

Minutes of
THE FACULTY SENATE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Senate met Tuesday, April 11, 2006, at 4 p.m. in Room 300 south of the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center. The following members were present:

Ms. Peggy Lee	Dr. Richard Knight
Dr. Carey Roberts	Mr. Rick Ihde
Dr. Jeff Robertson	Dr. Sid Womack
Dr. Jeff Mitchell	Dr. Trey Philpotts
Dr. Carl Greco	Ms. Marti Wilkerson
Dr. Scott Kirkconnell	Ms. Sarah Robison
Dr. Brenda Montgomery	Dr. Joe Moore
Dr. Robert Fithen	Dr. Shelia Jackson

Dr. Richard Smith was a visitor.

CALL TO ORDER
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

President Wilkerson called the meeting to order and asked for action on the March 2, 2006, and March 14, 2006, minutes. Motion by Dr. Jackson, seconded by Dr. Moore, to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. There being no amendments or corrections, motion by Dr. Greco, seconded by Dr. Jackson, to approve the March 2, 2006, minutes as distributed. Motion carried. Motion by Dr. Moore, seconded by Ms. Lee, to approve the March 14, 2006, minutes as distributed. Motion carried. Ms. Wilkerson noted that Ms. Chronister could not attend due to a family emergency and that this is the first Senate meeting she has ever missed.

OLD BUSINESS:
REPORT FROM
CURRICULUM
COMMITTEE

Dr. Smith reported that the Curriculum Committee is continuing its review of Arkansas Tech's general education goals. At this point, approximately 50% of departments have provided feedback, and many stressed concern that the structure of the general education program hindered meeting all of the goals. A draft report of the Curriculum Committee's findings will be available April 28.

Dr. Mitchell asked why the Curriculum Committee was examining these goals, and Dr. Smith replied that the impetus came from North Central as part of its examination of Arkansas Tech's assessment efforts.

President Wilkerson then asked for a report next month from the Senate's Assessment Committee appointee, Dr. Montgomery.

MOTIONS
REGARDING
ADMINISTRATORS/
NON-TENURED
FACULTY ON
ELECTED
STANDING
COMMITTEES

President Wilkerson called for action and discussion on the motions noted on the Senate's agenda. Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Dr. Greco, as follows: No dean of a school or head of a department shall be eligible for membership in the Senate (amends Section 3, Paragraph B, of the Constitution of the Faculty Senate). Given that Senators had already exchanged information via email concerning the motion, discussion was limited. Dr. Mitchell stated that the faculty should be allowed to decide the motion. Dr. Robertson called for the question and a secret ballot. Motion failed.

Motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Dr. Philpotts, as follows: No dean of a school or head of a department shall be eligible for membership on an elected standing committee. Dr. Robertson called for the question and a secret ballot. Motion failed.

ELECTED
STANDING
COMMITTEES
ELECTIONS

Dr. Robertson stated no problems had appeared with the Blackboard ballot for university standing committee elections and that candidate position statements should be forthcoming. The timing of the election still depended upon how fast Academic Affairs and Blackboard personnel could create a faculty Blackboard course shell for voting purposes. Discussion ensued on how to ensure faculty vote only once and questions were raised about absentee ballots.

The Senate decided to leave the voting window open from April 24 to May 3. If voters have problems, they should contact Dr. Robertson.

NEW BUSINESS:
MOTION TO
ACCOMMODATE
GUESTS

Dr. Robertson moved that when agenda items involve the participation of guests who are not on the Senate, that the agenda automatically be amended to place them at the beginning of the agenda. Seconded by Dr. Jackson. Motion carried.

REPORT FROM
SUB-COMMITTEE
REVIEWING
SEXUAL
HARASSMENT AND
CONSENSUAL
RELATIONS
POLICIES

Dr. Jackson reported on the sub-committee's March meeting. It was decided to place a draft of new or revised policies before the Senate, then before faculty (for one week). The subcommittee will then meet on April 18 to discuss issues raised by the Senate or faculty, then return a final draft to the Senate on May 2. The subcommittee did have questions regarding the stream of information involved in allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct particularly with regard to the affirmative action officer and various vice-presidents.

Dr. Kirkconnell expressed concern that the proposed ATU policies do not contain the same inspirational philosophical preamble put forward by the AAUP, the University of California, or in the policies which are cited by many universities as a model, those of Yale University. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to develop an exhaustive set of rules to address all circumstances that might arise, making such an overarching statement of general principles very important. He also suggested that either false or malicious (rather than "false and malicious") assertions should be grounds for disciplinary action. He questioned whether the best wording had been discovered for addressing potential conflicts of interest, because, as written, the policy would seem to rule out even a spouse's taking a faculty member's course.

Drs. Philpotts and Mitchell took issue with the wording of the Consensual Relations draft, specifically the perceived contradictions between telling faculty they should not have consensual, romantic relations with students, then requiring them to report such relations to their supervisor. Dr. Mitchell also believed the policy's coverage extended too far regarding what constituted a faculty member's "student." He also questioned to what extent Arkansas Tech policies should govern the private lives of employees.

Dr. Greco asked how the proposed policies would affect married faculty who are in the same department. Ms. Robison stated that State rules regarding nepotism cover most of these considerations. Dr. Womack said that sexual harassment is a major problem on many American campuses even though it may not be a problem at Arkansas Tech. He hoped strengthening Arkansas Tech's policies would prevent such problems developing here. Dr. Philpotts was glad that a solid policy was being put into place, but hoped that it was not understood that consensual relations could occur as long as supervisors were consulted. Dr. Mitchell asked how well this policy will protect faculty from rumor and innuendo.

President Wilkerson requested that the subcommittee send out the present clause and take into account the Senate's and faculty's considerations.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Greco asked about notification of faculty when the agenda for the Faculty Senate had been finalized. The agenda is routinely sent to department heads and deans, but not to faculty. Dr. Greco moved that when the agenda is prepared, that an email be sent to all faculty. Dr. Robertson seconded the motion with the amendment that when minutes are approved, a reminder be sent to all faculty. Seconded by Dr. Womack. Motion and amendment passed.

Dr. Kirkconnell questioned whether a mechanism exists for faculty to be reimbursed for legal expenses, or provided with legal advice, to guide them when they are acting in service to the University, such as happened earlier this semester when a Faculty Senate member felt it necessary to obtain legal advice so that he would ensure that he did not violate the rights of another faculty member. Ms. Robison stated state laws may preclude how much reimbursement can be provided. Dr. Womack said that public school teachers are protected by sovereign immunity unless the teacher does something well out of school policy and that this policy may also apply to state college faculty.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ INFORMATION ITEMS

President Wilkerson reported the following:

- The next meeting for the Faculty Senate is scheduled for May 2. Dr. Hamm will discuss faculty workloads and Dr. Brown will discuss the free speech area. April 18 will be the luncheon sponsored by the Senate and Academic Affairs for the SGA (Chambers East dining hall). Six topics have been agreed upon for discussion: assessment, student participation/role in elected standing committees, campus lighting, emergency response to campus crises, a resolution about smoking on campus, and faculty workloads.
- President Wilkerson asked that attending Senators choose which topics they wish to discuss with students. Drs. Brown and Hamm have also been invited to participate.
- The Convocations and Programs Committee has recommended disbandment. Chairs of elected standing committees should be present at the May meeting to provide annual reports.
- Dr. Hamm reported that we are still working on the budget but should expect a 3 percent salary increase. The May Board of Trustees meeting will be on May 19. He reported that there is still not enough housing and we are looking for other campus areas in which to house students. He also indicated controversy could arise about statewide course transfers given that some two year colleges are allowing students to take courses that four year colleges may not allow students to take without prerequisites. Under the new transfer system, students could transfer these courses from the two year schools without meeting prerequisites. Dr. Hamm stated that most four year schools will oppose this.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marti Wilkerson, M.R.C., President



Carey Roberts, Ph.D., Secretary