

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Friday, May 2, 2008, at 12:40 p.m. in the Hickory Lodge Atrium at Lake Point Conference Center. The following members were present:

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

Dr. Cheryl Smith, Mr. Rick Ihde, and Dr. Glen Bishop were absent. Dr. Robert Brown, Dr. Jack Hamm, Dr. Gary Biller, Dr. Carey Roberts, Dr. Jerry Forbes, Dr. Gill Richards, Ms. Beth Gray, and Dr. Carl Greco were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Tim Smith called the meeting to order and asked to amend the agenda to include for action items relating to the addition of TECH 1001, Orientation to the University, and a vote to break two ties resulting from the standing committee elections. Motion by Dr. Norton, seconded by Dr. Stephenson, to amend the agenda. Motion carried. President Smith then asked for any comments or amendments on the minutes of the April 11, 2008, meeting. There being none, President Smith stated that the minutes were approved by general consent.

NEW BUSINESS:
CURRICULAR
ITEMS

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

Motion by Dr. Philpotts, seconded by Dr. Ward, to discuss the following proposal. Motion carried.

Department of University College

(a) add TECH 1001, Orientation to the University, to the course descriptions and as a requirement for first-time, full-time entering freshmen beginning fall, 2008 (i.e., freshmen not taking either CSP 1013, Principles of Collegiate Success, or an orientation course required by their major).

President Smith asked for comments. Dr. Hamm reported that the course had been approved by the Curriculum Committee on April 29, 2008. He also advised that the course had been included in the undergraduate catalog currently in press as his office had expected the course to be presented to the committees earlier in the spring semester. He stated that the decision to keep the course in the catalog when the print submission deadline arrived was his, noting that if the course had not been approved, it would have been simple to waive the requirement. Dr. Hamm advocated the course as having the “potential to help our students become a graduate rather than a dropout.”

Dr. Kirkconnell stated several faculty had approached him with questions, which he would now like to pose. The first concerned the course being included in the catalog without having first gone through the committees. He noted that Dr. Hamm had addressed this

concern but asked if he had anything further to add. Dr. Hamm emphasized that he had never had any thought that the course would not go through the committee structure.

Dr. Kirkconnell noted issues raised concerning the order of the syllabus. Dr. Norton, who had served on the orientation course development taskforce, responded that the committee had ordered the syllabus in a “just in time” manner. Ms. Gray, another member of the taskforce, stated that the syllabus was ordered to match as closely as possible with the student’s progression through their first semester.

Dr. Kirkconnell stated one faculty member had suggested that “how to study” should be more of a “central theme for the class.” Dr. Brown noted this had also been a concern of his initially, and asked Dr. Forbes to respond. Dr. Forbes indicated this course was not designed to teach students how to study, which is the primary focus in CSP 1013; he stated the purpose of this course is to teach the student how to survive their freshman year. Dr. Biller commented that the “commitment for the students for success will mirror the commitment of the faculty.”

Dr. Kirkconnell questioned whether all students should be required to take the three hour course, CSP 1013. Dr. Brown responded that the courses have different objectives, with CSP 1013 emphasizing study skills and TECH 1001 orienting the student to college life.

Dr. Hamm reported that the deans are looking at the orientation courses residing in their schools and are determining which courses will be able to incorporate material from TECH 1001. He stated his office had calculated that approximately 20 sections of TECH 1001 will need to be offered in fall, 2008, in order to enroll all entering freshmen into an orientation course.

Dr. Forbes commented that Tech’s six-year graduation rate is 38 percent and the retention rate is 68 percent. He noted that the retention rate for Tech should be around 75 percent. He indicated his belief that the retention rate can be affected by a number of factors, including “faculty touch, good advising, first year experiences, and summer orientations.” Dr. Brown advised that graduation rates in Arkansas are lower when compared with institutions in neighboring states and noted this was probably due to certain risk factors in Arkansas.

Dr. Brown commended the members of the orientation taskforce for their work and observed that graduation and retention rates are becoming more important to legislators. He distributed copies of an article from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* concerning a new funding formula for colleges and universities which will include retention rates. He noted that the formula would tie ten percent of funding to end-of-term headcounts. Dr. Brown then distributed recommendations from the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Higher Education – Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates. One recommendation would require each institution to require a first-year experience course for entering students. Dr. Biller reported that the total number of high school students is expected to drop after 2010 and emphasized that the university must be able to retain the students who enroll.

Dr. Mitchell questioned why the university needs a blanket policy covering all students if the problem being addressed is identifying those students at risk. Dr. Biller responded that even the best measures available for looking at students at academic risk will not give the university “the best picture.” He noted that this type of course is aimed not just at academic success but also at emotional and social success and emphasized that many students have problems with the transition from high school to college. Dr. Brown observed that many nationally recognized schools, such as Stanford, have orientation courses for their students.

Dr. Philpotts questioned whether faculty volunteering to teach the course will get paid. Dr. Hamm stated that nine-month faculty will receive a \$600 overload for teaching the one-hour credit class, and he reported the course will be developed fully over the summer so that each instructor can be equipped with a notebook of course materials. Dr. Hoefler observed that some curricula do not have many electives and the course will be used as an elective for many majors. Dr. Hamm stated some programs do not have any electives and taking this course will mean that those majors will take more than 124 hours.

President Smith asked for any other comments or questions. Motion by Dr. Norton, seconded by Dr. Ward, to approve the course. Motion carried.

Dr. Brown thanked the Senate for agreeing to hear the proposal. Dr. Hamm asked those interested in volunteering to teach the course to email Academic Affairs.

Dr. Hamm expressed his appreciation to the Senate for their work over this academic year. Dr. Brown, Dr. Hamm, Dr. Biller, Dr. Forbes, and Ms. Gray then left the meeting.

TEXTBOOK ROYALTY POLICY

President Smith asked for a motion to discuss the draft textbook royalty policy. Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Robison, to discuss the policy. Motion carried. President Smith distributed suggested revisions submitted to the Senate by Dr. Greco. It was noted that Academic Affairs had drafted the policy in response to a faculty member's request to require a textbook in his class for which he was the primary author and was entitled to royalties. Upon investigation, it was discovered that two statutes relate to this issue; the policy was drafted to resolve any potential conflicts of interest and, where possible, to allow authors to receive their royalties. Academic Affairs is now asking to slow the process down to allow for additional feedback from the deans and department heads and does not anticipate having a final draft in place before the August Faculty Senate meeting.

President Smith asked Dr. Greco to go over his suggested changes. Dr. Richards asked to be recognized and noted that the policy is "basically a violation of academic freedom" and allows the administration to vet textbooks. He urged the Senate to look at the policy carefully.

ASSESSMENT AND THE GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

President Smith asked Dr. Roberts for his report. Dr. Roberts first reminded the Senate that he is maintaining the standing committees website and reported that several committees had not submitted minutes for posting this semester. He asked that the Senate look into this issue in the future.

Dr. Roberts, who is chair of the University Assessment Committee, distributed a packet of information relating to general education assessment on the Tech campus. He stressed that the Assessment Committee does not oversee the general education core of courses but does have responsibility for assessment of the general education goals. He also reminded the Senate that the general education core has been constructed over time with considerable influence by outside accrediting bodies and legislation passed by the State of Arkansas.

Dr. Roberts noted that the general education goals were updated about a year ago. Since that time the Assessment Committee, in conjunction with faculty teaching various general education courses, has been working on identifying assessment methods for each of the goals. Part of the handout includes the Assessment Committee's recommendations relating to assessment of the general education goals. He commented that the committee is still working on the "ethical perspectives" goal. Some measures for assessing the goals will be direct and will be included in final exams for certain courses and others will be indirect, including licensure and certification scores on national recognized exams. Dr. Roberts stated that one intention is to take the data for individual student scores and connect that data

to the students' T numbers which could give the institution information relating to specific school districts. For instance, this data could identify those school districts where students do well or do not do well in math.

Dr. Roberts stated that as a by-product of their work the Assessment Committee had identified five weaknesses in the assessment of general education: (1) lack of communication among faculty regarding content and the purpose of the core courses; (2) numerous departments are trying to compensate for perceived weaknesses in core courses; (3) confusion and lack of implementation of the *Faculty Handbook* guidelines for course syllabi; (4) no person or group charged with overseeing general education curriculum; and (5) The University Assessment Committee can develop the assessment plan for general education but cannot manage the curriculum. Dr. Roberts expressed his hope that the Senate will begin addressing the issue of oversight of the general education curriculum in the fall. President Smith noted that a subcommittee has been formed to start this process and thanked Dr. Roberts for his presentation.

SPEECH
RESTRICTION

President Smith asked Dr. Norton to report on the issue brought up by Dr. Mitchell at last month's meeting relating to the broadcasting and journalism students not being allowed to mention the Razorbacks in any of their news stories. Dr. Norton stated that she had been unable to speak with the director of broadcasting as he and she had "never connected" but that she had spoken to the faculty advisor for the student newspaper. Mr. Mumert had told her that neither he nor any of his students had ever been advised not to report on the Razorbacks.

APPOINTMENT TO
ASSESSMENT
COMMITTEE

President Smith asked for a volunteer to serve as the Faculty Senate's representative on the Assessment Committee next year. Dr. Philpotts volunteered.

STANDING
COMMITTEE
ELECTIONS

President Smith noted that ties in at-large positions had resulted on the Admissions, Academic Standards, and Student Honors Committee and on the Athletics Committee. Elections by secret ballot were held. Ray Moll was elected to the at-large position on the Admissions, Academic Standards, and Student Honors Committee and Shellie Hanna to the Athletics Committee.

President Smith reported that, out of 250 faculty, 144 had voted in the standing committee elections. He asked that the Senate consider a few changes to the process for next year. He noted the instructions may need to be updated; the possibility of reviewing the ballot before submission be investigated; the option of not voting for anyone on a particular committee be considered; and that listing the school name after the individual's name be considered.

OLD BUSINESS:
ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY/
STUDENT HONOR
CODE

President Smith reported that he had sent out an announcement on OneTech introducing the faculty to the work that has been done so far on the student honor code and had asked for volunteers to serve on a steering committee. Four individuals had responded. He is now going to resend the announcement by email to the "class list" on the Blackboard course used for the standing committees elections.

CAMPUS
SECURITY/
SYMPOSIUM

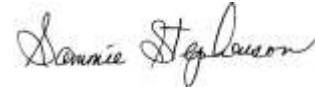
President Smith distributed proposed wording for an announcement concerning the campus security symposium. Discussion centered on whether the symposium should be expanded statewide. It was decided to focus this year's symposium specifically on issues relating to the Tech campuses. President Smith stated he would send an announcement out on OneTech soliciting interested participants.

- CAMPUS SAFETY UPDATE Dr. Mitchell reported that he had renewed his effort to contact the mayor of Russellville concerning the proposed bridge across Highway 7 but had not been able to speak with him as of this date. President Smith thanked Dr. Mitchell for his efforts over this academic year.
- OPEN FORUM No items were presented.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS President Smith announced that his term on the Senate was ending and thanked the Senators for their hard work and support over this academic year.
- ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Smith, D.M., President



Sammie Stephenson, Ed.D., Secretary