

Faculty Senate Minutes

December 1, 2021

Called to order at 3:06

Present: Adams, Allison, Burt, Campbell, Carter, Copeland, Cothren, Evans, Eyres, Farmer, George, Givan, Golston, Gross, Hale, Heffington, Higginbotham, Holt, Jester, Leach, Lock, Miller, Morgan, Mosser, Norman, Phelps, Poblete, Tchoi, Valentine, Worth, Zamani

Chancellor Ambrose addressed the meeting:

I don't want to say anything written in concrete only 2 weeks in. I hope for in person meeting in spring. Dr. Borsig has offered open access and help during this transition. Let me thank Jim Hunt and Rita for joining the University effort. We need to celebrate a successful semester. I intend to honor your concerns for transparency and data going forward. With Banner implementation we are building data for sharing. Next semester decisions will be based on open data sharing. HR, health care and other similar transitions will be easier when Banner is fully implemented. It is unique to begin new Chancellor work in Mid-November. Immediately we need to restore fiscal health. We have 3,000 students and 68 million to educate them. The next 6 months, the priority is to develop modified cash budget for end of the fiscal year. This is not where we need to be to know with confidence we can meet our payroll and pay our bills.

Many elements of our financial structure look more like a small private university than a public university. Our financial aid has not yielded net positive revenue. Years with more students have even produced less revenue. FY 22 non-recurring revenue won't be available in FY 23. Budgets built on enrollment without cash reserves are not reflective of our actual situation. Payables and Receivables are almost equal. Payroll, food service and utilities are okay with the cash we have. But that doesn't pay bills. 3 million of bills need paying. Modified cash budget is what HAS to be spent. Will be meeting to see what has to be spent, reduce payables. Going forward we will need to be descriptive in where we are and how people can help.

FY 23 has positive elements. Dr. Patterson's work is going well. Spring can be used to plan and engage in the future. Regarding Huron consulting, sure, their work informs us. It builds on prior work done. I don't see program elimination as a tool for sustainability. I can't promise that won't happen. We can do many things but we have to do them differently. Program elimination, financial exigency, retrenchment are not tools for sustainability.

There will most likely be an early retirement offer. We won't offer until the details are all worked out. Actually, it hurts a modified cash program. We are not currently able to offer positive early retirement options. Optimistic about where we can go. It is clear you have commitment and a caring community which isn't replaceable. If you need to reach me, my cel is 704-322-8399. Text is the best method to reach me. I will return the message. Email may be a bit slow.

Question- Have you done a campus hello to students? Answer: No, but we are planning to do that soon.

Dr. Patterson, Dr. Hunt, Ashlee Dixon – addressing admission questions on scholarships and test optional admissions.

Dr. Hunt – On the test optional piece. Higher education is moving away from test admissions. Covid sped this up. When I got here last October, we looked at test optional. I was accustomed to having an admission committee with data to drive decision making. That was not available here. This summer we needed to decide for the class of 22 recruitment. I recommended an ad hoc committee to recommend a one-time test optional plan. We had 3 meetings and recommended fall 22 test optional with GPA threshold as admittance process. Test scores are still submitted for enrollment and placement. We decided to look at this more closely as an addition to the Enrollment Management Committee. Going forward perhaps go through Shared Governance and then Enrollment Management.

Dr. Patterson – **(Data sheets from Dr. Patterson’s discussions are attached.)** We can look at high school GPA’s and confidently determine success chances. I am president of the Arkansas ACT group. ACT is good for noting deficiencies. We met with high school counselors this week and they are thrilled with our new policy. We were one of the last colleges in Arkansas to go to this system.

Scholarship discussion – In 2005-2008 UCA ramped up scholarships and reduced revenue take. That’s what we did in 2018. Some of the money challenges we have was unpaid student balances, but some was scholarship margins. Everyone except UA Fayetteville is vying for high ACT merit scholars. To compete you need to get many high paying students. 2018 class was the highest number of freshman but the lowest net revenue. Last for public institutions in the state. 2019-2020 next to last. Compare to SAU which had a margin of \$1,000 per student. 3,000 students at \$1,000 = \$3 million. We didn’t get that.

There are 15,000 high school grads in Arkansas who go on to college. 40 institutions competing for them in the state. If we all get an equal share, that’s 375 each. We have 416 new freshman this fall. We had 855 in 2018. 416 isn’t enough with our net revenue. We need more students who are not getting paid to go here. We are looking to increase the number of freshman who are not currently being contacted. There are 50% of high school students who data shows could be successful but are not going to college. Many students with 3.5 etc. GPA. 17 ACT score can’t get any help anywhere. We can offer help with the new scholarship structure.

Charts with the data on various student groups and the financial impact are attached from the presentation. The biggest impact is retention and graduation.

Question- **Dr. Worth**- STEM has concerns since over the past few years the ACT scores of our majors average 27. HSU is offering \$3,000 and SAU is offering \$11,000. Concerned STEM will have no majors.

Dr. Patterson- We can meet to discuss target recruiting for your majors. We cannot give \$11,000 scholarships. That contributed to our \$6 million deficit. It is not sustainable.

Chancellor Ambrose- 70% of private universities don’t generate enough enrollment to cover costs. They have other sources. Publics can’t do that. We don’t start at \$60,000 tuition like they do. Philanthropy and non-operating revenue can be utilized. But, we cannot sustain those levels of scholarships. With merit aid, we get left holding the bag.

Dr. Wittig- The website discusses Distinguished Freshman Scholarships. Says a select number. How many is that?

Ashlee Dixon – This year the number is 10 selected. But budget is a concern. We can supplement perhaps with the Foundation. There are interviews in February for the scholarships.

Dr. Wittig – Is it also room and board?

Ashlee Dixon- Yes.

Dr. Wittig – How do they retain the scholarship?

Dr. Patterson – We send an award letter that outlines the requirements for maintaining the scholarship. I will send it to you. We probably need to look at it and make sure it contributes to sustainable revenue process.

Dr. Worth – Will the policy be reviewed next year?

Dr. Patterson – Yes. Based on data regarding recruiting, retention and revenue sustainability. Admission data so far is up 17% over last year at this time. 60% of our applications come in during the spring so this needs to continue in order to yield an admission increase.

Dr. Givan – Did this decision go through the Enrollment Committee. There is a concern that there was no faculty input.

Dr. Patterson – Dr. Borsig began working last spring. The VP for Enrollment left. It was put under Admissions. Consultants recommended this solution. It was presented to the deans and administration. There has not been a shared governance in enrollment management.

Dr. Givan – Does this exclude room and board?

Dr. Patterson – There is different money received based on whether you live on campus or off campus.

November minutes were approved.

President's report

My conversation with Dr. Ambrose is basically what he told you today. And the same is true with Dr. Hunt. This is my last meeting as President. So I would like to recap.

January- We welcomed you as the first ASU senate.

Feb- I encouraged us to keep the students first.

March- April – Student focus continued

Sept- Nov- We worked with transitions.

Today we have more business in December than ever before.

My presidency won't be the same as Jamie's. We need to be realistic about the transitions we face and who and what we are. Reflect on your why? Why are you here? Why are you still here? Why are you worried about your struggling students? Who are we and who are our students?

Students deserve our best. And, our best is you.

Dr. Worth submitted a resolution commending Dr. Givan for her strong leadership during this year. It passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Handbook Committee – no report

Board of Trustees- Will attend the Friday Dec. 3 meeting.

Executive Committee – Discussed the situation with Bobbie Lee with being given \$20,000 raise and extra duties. Dr. Givan spoke with Dr. Ambrose and he will look into this.

Academics- Met by email. Investigating why students lose email after a year of graduation. It's a security concern. Contracts with Google, Microsoft and Cyber Security insurance require it. They are also wrestling with what to do regarding retired staff who retain emails.

Dr. Worth – If we went to Outlook would it change?

Dr. Norman- No

Dr. Farmer- I have my email from my alma mater so that answer doesn't seem to hold water.

Dr. Norman- Perhaps it is a resource question. They say it is not resource driven, but security. I think everything is resource driven.

Dr. Worth- Does the amount of use make a difference? Could we suspend them if they are not used in 6 months?

Dr. Norman- Yes unused accounts are the issue.

Dr. Wittig – When was this policy implemented? I graduated in 2011 and had access until 2019 when I was hired as faculty.

Grounds Committee – no report

Finance Committee- no report

Procedures Committee – Elections were done. New ballots were sent.

Graduate Council – no report

Shared Governance – no report

New Business

Dr. Wittig – Will we continue having Senate meetings by zoom or return to in person meetings?

Dr. Farmer – Zoom is the best option. We have gotten by far more participation in meetings done by zoom.

Dr. Lock – I would need to resign if the meetings were in person. The drive would make attendance prohibitive.

Dr. Norman – We can't really make that decision today with the new Covid variant out.

Dr. Worth – I prefer in person meetings because we have more vigorous participation. But half of the people impacted by this decision aren't here today since we have a new senate coming in January.

Dr. Hale – Can it be a hybrid meeting? We can have more participation with zoom, but less vigor. Can we do hybrid?

Dr. Farmer – New members can vote later, but for now, zoom is the right call.

Dr. Givan – Covid can change between now and January. This is a good start to the conversation. Email Dr. Engman with any feelings you have on the matter.

Dr. Lock – I enjoy being here and would hate to have to leave.

Meeting adjourned at 4:57