

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Monday, October 11, 2010, at 4 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Jennifer Helms	Mr. Ken Futterer
Dr. Dan Bullock	Dr. V. Carole Smith
Dr. Eric Lovely	Dr. Susan Underwood
Dr. James Walton	Dr. Michael Garner
Dr. Linda Bean	Dr. Penny Willmering
Dr. Cathi McMahan	Dr. Tom Limperis
Dr. David Eshelman	Ms. Annette Stuckey
Mr. David Mudrinich	

Dr. Alex Mirkovic, Dr. Gill Richards, and Dr. Robin Lasey were absent. Dr. Robert Brown, Dr. John Watson, and Mr. Thomas Pennington were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER

President Bean called the meeting to order and asked to suspend the order of the agenda to allow Dr. Brown to speak. There was a consensus to suspend the order of the agenda. Dr. Brown stated President Bean had spoken with him concerning the Senate's interest in FERPA (i.e., Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) law and guidelines. He commended the Senate on their concern with FERPA compliance, "a set of laws about which we have no choice." He noted the implications for students if the university is out of compliance in that students would not be eligible for federal financial aid. Dr. Brown reported he has asked Mr. Pennington to schedule a FERPA workshop for the benefit of the Senate.

Dr. Brown noted three additional topics for the Senators to consider. First, he recommended a seminar on sexual harassment be scheduled. Second, he asked for consideration of a workshop on the private uses of public computer resources. Lastly, Dr. Brown indicated the trend across the nation of many institutions of higher education requiring criminal background checks on those individuals they are considering making offers of employment to. He reported he had asked Mr. Pennington to be available to the Senate to conduct these seminars.

Dr. Brown reminded everyone that Mr. Pennington's job is to represent the university and to "keep us all out of trouble." He stated that in Arkansas only the university's counsel or the Attorney General can represent the university in legal matters. Dr. Brown asked President Bean to work with Mr. Pennington and schedule the FERPA training, which could include a lunch.

Dr. Brown expressed his appreciation for the invitation to speak and commended the Senators on their service. Dr. Brown and Dr. Watson excused themselves from the meeting.

ADDRESS BY
CHAIR

President Bean distributed a list of reminders on basic *Robert's Rules of Orders* procedures. She emphasized that, with the help of the other Senators, she would do the best she could to follow the procedures at each meeting to ensure collegial discussions.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Bean asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2010, meeting. Motion by Dr. Walton, seconded by Dr. Willmering, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
FERPA GUIDELINES

President Bean expressed her appreciation to Mr. Pennington for attending the meeting and asked for a consensus from the Senators present to have a workshop on FERPA. There being a consensus, President Bean asked Mr. Pennington for comments. Mr. Pennington noted his appreciation to the Senate for assisting with past policy and procedural initiatives, namely the sexual harassment policy. He indicated his website regarding FERPA consent issues needs some improvement and he is working on this. He emphasized that “FERPA is to us as HIPPA is to the medical community.” Mr. Pennington referenced Mr. Futterer’s concerns relating to recruitment of students and, in essence, their parents and being unable to talk to the parents about their student once the student is enrolled. Mr. Pennington stated that there is a way to enable this communication with the consent forms.

Mr. Pennington reiterated Dr. Brown’s comments concerning the need for a number of workshops on various topics. He posed that, if the Senate wished to begin with FERPA and a lunch, issues and questions could be brought to the lunch which he would then incorporate into workshops to be given campuswide.

Dr. Walton questioned why an instructor even needs to talk to parents. Mr. Pennington stressed that the consent form gives the instructor permission to speak to parents but does not require it.

Mr. Pennington observed that Facebook is the most visited website in the world and many teachers use Facebook to interact with their students. He stated that use of Facebook by Tech instructors might be another potential workshop.

Mr. Futterer stressed that many faculty have not had FERPA training. He also asked if one universal consent form could be developed for ease of use by faculty. Mr. Pennington stated that consent by a student has to be very specific as to which records an outside person might be able to see, so he is not certain that he can develop a universal form to cover all areas.

Dr. Smith questioned whether faculty can share information about students with each other, giving the example of a student who has been caught plagiarizing class work. Mr. Pennington responded that information can be shared as long as the participants have an “educational need to know.” An example is nursing interns in which discussions concerning student performance must take place between the student’s clinical supervisor and their on campus advisor. Agreements for nursing clinical sites typically have language which allows this type of interaction.

Responding to a question as to whether a high school student taking classes on the Tech campus also has the same FERPA rights as a regular student, Mr. Pennington stated that the high school student in this instance is a college student and has the same FERPA rights.

Mr. Pennington noted that these were all very good questions and he looked forward to working with the Senate on this issue. He apologized for not being able to attend last month’s meeting due to a last minute conflict and excused himself from the meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORT ON
EVALUATION,
PROMOTION AND
TENURE POLICY

President Bean reported that formatting the revised policy as requested by Academic Affairs is “a work in progress” and will take some time. She advised that Dr. Glen Bishop is assisting with this effort.

SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORT ON HIRING
PROCESS AND
FACULTY’S ROLE

President Bean asked Dr. Lovely for a report. Dr. Lovely stated that the subcommittee had met and wants feedback on this issue from the Senate before proceeding. He reminded the Senators that last spring a recommendation to incorporate more faculty involvement in the hiring process was made and the response was that the current process did not need any change. He stated that the subcommittee had discussed a poll of the academic departments to ascertain the level of faculty involvement in the search process for each department. Dr. Lovely noted his belief that some departments do involve their faculty more fully in the search process than others.

Motion by Mr. Mudrinich, seconded by Dr. Underwood, to charge the subcommittee to survey the colleges and departments on their hiring search traditions. Discussion concerned who to survey with the suggestion by Dr. Walton to include senior faculty and department heads. President Bean indicated that the subcommittee could use either Blackboard or Question Pro to conduct the survey. Motion carried.

SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORT ON
ADAPTING COURSE
EVALUATION
FORM FOR ONLINE
COURSES

President Bean asked Dr. Underwood for a report as Dr. Smith had left the meeting. Dr. Underwood reported that the subcommittee had met a few times, had looked at online course evaluation surveys at other universities and had looked at best practices. She distributed the recommendations of the subcommittee for action:

Course Evaluation Form

Question 3:

Current: The instructor was well prepared for each class.

Proposed: The instructor was well prepared for the course.

Question 4:

Current: The class time was valuable in helping my understanding.

Proposed: Delete

Question 5:

Current: The instructor rarely cancelled class.

Proposed: Delete

Question 6:

Current: The instructor generally began class on time and held class for the allotted time.

Proposed: Delete

New Question 4:

The instructor provided timely responses to my inquiries.

New Question 5:

The instructor provided opportunities for faculty/student interaction.

New Question 6:

The instructor provided opportunities for student collaboration/interaction.

Mr. Futterer expressed reservations concerning the new questions 5 and 6. It was noted that "Not Applicable" will be added to both the face-to-face and the online course evaluation forms as a response choice. Mr. Futterer then withdrew his objections. Motion by Dr. Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Helms, to endorse the online course evaluation form provided by the subcommittee. Discussion on how to make online students complete online course evaluations was held. President Bean will discuss this with Mr. Wyatt Watson in Institutional Research. Motion carried.

SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORT ON
REVIEW OF
STANDING
COMMITTEE
MEMBERSHIPS

President Bean asked Mr. Futterer for a report. Mr. Futterer distributed a sample of the work being done on rewriting the elected standing committee memberships to include the supernumerary voting block (which represents the combined College of Professional Studies and Graduate College). He stated that this will take some time.

Mr. Futterer noted that the Convocations and Programs Committee had been inactive since July 1, 2006, and questioned whether this committee should be deleted. After discussion, he noted that he would probably make a recommendation to delete the committee when the subcommittee makes their final report.

CHARGE TO
FACULTY SALARY,
BENEFITS AND
AWARDS
COMMITTEE

President Bean asked Dr. Lovely for his comments. Dr. Lovely noted that the Senate had charged the Faculty Salary, Benefits and Awards Committee (FSBAC) in spring, 2010, to look into the issue of equity pay and the position salary survey conducted by Academic Affairs and report back. He stated that apparently a report had been made to the previous chair, but this report had not been shared with the Senate as a whole. He also commented that the chair of the FSBAC had apparently understood that certain faculty in Fisheries and Wildlife had a grievance concerning the salary survey and upon learning that there was no grievance, had apparently advised those faculty members not to attend any of the meetings. Dr. Lovely also noted that Dr. Watson had stated the salary survey's goal was to fund positions at 85 percent of the median salary for each discipline by rank and that this had apparently been changed to 81 percent. He asked President Bean if she had a copy of the report from the FSBAC.

President Bean read the memo sent from Dr. Genie Black, chair of the FSBAC, to Dr. Bishop and Dr. Watson. From the wording, it appeared Dr. Black believed her committee had fulfilled its charge.

Dr. Lovely noted that the primary issue with the salary survey is that a small subset of institutions with similar programs is used in determining the median salaries by rank and discipline. He noted, however, that programs like Fisheries and Wildlife may not have but very few institutions to compare with. Dr. Lovely condoned using national medians rather than regional medians and adjust down the goal of 85 percent of the median to something lower that Tech could reasonably fund. He advocated having the FSBAC work with Dr. Watson to facilitate this change.

Dr. Walton questioned whether the FSBAC was the appropriate committee for this review. Mr. Futterer noted that no other committee exists to assist with this issue.

Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Lovely, to charge the FSBAC to investigate the procedures used to calculate the equity salaries and confirm that the formula used is indeed equitable. Dr. Walton noted that this charge is very subjective and the Senate should simply ask the committee to report on the process and allow the Senate to determine whether the process is equitable. Motion to amend by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Walton, to have the FSBAC make a report to the Senate on the process used for the salary survey. After further discussion, Mr. Futterer withdrew both of his motions from consideration. Motion by

Dr. Walton, seconded by Dr. Underwood, to charge the FSBAC to investigate the calculation of equity pay and report to the Senate. Dr. Underwood suggested that the chair of the FSBAC be invited to the November meeting to discuss and clarify the charge. Motion carried. President Bean stated she would invite the chair of the FSBAC to the November meeting.

MERIT PAY

President Bean stated that Dr. Mirkovic had fallen ill this afternoon and had been unable to attend the meeting. However, he had sent an email stating that he had no further business with the issue of merit pay. She referenced the handout on merit pay included in the Senators' packets.

NEW BUSINESS:
BUDGETED
SALARY FUNDS

President Bean reported she had visited with Dr. Watson concerning the budgeted raise funds and equity funds which were not paid for 2010-11 due to the Governor's directive to suspend raises for state employees. The funds are still available in the faculty positions and will be paid at the first opportunity if and when allowed by the State and approved by the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees.

OPEN FORUM

President Bean asked for items for discussion at this time. Dr. Eshelman reported that the ad hoc Committee on Adjunct Support met last Friday and had a productive meeting. He will have a report at a future meeting.

Dr. Helms asked for two items to be placed on next month's agenda: instructional technology issues and parking.

Dr. Lovely noted the discussion at the September meeting concerning asking an outside individual to come address the Senate and reported that two attorneys had responded to an invitation on the AAUP list serv. Both had stated they could meet with the Senate but could not officially work for the Senate. He stated that he would hold these names for future reference.

Dr. Lovely reported that he has "a sense" that there is pressure being placed on not holding courses with low enrollment or that those courses might not count towards load. He asked for this item to be placed on next month's agenda.

President Bean noted that the emergency procedures posted on campus do not include a procedure for dealing with an individual and a gun. Dr. Underwood noted that there is also not a procedure in place for dealing with a student who is behaving inappropriately. President Bean stated she would place these issues relating to emergency procedures on the agenda for next month.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Bean announced that the next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be November 8, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda C. Bean, Ed.D., President