

**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**  
**February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**HSS 1028**

**Attendees:** Kristen Sumler, Ed Salo, Addie Fleming, Karen Graham, Robert Williams, John Hershberger, Jake Qualls, David Pearlman, Kim Vickrey, Pradeep Mishra, Jessica Curtis, Audrey Folsom, Scott Mangan, Veena Kulkarni, Alexandr Sokolov, William Maynard, Sarah Scott, Guolei (Jason) Zhou, Richard Segall, Gary Edwards, Ibrahim Duyar, Rollin Tusalem, Paul Finnicum, Matt Carey, Arianne Pait, Suzanne Melescue, Shanon Brantley, Robert Robinette, Katie Camden, Zahid Hossain, Toccara Carter, Andrea Brown, Khem Aryal

**Proxy Attendees:** Frederick Webb for Cherly Knight

**Guests:** Amanda Mohler (President Elect), Mary Jackson Pitts, Lillie Fears, Sandra L. Combs, Tom Moore

**Absentees:** LTC J. Morgan Weatherly, Dwayne Powell, Bert Greenwalt, Cheryl Knight, DayDay Robinson

**Meeting Called to Order:** Ed Salo established a quorum. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Ed Salo.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** There were two corrections to the minutes. Khem Aryal was moved from absent to present and Lillie Fears was added as a guest attendee. Motion to approve the February 2, 2024 meeting minutes by Paul Finnicum, second by Matt Carey, all in favor, motion carried.

**Provost Update/Q&A- Dr. Calvin White: Conducted by Will McLean**

- Dr. White & Chancellor Shields unable to attend, Will McClean present to answer questions
- Question from Qualtrics Survey: We were recently informed through our dean to chairs and chairs to faculty that faculty should "under no circumstance" communicate with students in any form other than through A-State email. We have students in the clinic and we are in the clinic with them. Is there an appropriate alternative for communication (such as Google phone number) when emergencies occur in these situations? AND Why was a new rule passed that faculty and undergrads can only communicate via email or canvas without talking to faculty or other bodies on campus? This new rule negatively impacts certain activities such as research labs, conference attendance, etc....
  - Text with undergrad students- inappropriate from a FERPA perspective. It can be a judgement call at times. Canvas or student email recommended. University

can't protect you outside university channels. Was there a specific incident?—no, just a collection of things that happened over fall semester. No faculty in GroupMe or group chats with students.

- Question from Qualtrics Survey: When can faculty expect more information on faculty teaching loads and a policy on reassignment time for scholarship?
  - It's a work in progress. Slow rolling, investigating best practices, but it will come to faculty senate. It will be uniform, but there will be some variations. It will take a while to get it right and to work with deans and chairs. Plan to get to this spring semester. Hopefully finalized in summer, maybe come to senate early fall. Impacts other aspects (merit, equity, etc.). The policy has been arbitrary and very vague. We want to get away from this. We want to do it and do it right the first time.
- Question from Qualtrics Survey: I am in a department with a lot of student-athletes. The new required teaching schedule is making it very hard for students to find classes that work with their schedules. For instance, track students are going to miss 12 Fridays in the spring. Basketball players, cannot take classes after noon. Football players and other athletes have similar problems. By requiring classes all hours of the day, and five days a week, our students are finding it harder to find classes that work for their schedule or classes where they will miss a significant amount. At what point, do the faculty in the departments get to decide what is best for the students and their department? Perhaps the standard schedule works well for general education courses, but when students are in their major courses, it seems like the departments should be able to do what's best for its students. Friday class attendance has been abysmal among all students, not just student-athletes. At what point are we no longer setting students up for success?
  - 10/80/10 spreading across schedule. It happened for the most part this way, but most heavily on T/R. Student feedback is that I can't get this class because it's only offered on T/R. 10/80/10 is a rough suggestion. Of course, there are few classes on Friday afternoon. You still have some insight as a department and college. It was not mandated that you do it this way. 80% of our classes were scheduled between 0900 and 1300 on T/R. Some colleges have no classes on Fridays. Everyone thinks they operate in a silo, and they don't. We have to spread it out if we want to grow. We do want to accommodate students, but there is space in the schedule. Encourage to work with chairs and deans. This may be part of a larger discussion. Consider inviting athletic advisors here and discuss schedules. Ed will invite. Is that what the coach does? 8-2 between no revenue sports. Up to coach for football and basketball.
- Question from Qualtrics Survey: Could you give more details about what receivership means? (Referencing the minutes about the potential of a receivership for the journalism program.)
  - Receivership- any department; transfer of leadership and control of department defers to third party, either Chancellor, Provost, or even Dean's office. Chancellor was hopeful that this will not occur.

- Undergraduate students changing advisors? Is there a policy on this? Not an academic affairs issue. If a student wants to change advisors, then they should go up to the chain.
- Chancellor and Provost want to be here and wanted to send their regards. They are currently working to repair relationships with donors all over the state. Won't be at honors societies and events, not because they don't want to be, but their schedules won't allow them to be.
- Centralized scheduling – if we want to do senate at different time, will work on a different time. Calvin is serious about being willing to move to accommodate some that can't serve now, especially due to family commitments on a Friday afternoon.
- Transparency- if it's an academic policy, come to the provost. If it's an academic policy, deal directly with provost. He wants to work with you as faculty. He wants to work on merit and equity.
- Spring numbers and what do these mean? Traditional, online, international students are all up. 13,896. Toccara and Nikesha, worked overtime when so many international students showed up. Up in number of applications, all comes down to yield at this point. Registration is open now. The numbers are shared with deans as the numbers come out. Grew across all sectors. Breakdown in press release; daily reports from Deans.
  - Should numbers continue to rise? Hoping classes will make and hope to see more students in summer as well.
- Financial aid- taking a long time to respond. The Financial Aid Office doesn't report to academic affairs. They do have new staff and are short-staffed. There have been several changes at the federal level, and they've been slow, and that has a downstream effect.

### **Old Business:**

- The Closure of the Multimedia Journalism Program And Its Implications For The Program Viability Review Process- Gary Edwards Associate Professor of History
  - 4 points of deliberation (2 & 3 now moot point; discuss point 1 and 4)
    - 1- half the document—major cheating scandal not an extenuating circumstance; chancellor says and [flow chart](#) seems to matter 0 to Arkansas Higher Ed Board. Annual Review of Program Viability (flowchart)- data error, university mission. Cheating –academic discipline, but they don't care about the why. Extenuating circumstances don't matter. Unequal way to deal with this. No contingency for this on the flowchart. Careful with academic discipline in small programs
    - 2-Why were they not informed they weren't viable?
    - 3-Why did the university not request a reduction?
    - 4- Where are we year to year in this cycle of constant annual review. According to [flow chart](#), university is supposed to do something. What is the timeline and how do we respond? We want to know month to month where we are. What's being done for those currently on the chopping block (told in October?). Philosophy is worried. Are they going to enforce it now?

- Used to be you couldn't come up every year. Now you will get every October. Deans and chairs of any program on the list are informed. It's up to colleges and departments to draft the response. Response by November 15; made arguments. Two certificates pulled themselves down. It's still a fairly new process, to be honest. What was once an idol threat is now a real threat. Sound the alarm if you are on the list. Departments and colleges have to be cogniscent of their numbers. When do you sound the alarm? At the mercy of the state, but as soon as we got the list, it went out that day to the college/department.
  - Philosophy should be on the list, but they aren't? They don't have six graduates in any year for the last 3 years. Philosophy is not sure why they aren't on the list. The process is confusing for this reason.
- Looking at other colleges/university to look at how to set up? Two departments needs to come together to find a viable option. UofA is thriving. The departments are welcome to look in or outside of state. That was one of the first academic meetings July 6/7/or 8 for the provost to attend when he arrived on campus. There have been two or three meetings of the departments, but have seen no plan in academic affairs. Awaiting further input from the departments on how they wish to proceed.

### **New Business:**

- [Faculty Senate Resolution On Access to University Enrollment and Graduation Data And Receipt of Relevant Rulings from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education](#)
  - Small committee formed to write resolution of data aspect on this.
  - John Hershberger spoke regarding the proposal. See proposal attached at the end of the meeting minutes
    - Issue in communication- wasn't an enforced rule
    - Asked institutional research and told “you don't need to know it” or “that's not relevant”; asking for data to empower us to make decisions. Needs to be given to faculty, not just waiting for deans/chairs to send out.
    - Like to have relevant findings from ADHE- couldn't find
    - Also would like a process to easily find relevant data (numbers, demographic data (see proposal); always a struggle to get this data. Asking university to help us with this.
    - Is there a concern about privacy of the data? Not aware of reasons that were given. Maybe previous administration. Should be able to login and get it somewhere; like my.AState; not public on the website necessarily.
    - ASU system data dashboard on Tablo- not very timely. Can be 6 months or a year behind.

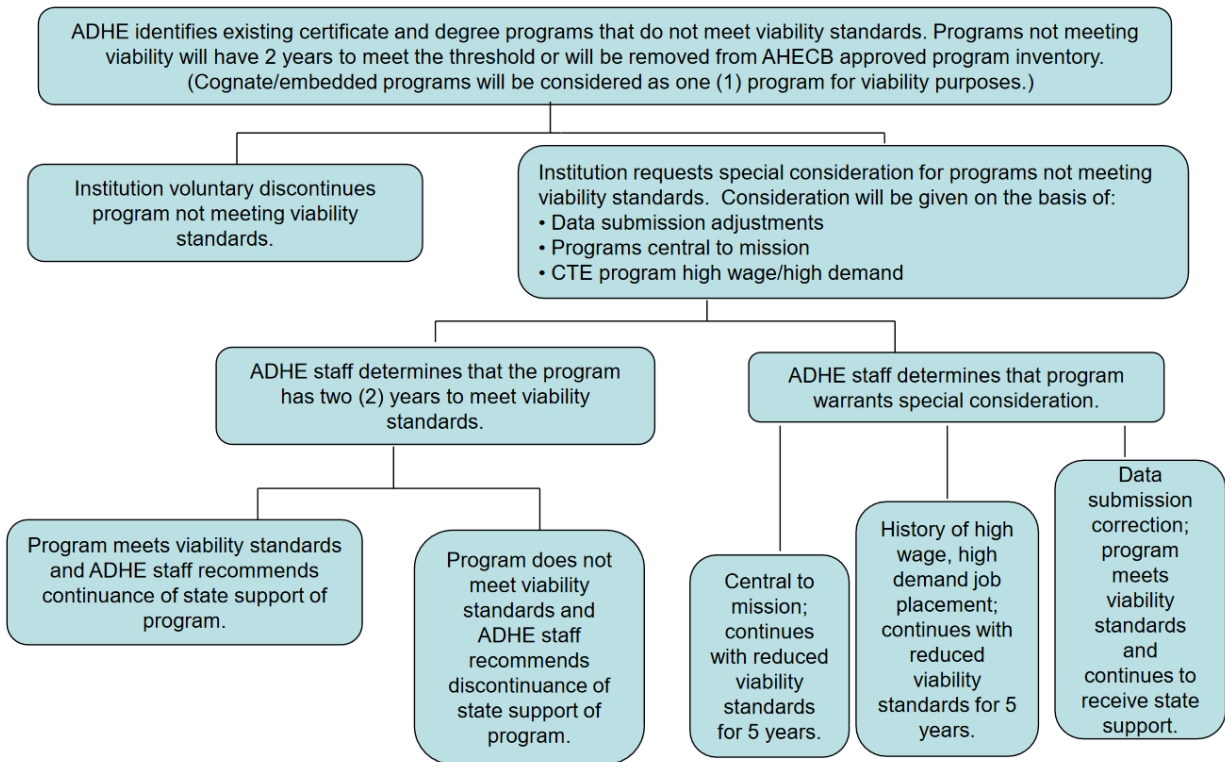
- William Maynard called to question and moved to accept the report as written. Seconded by Matt Carey. No further discussion, motion passed unanimously and will be passed along to provost office.
  
- Appointment of committee to draft resolution on Faculty 180 and the PRT process
  - Can be about something that works better, request that we don't use faculty 180, whatever possible solution.
  - Poll faculty on this to see if they are interested? Many senators are tenured and may be less pressing for us here. Tenured or pre-tenured or both? Ed thinks it should be both.
  - If faculty 180 will yield what PRT needs, then that's great. Need to be able to filter faculty 180 to get what we want. Merit, PRT, equity, etc.
  - Many didn't update until they were told HLC had to have it.
  - Email Ed to volunteer
- We currently meet on Friday afternoons when there are no classes so people can serve and attend. No, it's not the best time for those with families, and most don't want to stick around. Can consider changing.

**Other Business:**

- None

Ed Salo adjourned the meeting at 4:09 pm. The next meeting will be Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

# Annual Review of Program Viability



The full document can be found here:

[https://uca.edu/panda/files/2013/11/eapr\\_adhedocs1.pdf](https://uca.edu/panda/files/2013/11/eapr_adhedocs1.pdf) (Chart is on page 8).

-- From Gary Edwards

**Faculty Senate Resolution**  
**On**  
**Access to University Enrollment and Graduation Data**  
**And**  
**Receipt of Relevant Rulings from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education**

**Whereas** the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) discontinued A-State's B.S. in multimedia journalism (MMJ) for failure to graduate an average of at least 6 students per year during a 3-year assessment period (2018 – 2020) and during the 2 years following (2021-2022);

**Whereas** AHECB has assessed most non-STEM bachelor's programs on the above average since 2010 but regularly deferred closure of programs below the viability threshold prior to its April 28, 2023, meeting;

**Whereas** AHECB has tacitly indicated they seem intent on rigorous enforcement of these viability standards in the future;

**Whereas** the faculty in MMJ and the Director of the School of Media and Journalism were never officially informed, before 2023, that MMJ was formally deemed non-viable by the AHECB and ADHE after the 2018-2020 cycle and subsequently placed under a 2-year period when the department was expected to increase its number of graduates;

**Whereas** curriculum, accreditation, and research are all part of the purview of the faculty at A-State; and

**Whereas** A-State faculty have consistently been unable to obtain relevant data in a timely manner; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved** that the University commit to providing the resources and data for faculty to be empowered to fulfill their duties, including but not limited to teaching, research, service, and administrative tasks and be it further

**Resolved** that the University ensures that any and all relevant rulings from AHECB/ADHE, within the purview of faculty responsibility (such as program viability decisions) be disseminated to faculty at the time any such rulings may be created, and that such communications are clearly documented with respect to time and recipients (i.e. Deans, Directors and Department Chairs) and be it further

**Resolved** that the University design a process for faculty to easily find data without having to request it from administration, including, but not limited to, current semester degree/major enrollment, where the degree/program is in the ADHE program viability cycle, and demographics of current and former students in a program or major, and be it further

**Resolved** that the Faculty Senate work with administration to develop policy, procedures, and resources to ensure that this relevant data is freely available on demand.