAL
HARASSMENT
POLICY

President Jackson stated that Dr. Mitchell had questions during the August meeting concerning this policy as approved by the Board of Trustees on June 24, 2006. She stated that she had gone back to “refresh her memory” and reported that she and Ms. Wilkerson had met with Dr. Brown and Mr. Pennington two or three times in May and June to work on the section of the policy concerning the report of a complaint. The policy recommended by the Senate had indicated that a faculty member would report a complaint of sexual harassment to a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee. The policy approved by the Board indicates that the faculty member should file their complaint with the Affirmative Action Officer and may also choose to present a copy of the complaint to a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee. She noted that the change would allow for a central office to maintain records of a sensitive nature rather than having those kept by members of a committee with limited terms. President Jackson noted that the policy allows for the individuals involved to have an advisor of their choosing at meetings and interviews.

Dr. Mitchell reported that he had received an inquiry from Dr. Carl Greco, a member of last year’s Senate, concerning the policy and asked that the Senate have copies of both what was recommended last year and what was actually approved for comparison before next month’s meeting. He asked that this issue be continued as an item for discussion on the October agenda.

Dr. Philpotts questioned whether the sexual harassment policy has been communicated with the students. President Jackson reported that the policy is in the *Student Handbook* as an attachment. She also reported that the students were advised of the policy during their orientation sessions in August.

OPEN FORUM

President Jackson distributed proposed changes/additions to the questions asked on the course evaluation forms. She stated that Dr. Hamm will address these with the Senate in October.

Dr. Kirkconnell questioned whether the Senate could record speakers who have “lots of information” to impart, such as Dr. Underwood and Mr. Wester, to ensure an accurate translation of that information in the minutes. President Jackson stated that she knew of no reason why this could not occur as long as the speaker agreed to be recorded.

Dr. Mitchell questioned why the Senate as a group was not being involved in the Strategic Planning initiative underway this fall. Several members of the Senate indicated they had been invited to attend a session with the consultant. Dr. Cannon noted that the Senators can still represent the Senate and the faculty at large at these sessions whether other Senators are present or not.

Dr. Kirkconnell questioned whether the Senate wanted to pursue the issue of grade inflation that he had presented at the August meeting. Dr. Mitchell observed that he had considered this issue and had reviewed the spring, 2006, grade distribution analysis. He noted that there were marked discrepancies in the distribution of grades between certain schools and departments with certain departments giving numerous A’s. Dr. Cheryl Smith asked the Senate to also consider departments and instructors where students seem to fail quite frequently. Dr. Robertson stated that the problem then appeared to be inappropriate grades. Dr. Mitchell asked that this issue be placed on the agenda for October and that the grade

distribution analysis for both fall, 2005, and spring, 2006, be included in the Senators' packets for review. President Jackson reminded the Senators that for some classes there will be justifiable reasons for the students making high grades. For instance, she stated that in some of her senior level classes, the weaker students have already been "weeded out" in the lower level classes, and only the best are allowed to enroll in the senior level course. She stated that she would expect those students to do very well.

Dr. Norton questioned the possibility of establishing a noise ordinance on the campus. Specifically, she questioned whether an ordinance related to loud vehicle radios could be established. President Jackson stated that she will check with the city and with campus security first to see if such an ordinance already exists. She will also check the *Student Handbook*.

Dr. Stephenson questioned whether the University has a campus plan relating to acts of nature or terrorism. Mr. Ihde stated that a campus plan has been developed by the Department of Emergency Administration and Management and that it is in the final stages for approval. He also noted that a plan related to the campus and a pandemic event will also be forthcoming. Mr. Ihde stated that a pandemic exercise will be held in October; another emergency exercise will be held on campus in November.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

There were no additional announcements or information items.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shelia Jackson, Ph.D., President



Scott Kirkconnell, Ph.D., Secretary