

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at 3 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Jennifer Helms	Dr. Cathi McMahan
Dr. Dan Bullock	Dr. V. Carole Smith
Dr. Eric Lovely	Dr. Susan Underwood
Dr. Ernest Enchelmayer	Ms. Jamie Earls
Dr. Sean Huss	Dr. Johnette Moody
Dr. James Walton	Dr. Robin Lasey
Dr. David Eshelman	Ms. Annette Stuckey
Dr. Sherman Alexander	

Dr. Tom Limperis, Mr. Ken Futterer, Dr. Penny Willmering, and Dr. Alex Mirkovic were absent. Dr. Scott Kirkconnell, Dr. Jeff Robertson, Dr. John Jackson, Ms. Susie Nicholson, Ms. Jennifer Fleming, Dr. Charles Gagen, Ms. Carey Bosold, Ms. Hunter Robinson, Ms. Amber Acord, Ms. Mariah Small, Ms. Rachel Pennington, Ms. Clara Hodgson, and Ms. Suong Nguyen were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Smith called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2011, meeting.

Motion by Dr. Lovely, seconded by Dr. Walton, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

President Smith then ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2011, meeting.

Motion by Ms. Earls, seconded by Dr. Huss, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

Motion by Dr. Eshelman, seconded by Ms. Earls, to amend the order of the agenda and allow discussion of Old Business, Items A and B and then New Business: Item A. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
STUDENT
SERVICES'
SECURITY PLAN

President Smith asked Ms. Nicholson, Vice President for Student Services and University Relations, for comments. Ms. Nicholson reported that a campus security taskforce was formed last spring with an outside consultant hired to help review security issues. As a result, several projects improving campus security have either been completed or will be during the fall semester. These include the installation of new outside light fixtures, the addition of electronic door access to academic buildings, the installation of 40 security cameras and 14 emergency call stations with seven more call stations to be added at a later date, the trimming of trees and shrubs, the addition of another police sedan to the fleet, the addition of two public safety officers to the staff, and the installation of the security gates at key pedestrian crossings.

Dr. Huss noted instances where Public Safety has been called but not been responsive. Ms. Nicholson stated she would look into this issue.

Dr. Walton questioned how the electronic door access would work and she responded that the software works with Banner.

Dr. Enchelmayer asked if a bike patrol or golf cart patrol would help with responsiveness on the busy campus. Ms. Nicholson noted that some of the golf carts are not currently operational but would be repaired soon. She stated some of the officers have been through bicycle training but have not been designated for this duty as of yet.

Dr. Lovely questioned how the installation of the gates helped improve security. Ms. Nicholson responded that the main goal of the gates was to improve safety for pedestrian traffic.

Ms. Nicholson asked for any suggestions or ideas for security improvements to be sent to her. President Smith thanked her for her comments.

REPORT ON
FISHERIES AND
WILDLIFE
PROGRAM

President Smith reminded the Senators of Dr. Lovely's concerns for the Fisheries and Wildlife Program as noted in the August, 2011, minutes, and distributed a letter from Dr. Brown concerning this issue. She then asked Dr. Gagen, Head of the Department of Biological Sciences, to address the concerns. Dr. Gagen reported that funding for the program remains constant at this time but that funding past 2013 is not assured due to factors he would address. He stated he had spoken with Dr. Lovely concerning this issue but may not have made the situation clear. Dr. Gagen described the current thesis-based program as one designed to have limited enrollment due to the nature of the research undertaken by the student and supervised by the faculty. The program was still meeting productivity standards relating to graduates, however, until the Arkansas Department of Higher Education changed the standards approximately two years ago. Instead of two graduates on average per year, now the program must have four graduates on average per year. For programs not meeting the new standards, the institution had to submit an appeal to ADHE to keep the program through 2013, giving the institution time to increase both enrollment and graduates. The appeal was successful; however, Dr. Gagen noted that ADHE will review the program in 2013, and if the number of graduates has not increased to meet the standards, the program will no longer be recognized by ADHE and no funding will be forthcoming from the State, thus killing the program.

Dr. Gagen reported that the faculty had created a non-thesis option for the degree which is currently undergoing review by the Graduate Council. He stated his hope that this option would revitalize the program and allow the institution to keep the program past 2013. Dr. Gagen noted other issues brought before the Senate relating to the salaries of the Fisheries and Wildlife faculty and the salary study undertaken by Academic Affairs and stated that those issues are distinct and separate from the productivity issues.

President Smith thanked Dr. Gagen for his remarks.

NEW BUSINESS:
PHYSICAL
EDUCATION
ACTIVITY
COURSES

President Smith asked Dr. Kirkconnell for comments. Dr. Kirkconnell distributed two handouts, one titled "How to Become Smarter, Happier, Healthier and Younger for Free" and the other a 1979 abstract titled "The Effect of Regular Exercise on Cognitive Functioning and Personality" authored by R. J. Young, an instructor at that time with Washington University. Dr. Kirkconnell referenced his students present and stated they were engaging in research on the application of neuroscience findings in education. He also asked for permission to record (audio only) his presentation. There were no objections.

Referencing the recent curricular change removing the physical education activity courses from the general education core, Dr. Kirkconnell noted that many of the departments were

removing the two hours of physical education activity from their program curricula in order to meet the new state-mandated requirement of 120 hours for a bachelor's degree. He stated he had no objection to this, but emphasized that regular exercise should be encouraged by the university as certain health benefits are currently being documented. He noted a recent study finding that macular degeneration is decreased 70 percent by regular exercise. Other scientific studies have concluded that regular exercise affects depression, cancer rates, dementia, diabetes, heart disease, and other illnesses in a positive way. Dr. Kirkconnell noted several references and links within the handouts which faculty might wish to review to familiarize themselves with the documentation.

Dr. Kirkconnell asked that the Faculty Senate become “engaged” in the issue and noted eight points or recommendations: (1) appoint a subcommittee to look at efforts to enhance cognition and student learning; (2) invite the Physical Education departmental faculty to share knowledge; (3) inform the Physical Education department of the Senate's support; (4) ask for assistance from Mr. Vincent Tinerella, Assistant Librarian, in relevant searches on this topic; (5) “read up” on the topic; (6) solicit ideas from the faculty in general; (7) invite his student researchers to give presentations to campus groups; and (8) seek administrative concurrence that enhanced cognition is desirable.

President Smith thanked Dr. Kirkconnell for his presentation and stated the Senate would address this topic at a future meeting.

APPOINT
MEMBERS TO
TASKFORCE
REVIEWING
PROMOTION AND
TENURE POLICY
REFORMAT

President Smith asked to continue with New Business at this time and discuss Item B. There were no objections. President Smith reported that Dr. Watson is forming a taskforce to review the recommendation by the Senate last spring on the reformat of the evaluation, promotion and tenure policy. He has asked for volunteers from the Senate to serve and she reported that Mr. Futterer had already indicated his willingness. Dr. Lovely and Dr. Moody volunteered to also serve.

At this time, the order of the agenda was resumed.

OLD BUSINESS:
UNIVERSITY
POLICY ON
RETIREMENT
FUNDS

President Smith reported that Mr. Moseley had been unable to attend today's meeting, but noted that the retirement funds were considered exactly that by the university – a retirement fund. Ms. Stuckey reported several faculty in her area interested in this issue. Dr. Huss noted that the university's agreement with TIAA-CREF was the key to this discussion. President Smith stated she would ask Mr. Moseley for a copy of the agreement to review.

Dr. Enchelmayer excused himself from the meeting at this time.

ATTENDANCE
ACCOUNTING

President Smith referenced the information sent by email by Ms. Shirley Goines, Director of Financial Aid, which outlined the policy on monitoring attendance for federal financial aid purposes. She stated Ms. Goines had been unable to attend today's meeting. Referencing statements made previously concerning the amount of federal financial aid funds the university is currently returning each year due to an inability to appropriately document student attendance, several Senators indicated they were following university policy relating to the taking of attendance and expressed their frustration with the situation. Dr. Lasey questioned what the faculty need to do differently. President Smith stated she would ask Ms. Goines to respond to these questions, including the type of documentation needed to prove student attendance, and invite her to the next meeting.

REPORT BY
SUBCOMMITTEE
REVIEWING
COMMON
TEXTBOOK POLICY

President Smith asked for a report from Dr. Eshelman. Dr. Eshelman stated the subcommittee was still working on the policy and was not yet ready to present.

REPORT BY
SUBCOMMITTEE
ON FACULTY
HIRING PRACTICES
AND THE
FACULTY'S ROLE

President Smith asked for a report. Ms. Earls stated that the subcommittee is formulating a survey to bring to the Senate for consideration.

FACULTY LINE-UP
AT
COMMENCEMENT

President Smith asked for a report. Ms. Chronister, recording secretary, noted that Dr. Eshelman and Dr. Enchelmayer had assisted with wording to be included in the emails sent to the faculty prior to each commencement. The wording, which would appear at the beginning of the email rather than at the end, was read as follows:

Before we give you the usual information about graduation, I need to say a few words about the lineup. The Faculty Senate has chosen to maintain the system for lining up that has been used in previous semesters, as they believe that it reflects a tradition at Tech. The lineup is determined by rank and by years of service in rank. The number of chairs and rows of chairs placed on the floor of the Coliseum directly relate to the number of faculty expected to attend. The lines for faculty are counted based on the number of chairs in each row. This is why the lineup is so important. We ask you to stand in line as per the lineup (posted on the Coliseum walls) so that senior faculty are not embarrassed by running out of chairs and being forced to the end of the last row.

Dr. Walton commented that at some other institutions the faculty were led in the processional by the chair of the Faculty Senate.

Motion by Dr. Bullock, seconded by Dr. Moody, to accept the wording. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATION
WITH THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES

President Smith stated she knew of nothing new related to this issue. Dr. Lovely stated he would like to make a motion that the Senate send the Board of Trustee members a letter opening communication lines. The letter would invite them to any future meeting of the Senate, give the times and room for the Senate meetings, note the weblink for the Senate's minutes, and basically state that the Senate welcomes communication with the Board.

Motion by Dr. Lovely, seconded by Dr. Huss, for the Senate to write the letter. Motion carried.

Dr. Lovely reported he would draft the letter; Dr. Walton volunteered to assist.

OPEN FORUM

President Smith asked for any additional discussion items. Dr. Walton expressed his opinion that, while the guests were informative, the length of time taken for the presentations was "not a good use of the Senate's time."

Ms. Earls questioned when the Senate would discuss Dr. Kirkconnell's recommendations. President Smith asked that the Senate review the list and discussion would take place at a future meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
INFORMATION
ITEMS

President Smith stated that the issue relating to student evaluations and the conflict with the *Faculty Handbook* will be discussed at next month's meeting.

President Smith questioned whether the Senate wanted to have lunch on Reading Day, December 6, 2011, and then the meeting at approximately 1 p.m. Several indicated approval. President Smith stated that the lunch would be scheduled. Senators unable to attend the lunch but able to attend the meeting would need to let her know.

President Smith reported that Michael Stoker would be conducting training for the new content management system soon.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



V. Carole Smith, Ph.D., President



Daniel W. Bullock, Ph.D., Secretary