

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
December 1, 2023
HSS 1028

Attendees: Ed Salo, Addie Fleming, Dwayne Powell, Katie Camden, Shanon Brantley, Robert Williams, Richard Segall, Sarah Scott, David Pearlman, Guolei (Jason) Zhou, Alexandr Sokolov, Karen Graham, Paul Finnicum, Khem Aryal, Pradeep Mishra, Scott Mangan, Suzanne Melescue, Rollin Tusalem, Gary Edwards, Bert Greenwalt, Veena Kulkarni, DayDay Robinson, Kim Vickrey, Jessica Curtis, Arianne Pait, Andrea Brown, Audrey Folsom, John Hershberger, Toccara Carter, Kristen Sumler, Matt Carey, Bert Greenwalt

Proxy Attendees: Star Holloway for Robert Robinette, Kim Vickrey for Jake Qualls, Fredrick Webb for Cheryl Knight

Guests: Tom Moore, Cathy Reese, Amanda Mohler (President Elect)

Absentees: William Maynard, Ibrahim Duyar, LTC J. Morgan Weatherly, Zahid Hossain

Meeting Called to Order: Ed Salo established a quorum. The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm by Ed Salo.

Order of the Day: Motion to approve the order of the day by Andrea Brown, seconded by John Hershberger, all in favor, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the November 17, 2023 meeting minutes by Paul Finnicum, second by Alexander Sokolov, all in favor, motion carried.

Provost Update/Q&A- Dr. Calvin White:

- The academic calendar was just approved for 2024-2025; approved by committee on campus with a unanimous vote. The committee is made up of students, faculty, and staff. Provost does not push the schedule; sets it up and the committee weighs in. Should be published next week or very soon.
 - On the new schedule, you will see Dead Days added back as the students want these. There is also a planned October break to line up with parent/teacher conferences for schools for faculty/staff (currently says “tentative”).
- Commencement coming up- December 16th. Please encourage colleagues to attend. The Provost has been asked about the possibility of the football bowl game being on same day as graduation and was asked about moving graduation. Graduation will not be moved.
- How are the enrollment numbers? They are still going up and are at an all-time record high. They have shattered every number in the last 5 years. Keep in mind that admitted and capturing are 2 different things. Our highest yield rate is about 38%, but as low as 20-21% in the last 5 years. We’ve got well over 5,000, but not sure what we will end up

with. We are being more strategic with contact and touch points after admission. The Chancellor and Provost went to Valley View this past week and have plans to go to Cabot and Central in the future.

- What is being done with or is there a plan for the area on the west side of campus where houses have been torn down? Wanting it to be some sort of entertainment/family friendly but keep students here on the weekend. That's the plan for the next 10 years. Houses were past the point of return and too much money was going to have to be put into them. Not sure what it will ultimately be. We do plan to lease the land, like what we do with Embassy Suites. We are a “suitcase campus”. We can get better. We've got to give the students something to stay for and keep them here. Provost has heard talk of Top Golf, sports bar, but no takers yet.
- When do the 9-month and 12-month faculty have to be here? Refer to deans and chairs. The handbook is out of date and does not reflect where we are today. Interpretation for this is wide open. We are working with the handbook committee to narrow down the language, but not making it punitive, but still open enough for chairs and deans.
 - Will McLean spoke and stated that he has had received questions in academic affairs about who has to be here and when. Chairs and Deans set the tone for their departments. We are in the people business. Not about who can “make you do something”. Worker flexibility is important. We want to ensure maximum flexibility. We know we have international faculty, working families, single parents, and want to maximize flexibility for these reasons. If it's imperative or an emergency, then meet. There needs to be some discretion about do we have to meet on this day, or can it wait until January? Most of the time, it can wait. Think about these things as chairs, dean, program directors, as you set these. Most of us are in academia not because we want a 9-5 but want flexibility. If it is important, be respectful as faculty if your dean/chair is asking you to meet. No real policy—policy is wide open for interpretation.
 - Provost stated he is hesitant to tell deans that “this is what you have to do”. Understand we are in the people business, and we have people with families and kids in school. If it's a meeting on the Monday after graduation, then that should be it. Leaving these decisions to the discretion of deans and department chairs. “Don't judge me on what I did but judge me on what I didn't do when I had the authority to do it”. None of us make enough money. All of us work hard.
- Provost has been asked about the change to a 5-day schedule and that people believe he did this for athletics. That is not true, but he did it for all students. This includes the mom who needs night classes, the kid working on campus in the cafeteria. He thinks about the student in very broad terms.
- It was brought up that it sometimes feels like faculty that are here and present on campus get “punished” and have to do more. The example was given of having to advise students not assigned because students coming looking for a faculty member who isn't present. When other faculty aren't here (due to flexibility), it seems like duties fall to pre-tenure faculty and that the things we do aren't weighted heavily (for PRT purposes). It feels inequitable in some ways.

- The Provost called this “invisible collateral” and stated that the deans should be looking at this. What is valued? Research is important, but teaching and service are important too. Trying to fix all of this. We are changing the culture and setting expectations, but it doesn’t happen overnight. This “invisible collateral” often falls to minorities, women, and the fine arts. The Provost stated he understands and is working to change this.
- Be sure to get grades in on time. We have faculty/staff who must work all day on the 23rd and Christmas Eve to process grades. We can change this to make it better for everyone. The “why” behind changes is not always what you think it is.
- It was asked if there had been any thought given to changing the time for faculty senate meetings. Ed stated that he is working on it. With the central planning, there will be other opportunities. Currently, we are only doing Fridays from 3-5 pm because there are no classes. The Provost also mentioned that he also meets separately with the faculty senate executive committee.
- It was asked if there were any plans to use Faculty180 other than for HLC and if there was a possibility of using it for tenure. The Provost discussed that the short answer is that the deans and chairs were supposed to be mandating Faculty180 and use it for merit raises. Some use it, some don’t. This is part of a larger conversation that needs to be had and best practices need to be discussed. Currently it is in no way tied to PRT. Faculty180 has more than we can integrate, but of course these things cost more. This is a discussion for faculty, chairs, and deans.
- The Provost discussed tenure and stated that at the college he came from, there was a 98% success rate for tenure. It should not be punitive or an “I gotcha”. Expectations should be clearly stated. If you have a bad case and it gets to the Provost, then we have a department/college problem. We don’t want to invest time, money, and energy into a candidate and then they leave, and go be successful somewhere else and benefit another institution. We will not “cake it”. You have standards. It should be about how I can help facilitate you to get there. If you are not making it, the department chair and dean need to work it out. It may be moving them on to where they could be successful. There should be accountability in the 3rd and 4th year. There should be yearly updates and progress, and if faculty is struggling and they choose to stay, then there should be documentation of what has been discussed. We are here to help you. Hopefully we can have a good success rate.

New Business:

- Establish a Committee to discuss Equity
 - This was discussed at the last meeting. Kim Vickrey will chair this committee. Ed will send out the members of the committee very soon. It is our voice and chance to work with Chancellor and Provost, and ensure that our different concerns are in this. Pay is included, but it’s not just one thing. This includes equity related to gender, age, AOS vs others, etc. Ed has asked Cathy Reese to help us with this as well.
- Discussion of Goals for Spring 2024

- The Provost has told Ed that there will be proposals coming in spring from the Provost's office that we will review and discuss.
- It was discussed that there is currently no promotion pathway for non-tenure track faculty, and faculty senate should discuss this.
- It was asked what the purview is of having the provost here for the entirety of all faculty senate meetings. Senators want to be able to have open communication and discussion but feel like we can't always do that. It was discussed that senators prefer the Provost coming for the Q&A and then leaving for the remainder of the meeting.
- It was discussed that we should go to our constituents and ask what is bothering them and ask what concerns they have.
- It was brought up that Will McLean had said he drafted a campus climate survey, but don't believe it was every sent. Could we ask him to send that out? Ed will follow up on this.
- There was also a survey for retention that was supposed to have been sent out previously. Ed was told to hold off on sending it (before the new Provost came) because at the time, the Chancellor was working on a survey too. Ed will ask Will about this.
- It was asked if we are done reviewing the handbook. Ed stated that it has been sent to the Provost. He mentioned that handbook committee has done a great job over the last few years reviewing and editing the handbook. It was then discussed if we need to reconsider language about meeting/meeting times for faculty (see previous discussing with Provost Q&A)? Ed stated that it is something to consider and something we can look at.
- It was asked why program costs and programs that got cut weren't discussed here. Several senators mentioned that it was discussed some last year. These cuts were made by the state, not the university. Ed stated that he was told by the Chancellor that he had prepared talking points and things to discuss, but they moved to a vote, and weren't given a way to defend those. Didn't get a voice on saving anything. This wasn't part of the viability report. It was graduation numbers reported to the state. This might have to do with new state administration.
- It was discussed that senators would like to hear from the Chancellor as he hasn't been at the last few faculty senate meetings.
- It was asked what system or process there is for checking on positions that have been stalled. A position went out in August, and they still haven't heard anything. It was discussed in Chairs Council, and they said you should know something about positions before break.
- Several senators discussed having issues with Creative Services. They are not getting information and can't get anything from them. This can affect recruitment and recruitment materials. We all need innovative ways to promote our colleges. It was asked if we can bring Todd Clark to a meeting to discuss this with him. Ed will reach out to him.

- It was asked what is the policy on spousal hires? Some believe this went through SGOC three or four years ago and was brought before senate. Ed will check on this.
- It was discussed that we as senators need to ensure we are disseminating information back to our departments and getting feedback/questions from them. It was asked if there was a way we could submit questions ahead of time for the Provost Q&A. This might help with anonymity, especially when questions are for others in our departments/colleges. This would also allow the Provost to prepare and not be blindsided by our questions. Addie volunteered to help Ed with a survey.
- There was discussion about the need for consistency between Program Directors and Chairs within the colleges. Roles need to be defined. It is an equity issue. There needs to be hierarchies and levels that are somewhat standardized. There is no incentive currently to be a program director or chair, which the Provost and Chancellor have discussed before. The equity issue includes title, pay, and release time. This needs to be discussed.
 - It was discussed that previously a proposal was written to petition a program to become a department. This may have to be petitioned year after year. Need a well-documented rationale.
- It was discussed that the Calendar Committee does not require a representative from each college. There are colleges not represented. SGOC needs to consider one from each college. Ed discussed that several committees are like this and don't require a representative from every college. Several senators requested that we have more faculty representation. Ed asked senators to encourage people in their departments to sign up for committees, especially those that will attend and participate in the committee. We need committees that help the university and that we (faculty, students, staff, retirees) can have a voice in.

Old Business:

- None

Other Business:

- None

Ed Salo adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm. There will be no meeting on December 15th. The next meeting will be Friday, January 19th, 2024.