

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Tuesday, April 12, 2011, at 3 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Gill Richards	Dr. Cathi McMahan
Dr. Dan Bullock	Mr. David Mudrinich
Dr. Eric Lovely	Dr. Susan Underwood
Dr. Linda Bean	Dr. Penny Willmering
Dr. Alex Mirkovic	Dr. Robin Lasey
Dr. David Eshelman	Ms. Annette Stuckey
Dr. V. Carole Smith	Mr. Ken Futterer

Dr. James Walton, Dr. Michael Garner, Dr. Thomas Limperis, and Dr. Jennifer Helms were absent.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Bean called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2011, meeting.

Motion by Dr. Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Smith, to approve the minutes.

President Bean asked for any corrections or amendments. Dr. Willmering asked for her title to be corrected on page 2 to "Dr. Willmering" rather than "Ms. Willmering."

Motion to approve the minutes, as corrected, carried.

President Bean asked Dr. Underwood to distribute the results of the standing committee elections. Dr. Underwood reported that 130 faculty voted, representing 51% of the total full-time faculty. President Bean thanked Dr. Underwood for her efforts and hard work.

President Bean also reported, as a follow up to a discussion in March, that the Admissions, Academic Standards and Student Honors Committee had approved a change to the repeat grade policy as follows: "Students may not repeat a course in which the highest grade possible has already been earned." This amendment was included in the 2011-12 catalogs.

OLD BUSINESS:
COMMON
TEXTBOOK POLICY

President Bean asked Dr. Lovely for comments relating to common textbooks for multiple sections. Dr. Lovely read Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution of the Faculty Senate of Arkansas Tech University and then read the following remarks.

Article I, Section 2: Purpose – The Faculty Senate shall act for the faculty in all curricular matters other than those involving changes in general academic policies and for the faculty or the administration on matters referred to it for action; it shall serve as an advisory body to the faculty on matters involving academic policies and to the administration or the faculty, as appropriate, on any other matters of general concern to the University.

Remarks: This is consistent with the AAUP position on the responsibility of faculty.

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.

(<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/governancestatement.htm> and also Red book 9th edition page 221).

As the Faculty Senate, our most important purpose is to act for the faculty in curricular matters. This purpose is critical for maintaining standards and the integrity of our academic programs. We also serve as an advisory body. The new textbook policy is an academic policy, so no campus policy was violated in its enactment. But it is uncomfortably close to areas of faculty responsibility including curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction. This policy has sparked more discussion among our faculty than seen recently. Many of the faculty on this campus has suggested that this policy is a violation of their academic freedom.

Results of the AAUP poll with 83 respondents.

Question 1: The administration has created a new textbook policy. All courses with multiple sections must use a common textbook. The administration need not consult with the faculty on this type of policy change.

strongly agree 6.1% agree 4.9% disagree 22.0% strongly disagree 76.1%

Question 2: This policy will not impact the faculty which must use a textbook selected by others.

strongly agree 2.4% agree 8.4% disagree 21.7% strongly disagree 67.5%

Question 3: This policy, forcing faculty to use books not of their choosing, will not impact student learning.

strongly agree 7.2% agree 9.6% disagree 28.9% strongly disagree 54.2%

I think we all understand the advantages of using common textbooks. Most of the faculty in the life sciences enthusiastically supports the spirit of this policy. One is enthusiastic about the specific wording and process the new text book policy was enacted and communicated to faculty. We have used common textbooks in Biology and Fisheries and Wildlife for years, and there are abundant reasons to comply with a policy on this issue. But, there are reasonable exceptions and in the sciences we were always secure in the knowledge that although we always attempted to agree on common textbooks, if there was disagreement the individual instructor was always ultimately responsible for the textbook selection. I have heard more examples from colleagues since the enactment of this policy than I previously considered. We are judged as individuals on our student evaluations regarding textbooks and yet in some cases under this new policy, committees, program directors, or department heads may determine the textbook. Faculty teaching courses which have multiple sections should be encouraged to adopt a common text. However, no faculty member should be compelled to adopt a text not of his/her choice.

We should be able to give advice on academic policies since this is a purpose of the Faculty Senate. This is our opportunity to speak on an issue that relates to what we do in the classroom. Curriculum is not only the courses offered but also the content of those courses. The textbook selected influences the course content. So although this is an academic policy, it is related to issues of curriculum and academic freedom. Please don't prejudge our discussion with thoughts that this is a waste of time. If we ignore this issue we neglect our purpose as senators. Of course, how we advise will be determined by the will of the Faculty Senate.

Motion as read by Dr. Lovely: "Faculty teaching courses which have multiple sections are encouraged to adopt a common text. However, no faculty member should be compelled to adopt a text not of his/her choice." Seconded by Dr. Lasey.

Dr. Lovely reported this statement would be included in the *Faculty Handbook* if approved by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Futterer questioned whether there was any evidence of legislative action regarding this issue. Dr. Lovely reported he had reviewed legislation and did not find reference to any acts regarding common textbooks. Mr. Futterer noted several questions he has relating to this issue, including whether Tech is being proactive with regards potential legislation and what are the policies of other universities in the state. He advocated the establishment of a subcommittee to review and study the issue.

Dr. Eshelman questioned whether this motion would actually affect the policy already enacted by Dr. Watson and suggested, instead, that the Senate try to influence the policy by suggesting means of implementation. Dr. Mirkovic expressed his concern that, although faculty are evaluated individually, the requirement of common textbooks might factor into an individual's evaluation by their department head. Dr. Smith noted discussion in her college concerning the possibility of future legislation relating to common textbooks and stated that the university may be trying to be proactive on this issue. Dr. Richards advocated the Senate should "get our own feelings on record" concerning the policy. President Bean reminded the Senators that 83 out of approximately 250 full-time faculty participated in the survey. Mr. Futterer again proposed that the Senate "do some due diligence" on the issue prior to acting on a motion or resolution.

Motion by Dr. Eshelman, seconded by Dr. Lasey, to table Dr. Lovely's motion. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Mirkovic, to form a subcommittee in order to formulate a faculty-driven policy on common textbook usage, including a review of other institutions' policies, and present to the Senate with a motion for action. Motion carried.

Dr. Eshelman, Dr. Lovely, and Mr. Futterer volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Motion by Dr. Lovely, seconded by Dr. Lasey, to remove the question on the student evaluation form relating to the textbook required for the course.

Dr. Underwood noted that this question is important even though it relates more closely to the course rather than the instructor. Dr. Lasey stated that this question could be included in the future when the evaluation process includes questions relating specifically to a course.

Motion carried.

BANNING USED TEXTBOOK SALESPERSONS FROM CAMPUS

President Bean asked Dr. Mirkovic for comments.

Motion by Dr. Mirkovic, seconded by Dr. Willmering, to ban all unauthorized booksellers on campus.

Dr. Mirkovic stated that this practice appears "unseemly" to him. Dr. Eshelman reported he had spoken with Mr. Pennington concerning this issue and had been told that all solicitors would have to be banned from campus; one group could not be singled out.

Motion failed.

SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORT/ACTION
ON REVIEW OF
FUNCTION OF
FACULTY SALARY,
BENEFITS, AND
AWARDS
COMMITTEE

President Bean asked Mr. Futterer for his report. Mr. Futterer reported he had met with Dr. Watson concerning a proposed function for the Faculty Salary, Benefits, and Awards Committee and that Dr. Watson had asked for time to consider the proposal. As Dr. Watson had not gotten back to him, Mr. Futterer asked that the item remain tabled.

SUBCOMMITTEE
REPORT/ACTION
ON REVISION OF
EVALUATION,
PROMOTION AND
TENURE POLICY

President Bean reported that the subcommittee reviewing the Evaluation, Promotion and Tenure Policy reformat had met on April 1, 2011, and had gone over the changes proposed by the first subcommittee.

Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Willmering, to approve the suggested reformat of the document.

Motion by Dr. Lasey, seconded by Dr. Smith, to remove language in the “Suggested Records of Student Advisement to include in the Teaching Portfolio” section relating to “documentation of students advised.” Motion carried.

Motion by Dr. Lovely, seconded by Dr. Richards, to amend the section on “Suggested Records of Service” under service to the institution by removing the wording “for reduced compensations” as relates to teaching overloads. Motion carried.

Original motion to approve the suggested reformat of the document as now amended carried.

Dr. Lovely noted that substantive changes to the policy could now be suggested. Dr. Lasey noted an objection to allowing fractional points in the evaluation ratings, stating that assignment of fractional points was too subjective on the part of the department head.

Motion by Dr. Lasey, seconded by Dr. Richards, to remove fractional points within the evaluation rating system.

Mr. Futterer noted that fractional points may allow an individual to receive a 3.9 instead of just a 3 and give a better indication of improvement in performance.

Motion failed.

Dr. Mirkovic questioned why faculty receiving credit towards tenure consideration do not automatically receive the same credit towards promotion consideration. He noted that this has caused confusion for some faculty who believed they had negotiated for both when initially employed. President Bean stated she could ask Dr. Watson to attend a meeting and discuss this issue.

Mr. Mudrinich stated that the membership and function of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee should be listed with the other appointed standing committees in the *Faculty Handbook*.

Motion by Mr. Mudrinich, seconded by Mr. Futterer, to list the University Promotion and Tenure Committee in the appointed standing committees section of the *Faculty Handbook*. Motion carried.

Dr. Lovely stated that appeals to decisions relating to promotion and tenure are restricted to procedural issues only. He asked whether a means to appeal the outcome should be included. Dr. Lasey noted this would "open up a can of worms."

NEW BUSINESS:
EMERGENCY
PROCEDURES
VIDEO

President Bean reported that Dr. Biller was ill today and unable to attend to show the video relating to emergency procedures as planned. She stated that she hoped he could come to the next meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Eshelman reported that the ad hoc Adjunct Support Committee had met. Dr. Watson was to have attended but was unable to and had sent Dr. Norton to represent him. He stated that Dr. Watson is trying to enact at least one solution to one concern if at all possible.

Dr. Mirkovic stated he would like to invite representatives of the Student Government Association to a meeting to discuss issues of concern to the Senate with them and allow the SGA the same courtesy. For instance, he stated he would like to talk with them concerning the implementation of a fee to build a fund for students to apply to for foreign travel. President Bean stated that the Senate could discuss possible topics at the next meeting and have the meeting with the SGA in the early fall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

Mr. Mudrinich announced that the senior fine art exhibit is on display in Norman Hall until April 19. On April 23, the graphic design seniors will have works on display.

President Bean announced that the next meeting of the Senate will be at 3 p.m. on Reading Day, May 3, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda C. Bean, Ed.D., President



Alexander Mirkovic, Ph.D., Secretary