

## Staff Senate Minutes for Special Called Meeting

December 12, 2024

Dr. Jones asked Staff Senate to hold a Special Called Meeting on December 12, 2024. The meeting was held at 9:00am in a hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual online meeting.

### **Special Guest**

Arkansas Tech University President Dr. Russell Jones



### **Special Report**

Dr. Jones wanted to come on Staff Senate to speak on the raises that will be given out, pending board approval. He wanted to explain what the process was, how they determined the amount, and what we are going to do moving forward.

For the 2025 budget, he set aside \$1.2 million for raises. That money was split as follows: the president's office got \$19,000 (2%), Academic Affairs got \$425,000 (46%), Student Affairs got \$135,000 (15%), Finance and Administration got \$265,000 (29%), Advancement got \$25,000 (3%), Athletics got \$30,000 (3%), and Human Resources got \$21,000 (2%). Those totaled to \$920,000. Then you have to add benefits at ~22.5% that added about \$220,000, which came to roughly \$1.2 million.

To get to this, Dr. Jones looked at how much of a raise could he give to everybody if he just went straight across the board. Everyone would've gotten a 2.2% raise. However, that couldn't really change the lives of those that really needed the money. Instead, he decided to see how much it would be to give everyone a 1% raise, then look and see what he could do for those that were significantly under their CUPA percentage. His goal is/was to get everyone on this campus that works full time, to at least \$30,000. So, when they looked at it, they determined that, with the rest of the money, we could get everyone up to 80% CUPA or up to a \$5,000 raise. Late October, Dr. Jones set a deadline for everyone's CUPA titles and job descriptions to be reviewed and updated. Then, there were a few employees that were so far below their CUPA percentage that even \$5,000 wouldn't get them up to 80%. Unfortunately, there had to be a cap somewhere. He is hoping that those individuals can be fully caught up in the next, future, round of salary adjustments.

So now as a university at a whole, we are averaging somewhere between 84 to 87% CUPA. However, Dr. Jones' goal wasn't to get everyone to 80% CUPA and be done. He wants to get us up to the median pay. That goal will take about \$13 million. 80% is just what he could do with the money that he had.

Then Dr. Jones had to decide how to get the money to the employee. There are two options on how to reflect the raise on an employee's pay check to show their total each month. One is by issuing new Notice of Appointments and Contracts to everyone on campus. The other is to manually adjust the total for everyone each month. Both options are incredibly taxing on the departments that would complete those tasks. Instead, it was decided that in February, the individual employee would get a lump sum of

what their raise would be from January through June. Then in July, the new Notice of Appointment and/or Contract would reflect the new total that the individual will receive for the entire year.

There became a question of promotions and transfers and how that would affect this raise. If it was not in place by 10/20, then it would not be considered. That means if you were promoted on 10/21, you would not see a raise for the new job. You will see the raise for the job you had previously. Unfortunately, there had to be a cut off somewhere. We are unable to chase after everyone for the rest of the year to catch them up. These individuals will have their totals corrected on their July appointments.

Looking in the future, raises are the goal but aren't necessarily promised. Only enrollment numbers will tell us. Also, just because we did raises this time, doesn't mean that's how we will do them next time. We will reassess that whenever the time comes. Dr. Jones hopes for Staff and Faculty Senate to come up with a merit raise formula that we can use in the future. He also hopes to solve the problem of longevity pay.

#### **Senate Discussion**

Last year we voted to cancel the January meeting. Due to the short time between the December meeting and the anticipated January meeting when taking into account our winter break. President Thompson asked if there was a motion to vote to continue that and cancel our January meeting this year as well. Senator Hilliard made a motion and Senator Tomlin seconded. After holding the vote, the senate voted unanimously to cancel the January meeting. Our next meeting will be February 6, 2025.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

At 9:34 am Senator Hilliard made a motion to adjourn, and Senators Schluterman, Hall, and Rideau seconded. President Thompson concluded the December 12, 2024 special called meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Whitney Moore, Secretary