

**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**  
**November 3, 2023**  
**HSS 1028**

**Attendees:** Andrea Brown, Ed Salo, Audrey Folsom, K. Renee Sumler, John Hershberger, Robert Williams, Jessica Curtis, Dwayne Powell, Shanon Brantley, Katie Camden, Scott Mangan, Pradeep Mishra, Paul Finnicum, Zahid Hossain, Jake Qualls, Alexander Sokolov, Cheryl Knight, Arianne Pait, Robert Robinette, Toccara Carter, William Maynard, Khem Aryal, Veena Kulkarni, Matt Carey, DayDay Robinson, Gary Edwards, Suzanne Melescue, Richard Segall, Kim Vickrey

**Proxy Attendees:** Robert Williams for Ibrahim Duyar, Katie Camden for Addie Fleming

**Guests:** Wayne Wilkinson, James Conway, Joanna Grymes, Jason Post, Tom Moore

**Absentees:** Amanda Mohler, Bert Greenwalt, LTC J. Morgan Weatherly, Rollin Tusalem, Sarah Scott, Karen Graham, Guolei (Jason) Zhou

**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 Andrea Brown, seconded by Paul Finnicum, all in favor, motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the October 20, 2023 meeting minutes by Audrey Folsom, second by Andrea Brown, all in favor, motion carried.

**Campus Update from Chancellor- Dr. Todd Shields:**

- Not in attendance.

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

- Not much to update. Would like to stress that the Campus Conversation with the Chancellor from yesterday was filmed and is available for viewing on request. Regarding the scrutiny being placed on teaching schedules, “We do not care when or where you teach.” Parameters may be provided to department chairs, with schedules incorporating course offerings from 7:00-8:00 am (10%), 10:00-4:00 p.m. (80%), and 4:00-6:00 pm (10%). Dr. White also mentioned cancelling low enrollment classes. Discussed University’s lean into research – the goal is for workloads to be rearranged based on faculty interest in research and their research activities. Individuals not interested in research will not be required to develop a research agenda. The idea is that excellent teachers can be rewarded for teaching while excellent researchers can be supported in research ventures – either role should have the opportunity to receive a raise. Emphasis being placed on hiring more research faculty. “We do not have a problem with resources or funding! Our problem is the \$650,000 spent last summer on under-enrolled courses.”

This money can be better spent. ASU is in a healthy spot. State funding doesn't seed our research – ASU needs to seed research itself (the Provost's office is working toward providing research grants). Campus Conversation with the Chancellor also included discussion about A-State Promise Plus scholarship. Today we have 5,200 applications, which is only 200 applications away from exceeding the total number of applications in 2022. Student retention is also relevant and is important to the Chancellor. Graduation rates contribute to the loss of money - \$500,000 lost this year alone. Current 4-year graduation rate is 40% (up 2% from last year), and 6-year graduation rate is 52% (up 2% from last year).

- “What is the yield on the 5,200 applications?” - A new strategy is being utilized that focuses on ensuring these applications turn into actual enrollments. This includes a regional marketing campaign that targets potential students (16-22 year olds), parents/grandparents, and state legislators. Traditionally the yield on applications is 38%, which is not good. This number has been as low as 20%.
- “How many students are we losing?” - We had about 1300-1500 graduates last year. These students need to be replaced and enrollments need to increase. Losing 40% of the student body must be factored in – this is hurting us. There are 0.5 students admitted for every 3 students that apply. “We will do better. We didn't come here to fail.” We need to increase the yield on applications. ASU has a medical school, veterinary medicine school, the largest graduate program in the state, ABI, and an international campus. We are going to compete for every student by packaging our perks to get the attention of prospective students.
- “How will workload realignment feed into PRT documents?” - “The biggest complaint I have received since coming here is that there is no promotion possible for non-tenure track faculty.” Eventually there will be two tracks incorporated into PRT documents – a teaching track and a research track. Workload percentages will be calculated based on which track the faculty is on. Colleges will be directed to change their PRT documents. These changes are estimated to take place in four or five years. We are one of the only colleges in the sun belt that does not incorporate an external PRT review. Eventually, as we move forward, “appropriate for us” faculty will be hired. This will be a slow walk. As more research active people are hired, current faculty will be lost through attrition.
- “Any thoughts about advising as a whole and the overall structure?” - Dean Nesbitt and group of advisors do holistic advising really well. Professional advisors and Dean Nesbitt/advisors need to collaborate. Dean Nesbitt is not here to do the professional advisors' jobs – their role is entirely separate and relevant to all students. Professional advisors can work with Dean Nesbitt's group as little or as much as they choose. ASU currently has a 75% retention rate for students in years 1-2. Years 2-3 have a retention rate in the 60% range, and it is during years 3-4 that we are losing students. Our campus has inverted retention rates in comparison with other campuses. Anecdotally, it is thought that these students are being lost in relation to financial needs (they are working, offered higher salaries to take professional jobs and leave school, etc.).
- “How soon will equity be on the radar?” - “If I could change it today, right now, I would.” The shared governance process inhibits the Provost's ability to make change. Currently, equity on campus requires individuals to raise their hands – some individuals

are never going to raise their hands. The vision for campus equity in 2-3 years is for each college to get an equity pool of money. Department Chairs will share information with their Deans regarding equitable salary needs. Individuals with the lowest salaries should be sent to the Deans first. Furthermore, these individuals will continue to be eligible for salary increases – they won't have to wait for three years before becoming eligible again. Campus equity needs to change as we will not get or retain the best faculty and staff with our current process. Starting salaries have been increased, with most around \$60,000+.

- “Are teaching schedules meant to fill up space or is the goal to align scheduling across campus?” - We are one of the only campuses that doesn't have centralized scheduling – college-level scheduling has resulted in the current situation. Centralized scheduling is coming to campus within 2-3 years. The goal is to develop a five day a week schedule that will increase accessibility to students. Faculty comfort may be disrupted as they may not get to use the closest classrooms or those that they are used to. However, this will be important in relation to the expected increased numbers of students on campus. The current process won't work anymore – course schedules need to meet the needs of our students, not our faculty.
- Dr. White says, “we are not doing anything just to do it.” We are doing things that will make us better and that will accommodate the growth that we hope for on campus. He is not asking faculty to do anything that he hasn't done himself. He is simply asking faculty to be more flexible to meet the needs of our students. We want to remove systemic barriers, not erode the rigor of our courses. Dr. White does not want us to be afraid, and stresses that we can always come and talk with him. We may not always agree, but he will always try to build consensus with faculty. Feel free to email [calwhite@astate.edu](mailto:calwhite@astate.edu) - he will always answer. Avoid using the [provost@astate.edu](mailto:provost@astate.edu) email address, as this is a dummy address. All email communication that is sent from the Chancellor or Provost is tracked. They are monitoring whether the email is read, if links are clicked, the length of time spent in the email, etc.

#### **Guest Speaker:**

- N/A

#### **New Business:**

- Vote on Faculty Handbook Sections IV and V
  - Motion by Andrea Brown, seconded by Alexander Sokolov, all in favor, motion carried
- Discussion on Academic Calendar
  - Faculty were not happy with the new calendar sent out – there was not enough time at the beginning of the spring semester, this isn't how other research universities do things, and there are questions about the actual number of weeks required in a semester.
  - Will McLean – The academic calendar is not set in stone – it is proposed each year. We are mandated by the state to have 14-week semesters. With 13-week semesters, HLC requires the institution to move to a quarter system. The calendar must consider and incorporate new faculty orientation, college meeting days,

AOS schedules (5-, 7-, and 15-week courses), hybrid course proposals, dissertation dates, thesis dates, holidays, athletics, public school schedules, etc. Everything has a downstream effect, and it is important to consider that HR, the Registrar's office, etc. deserve time off as well. The 2024-2025 academic year is an odd one, as August 16<sup>th</sup> falls on a Friday (when 9-month faculty contracts start). This happens roughly every seven years. Dr. McLean is asking for patience and grace, as this is a difficult process. Not everyone will be happy when the calendar is posted because it is never going to fit everyone's routine. He is always open to feedback and suggestions, but it won't always work out to get everyone what they want. Dr. McLean is happy to entertain questions, discussion, etc. The 2024-2025 Academic Calendar will be released as soon as it is feasible. SGOC has a part in this process, as they are responsible for getting the information out to everyone. Feedback, concerns, etc. should be shared with the SG Academic Calendar Committee representatives. Ed will send out the proposed calendar and committee member list.

- “Can you tell us what changes to expect?” - The semester will begin Friday, August 16. The faculty conference will take place on August 19, college meetings will be held August 20, and classes will begin August 21. Finals will be from December 5-11, with graduation on December 14.

**Old Business:**

- Team Teaching Proposal – no comments have been received as of today. If no comments are received by the next SGOC meeting, they will vote and then the proposal will go to the Provost and Chancellor.

**Other Business:**

- None

Ed Salo adjourned the meeting at 4:13 pm.