

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Friday, March 14, 2008, at 3 p.m. in Room 300 South of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Tim Smith	Dr. Trey Philpotts
Dr. Glen Bishop	Dr. Robert Fithen
Dr. David Ward	Dr. Annette Holeyfield
Dr. Jeff Mitchell	Dr. Willy Hoefler
Dr. Pat Buford	Dr. Cathy Baker
Dr. Hanna Norton	Mr. Rick Ihde
Dr. Andrew Cannon	

Ms. Sarah Robison, Dr. Cheryl Smith, Dr. Sammie Stephenson, and Dr. Scott Kirkconnell were absent. Dr. Jack Hamm and Dr. Ardith Morris were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Tim Smith called the meeting to order and asked for action on the February 15, 2008, minutes. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Norton, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

REPORT BY VICE
PRESIDENT

President Smith welcomed Dr. Hamm to the meeting and congratulated him on his upcoming retirement. Dr. Hamm expressed his appreciation to the Senate for allowing him to speak and noted he had one or two items to relate.

Dr. Hamm reported that the academic calendar for the 2008-09 academic year had recently been finalized with significant changes. He indicated that one change was made due to the Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes being short on class time as established by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Another change is a result of the strategic planning council's recommendation that only those students completing graduation requirements for a given term be allowed to participate in commencement exercises. In essence, only those students completing degree requirements for fall, 2008, will be allowed to participate in that ceremony; those completing in spring will participate in the May ceremonies, and students completing during either summer term will participate in a new August graduation exercise beginning in summer, 2009. He emphasized that the May, 2008, ceremonies will not be affected by these changes.

Dr. Hamm distributed the academic calendar and reviewed the changes, noting that classes for the fall and spring terms will now end on a Monday rather than a Thursday with Reading Day moving from Friday to Tuesday. Exam week will start on Wednesday and continue through the following Tuesday with grades due for all students on that Wednesday. This will allow the Registrar's Office two days before graduation on Saturday to identify those students who have completed degree requirements and those who have not. Students who do not complete graduation requirements (either required hours or grade point average) will be advised of their deficiency and allowed to participate in a future graduation ceremony upon completion of their requirements. Dr. Hamm noted that grades for all students have to be submitted at the same time as the Banner system will not calculate grade point averages for any student for a given term until all grades are posted. He also stated that Academic Affairs will be reviewing the exam week schedule in an attempt to move as many exams as feasible to the Wednesday through Friday part of the schedule.

Dr. Philpotts questioned whether the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the Monday before the Wednesday start in August could be used to make up the MWF class times rather than adding two days at the end of the term. Dr. Cannon asked if class time could be added to the current MWF time periods to make up the time. Dr. Hamm responded that these suggestions could be considered in the future. Dr. Norton questioned who made the decisions relating to the academic calendar. Dr. Hamm noted that Academic Affairs drafts the calendar which is then considered by the Deans Council and the Executive Council. He reported that spring break is coordinated with the area public schools.

Dr. Cannon expressed his concern that international students will be traveling home later in December due to the change. Dr. Philpotts emphasized that faculty should be consulted in the future on changes of this nature.

Dr. Hamm reported that the budget process for the next academic year is underway.

Dr. Cannon asked whether it was time for the promotion and tenure policy to be reviewed. Dr. Hamm expressed his belief that all processes and systems should be reviewed periodically with the possibility of improvement. He emphasized that a review of this nature should be done in some “organized, collaborative fashion with good representation at the table and good data.” At this time, Dr. Hamm thanked the Senators for their time and excused himself from the meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:
STANDING
COMMITTEE
ELECTIONS**

President Smith reported that he had the results of the school standing committee elections and that it was time to prepare the ballot and determine when the election should be held. After discussion, motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Dr. Philpotts, to hold the election the week of April 21. Motion carried. The election will take place throughout that week; President Smith stated that he would send out announcements and reminders at least three times during the election week.

CAMPUS SECURITY

President Smith observed that a theatre production had been postponed last month due to a “unique set of circumstances” and indicated that he had placed this item on the agenda to allow for discussion of items relating to security on the campus. He noted that Mr. Ihde had sent out a link to the campus emergency plan on the Tech website and distributed information concerning the link. Mr. Ihde cautioned that the plan is “complex” and is subject to change. Dr. Bishop questioned whether the faculty as a whole were being advised of the plan and Mr. Ihde observed that he would check. Dr. Cannon stated that some campuses have the ability to make announcements campuswide in emergency situations. Mr. Ihde stated that his department has looked at a system which would allow for direct voice messages through a receiver that would be placed in classrooms. He stated that there could also be a warning siren for the campus which could be used as a loudspeaker to announce an emergency to students or faculty outside. He expressed his opinion that a text messaging system was often ineffective as cell phones are not allowed in classrooms as a general rule. Several senators indicated the need for a summary of the campus emergency plan which might be posted in classrooms to assist an instructor in the event of an emergency.

President Smith indicated that issues relating to campus security were reasons given for postponement of the play production and noted that the production was scheduled to take place just days after the shooting on the Northern Illinois University campus. He reported that the AAUP had asked for a special meeting of the Senate to discuss the issue as a violation of academic freedom; however, he noted that the play was rescheduled while he was considering their request and he had decided not to call a special meeting. Dr. Philpotts questioned Dr. Morris on the normal procedure for scheduling a play production. She stated

that she speaks with her department head concerning a proposed production and noted that this had occurred in spring, 2007, for this particular proposed production. Dr. Morris commented that Dr. Vocate is rarely concerned about the content of a proposed production; her concerns are focused on resource allocation. Dr. Morris noted that she had started ordering materials for this particular play, *Assassins*, at the end of the fall, 2007, semester. President Smith questioned Dr. Morris as to when concern for the play production was first expressed. Dr. Morris stated that after the campus shooting in Illinois she had notified individuals in administration of the fact that prop weapons (starter pistols) were to be used in the production. A meeting was held subsequently in which she reported that Dr. Brown had asked her to postpone the production. When the play was rescheduled, Dr. Morris observed that several security measures were put into place, including the selling of tickets for reserved seating and the presence of security officers at the production. Dr. Morris acknowledged that several letters were written by individuals in protest of the postponement and that she also knew that the ACLU had contacted the campus the day that the play was rescheduled. Dr. Mitchell questioned whether the security measures were necessary. She responded that she did not know and that she “doesn’t know what we are afraid of.” She stated that the “graphically violent content” of the play was the reason given to her initially for postponement and that this reason later changed to the use of weapons. Dr. Norton reported that Dr. Brown had told her that the play was postponed due to the use of the weapons. Dr. Mitchell noted several news articles recently relating to student athletes being implicated in events using “real guns” and stated that the administration should focus their attention on this issue rather than a play production. When questioned whether this event would have an effect on plays presented in the future, Dr. Morris stated her belief that it would and emphasized that she “did not set out to embarrass the university.”

President Smith stated that he was a member of the cast for this play and that he had scheduled his spring semester around doing the play in February as initially scheduled, not in March as rescheduled. However, he noted that he wanted “something positive to come out of this.” He asked the Senate to allow him to read a note written by his wife, Kristin Smith, relating to the issue in which she asked that the campus work together on issues relating to campus violence. Motion by Dr. Norton, seconded by Dr. Holeyfield, for the Faculty Senate to work with a campuswide collaboration of faculty, staff, and students to sponsor a symposium on campus violence and campus safety protocols in the near future. Motion carried. Several senators indicated their support for this initiative. President Smith was asked to speak with Dr. Hamm on how best to begin the initiative which will carry forward into the upcoming academic year.

Dr. Mitchell questioned who he could notify concerning students with behavioral issues. It was pointed out that Counseling Services on campus will work with these students and that a faculty member can email Counseling Services with issues relating to a student’s behavior.

OLD BUSINESS:
ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY/
STUDENT HONOR
CODE

President Smith reported that Dr. Christine Austin had met with the SGA on the subject of a student honor code. Dr. Austin had noted her impression of wariness on the part of some of the students; however, Ms. Leslie Miller, SGA President, had reported that the meeting went well and that the students as a whole were interested in the concept. President Smith indicated that the next step would be the formation of a committee of interested faculty, staff, students, and administrators to establish a dialogue and begin the educational process. He reported that Ms. Miller had asked that a group of senators meet with the SGA and noted that the Student Affairs Committee might be the most appropriate committee to look at the issue initially. Dr. Norton and Dr. Cannon indicated their willingness to meet with a group from SGA along with President Smith. President Smith commented that he believed a representative from Academic Affairs should also attend and stated he would speak to Dr. Hamm concerning the issue.

CAMPUS SAFETY
UPDATE

Dr. Mitchell reported that he had sent an email to the Russellville mayor concerning the idea of a pedestrian walkway from the Tech campus over to the Whattaburger parking lot and had never received a response. He noted he has since called the mayor's office and left a detailed telephone message and has not yet received a call back. He will try to contact the mayor prior to next month's meeting.

Dr. Mitchell stated that there are now two speed limit signs (20 mph) on North Fargo Street. He indicated that he had sent the Public Safety director, Steve Lawrence, an email thanking him for posting the signs and relaying concerns about the visibility issues at the intersection of Fargo and M Streets. Mr. Lawrence had responded that Physical Plant would be painting a crosswalk across North Fargo Street and will also be removing one parking space on each side of the intersection of Fargo and M Streets to assist with visibility. Dr. Norton reported that the crosswalk has been painted and that it appeared removal of the parking spaces was in progress.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Norton noted that she had met with Dr. Clary after an assessment meeting and he had asked that the Senate consider the issue of establishing a general education committee to look at general education issues. She asked that this topic be placed on next month's agenda and she would ask Dr. Clary to attend.

Dr. Bishop asked that Dr. Mitchell also look at the parking issue behind Williamson Hall along North Fargo Street. He indicated difficulty in pulling out onto Fargo from the parking lot on the Williamson Hall side of the street due to poor visibility.

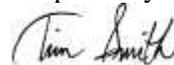
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Smith stated that the next meeting of the Senate would be on April 11 at 3 p.m. He reminded the Senators that both he and the recording secretary should be notified if a senator cannot attend.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Smith, D.M., President