

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Friday, February 12, 2010, at 3 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Jennifer Helms	Dr. David Eshelman
Dr. Glen Bishop	Dr. Penny Willmering
Dr. Eric Lovely	Dr. Tom Limperis
Dr. Jim Walton	Mr. David Mudrinich
Dr. Linda Bean	Dr. Jeff Robertson
Dr. Alex Mirkovic	Dr. Cathy Baker
Mr. Ken Futterer	Dr. Larry Morell

Dr. Annette Holeyfield, Dr. Gill Richards, and Dr. V. Carole Smith were absent. Dr. John Watson, Vice President for Academic Affairs, was a visitor.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Bishop called the meeting to order and asked for action on the minutes of the December meeting. Motion by Dr. Walton, seconded by Dr. Bean, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
SALARY EQUITY
SURVEY

President Bishop asked Dr. Watson to address this issue. Dr. Watson distributed a list of the 36 (37 counting Arkansas Tech as part of the sample group) peer institutions (SREB category 3 and 4) reported through CUPA and used for the calculation of the salary medians by discipline and rank. Dr. Watson stated that, at the time the survey was first formulated by Dr. Hamm, Arkansas Tech was either still a category 5 or had just become a category 4 institution. He noted that SREB institutions were used as the comparison group for the survey calculations because ADHE uses primarily SREB data when determining line-item maximum salary ranges, etc. Dr. Watson also emphasized that the purpose of the survey is to fund each full-time faculty position at a salary level needed for replacement of that individual should they leave. Currently, the survey calculates the increase needed by faculty position to bring that position to 85 percent of the median salary for that discipline and rank. He reported that, had the institution been able to fund "equity" for 2009-10, 57 faculty members would have received a salary increase based on the survey data. Dr. Watson noted his concern that changes to the method of calculating salary medians will affect some faculty positively and some negatively.

Mr. Mudrinich noted his concern that faculty with less experience were making the same salary as those with more experience. He questioned whether using a higher percentage for calculating promotion increases could help offset this. Dr. Watson stated he is willing to look at those percentages but cannot promise a change at this time.

Dr. Walton questioned whether a salary study had been conducted utilizing the four-year institutions in Arkansas; Dr. Watson indicated that such a study had not been conducted.

Dr. Lovely noted his concern that some of Arkansas Tech's programs may be unique to the extent that comparable programs at institutions within the peer group are few, and therefore, the data gathered by the survey was insufficient for meaningful salary medians to be

calculated. He suggested utilizing national averages by disciplines in order to increase the sample size and noted that the institution might have to scale back to 82 or 83 percent of the median when performing the study to compensate for the anticipated higher salary medians. Dr. Watson stated that he would be willing to look at all master's level II institutions to see how the medians would compare. Dr. Lovely questioned whether years of service could be included mathematically within the salary calculations. Dr. Watson stated that this would entail defining "experience," noting that it could include years only at ATU, years at other institutions of higher education, years at public schools, years at community colleges, etc. He stated he has sympathy with this point of view as he had questioned Dr. Hamm himself on this very issue, but reminded the group that the original intent of the survey is to focus on positions, not individuals.

Dr. Robertson stated that the institution does not just compete for faculty from SREB states. Dr. Watson emphasized he is willing to look at broadening the survey sample as long as it does not penalize more faculty than it helps. Dr. Lovely questioned why promotion consideration was delayed a year in the calculations. Dr. Watson noted that the survey compares equal ranks at a point in time and that promotions do not take effect until the fall term of the next academic year.

Dr. Morell expressed his concern that the institution will fall behind in being able to attract new faculty due to salaries if equity funding is delayed again due to budgetary constraints. Dr. Watson stated he is also concerned about this very scenario.

Dr. Lovely questioned whether Dr. Watson would be open to the idea of having a subgroup of the Senate look at the survey numbers. Dr. Watson responded he would be glad to share the survey data with Dr. Bishop.

**NEW BUSINESS:
MID-TERM GRADES
FOR ALL
STUDENTS**

President Bishop asked Dr. Watson for comments on this issue. Dr. Watson reported that the Admissions, Academic Standards and Student Honors Committee had recommended all students receive mid-term grades as part of retention efforts. He stated that this idea had also been endorsed by the Deans Council and the Strategic Planning Council and would be going back to a previous practice. Dr. Watson noted the concern that some faculty will give blanket grades but stated he felt the majority of the faculty would treat the change "the way they should." He asked for any thoughts on this initiative, stating that it would be next fall before the change would be made.

Dr. Robertson stated that a grade given at mid-term may be based on only a small percentage of the total points for the course and be misleading for many students. Dr. Walton advocated having students talk to their instructors before being allowed to drop a class to allow the instructor an opportunity to explain the student's grade to them. Dr. Eshelman reported that the faculty in Speech, Theatre, and Journalism most opposed to this change were those teaching mostly upper division classes. Dr. Mirkovic questioned whether a grading system of pluses and minuses (A-, B+, etc.) could be considered.

Dr. Watson noted a consensus that the reporting of mid-term grades be limited to freshmen and sophomores and that instructors should sign the drop forms. He stated he would take the suggestions back to the Deans Council for further discussion.

Mr. Futterer noted that the academic calendar for 2010-11 does reflect the reduction of one week for both fall and spring and the counting of finals as class time. He thanked Dr. Watson for his efforts on getting the calendar changed.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE
TO REVIEW
PROMOTION AND
TENURE POLICY

President Bishop asked Dr. Bean to address this issue. Dr. Bean stated that she would like to have a subcommittee of the Senate review/edit the promotion and tenure policy for consistency. Motion by Dr. Lovely, seconded by Mr. Futterer, to form the subcommittee. Motion carried. Dr. Morell, Dr. Helms, and President Bishop volunteered to assist Dr. Bean with this effort.

SUBCOMMITTEE
TO REVIEW
ADJUNCT
FACULTY
BENEFITS AND
PRIVILEGES

President Bishop asked Dr. Baker and Dr. Eshelman for any comments. Dr. Eshelman indicated his interest in forming a standing committee to represent the interests of adjuncts on the campus. He noted that 105 adjuncts taught in fall, 2009, representing over 57 teaching FTE. Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Willmering, to establish a subcommittee to study the formation of a standing committee to represent adjuncts. After clarification, Mr. Futterer amended his motion: to establish a subcommittee to look into representation of the adjunct faculty in faculty governance issues. Amendment approved. Motion to establish subcommittee as amended approved. Dr. Baker, Mr. Futterer, Dr. Willmering, and Dr. Lovely volunteered to serve with Dr. Eshelman on the subcommittee.

President Bishop noted that the standing committee elections are upcoming. Motion by Dr. Bean, seconded by Dr. Mirkovic, to discuss this issue at this time. Motion carried. Dr. Robertson volunteered to prepare the electronic ballot. President Bishop asked for volunteers to assist Dr. Robertson when it was time to “count the ballots.” Mr. Futterer, Dr. Mirkovic, and President Bishop volunteered to assist.

OPEN FORUM

President Bishop asked for items for Open Forum. Dr. Mirkovic asked that a discussion of a grading system including pluses and minuses be added to next month’s agenda.

President Bishop questioned whether the Senate would like for Dr. Underwood to address technology issues at the March meeting. Items for discussion include the OneTech portal, imaging and re-imaging of laboratory computers, and “broken” web links. It was suggested that Dr. Underwood would need to bring personnel with him from Computer Services in order to address most of the issues. Mr. Michael Stoker from Public Relations will also be invited to attend to discuss issues relating to the website.

Dr. Lovely questioned what exactly had happened with the academic calendar. It was noted that the fall and spring semesters had been shortened by one week each. This allowed for the summer I start in 2010 to be delayed by a week. It will also allow for the spring 2011 start to be moved forward one week also. The start dates for fall and spring will be similar to those utilized in the past.

Dr. Lovely questioned whether there had been any feedback on the recommendation to change the hiring policy. President Bishop stated there was none as of yet.

Dr. Lovely asked that Brian Lasey from Physical Plant be invited to the April meeting to talk about recycling on campus.

Dr. Bean reported that a technology recycle day on April 2 is being sponsored by several student organizations.

Dr. Lovely stated he would like to have as an item for the next agenda the formation of a subcommittee to be involved in assisting Dr. Watson with the salary equity survey.

Dr. Lovely asked to have at a future meeting discussion concerning the establishment of a subcommittee to look at the standing committees’ membership structure.

Dr. Bean extended an invitation to hold the March meeting in Rothwell Hall and stated she would get back to President Bishop once she had the room identified.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Bishop reported that the Recreation and Park Administration faculty have been helping with the Russellville Public Schools' fifth grade camp for several years. The camp is held in Ferndale at a Presbyterian site which is currently looking for volunteers to help prepare and ship out care packages to Haiti. He encouraged faculty to let their student groups know in case any would like to volunteer in this effort.

Mr. Futterer announced that the musical performance, *A Little Night Music*, will be held tonight, tomorrow night, and Sunday.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Glen Bishop, Ph.D., President



Cathy Baker, Ph.D., Secretary