

ASU FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
November 15, 2002

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Bill Humphrey, Vice-Chair

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Bob Bennett, Chair and President of Faculty Association

Jim Bednarz

William Burns

Dick Freer

Ernesto Lombeida (absent)

Bill Maynard (absent)

Jie Miao (absent)

Joe Sartorelli

Norman Stafford (proxy – Dave Truncellito)

Richard Wang

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Chris Brown

Dan Marburger

Terry Roach

Jim Washam

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Lillie M. Fears

Jo Anna Grant

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Cindy Albright

Kris Biondolillo

Dan Cline

John D. Hall – Secretary/Treasurer of the Faculty Association

John Ponder (proxy – Joanna Grymes)

Karen Yanowitz

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Thomas Parsons (absent)

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Bill Rowe, President-Elect of the Faculty Association (absent)

Alyson Gill (absent)

Ken Hatch

John O'Connell (absent)

COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Troy Thomas, Secretary

Terry Baggs (absent)

Debra Walden

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Polly Green

LIBRARY

Myron Flugstad (proxy – Wendy Crist)

MILITARY SCIENCE

LTC Michael Loftis (absent)

COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC DEANS

Jan Duggar

VISITORS

Phillip Stuly – ASU Herald

Erin Hill – Student

Brittani Jordan – Student

Rick McDaniel – VPAA

Sach Oliver – SGA President

CALL TO ORDER

Senate Chair Bennett called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Due to an email error, faculty did not receive the November 1 Faculty Senate Minutes for review prior to this meeting. Approval of the minutes was postponed until the next meeting. Secretary Thomas will resend the minutes.

REMARKS

- Attendance at Senate Meetings

Chair Bennett reminded senators to send proxies to any meeting that they could not attend.

OLD BUSINESS

- Town Hall Meeting

Chair Bennett reported that he had solicited comments via email from faculty members who had attended the Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2002. Bennett reported that as of 2:15 pm on Friday, November 15, he had received 23 responses. A copy of the responses received was distributed to those present at the meeting. **(A final copy of the comments presented to the ASU President's Council on November 18, 2002 is attached to these minutes).** The Town Hall Meeting was taped and will be re-broadcast on Tuesday at 2 pm and Thursday at 6 pm on Channel 63. A majority of the faculty members who responded to Bennett's request for feedback provided negative feedback of varying intensities. Bennett drew attention to the fact that only a few of the respondents were members of the Senate.

Bennett made the following personal comment about the Town Hall Meeting:

“I went to the meeting hoping and optimistic that we would have a good, productive sharing of information. It fell somewhat short of that.”

Bennett gave the senators time to voice their reactions to the Town Hall Meeting. The majority of the senators also had negative feelings regarding the Town Hall meeting as it occurred.

The majority of the meeting time was spent discussing this topic. Some of the major sentiments expressed included:

- Feelings that it was the attitude of the administrators at the Town Hall meeting, not the format, that was the problem
- Frustration that Dr. Wyatt had been unwilling to make changes to the format of the Town Hall meeting as suggested by the Faculty Senate
- Feelings that the answers/responses provided by Wyatt et al were evasive, insensitive, vague, juvenile, insulting, etc.
- Frustration that faculty members were not able to ask follow-up questions
- Feelings that the stated priorities of the administration are not backed up by the actions of administration (e.g., academics is important and faculty are invaluable, but financial allocation to these areas does not seem to be a high priority).
- Feelings that shared governance on the ASU campus is dead and frustration that faculty input is routinely ignored or discounted
- Frustration that the university budget is not in a form that is easily interpretable
- Frustration that faculty members are frequently given information or informed or important decisions/events after the fact

- Feelings that the issue of faculty not getting raises was a very small issue compared to other issues. However, the lack of raises appeared to be another instance of the discounting of the importance of academics and faculty on the ASU campus.
- Feelings that neither the faculty as a whole nor the Faculty Senate would entertain future interactions with administration such as a Town Hall meeting that did not involve input from the faculty and/or senate.

Dr. McDaniel was present at the meeting and responded to questions regarding apparent increases last year in the salaries of certain administrators and faculty members by stating that he did not believe that any raises had been given. Speaking for himself, Dr. McDaniel stated, “My salary is the same as it was 2 years ago”. When questioned about the numbers in the budget, Dr. McDaniel stated that the budget book often contains errors, as it is published before the budget is finalized.

One senator pointed out that, based on his investigations, he did not believe that the administration was lying about the alleged faculty and administrative raises. He pointed out that the level of distrust on the campus has grown to the point that he believes that many of the faculty members are likely to interpret any actions of the administration with high suspicion.

Chair Bennett followed by saying that how things are being done on the campus affects morale. He cited the splitting of the College of Arts and Sciences and the new health center as examples of decisions that many faculty members felt to be good things. The problem is, however, that faculty members were never asked for any input on these decisions. Bennett offered that “there is a tremendous desire among the faculty to work with administration, but it seems that administration inadvertently keeps sticking its foot in its mouth.” This type of behavior affects morale, trust and productivity. Bennett emphasized that it is not just the senators who feel this way, citing that the majority of the respondents to the Town Hall meeting were not senators. He concluded by saying that unless we can find some way to bridge this “distrust gap” then things are probably not going to get any better on this campus.

One senator expressed his concern over the growing inequity between administration and faculty and stated that he believed that, ultimately, collective bargaining would be the only way to address such inequities.

Dr. McDaniel also responded to the topic of the increase in part-time/temporary faculty and the decrease of full-time/tenured faculty by saying that much of the growth in part-time/temporary faculty has occurred as a result of the addition of the expansion campuses. Dr. McDaniel also stated that part-time/temporary faculty provide a sort of safety buffer for full-time faculty in times of economic stress since the employment terms of these individuals is more easily regulated.

SGA President, Sach Oliver, was asked for his response to the Town Hall meeting. He stated first of all that he felt that he was getting a top education at ASU and attributed much of that to the quality of his professors. He also stated that he works frequently with administrators and did not feel that they were lying and felt that they were trying to do what was in the best interest of the university. Mr. Oliver expressed concern over the apparent adversarial relationship between the administration and the faculty. He expressed the belief that faculty and administration could and must work together to solve problems and that the two groups needed to stop butting heads.

One senator expressed the view that the Senate should not meet with Dr. Wyatt until Dr. Wyatt is willing to acknowledge that the Senate represents the faculty and is willing to be straightforward and honest in his dealings with the Senate. The senator stated that the credibility of the Senate was on the line.

Chair Bennett responded to an anonymous comment that he had received from someone on campus who felt that the recent employee satisfaction survey was biased and constructed specifically to attack the administration. Bennett denied this claim as “simply not true” and explained that the survey was one constructed to be used by HR personnel in corporations to measure employee satisfaction. Bennett clarified that the purpose of the recent survey was to assess the status of things on the ASU campus as a starting point from which to begin working on collaborative (i.e. administration and faculty together) solutions to our problems.

- Funding for Honors Theses

Senators Bednarz and Grant stated they would meet with Dr. McDaniel and Sach Oliver immediately after the meeting to discuss this issue.

- Faculty Handbook

The Faculty Handbook has been in the President’s office for about 2 weeks. The President has not read it yet. He is waiting for Dr. Allen (new VP for Academic Affairs and Research) to review the document. At the request of the Senate, it was decided that Chair Bennett would ask Dr. Wyatt to have the handbook wrapped up by December 13, 2002.

- Health Center

Debra Walden reported back on concerns raised at the last meeting about the role, if any, St. Bernard’s would have in determining services, such as reproductive health options, offered by the Student Health Center. Senator Walden spoke with Marcia Morgan, RN at the Wilson Health Center. Ms. Morgan stated that a system is in place to protect the current services offered by the Student Health Center after the move to the new facility.

- AAUP Meeting

From John Hall - AAUP ASU Chapter is currently planning a meeting with area legislators to meet them and to hear about the current issues that they are facing pertaining to Higher Education in Arkansas. It will also give us a chance to share with them our concerns specific to Higher Education in Arkansas and ASU. We are hoping all senators will attend, and we ask them to bring a colleague who is interested in the above issues. Right now the meeting will likely be on Saturday, December 7 in the morning, (10-12 a.m.). We are still trying to secure a location. It will be a breakfast/brunch.

- Bennett will send a formal letter to thank those individuals responsible for the campus survey (Dr. Kim Hester and her associates) and the recent finance committee report on the ASU budget (Dr. Marburger and Dr. Moore).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Troy Thomas, Secretary