

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Tuesday, March 11, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Dr. Sherman Alexander	Dr. Sean Huss
Dr. Glen Bishop	Dr. Chris Kellner
Dr. Carey Bosold	Dr. Linda Kondrick
Dr. Molly Brant	Dr. Timothy Leggett
Dr. Ernest Enchelmayr	Dr. Eric Lovely
Dr. Marcel Finan	Dr. Kevin Mason
Mr. Ken Futterer	Dr. Johnette Moody
Dr. Beth Giroir	Dr. Michael Rogers
Mr. Neal Harrington	Dr. David Ward
Dr. Annette Holeyfield	Dr. Deborah Wilson

Dr. John Watson, Ms. Pat Chronister, Ms. Liz Means, and Dr. David Bell were visitors.

CALL TO ORDER

President Lovely called the meeting to order and asked for a motion in regard to the minutes of the February 11, 2014, meeting.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Dr. Rogers, seconded by Dr. Bishop, to approve the minutes as distributed.
Motion carried.

President Lovely recognized Dr. John Watson, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and recommended an amendment to the agenda to allow Dr. Watson to address the Senate.

Motion by Dr. Bishop, seconded by Dr. Rogers, to amend the agenda by adding a report by the Vice President as the first item of new business. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:
REPORT BY THE
VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Watson reported the presidential search had produced a pool of 37 applications for the position. He stated the advisory committee had conducted interviews via Skype with seven applicants, and of those interviewed, had recommended five candidates to the Board of Trustees. He indicated the Board will conduct Skype interviews prior to selecting the finalists for on-campus interviews. Dr. Watson commended President Lovely for his representation of the faculty at large on the advisory committee and expressed his appreciation for his service.

In regard to the Faculty Senate's proposed change to add "sexual orientation and gender identity" to the non-discrimination policy, Dr. Watson stated he believed the changes would be presented to the Board of Trustees at either the March or April meeting. He then stated the Senate would need to resubmit the verbiage regarding the change to the Faculty Senate membership, recommending tenured faculty. Dr. Watson expressed his understanding of the Senate's hesitancy to modify what was voted on by the faculty at large, but he stated, as representatives of the faculty, now could be the time to move forward with a collaborative effort to find acceptable verbiage to present to the Board. He offered his support for however the Senate decided to proceed and expressed confidence in their ability to accomplish this amendment to the by-laws. Dr. Watson thanked the senators for their time and excused himself from the meeting.

CURRICULAR
ITEMS

President Lovely asked if the Senate had any motions concerning the submitted curricular proposals.

Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Huss, to approve the following curricular proposals as a block:

Departments of Art and Speech, Theatre and Journalism

1. Add ART 4833, Advanced Web Design, to the course descriptions;
2. Add ART 4883, Advanced Studio Studies, to the course descriptions; and
3. Change the title for ART (JOUR) 4163, Advanced Photography, to Advanced Digital Photography, and modify the course description.

Department of Health and Physical Education

1. Add PE 3593, Methods of Teaching Health and Physical Education K-6 Teacher, to the course descriptions.

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

1. Add the following courses to the course descriptions:
 - a. ELED 2003, Educational Research and the Teacher as a Lifelong Learner;
 - b. ELED 3113, Human Development and Learning Theories;
 - c. ELED 3123, Diagnosis and Assessment of Elementary Students;
 - d. ELED 3133, Integrated Curriculum;
 - e. ELED 3143, Teaching Methods K-6 Social Studies;
 - f. ELED 4033, Classroom and Behavior Management;
 - g. ELED 4912, Internship in Elementary Education;
 - h. RDNG 3003, Teaching Literacy Foundations;
 - i. RDNG 3163, Integrated Language Arts;
 - j. RDNG 4003, Literacy Assessment and Intervention;
 - k. RDNG 4013, Child and Adolescent Literature;
 - l. RDNG 4023, Disciplinary Reading and Writing;
 - m. SPED 3023, Development and Characteristics of Diverse Learners;
 - n. SPED 3033, Foundations of Special Education;
 - o. SPED 3153, Planning, Instruction, and Assessment for Students with Disabilities;
2. Add the Curriculum in Elementary Education; and
3. Modify the Curriculum in Middle Level Education as follows: change the current selection of either English/Language Arts/Social Studies or Mathematics/Science to a selection of two concentrations from English and Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science.

Motion carried.

REPORT BY
DISABILITY
SERVICES

President Lovely recognized Ms. Liz Means, Director of Disability Services, and invited her to address the Senate.

Ms. Means reported the Disability Services website had been updated to include information regarding accommodation, documentation, and information specifically tailored for faculty. She expressed concern that many faculty may not be aware of the information available online and distributed printouts of the website (<http://www.atu.edu/disabilities/index.php>) for the senators to review. Ms. Means announced her intention to provide an online request form for exams to be proctored in the testing center, with the hope of improving the process and making it easier for faculty to utilize. She emphasized Disability Services should be used as a resource not only for students, but for faculty as well, especially in providing accommodation.

Dr. Kellner asked if an official diagnosis is required for a student to receive accommodation. Ms. Means responded it is not required, as there are many reasons a student may not have an official diagnosis, such as the cost prohibitive nature of certain evaluations. She encouraged the faculty to contact her with any questions or concerns they may have.

ACCESSIBLE SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

President Lovely asked if the senators were aware of any programs which had requested the purchase of software that was denied based on the requirements of Act 308 of 2013 for accessible software. Dr. Kellner reported in discussion with a faculty member, he had discovered the GIS mapping software being used in the Geography program was compliant. He mentioned accommodation seemed unfeasible in such a highly visual field.

President Lovely asked Ms. Means if a program without visually impaired students would need to comply. She confirmed compliance would be required for all programs. He then asked if faculty facing difficulty in purchasing approved software could contact her, and she agreed, stating she would be happy to assist the faculty in any way she can. Ms. Means excused herself from the meeting.

METHOD FOR SUBMITTING SUGGESTIONS TO THE SENATE

Dr. Finan expressed interest in providing a means for suggestions and issues to be submitted to the Senate. Mr. Harrington stated the faculty should be able to identify the senator(s) from their respective colleges. Dr. Rogers commented the faculty may, at times, wish to bring an issue to the attention of the Senate anonymously. Dr. Finan asked if the Senate should also discuss issues brought forth by staff members. President Lovely responded the Senate would assist staff to the extent possible, but mentioned the Senate is not representative of the staff. Dr. Rogers noted the challenge for maintaining a “suggestion box”, as the Faculty Senate does not have an office. Dr. Finan suggested this item be removed from further discussion.

SPRING ELECTIONS

President Lovely asked for a volunteer to facilitate the online spring elections through Blackboard. He stated Dr. Jeff Robertson and Dr. Susan Underwood have managed the elections in the past, and could both be used as a resource. Dr. Johnette Moody volunteered to facilitate the upcoming elections.

Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Mason, to hold the spring elections on Monday, April 7 through Friday, April 11, 2014. Motion carried.

Regarding the verbiage of the proposed Handbook changes, Mr. Futterer stated he did not believe the Senate should amend the proposals voted upon by the faculty without a subsequent vote for approval of the newly drafted verbiage. President Lovely agreed, stating it could also be placed on the ballot for the following spring election in 2015.

ONLINE STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Dr. Finan reported he had discussed student evaluations with Mr. Wyatt Watson, Director of Institutional Research, and questioned the rationale for continuing to have students submit evaluations on paper rather than electronically. He stated Mr. Watson had agreed to pilot fully online student evaluations in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Department of Mathematics for the current spring 2014 semester. Dr. Mason noted a statistically lower response rate from online evaluations. Dr. Finan emphasized the importance for instructors to inform students of the evaluation and remind them to submit responses in order to increase participation.

OLD BUSINESS: PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Lovely stated Robert’s Rules of Order allows for a vote by email, such as for the approval of the April/May minutes over the summer break, but requires a stipulation in the by-laws. He noted a change to the by-laws would require a vote by the faculty and Board approval, and would therefore not likely be feasible for the upcoming April/May minutes approval. Dr. Bishop mentioned a stipulation for holding an executive committee vote when the full Senate body does not meet for an extended period of time.

Dr. Rogers stated he did not feel inclined to pursue this change if it would be used for only one particular situation. Dr. Kellner commented changes to the Faculty Handbook could be put forth for review by the Senate over the summer, which could make use of such a stipulation in the by-laws. Mr. Futterer stated the Senate can also be called to meet during the summer.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Dr. Bosold reported the faculty and students in her department were dissatisfied with the fall commencement ceremony being held in close proximity to the Christmas holidays. She stated she had hoped this shift was a one-time occurrence, but the calendar remained the same for 2014. She asked if the senators had been given an explanation. Mr. Futterer reported the Registrar requires ample time after final grades are due to determine eligibility for graduation. He stated the shift in the calendar had allowed students enrolling later in the month to have sufficient time to enroll in Tech. Mr. Futterer noted the calendar cannot be condensed further, and if the university continues to begin classes later than surrounding institutions, the calendar will remain the same.

REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

The Senate subcommittees did not have any reports or updates at the time.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Finan questioned the membership of the Faculty Senate, stating the current representation consists of 20 senators elected by the colleges. He noted certain departments have no representative, while other departments have multiple representatives. Mr. Futterer stated the senators are elected by and represent colleges, and the proportion from each college is based on the number of faculty within that college. Dr. Finan recommended the senators be elected by and represent their respective departments to allow the concerns of each department to be presented efficiently.

Dr. Kellner relayed the concerns of a faculty member regarding the university's remediation rates. He stated, with high rates of both remediation and graduation, one could come to the conclusion this is an "easy" institution. Mr. Futterer asked if the average university ACT had shown an increase in recent years. Dr. Kellner commented both the ACT scores and remediation rates have risen, noting the rate at which students succeed in a remedial course on the first attempt is below average. The following discussion centered on the data presented by the university and the possible misleading effect of comparing ACT scores with the state average. President Lovely stated in terms of performance funding, the formula consists not only of enrollment, but also retention, and admitting students who are more likely to fail does both the student and the university a disservice. Dr. Rogers suggested the formation of a subcommittee to collaborate with the administration to gather and analyze data on student remediation and retention.

Motion by Mr. Futterer, seconded by Dr. Kellner, to form a subcommittee to research the correlation between student success and ACT scores while collaborating with the administration on data findings. Motion carried.

Drs. Kellner and Huss volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Dr. Enchelmayer encouraged the subcommittee to seek out the new Associate Dean for Student Success as a resource once that individual is named by Student Services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ INFORMATION ITEMS

President Lovely announced the upcoming meeting of the Faculty Senate would be held on Tuesday, April 8 at 3:00 p.m. in room 325 of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center.

Proposed curricular assessment forms were distributed for the senators to review. Ms. Chronister explained Dr. Monica Varner, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, has developed an assessment form to be attached to curricular proposals which will replace the assessment portion of the existing curricular forms.

She stated the forms include examples and more self-explanatory questions, rather than broad questions that may not apply to all curricular proposals. Ms. Chronister invited the senators to contact Dr. Varner with any questions or feedback they may have.

Dr. Brant announced FFA Day will be March 20, with expected attendance between 1,000 and 1,500 students.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric C. Lovely, Ph.D., President



Marcel B. Finan, Ph.D., Secretary