

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes October 8, 2024

Senators in attendance: (no particular order) T. Nupp (chair), M. Rogers (chair-elect), M. Hankins (Secretary), J. Grosskopf, J. Greer, A. Gilbert, J. Clements, T. Limperis, C. Brucker, P. Dykema, S. Tinerella, D. Dunnick, D. Murphy, S. Escobar, S. Huss, M. Bradley, C. Austin, V. Jones, C. Capen-Housley, T. Pennington, E. Wondolowski, S. West

Guests: R. Jones (president), A. Santos (provost), J. Myers (Assoc. VPAA), M. Davis (Faculty), B. Daubenheyer (Admissions), S. Huggins (Admissions)

1. Call to order (Nupp)

- Motion to suspend agenda to allow guests to speak first. Motion passes.

2. President's Update:

- Opening remarks – Over the past 30 years state funding at universities across the state has gone down. To give an example ATU's annual budget is 172M, the state only provides 41M of that total amount. A portion of the 41 M comes from the funding formula to be discussed by Wyatt Watson.
- State formulas consist of two parts: 1) how many points you earn and 2) how much funding that corresponds to.
 - Funding formulas are set by the governor with inputs from consultants. Notably they are currently looking at reworking the funding formula, so the discussion presented today may not be relevant later on if and when a new funding model is created.
 - Consultants have been hired from Florida and Texas to get input on the funding formula revisions. Currently universities have not been asked for their input on this, but we hope this will occur at some stage in the process before it becomes law.
 - Many university decisions are based on trying to maximize returns based on the current funding formula, with examples provided as part of this discussion. But there are issues with the funding formula – e.g., getting additional funding from productivity formula is 'all or nothing' with only positive point totals receiving funds.
- Presentation by Wyatt Watson discussing state productivity funding

- The funding formula uses a productivity funding model that guides decisions made by universities
- The model calculates points for universities, and the distribution policy determines how much state revenue each institution receives
- The model is broken into effectiveness, affordability, an adjustment for research, and an adjustment for efficiency
 - The effectiveness component comprises 80% of the model and includes credentials, progression, gateways, and transfer success
 - The largest metric in this category is credentials, which makes up 32% of the model. Different degrees and awards have different point values
 - Affordability is the other 20% of the model
 - Time to degree (10%) and credits at completion (10%) are the two components.
 - Research and efficiency are adjustments on top of these two categories.
- The formula compares the three most recent years of data with the three years before that, essentially comparing the current year with four years ago
- Enrollment numbers heavily influence the outcome of the funding formula, as many metrics are directly or indirectly tied to enrollment
- Issues Impacting Funding
 - ATU has seen a decrease in the credentials metric over the past few years, likely due to declining enrollment
 - Concurrent enrollment, where high school students earn college credit, does not count towards the Gateway and Progression metrics in the funding formula, which means we don't get to count these students in these categories as a positive.
 - There was a data reporting error related to the faculty to administrative salary ratio in 2017 that impacted ATU's funding for several years. For three years, ATU received a benefit from the error, but for the following three years, it had a negative impact as those years became part of the baseline model.
- Potential for Change
 - The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) peer group will replace the previous peer group for comparing the expense ratio, which measures

spending on education versus administration. The impact of this change is uncertain

- There is discussion about only counting in-state students in the funding formula, which could significantly impact universities that enroll many out-of-state students
- One suggestion is to maximize the two efficiency measures in the funding formula, as they are the only metrics not tied to enrollment
- Maximizing the efficiency measures would require investigating whether dollars are being classified in the most appropriate category
- Distribution model is based each year on the % change in the productivity index, which helps to determine what the recommended funding will be.
 - Max gain per year to base is 2% and max loss per year is 2%
 - Max 5-year loss is 5%
 - Funds lost by institutions are redistributed to other institutions that gained in points
- ADHE does not decide on appropriation, but runs the funding model and provides this information to legislatures as recommendation, and the governor makes final decisions.
- As of January 1st, funding will be made available for faculty salary raises. The total amount in raises is near \$1M (give or take 10%).
 - Focus of the raises will be on trying to raise salaries to near the coupa median, so the raise will not be across the board, but instead help with salary equity issues by raising most those impacted by bad coupa years, etc.

3. Recruitment and Retention Presentation by Brittney Daubenheyer

- ATU is implementing various strategies to address declining enrollment, including:
 - Hosting events to bring students to campus and requesting faculty to share contact information for attendees
 - Offering campus tours and encouraging faculty to meet with prospective students during those tours
 - Asking faculty to help identify alumni who teach in local schools to schedule classroom visits and presentations
 - Shifting the “Timeout for Tech” preview day to the fall (Nov. 12th) to reach students earlier in the recruitment process
 - Note there will not be the usual visiting of departments during time out for tech in the fall; however, there are planned spring events that are college specific that will allow students to come interact with faculty in their desired

major.

- Dates for spring visit dates are: Arts & Humanities - Feb 13th, Education and Health – Feb 20th, Business and Economics – Feb 6th, and STEM – January 30th.
- Requesting alumni to participate in academic signing and award ceremonies at their former high schools
- Utilizing Slate, a customer relationship management software system, to track prospective student data
- Challenges in Recruitment and Retention:
 - Demographic declines, particularly among high school graduates
 - Increased competition from other universities
 - Misperceptions about the affordability of college
- *Faculty expressed concern that ATU is not contacting local students as often as other universities*
- *Also concern about how in the post-covid phase we are now in that other universities around the state seem to have their enrollment increasing again, but we lag behind. Could there be more to it than just the issues of the 'free tuition' offers that some are making?*
- Additional information related to recruitment efforts can be found in the supplemental documents attached to these notes.

4. VPAA Update

- Continuing work on policy review – desire to update old policies and make changes to be more student focused.
 - Specific items being looked at now are changes to service requirements, grant writing, merit pay, and office hours.
- Carried out meetings with assessment committee and thinking of ways to improve this across the university.
 - Possibility of having an 'assessment day' in conjunction with the spring symposium.
 - Looking into using AI to assist with assessment of students. Very early stages, but something we are looking forward to.
- Plan to issue a call for white papers for the 90-hour degree that ADHE has recently approved. ATU will be allowed to create one of these degree programs.
 - First Arkansas college to do this is Henderson, which has proposed a 90-hour degree in criminal justice.
- ADHE has recently sent out a survey, with the following question: 'Do we (ATU) support the idea of revising the state minimum general education criteria?'
 - No specific adjustment is being proposed at this stage.
 - Last change to the gen. ed. criteria was 8 years ago.
 - *Discussion of this item was positive. A motion was made to pass a 'yes' to the*

question, which was voted and approved unanimously.

- There are ongoing efforts to analyze data on why students stop attending, including program-specific information
 - Work is being done to compile a list of resources available to students to address challenges they may face

5. Curricular Items

- A listing of items under consideration found here:
<https://www.atu.edu/standingcommittees/curriculum/25-26/Summary%20Proposals%20Sept%20CC%20Oct%20FS.pdf>
- A motion was made to approve all items as a block, discussion ensued, followed by a vote of approval that was unanimously in favor of accepting the proposed changes.

6. Approval of Sept. 10 minutes.

- Minutes approved

7. Committee Reports:

- i. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp) – No Report
- ii. General Education Committee (Tinerella) – No Report
- iii. Institutional Aid Committee (Rogers) – No Report
- iv. Shared Governance Committee (Huss) – Committee has met. Draft of proposed document shared by Dr. Huss to be taken as a very quick brain storm on the committee structure.
 - Discussion on the floor focused on improvements to the draft based on composition of the committee and keeping things balanced between students, faculty and staff. Suggestion was made to a change in leadership structure for the committee that would alternate chair between a faculty member and a staff member every other year. Note was made that this will be a university wide committee rather than a senate specific committee.
- v. Campus Space and Utilization Committee: (Jones) – No meeting
- vi. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee: (Nupp) – Committee has met to discuss sabbatical recommendations, will provide further updates at a future meeting after discussions with VPAA office.
- vii. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Murphy) – No Report
- viii. Professional Development Committee (Dykema) – PD grants for the fall semester have been completed. There are two rounds of PD grants with one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall covers 8 months of the year, while the spring only covers 4 months of the year. There is an annual budget of 60K for PD grants, and the choice was made to allocate 2/3 of the funding to the fall proposals and leave 1/3 to the spring proposals, which is roughly commensurate with the timeframe for each. The committee met last week to discuss the applications received (40 total). The committee made the decision to approve all 40 applications, but in order to fit all within the budget, all amounts had to be reduced to 85%

of the requested amount as not to exceed the 40k budget of the grant pool. College break down on awardees was very even: 10 to AH, 11 to BE, 9 to EH, 10 to STEM.

ix. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple) – No Report

x. Emergency Management and Safety Committee (Escobar) – No Report

B. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees

i. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss) – Committee has met. Division of personnel is 2 full professors, 2 associate professors, and 4 assistant professors. Current plan is getting feedback on draft documents among the committee members, and then bring this to the senate for discussion later on. Tentatively plan to have a draft ready to present at next meeting.

ii. Insurance Benefit Committee (Clements) – Open enrollment is Oct. 28th to Nov. 8th. There are planned meetings with HR for any questions you might have about benefits (see tech news item - <https://www.arkansastechnews.com/atu-employee-benefits-open-enrollment-for-2025/>)

iii. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski) – No Report

iv. Credit for Prior Learning and Microcredentials (Bradley) – No Report, will meet on Thursday

v. Rules Committee (Dykema) – No Report

vi. Recruitment and Retention (West) – see earlier discussion on recruitment and retention efforts. Nothing further to add.

vii. Assessment (Murphy and Jones) – Had meeting with Alexis Johnson from the LIFE center. Current discussion is focused on developing a plan to better understand where various departments are in terms of assessment. It seems like there is a lack of understanding where different departments are in the process of assessment. There was discussion of a plan to have one of the spring PD meetings be an opportunity to share between departments what type of assessments different people are using as a way to understand the current state of things.

viii. Common Hour Committee (Clements) – No Report

ix. Merit Pay Committee (Rogers) – Still working on forming a committee. Dr. Huss has already provided a lot of groundwork to build off of (see earlier discussion item). Plan to have mix of junior and senior faculty from each college.

8. New Business – None

9. Old Business – None

10. Open Forum – None

11. Announcements and Information Items

- Presidential inauguration on Friday Oct. 11
- Homecoming is this weekend
- Faculty art showing in Norman hall

12. Adjournment