

Faculty Senate Minutes for May 12, 2014

Chair Julie Isaacson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Delta Center for Economic Development, Room 201.

Approval of May 2, 2014 minutes

Senator John Hall moved that the minutes of 2 May 2014 be accepted. Senator Andy Mooneyhan seconded the motion. All were in favor.

New Business: Discussion with Drs. Hudson and Cooksey

Joanna Grymes (clarification from last meeting)

Senator Joanna Grymes reiterated concerns from her college (College of Education and Behavioral Sciences) previously reported at the last meeting. In general, the following two questions involve issues of importance to the faculty. They pertain to the core of faculty participation in the governance system. There does not seem to be enough discussion happening across departments and colleges, and the campus as a whole. This may be indicative of low levels of morale, high levels of apathy, and/or high levels of fear.

1. What are the structural changes occurring in academics across campus, why do they seem to be occurring without much public discussion, and what is the rationale for the processes being put into place? Is ASU in such poor financial state? What is the shared governance process for these matters? They do not seem to be addressed in the Faculty Handbook.
2. The new “School” within the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (School of Teacher Education and Leadership) is a part of the governance structure that does not exist in the Faculty Handbook. Clarification is needed regarding the curriculum development process.

Chair Julie Isaacson addressed Senator Grymes’ second question, by stating that the new Faculty Handbook Committee would undertake necessary revisions concerning the governance structure including the current A-State schools.

Chancellor Timothy Hudson began his response by mentioning that if everything cannot be addressed today, please send inquiries via email. He then announced various past (and upcoming) events at his house this week, which have allowed him to converse with the students who have good things to say about the faculty. It is obvious that the students are happy. A-State will continue to invest in its faculty in order to ensure the well being of the students.

Chancellor Hudson continued by addressing the university’s financial state. A-State has undergone two evaluations by Moody and Associates, Inc. With the second rating, there were no changes. The university is in good financial health. In viewing the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) data that has been tracked for the last 3 years, ASU salaries are looking good with salary raises each year. In 2011-2012 salaries increased as follows:

Professors from 93.8% of SREB average to 100.8%, Associate from 92.6%-102.6%, Assistant from 98.7% to -99.9% and Instructor from 84% to 92%. Also, the university absorbed ~\$600,000 in benefits cost.

Faculty raises have been accomplished through the Excellence Fee, tuition increases and bringing in new revenue. The number one concern is making faculty salaries competitive. Other positive things happening on campus include the salvaging of Kays House; the progress with construction on the Liberal Arts building; and the offering of the Early Retirement package this year. The administration is listening to faculty needs and concerns.

Dr. Ryan Peterson (Accounting), who had given a detailed report of the Finance Committee at the last Senate meeting, made a correction from his presentation involving misinterpreted data (shown in italics).

From the previous report as seen in the Senate minutes of 2 May, 2014:

Statistics of the Society for the Study of Curriculum History (SSCH) within the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) show that Distance Education this spring was up to *62% of our total offerings*.

Correction:

Statistics of the SSCH..... show that Distance Education this spring was up to *62% of the student enrollment at ASU*.

Dr. Peterson also mentioned that the SREB is on par with the “Arkansas-3” (ASU, University of Arkansas and Arkansas Tech University). Chancellor Hudson made the clarification that A-State is actually above the AR-3 average.

Senator Bill Humphrey inquired about the budget for upcoming year. Chancellor Hudson responded that all is looking good. The administration has worked to support promotions, give raises, absorb health care costs, and add new positions. In fact, 28 new positions have been added over the past 4 years. Dr. Hudson reiterated that the administration wants to invest in the faculty. That's how you get the students. A small tuition increase (slightly under 3%) will be requested. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and University Provost, Dr. Lynita Cooksey added that ASU has covered expenses with its current budget. There is not any extra. Senator John Hall stated that Dr. Len Frey (Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration) has been more than willing to work with the Finance Committee. Hopefully in the future, it will ensure that the senate finance report is absolutely accurate before it is aired.

Senator Tom Ratliff inquired about hiring freezes. Chancellor Hudson explained that ASU never had a hard freeze for faculty, but perhaps a soft freeze primarily regarding staff. Faculty positions are sacred and will be reviewed and filled as needed. Strategic positions have not been neglected. Senator Joanna Grymes found it intriguing that positions might undergo such careful review that they may not be replaced. The Chancellor offered a local example: both Academic Affairs and the Chancellor’s Office have eliminated staff in order to benefit the faculty. Vice

Chancellor Cooksey added that the return on the investment must be considered. Positions may be returned in a different area in the college. Things continually change. Needs are different. All positions need to be justified. Positions are being replaced, not people. Senator Grymes questioned the programs which have been affected by the changes in positions. Dr. Cooksey confirmed that programs are also under continual review. They need to be thriving. There is not more money coming in, but the money that does exist is being put toward faculty lines. Changes in leadership may occur. No faculty cuts or budget cuts are being made.

Vice Chancellor Cooksey clarified the early retirement package offered this year. As discussed in the last Senate meeting, early retirees will receive 25% of their salary plus 1% per year over 2 years, up to \$50,000. Temporary replacements, as approved by the Executive Council, will be utilized while positions are reviewed and/or restructured. Money has not been taken from faculty lines. A savings must be demonstrated.

Senator John Hall made an inquiry regarding Dr. Cooksey's comments on the needs of various areas/programs, "When we talk about need, are we talking about head count? Some departments need a certain number of faculty to maintain accreditation." Cooksey replied that it is a combination. Programs need to meet credibility requirements of the state, be in keeping with existing national accreditations, etc. The students need to be accommodated without duplicating efforts about campus. Chancellor commented that Senator Hall raised an interesting philosophical question. Performance budgeting is coming. The State of Arkansas will pay for two things: stem programs and underserved/under-represented students. Citizens need to articulate the value of education, and to perceive Higher Education as an investment and not a cost.

Dr. Lynn Howerton (Psychology and Counseling) inquired about structural changes. Vice Chancellor Cooksey explained that the administration had studied the faculty lines in order to decipher how the needs of various departments could be met. The changes made achieved this purpose. Discussions with faculty did occur at meetings, as recorded in meeting minutes. Senator Joanna Grymes retorted that discussions did happen; however, decisions were still made that were not in keeping with the desires of the faculty. Dr. Cooksey commented that the Faculty Handbook only directly addresses shared governance at the university level and that this could be an area that needs discussion and/or revision. Dr. Cooksey stated that the merger between the Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum, and Special Education, and Teacher Education resulted in enough savings to fund 14 new faculty lines.

Dr. Mitch Holifield (Former Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum, and Special Education) asked how the mergers brought ASU 14 faculty positions. Vice Chancellor Cooksey explained the salary savings in some cases came from administrative lines and instructor lines which were redistributed as tenure lines. Expenses are not less, but the restructuring results in getting more for our money. Holifield inquired about examining the financial data in the Office of Academic Affairs and Research that supported the cost savings with the mergers in his department and college; Cooksey responded in the affirmative. Dr. Holifield expressed curiosity as to when the decision to merge occurred, and shared that Dr. Lina Owens (Interim Chair, Teacher Education 2011-2013) discovered the restructuring of her administrative position through faculty members. Further, Holifield mentioned that the dean of

the college (Dr. Thilla Sivakumaran) informed them both (Owens and Holifield) before discussion occurred, that the mergers were definite. Dr. Cooksey assured Holifield that to her knowledge, the merger was not decided before input was heard from the faculty. Her understanding was that prior discussion only occurred between the dean and the upper administration, and not a decision.

In summary, Vice Chancellor Cooksey agreed that faculty input is needed. Some areas are very pleased with the restructuring. Discussions will continue in the fall regarding restructuring. Our accomplishment/goal is the output of fine students. Senator Tom Ratliff asked about our distance education program and the potential we have to lose several programs to the University of Arkansas if we do not make clear our intentions to support and develop our distance education programs. U of A, from what he has been told, has made offers to provide both online and in-class BA degrees. Cooksey answered that this would all be a part of the discussion. Academic affairs will assist with what is best for ASU, regardless of what the University of Arkansas does.

Dr. Ryan Peterson asked how costs are allocated. The Chancellor offered that the necessary revenue is multi-faceted; Cooksey added that a formula is used by the state for calculations.

Senator Hans Hacker made an inquiry regarding the merger in his department (Political Science). Where is the savings? Each faculty member is responsible for advising over 100 majors. After posing a question to his chair as to what direction things were going, the chair had no idea, but did mention that the newspaper would most likely soon reveal the answer.

Cooksey offered that Dr. Larry Salinger (Interim Chair, Department of Criminology, Sociology and Geography) passed away and allowed that opportunity in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. That merge is not happening as of 1 July 2014. World Languages and Cultures (also involved in the merger within the same college) is small department. It is difficult to defend having a full-time administrator for such a small area. Because the chair is leaving, the opportunity will be taken to merge with History Department. Dr. Richard Wang (Political Science) clarified that this was not a merger. Faculty members were not in favor of these departments having one chair. Cooksey agreed that in some cases, one chair serves two departments (e.g. Accounting and Computer Information Technology). This is a temporary arrangement; opportunity for discussion would be given in the fall.

Chancellor Hudson commented that Dr. Hacker had a good point. Communication is important. The commitment to communication needs to be a two-way street. The progress and welfare of the students is of utmost importance. Roles will change over the years; faculty members are urged to do the things they do best. In the process, he looks forward to the conversations.

Vice Chancellor Cooksey illuminated the view of a school within a university setting. A school is somewhat between a college and a department. There are multiple departments and programs in Educational Leadership and the College of Education and Behavioral Science. It is a sizable college, which lends itself to the concept of a school within the college designating a department which is larger than normal. Dr. Amy Pearce (Psychology and Counseling) asked if Cooksey would encourage deans to discuss ideas as her colleagues had been discouraged by their dean

from meeting. Cooksey replied favorably, and added that deans should have an open-door policy. Many junior faculty members have opinions, but are timid to have a voice due to their non-tenure status. Colleagues within the College of Education and Behavioral Science, Dr. Howerton, Dr. Pearce and Senator John Hall mentioned serious concerns within the Department of Psychology and Counseling involving organized attempts for faculty discussions and votes specific to a merger, which were suppressed by college administration. In response, Vice Chancellor Cooksey remarked that this seemed more of a departmental issue. In any case, discussion is always necessary, whether the outcome is appreciated or not. Dr. Cooksey also encouraged faculty members to apply for any upcoming vacant administrative positions. The big picture is not an easy one to see. Communication is vital and suggestions to improve upon the matter are welcomed.

Dr. Curtis Steele (Proxy for Senator Bill Rowe) shared that as Chair of the Art Department, he meets twice a month with the college dean following the meetings of the Dean's Council. This information is shared with the faculty. He assumed that this form of communication was the norm. Senators responded that this varies by college and departments.

Vice Chancellor Cooksey provided final remarks involving the need to look at various committees and the charges given them. Buildings and Grounds is a good example. One would think this committee has input on the physical changes of the campus, but indeed, it does not. Sometimes shared governance committees do not properly represent their constituency groups. The fact that shared governance committees don't meet between May and September is a problem. There is a lot of work yet to be done, but big changes are not expected. Dr. Cooksey concluded by stressing that she was very serious about meeting with various departments regarding an explanation on restructuring thus far. She would be available over the summer months to meet with certain faculty who had any concerns with the issues at hand.

Senator Bill Humphrey move to adjourn the meeting at 4:19 p.m. Senator Andy Mooneyhan seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marika Kyriakos

Visitors: Mitch Holifield, Dianne Lawler, Annette Hux, Wayne Wilkinson, Chris Peters, Asher Pimpleton, David Saarnio, Amy Pearce, Lacy Overley, Patrick Peck, Julie Grady, John Pratte, Erik Gilbert, Amanda Wheeler, John Beineke, Tom Adams, Clint Vogus, Shane Butler, and Kris Biondolillo

Senators in Attendance:**Executive Committee:**

Chair Julie Isaacson

Agriculture & Technology:

Bill Humphrey

Business:

Richard Segall

Jollean Sinclair

Media & Communication:

Pradeep Mishra

Education and Behavioral Science:

Joanna Grymes

John Hall

Andy Mooneyhan

Joe Nichols

Amany Saleh

Engineering:

Shivan Haran

Fine Arts:

Claire (Garrard) Abernathy

Marika Kyriakos

Humanities & Social Sciences:

Warren Johnson

Hans Hacker

Thomas Ratliff

Alex Sydorenko

Nursing & Health Professions:

Brenda Anderson

Kat Carrick

Larry Morton

Judy Pfriemer

Debbie Shelton

Sciences & Mathematics:

Bruce Johnson

Fabricio Medina-Bolivar

Suzanne Melescue

University:

Nikesha Nesbitt

Military Science:**Library & Information Resources:**

Wendy Crist

Absentees:

Hyung Kim

Larz Roberts

Minghui Gao

Bill Rowe

Proxies:

Curtis Steele

Win Bridges

Cherisse Jones-Branch

Bill Payne

Hai Jiang

Cecil Clark