

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Monday, September 10, 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 was absent. Dr. Ron Nelson, Dr. John Krohn, and Dr. Tom DeBlack were visitors.

**CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES**

President Tim Smith called the meeting to order and asked for action on the August 20, 2007, minutes. There being no amendments, corrections, or other discussion, President Smith indicated approval of the minutes as distributed.

**OLD BUSINESS:
STUDENT
ATHLETES AND
CLASS
ATTENDANCE**

President Smith asked for Dr. DeBlack's comments. Dr. DeBlack, the Faculty Athletic Representative on the Athletics Committee, reminded the Senators of concerns expressed last spring regarding class attendance by athletes, particularly softball athletes. These concerns had been brought to the Athletics Committee for review, and he asked to report on actions taken during the Gulf South Conference this summer. Dr. DeBlack emphasized that both Dr. Brown and Coach Mullins were supportive of advocating a change to the softball conference schedule to coincide with the baseball conference schedule, namely that games are played on weekends, which would minimize the time out of class for athletes during the week. Although some resistance was met at the Gulf South Conference, Dr. DeBlack reported that Dr. Brown had prevailed during the Presidents' meeting at the conference, and the softball playing schedule for conference games was changed to weekends beginning with the 2008-09 year. He stated that, since the conference game schedule for 2007-08 had already been established prior to the summer conference, the coaches would do all they could for this academic year to reduce the amount of time that the softball athletes would have to miss classes. Dr. Mitchell questioned whether the schedule change was permanent; Dr. DeBlack stated that he believed it was a permanent change. Dr. DeBlack observed that some non-conference games may still be played during the week.

Dr. Cannon questioned what advisors could do when scheduling courses for athletes for spring, 2008, to lessen the possibility of the athletes having to miss classes. Dr. DeBlack stated that Dr. Brown has been opposed in the past to special advising for athletes, and noted that each coach should advise their players what time periods for classes to stay away from. Dr. Norton noted that the Advising Center routinely produces a list of times for each sport which should be avoided when scheduling courses for student athletes. Dr. Holeyfield cautioned that there is a fine line which cannot be crossed in advising student athletes per

NCAA guidelines. Dr. Norton clarified that the list does not list the students by name but only the times for each sport which should be avoided for scheduling classes. Dr. DeBlack stated that he would follow up on this suggestion with the Registrar's Office and the NCAA Compliance Officer, and if such a sheet could be distributed to all advisors, he would assist in that effort.

Dr. Kirkconnell emphasized that the student athletes have a responsibility for learning their academic material and that sports should not be an excuse for not meeting their academic responsibilities. Dr. DeBlack recommended that instructors report academic problems with their student athletes to the appropriate coach with a copy to him. He also invited the faculty to send emails to him directly if they so chose (i.e., tdeblack@atu.edu), and he would follow up on any student issues with the coaches involved.

President Smith asked to amend the order of the agenda to allow discussion of the curricular proposals at this time. There were no objections.

**NEW BUSINESS:
CURRICULAR
ITEMS**

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

Motion by Dr. Buford, seconded by Dr. Stephenson, to approve 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.

President Smith invited Dr. Nelson and Dr. Krohn to speak. Dr. Nelson reported that many of the institutions Tech's engineering programs compete with do not require as many credit hours as Tech's programs nor do they require life sciences. To be able to offer an additional engineering course without increasing overall program hours, he stated that he and Dr. Krohn were asking for an exemption to the four-hour biological sciences requirement. Dr. Kirkconnell expressed his belief that life sciences should be one of the last courses to be eliminated from a curriculum, with both Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Ward agreeing. Dr. Fithen noted that engineering graduates are also facing increasing competition from abroad for jobs. President Smith stated that he had graduated with a music degree from a liberal arts college and was not required to take any science; others reported similar experiences. Dr. Kirkconnell noted that recommending exemptions from the general education core would set a precedent; Dr. Bishop stated his belief that if exemptions were granted for the engineering programs, they should be considered for all programs. Motion by Dr. Holeyfield, seconded by Dr. Bishop, to table this agenda item until October to allow the Senators time to talk with their constituents concerning these issues. Motion carried.

The order of the agenda was resumed.

**OLD BUSINESS:
FINAL EXAMS**

President Smith asked for action on the final exam survey distributed by Dr. Hamm at the August meeting. Motion by Dr. Norton, seconded by Dr. Mitchell, to discuss the survey. Motion carried. Dr. Norton stated that the survey assumes that all faculty surveyed would accurately report their activities for final exam week, and indicated that she did not believe this would be the reality. President Smith asked if the consensus of the Senators was to recommend that the survey not be used; most indicated that this was their preference.

Dr. Mitchell reminded the Senate that he had proposed in the spring that the department heads issue a card to each faculty member close to the end of the semester, asking the faculty member to put into writing their planned activities for giving final exams and for final exam week. It was noted that putting their plans in writing might make the faculty member more likely to follow through. Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Robison, to recommend that the department heads issue cards to their faculty to collect information concerning the nature, date, and time of the finals to be given during finals week which would be turned in and maintained in the departmental office. After additional discussion concerning whether the cards would become part of the faculty member's personnel folder and what consequences were feasible for a faculty member who did not give a final exam, Dr. Mitchell withdrew his motion. Motion by Dr. Cheryl Smith, seconded by Dr. Buford, to table this item until October. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:
DISCUSSION OF
BY-LAWS**

President Smith distributed a proposed addition to the Faculty Senate By-Laws as follows: *Article III, Section 4: Attendance at Meetings. Official meetings called by the Faculty Senate chairperson are open to the general university faculty and invited guests.* President Smith stated that this proposal was in response to a concern expressed about a dinner meeting last spring which was not open to the public and during which university policy was discussed. He stated that determination of whether a meeting was official would rest with the Senate chairperson. Motion by Dr. Ward, seconded by Dr. Buford, to recommend the adoption of the addition to the By-Laws to the general faculty. Motion carried by a two-thirds majority. It was noted that changes to the Constitution or By-Laws were generally added to the standing committees ballot during the faculty elections in the spring. If approved by the general faculty, this change would then go to the Board of Trustees.

**PROJECT TO
IMPROVE
CROSSWALK**

President Smith asked Dr. Mitchell to address this issue. Dr. Mitchell indicated that some additional signage has been placed in the crosswalk at the intersection of Highway 7 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, which is an improvement. However, he noted that it was difficult for drivers traveling north on Highway 7 and exiting east onto Highway 124 to see pedestrians crossing over to the Whataburger parking lot due to the cars parked in front of the restaurant. Dr. Mitchell noted that he had spoken to Pete Kelly in Student Services, who had indicated that the institution had at one time considered building either a bridge or tunnel to assist students in crossing Highway 7. However, Mr. Kelly had noted that Highway 7 is a scenic highway, and he was unsure that a bridge could be placed over a scenic highway. Motion by Dr. Kirkconnell, seconded by Dr. Cannon, to ask Dr. Mitchell to continue looking at possible improvements to the intersection and to also look at safety issues in general on campus (e.g., cell phone usage by drivers, closing inner campus streets, signage, etc.). Dr. Mitchell agreed to look at some of these issues also. Motion carried.

**APPROACHES TO
INCREASE
FACULTY
PARTICIPATION;
ISSUES FOR THE
FACULTY SENATE**

President Smith asked Dr. Kirkconnell to address these issues. Dr. Kirkconnell noted the "considerations likely to increase faculty influence" in shared governance suggested by Dr. Cohoon which had been first distributed at the August meeting: *Do your homework. In the end, speak with one voice. Consider the overall good of the institution and don't get sidetracked into focused, special-interest (or, self-interest) areas. Visit with constituents and discuss at the school level what the general faculty "take" on issues before the Faculty Senate might be.* He emphasized his belief that the Faculty Senate, and the faculty at large, could better represent their interests if these considerations were followed.

Dr. Kirkconnell then noted the suggestions for issues that the Senate might want to consider also distributed at the August meeting. He stated that he would like the Senate to continue to pursue a student honor code with the SGA, to continue to look at the issue of final exams,

to continue to look at campus safety, to look at general education issues, and to look at ways to promote healthy lifestyles. In particular, Dr. Kirkconnell stated that hiring practices should be reviewed. A draft memorandum from President Smith to Ms. Darla Sparacino, chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee, was distributed which would direct this committee to review procedures “to do everything possible to promote the hiring of highly professional, committed, and law-abiding faculty and staff . . .” Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Dr. Ward, to consider the issue of the hiring practices at the October meeting. Motion carried. President Smith asked everyone to review the memo plus the excerpt attached to the memo (Chapter 9 of *The Gift of Fear*, a book by Gavin DeBecker) and be prepared to discuss the issue at the October meeting.

OPEN FORUM

President Smith asked for any additional items. Mr. Ihde asked the Senators to participate in a research project related to online teaching.

Dr. Norton asked if adjuncts could be allowed to use Tech Fit. Dr. Holeyfield noted that the number of physical education and wellness science classes running each semester has severely limited the times available for even full-time faculty and staff use. She did not see how she could accommodate a larger population at this time. Additionally, it was noted that adjunct faculty received paper IDs which cannot be scanned. Tech Fit requires that an individual’s ID be scanned before entrance. It was then asked if the adjuncts could use the swimming pool. Dr. Holeyfield stated that she could accommodate more individuals during the faculty/staff swim times; however, the issue of the paper IDs was still a deterrent. She volunteered to take the names of adjuncts interested in using the pool during faculty/staff swim times and add them manually to a list for the lifeguards.

Dr. Mitchell questioned why overload pay does not commence until September in the fall semester and February in the spring semester. It was noted that, due to the increasing numbers of overloads prepared each semester and the continually changing course schedules through the first week of classes, it was impossible to meet the payroll deadlines in August and January for the payment of overload pay. Teaching overload pay was, therefore, handled like adjunct pay which is paid over four equal installments in the fall semester beginning in September and in the spring semester beginning in February. Additionally, it was noted that this allows for approval by the Board of Trustees on payments to adjuncts prior to their actually receiving a paycheck.

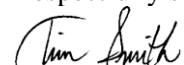
**ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS**

President Smith announced that Dr. Hamm had approved overload pay for the Faculty Senate chair in the event that release time for the chair cannot be granted.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Smith, D.M., President



Sammie Stephenson, Ed.D., Secretary