

Faculty Senate Minutes

April 16, 2024

3:00 PM

ROTHWELL 456

VIA WEBEX: <https://www.atu.edu/facultysenate/>

1. Call to Order (Dr. Newt Hilliard)

2. Approval of March Minutes

3. Committee Updates

a. Standing Committees

- i. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp) No Report.
- ii. General Education Committee (Tinerella) No Report.
- iii. Institutional Aid Committee (Taylor) No Report.
- iv. Shared Governance Committee (Hilliard) No Report.
- v. Campus Space and Utilization Committee: (Singh) No Report.
- vi. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee: (Hilliard) No Report.
- vii. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Swindell) No Report.
- viii. Professional Development Committee (Dykema) No Report.
- ix. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple) No Report.
- x. Emergency Management and Safety Committee (Laffoon)

b. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees

- i. Faculty Workload Committee (Darnell) No Report.
- ii. Insurance Benefit Committee (Clements) No Report.
- iii. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski) No Report.
- iv. Prior Learning Assessment (Mikles-Schluterman) No Report.
- v. Micro-Credentials (Bradley) No Report.
- vi. Rules Committee (Dykema) No Report.
- vii. Recruitment and Retention (Laffoon) A meeting is scheduled in the next few weeks.

4. New Business

a. VPAA Update – Dr. Adolfo Santos

- Dr. Santos reiterated his commitment to shared governance and working collaboratively with Faculty Senate during a time of demographic change impacting all universities, including the draft retrenchment policy. He thanked Faculty Senate and the writing committee for their work on the draft retrenchment policy, which will protect faculty during program changes due to financial exigency and government mandates. Dr. Santos requested changes to the policy, which have been incorporated into the attached draft and will be discussed in meetings with the writing committee this month. Dr. Hilliard asked faculty to revisit the policy and to send feedback to Dr. Michael Rogers (mrogers6@atu.edu), chair of the writing committee.
- Dr. Santos reported that will be made in the way faculty summer pay is figured this year, thanks to efforts of the president and Ms. Fiorello.

- Dr. Santos discussed four suggestions for future cost cutting: (1) faculty assuming multiple roles, such as grant writing for program innovation and faculty salary support;(2)improving advising for greater retention; (3) reformulating general education courses to reduce the number of sections and to increase enrollment; and (4) cutting back on faculty course releases and faculty overloads. Senators welcomed the discussion and asked questions about course releases for grant writing, class enrollment caps, faculty to student ratios and the impact on effective instruction and advising, and budget cuts in other divisions. The conversation will continue in the future, including this summer, as several senators agreed to return to campus to work with Dr. Santos on these issues.

b. Finance Update-Ms. Laury Fiorello

- Ms. Fiorello discussed the proposal to the ATU Board of Trustees for differential fees. Ms. Fiorello explained that tuition and fees will stay the same in 2024-2025, and specific course and program fees will be restructured so that they are fully transparent to stakeholders. In response to senators’ questions, Ms. Fiorello explained that 80% of course and program differentiated fees will go to the department to pay related course and program expenses. Twenty percent of differentiated course and program fees will go to college deans for their discretionary fund. A small percentage will be reserved to pay for Administration and Finance costs associated with processing differential fees.
- Dr. Clements offered an example of the way that differential fees could benefit the music department. He described how fees already paid by students enrolled in certain music courses could directly benefit programs if returned to the department and used to replace instruments.
- Faculty Senate thanked Ms. Fiorello for her service to academics. The conversation about differentiated fees will continue at the May Faculty Senate meeting.

c. Salary Equity Committee-Dr. Tom Nupp

- Dr. Nupp updated senators on the work of the salary committee to discern ideal equitable salaries reflective of each discipline compared with other universities. He explained that ATU has not kept up with COLA or regular salary adjustments. The consequence is that new faculty hires are often paid higher salaries than tenured faculty with extensive time and service. The committee will continue to look at data from medium and large master’s degree-granting IHEs with the goal of recommending a formula for faculty salary adjustments over time. Dr. Nupp noted that there is much more work to do.

d. Faculty Senate Elections for 2024-2025-Dr. Newt Hilliard

- Dr. Hilliard asked Faculty Senate to let Dr. Treadway know if they would like to be considered for chair-elect or secretary for 2024-2025. A campus-wide vote will be held.

5. Old Business

- Dr. Laffoon: A poll to survey student attitudes toward moving fall break to Thanksgiving week will be sent soon.
- Faculty Senate thanked Dr. Laffoon for her service to ATU. Dr. Darnell invited faculty to a reception on May 1 to honor Dr. Laffoon for 25 years of service to ATU as professor of nursing.
- The Faculty Senate Choice Award will be given on August 25. More information about the recipient will be forthcoming.

6. Open Forum

- Dr. Clements asked for a discussion of the impact of the X period on class schedules.

7. Announcement and Information Items

- Dr. Mikles-Schluterman asked senators to remind faculty to complete the Faculty Satisfaction Survey, which was emailed from the VPAA office on April 15: <https://questionpro.com/t/AJ9jdZ2Jg6>
- The university community is invited to the All Faculty Event at the train depot in downtown Russellville on April 26.
- Faculty Senate congratulated Susan West, Emergency Management faculty, staff, and students, and all other members of the university community who facilitated a positive eclipse experience. Ms. West reported that all participating student organizations will receive \$2,500 from the event. No profit was made by the event.

8. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Newt Hilliard

Dr. Newt Hilliard, Chair

Ellen Treadway

Dr. Ellen Treadway, Secretary