

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Monday, October 8, 2007, at 3 p.m. in Room 300 North of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Cheryl Smith	Dr. Tim Smith
Dr. Glen Bishop	Mr. Rick Ihde
Dr. Willy Hoefler	Dr. Sammie Stephenson
Dr. Jeff Mitchell	Dr. Pat Buford
Dr. Robert Fithen	Dr. Cathy Baker
Dr. Scott Kirkconnell	Ms. Sarah Robison
Dr. Andrew Cannon	Dr. Hanna Norton
Dr. David Ward	Dr. Annette Holeyfield
Dr. Trey Philpotts	

Dr. Jack Hamm, Dr. Ron Nelson, Dr. John Krohn, and Dr. Joe Stoeckel were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Tim Smith called the meeting to order and asked for action on the September 10, 2007, minutes. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Dr. Buford, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

President Smith asked to amend the order of the agenda to discuss the issue of final exams with Dr. Hamm at this time. Motion by Dr. Holeyfield, seconded by Dr. Kirkconnell, to amend the order of the agenda. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
FINAL EXAMS

President Smith asked Dr. Hamm for comments. Dr. Hamm observed that a number of questions concerning final exams and exam week had arisen over the past several semesters which had prompted him to review the *Faculty Handbook*. He distributed a draft modification of the policy in the *Handbook* and advised that it is intended to be a clarification of wording and intent. Dr. Hamm noted that he would be taking the modification to the Board of Trustees this month for their consideration and that, if approved, the changes would take effect with the current semester. Dr. Hamm indicated that the policy's intent had always been for faculty to give end-of-term exams, which could consist of written exams, presentations, projects, and other methods of course assessment; he emphasized, however, that the policy also intends for the end-of-term exams to occur during the examination week established by Academic Affairs. Therefore, the modification for consideration by the Board of Trustees contains language which will make the policy's intent clearer for all faculty. He noted that any deviation from the policy, other than those referenced in the policy itself such as laboratory exams, could be considered insubordination. He asked that any comments or suggestions regarding the policy be sent to him by this Friday, October 12, 2007.

Dr. Mitchell noted that many of his final exams were designed to only take an hour to complete and questioned whether giving an exam at 9 a.m. during the 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. time period would be considered an act of insubordination. Dr. Hamm stated that he would not see that as a problem.

Dr. Hamm noted that laboratory classes have traditionally given their end-of-term exams during the last week of classes so that the exam for the lecture portion of the course could be given during finals week. He stated that other special courses may also need to have their final exam during the last week of classes, and the policy provides a means by which the school deans can approve those exceptions. Dr. Hamm indicated that Academic Affairs would reissue the examination schedule for fall, 2007, with additional language indicating the policy clarification once approved by the Board. He stated that the changes in policy would be distributed through email and other means.

Dr. Bishop questioned whether there was an avenue available for gaining an exemption beyond those outlined in the policy itself. Dr. Hamm stated that other exemptions must be submitted to the appropriate dean's office for special consideration. Dr. Philpotts noted that many faculty had distributed syllabi at the beginning of the semester with their plans for final exam week stated which may be in conflict with the changes. Dr. Hamm responded that he had considered this but believed that the issue was important enough that any changes approved by the Board should take effect immediately. He stated that he realized that some issues may need to be worked out with the deans for this semester. Dr. Hamm also expressed his opinion that the changes may cause some faculty to rethink what they are doing for end-of-term exams. Dr. Kirkconnell noted that many of the faculty in his school were supportive of final exams being given only during finals week. Dr. Hamm noted that the policy applies to all courses, graduate and undergraduate. Dr. Bishop questioned how the policy applies to web courses. Dr. Hamm stated that the policy applies to web courses also in that the final exam for the course needs to be given during finals week. The only difference between web courses and face-to-face classes will be that the web courses will not have to physically meet during finals week.

Dr. Hamm emphasized that he believed that it was important for examination week to include examination activities and stated that he was "convinced that we will be a better institution if we do this."

At this time, Dr. Hamm excused himself from the meeting.

The order of the agenda was resumed.

CURRICULAR ITEMS

The following action was taken with regards to recommendations from the Curriculum Committee.

Motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Cannon, to consider the following proposals: (1) Department of Electrical Engineering -- modify the curriculum in Electrical Engineering as follows: delete four hours of biological sciences by requesting an exemption from the general education life-science requirement, and add ELEG 3153, Electrical Machines, to the required curriculum; and (2) Department of Mechanical Engineering -- modify the curriculum in Mechanical Engineering as follows: delete four hours of biological sciences by requesting an exemption from the general education life-science requirement. Motion to consider carried.

Dr. Mitchell stated that he had discussed the proposals with his faculty at a departmental meeting, and the majority was opposed to making any changes to the general education core on a "piecemeal" basis. Dr. Norton stated that her experience was similar in Speech, Theatre, and Journalism. She also noted that one comment made to her was the "idea of our general education core being part of our identity as a university." Dr. Stephenson stated that

her department had advocated leaving this decision to the administration. Several faculty indicated that their colleagues had advocated against case-by-case changes or exceptions to the general education core. Ms. Robison commented that her department was more likely to “side with Engineering” due to accreditation issues that computer science is facing. Dr. Buford referenced the original guidelines related to establishing the state minimum core from 1990 and reported that those guidelines had noted specifically that engineering students may need different routes for completing general education.

Motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Hoefler, to approve the amendments to the engineering curricula as proposed. Motion failed.

Motion by Dr. Buford, seconded by Dr. Cannon, to recommend a review of the general education core curriculum at the earliest timeframe. Motion carried.

Dr. Stoeckel asked to speak. He encouraged a review of general education, including the need for establishing flexible hours in the social sciences area and for considering issues relating to professional degrees and the competition for students in those disciplines which the general education core could affect.

STUDENT ATHLETES AND CLASS ATTENDANCE

President Smith asked for a motion to discuss the issue of student athletes and class attendance. Motion by Dr. Philpotts, seconded by Dr. Mitchell, to place the item on the table for discussion. Motion carried. President Smith reported that Dr. DeBlack had talked with Dr. Brown about this issue and noted that Dr. Brown opposes any special registration for athletes. Dr. DeBlack had suggested that coaches be advised to send the practice schedule with the student athlete for registration purposes. President Smith noted that he had asked Dr. DeBlack to ask Dr. Brown if the practice schedule list the Advising Center uses could be distributed to all faculty. Dr. Cannon noted that the student really needs to provide both their practice schedule and their travel schedule for accurate advising into classes.

Dr. Cannon noted a recent occurrence in one of his classes where the student athlete provided the appropriate notification for missing the class, signed by the Athletic Director. However, Dr. Cannon stated that he had driven by the practice field later and the athletes were still practicing; they had not actually left for the game. He stated that this concerned him as his understanding was that the student could not meet his class for travel reasons. Dr. Mitchell asked President Smith to suggest to Dr. DeBlack that student athletes should not miss class for practices.

Dr. Cannon emphasized that the next Senate meeting would be after pre-registration for spring had begun. President Smith stated that he would look into these issues immediately.

NEW BUSINESS: HIRING PRACTICES

President Smith asked for a motion to consider the issue of hiring practices. Motion by Dr. Philpotts, seconded by Dr. Kirkconnell, to place this item on the table for discussion. Motion carried. President Smith referenced the memorandum drafted by Dr. Kirkconnell and asked for comments or suggestions. Dr. Kirkconnell emphasized that the Senate and faculty should do whatever can be done to improve hiring practices on the campus. He also noted that the Faculty Welfare Committee might not be the best committee to look at the issue and suggested that an ad hoc committee with members from all over campus might be formed. Dr. Philpotts stated that any request for review of the issue should be more focused. Dr. Bishop suggested training for faculty on how to interview faculty candidates. Motion by

Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Holeyfield, to recommend that faculty development activities include a series of workshops on the hiring process. Motion carried.

GROWTH OF FACULTY

President Smith asked for a motion to consider the issue of the growth of faculty. Motion by Dr. Buford, seconded by Ms. Robison, to place this item on the table for discussion. Motion carried. Dr. Bishop stated that the request for this information had been made to him by one of his fellow faculty members. Dr. Cannon noted that it is the responsibility of the faculty to make sure that full-time as opposed to part-time faculty are hired as the student population grows. Dr. Mitchell stated that the increasing number of adjunct faculty is a nationwide problem and asked if data concerning the number of classes taught by adjunct faculty was available. It was suggested that a more accurate reflection of coursework taught by full-time faculty as opposed to part-time faculty was a teaching full-time equivalency (FTE). President Smith stated that Academic Affairs would provide this information when it was available, and the discussion of the issue would be tabled until that time.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Mitchell noted that he is still working on issues of campus safety. He has requested information from Hendrix College concerning how they financed the bridge crossing Highway 64 in front of their school in Conway. Dr. Norton asked that he also look into pedestrian traffic issues on North Fargo and West M Streets adjacent to the temporary buildings where the Speech, Theatre, and Journalism Department is currently housed. Dr. Cannon stated that he had been told last spring that speed bumps were to be installed on Glenwood which has not yet happened.

President Smith announced that a new faculty member in College Student Personnel, Dr. Christine Austin, had helped at the University of Denver in developing their honor code. He suggested that she be invited to speak to the Senate on this issue in the spring. It was also suggested that the SGA president be invited to that same meeting.

Dr. Mitchell reported a faculty complaint concerning the Tech website and an inability to access a list of academic departments. He stated that this led to a discussion of some of the strange names some departments have. He asked if there was interest in discussing this issue; President Smith stated that the issue would be placed on the November agenda.

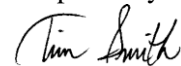
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Smith reminded the Senators of next month's meeting on November 12, 2007.

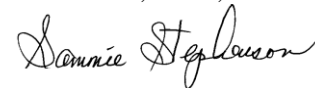
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Smith, D.M., President



Sammie Stephenson, Ed.D., Secretary