

Staff Senate Minutes

July 11, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

President Kristian Thompson called the Arkansas Tech University Staff Senate meeting to order on Thursday July 11, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in a hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual online meeting.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Sabrina Anwar
Peggy Ayers
Megan Bell
Jenna Bradley
Rachel Broussard
Kate Carter
Bonnie Freeman

Shelly Hall
Connie Herring
Kim Hilliard
Katie Hook
Amber Jacimore
Kacie Lopez
Whitney Moore

Tanda Morrison
Cody Neal
Cesiley Rideau
Nick Schluterman
Miranda Senn
Mackenzie Taylor
Kristian Thompson

Senators Absent:

Bethany Brown
Slade Dupuy

Scott Tomlin

Visitor(s):

Alisa Waniewski
Andrea Eubanks
Angela Westbrook
Ashley Bryant
Belinda Hilliard
Bonnie Heathcock
Brandi Duvall
Brandi Tripp
Chelsea Martin
Cole Hendrix
Eric Rector

George Brooks
Julia Pope
Kasten Searles
Kim McKown
Kimberly Turner
Lisa Gibson
Newton Hilliard
Shanteal Scott
Susan Johnson
Tammy Weaver
Valli Wanzer

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the June 13, 2024 meeting were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Senator Ayers filed a motion to accept the minutes. Senator Hilliard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by Senate vote.

Special Guest

Interim VP and EC member Suzanne McCall

Special Report

First and foremost, Suzanne wanted everyone to know that approval to start the construction of the Ferguson Student Union again has been given! We should see a lot of movement on that part of campus as that commences. Please do what you can go hype this construction up. It is in the heart of our campus and we want students to be excited about it.

Secondly, Suzanne wanted to address the new overtime item. She wants to remind everyone that this was not a policy/procedure that Tech initiated, but rather, a federally mandated item. She has had several people reach out and say I am just a few hundred dollars under the wage threshold, can't I just get a raise and be done with it. However, that threshold will be going up significantly again January 1. So, a raise may get you out of the first wave but not the second. Suzanne said she knows that these individuals that were previously salaried, but are now filling out timesheets, this can feel like a demotion or downgrade. She wants everyone to know that it is in no way a reflection of your position or performance. From reading the background on the Federal government's decision to implement this change, it seems as though the intention was to fairly compensate those that work an excess of 40 hours a week through either overtime or comp time.

Payroll has sent out information to those affected on how to complete a timesheet and there are tutorials available online as well. You can also reach out to Payroll at any time. If you have any questions on comp time, how you acquire it, or how it is dispersed, there is a lot of information about it in the Staff Handbook. Suzanne wanted to make sure everyone is aware that your supervisor can ask you to take your built-up comp time during specific times of the year and to not take it during others. Some departments are incredibly busy, for example, in August, and can't afford for their employees to take their comp time. It is always just a good idea to have open communication with your supervisor. Also, keep in mind, comp time must be taken before you can take vacation time. Please also be mindful and give Payroll some grace over the next few months as they adjust to an additional 80 timesheets that they have to audit and process. If you have questions about any of this process, feel free to reach out to Suzanne, HR, or Payroll for assistance!

Senate Discussion

We wanted to give a warm welcome to our new members! We are excited about your contribution to the University and thank you all!

Committee Updates:

- Budget Advisory
 - No update
- Campus Space & Utilization

- No update
- Emergency Management & Safety
 - No update
- Access and Equity Committee
 - No update
- International Travel Advisory Council
 - No update
- Technology Prioritization
 - No update
- Insurance, Benefits, & Wellness
 - No update
- Presidential Communication
 - No update

Concerns & Questions brought to Staff Senate

<p>I would like to propose a change to our current performance evaluation process. I believe it is in the best interest of our campus morale to reconsider the inclusion of specific goals in our performance evaluations. While staff evaluations are valuable to encourage feedback and communication, the goals seem to perpetuate a feeling of doing more with fewer resources and zero benefits. Performance evaluations do not convey to raises so I believe most staff are not setting real goals at all. Rather we write things we probably have to do for our jobs anyway. I have consistently received high scores for going above and beyond in my job, so goals for improvement feel like there's no reward. I would like to suggest that goals are removed or no longer required unless staff receive unsatisfactory scores.</p>	<p>Specific performance related goals are important to assess or measure. A performance evaluation process should be set up to assess both attributes and skills. Attributes are inherent qualities that shape a person's character and behavior. Skills are acquired through learning and experience often referred to as goals. These are usually linked to the job duties of your position or projects that you maybe are specifically working on in the position or as part of a career advancement opportunity. While a consideration to remove goals is a valid consideration, and based on the reasons stated above, I am not trying to downplay that here. I would like to counter that it is in the best interests of all parties (employees, supervisors, administration, and the university community) that goals remain a part of the evaluation. The goals of performance evaluations are to develop expectations, improve the performance, enhance accountability, guide decision making, and support learning and developing. While it is true that currently there is no monetary value associated with the performance evaluation process and goals, Dr. Jones has met with the senate to relay how we would like to incorporate merit-based pay on performance in the near future.</p>
<p>I would like staff senate to address those working from home who can't complete tasks because they are not on campus. Twice this week I have called two separate departments to ask questions</p>	<p>Supervisors may not be aware that an employee is not able to complete certain tasks while working from home. If you encounter problems with someone not being able to provide</p>

<p>and received “I don’t know, can’t help because I’m working from home today”. If people are not able to complete tasks from home, then they are not performing their job duties. I understand, at its core, this is a supervisor issue, but more and more I am not able to get assistance I need from staff because someone is working from home.</p>	<p>assistance due to working from home, you may reach out to the department or supervisor and let them know about the experience. It is also encouraged for supervisors to make sure employees have the ability to complete job duties from home before remote work is approved. Please make sure you are trying to remedy this issue with the specific employee first. If you continue to get push back, reach out to the supervisor.</p>
<p>It has come to my attention that currently the Custodial Services employees are being paid more than an Administrative Specialist II. It came to my attention when I went to sign my contract for 2024-2025 academic year. I had been talking with our custodian and she expressed how grateful she was that at least they had finally gotten a small raise. She asked me if I’d received my contract yet and if I had received a raise. I told her I hadn’t seen mine at the time. After we spoke, I went in and checked my email and my supervisor had sent me a contract. I noticed that it was the same as it has been for the last 3 years, no raise. I can look on OneTech to look at jobs offered on campus and I see Custodial positions. I opened it up to look how much they would be paid, the amount of \$1,000 above the amount I make after 20 years of service. To say this was a slap in the face was an understatement. I am truly heartbroken to see that because they have been unable to keep Custodians, they have had to raise their pay. But the same consideration has not been given to those who have stuck by Tech through thick and thin. I already reached out to my department head and HR. Their comment was to talk to Staff Senate and see if it could be brought up in the meeting. I am not mad at Custodial for making more money. I am grateful that people are able to make higher wages. However, this has been a recurring problem at Tech. New people are being hired in constantly at significantly higher salaries and we are not seeing any change in compensation to folks who’ve been here for decades. More and more people are leaving ATU because it is the only way we can make livable wages. Tech is having trouble hiring people because when they reach out to us, their friends from the community working at Tech, we</p>	<p>Thank you to whoever sent this in. We will bring it up at our next meeting and bring back a response as soon as we can.</p>

honestly tell them not to apply because there is no advancement opportunity for a log of these positions.	
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Meeting Adjourned

At 9:23 am Senator Hilliard made a motion to adjourn, and Senator Ayers seconded. President Thompson concluded the July 11, 2024 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Whitney Moore, Secretary

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