October 2, 2026

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

October 2, 2026

HSS 1028

Attendees:

Banafsheh (Bana) Aghayeeabianeh, Kacie Altom, Timberly Baker, Kousik Biswas, Robert Bradley, Toccara Carter, Jason Causey, Michael Cooper, Nicole Covey, Eric Dry, Gary Edwards, Melany Fulton, Stephanie Gotay, Bert Greenwalt, John Hershberger, John Howard, Mark Lewis, Anne McGee, Suzanne Melescue, DayDay Robinson, Veronika Scudamore, Richard Segall, Alexander Sokolov, Rollin Tusalem, Kim Vickrey, Rob Williams, Jason Zhou

Teams Attendees:

Scott Mangan, Stephanie Hoeckley, Pradeep Mishra, Pankaj Nagpal, Mohamed Milad

Proxy Attendees:

John Howard for Matt Weeks, Kevin Berry for (Kristen) Renee Sumler; Alexander Sokolov for Eric West; Alexander Sokolov for Julie King, Alexander Sokolov for Audrey Folsom

Guests:

Dominique White (Access and Accommodations); Gregory Hansen (Faculty); Hans Hacker (UPRTC)

Absentees:

Kristin Sumler, Eric West, Julie King, Audrey Folsom, Andrea Brown, Khem Aryal, Marceline Thompson-Hayes

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by John Hershberger

Order of the day:

Motion to approve the order of the day made by Richard Segall; seconded by Rollin Tusalem; all are in favor, the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

The motion to approve the September 18, 2026, meeting minutes was made by Eric Dry, seconded by Rob Williams; all in favor, the motion carried.

New Business

Dominique White--Access and Accommodations (New Policies)

- Old policies caused delays
- All exam materials must be received by 8am the business day before the exam. If materials are not received by 8am the day before the exam, faculty are being asked to proctor their own exams with the accommodations. A&A offers training for what it looks like to meet accommodations.
- This reduces anxiety for students and chaos for staff. Low distraction for students includes having the exam ready to go when the student gets there.
- Students must request to take an exam in A&A at least 3 business days prior to the exam. There is only space for 10-11 people at a time, so other spaces have to be reserved when exam loads are high.
- It has always been an expectation to have the testing contract. What if there are last minute changes to the exam? You can call A&A to notify them of changes.
- Is there a reason that the document is called a contract or agreement? The data management system uses that term. It cannot be changed.
- What happens when a student is found with a phone in the exam room? How are faculty notified? How long after the incident?
- Incident report is filled out, and faculty are notified after that.
- All exams are proctored via camera. Students are asked to put their belongings in a locker. They are not being searched, but are requested to leave items at the front. If student says they have done so, they are trusting that. Faculty can request footage of the exam when reasonable suspicion of cheating occurs, and at minimum a screenshot is sent. A&A won't pre-emptively send footage due to privacy for other exam takers. There is "no reason footage wouldn't be provided if requested." A faculty can request the full video of the testing session to ensure that additional instances of use of the phone (or other items) are not located on the footage prior to the incident caught by A&A staff.
- Are they monitored live? Student workers and testing coordinators are monitoring sessions live.
- Unless the contract specifically states to end the test on suspicion of cheating, the student will get to finish the test. That is why the agreement is so vital. You can type it into the contract and edit the contract if any time.
- Can that be added as a question? A&A will look into this as a possibility.

Gregory Hansen--Faculty to speak on disruption caused by afternoon class cancellations

- Gregory expresses thanks for being allowed to address the senate.
- Expresses appreciation for the good intent of administration in allowing additional time off on a Friday before a holiday weekend. However, also expresses concerns as follows:
    - substantial loss of instructional time
    - tendency of students to skip morning classes when afternoon classes are cancelled
    - chance of exams or guest speakers being scheduled
    - results in extra work for faculty who teach in those courses/sections

    - syllabi are considered a legal document, and changes due to class cancellations should be minimized
    - Sends the wrong message to students
    - Cancellations disproportionally affects those who teach in the afternoon
    - May be an issue for accreditation of various programs where classes are required to meet for a certain number of hours
- Additionally, he cites that during the most recent cancellation, he had planned a review for his class and wasn't able to do so adequately because of the cancellation. Results in extra work.
- Faculty might make different plans if we had more advance notice, but advance notice cannot be made and align with governing bodies.
- Some express understanding that there is a long standing tradition of letting staff leave early for holidays when classes are not in session, but cancelling class is a separate concern.
- Administration seems to feel the practice is acceptable, so there may not be much movement. It is worth discussing.
- Is anyone interested in creating a resolution?
- Can we invite administration to senate to discuss the concern? Can discuss with provost at next meeting? Some would not feel comfortable speaking to it or voting on any resolution until talking to others in their department/college.
- John Hershberger asked Gary to draft a resolution that could be presented and voted on at the 11/6 meeting.
- It may be better to draft a list of concerns and harmful results of recent early closures rather than a statement that communicates disapproval of the practice. If it becomes more of an issue we could produce a proposal at a later date.
- This has happened before, and has been discussed by faculty senate in the past. When administration turnover happens, sometimes those past events are forgotten.
- Kacie Altom will create a Qualtrics survey for senators to provide feedback from their departments/colleges.

Hans Hacker--University PRT Committee Chair (New wording for PRT documents); Role of Chairs in PRT process; Non-tenure track promotion and retention

- The UPRTC voted unanimously for changes to the PRT process at UPRT level
- Now, tenure track faculty are presented one set of PRT criteria on hire and guided on their work in the first 3 years based on those criteria. Then, at the 3rd year review, if there have been changes to the criteria, the faculty is affected.
- Essentially up until the 3rd year, they have one set of requirements and are potentially ultimately evaluated for tenure/promotion on different criteria.
- The UPTRC drafted and voted on a proposal that would change PRT process to reflect that faculty will be evaluated based on the PRT criteria in place at the time of their hire.
- Senators express agreement with the sentiment for sure. Anne McGee brought up in email and Kacie Altom asked if there was the potential for revision of the current proposal to reflect an ability of the faculty to choose which criteria they are evaluated on if changes are made during the pre-tenure appointment (in case the requirements were to become less stringent during the pre-tenure period).
- There may be and option to edit further in the shared governance process, but the proposal already left the hands of the UPRTC
- Section 3.c.2 of faculty handbook—minimum time in rank 3 years. Early tenure is not necessary for early promotion. Minimum time in rank for associate professor is 5 years. Current administration is in favor of early tenure if requirements are met. Might want to consider tying promotion and tenure more closely together.
- Role of department chair: it is inappropriate for a department chair to dictate who will be on and/or chair the PRT committee. Faculty are to choose committee and chair of the committee. There are chairs and deans that are dictating PRT members and chairs, and this has the potential to sway the decision of the committee. This should

not be happening.

- Path to promotion for Non Tenure Track faculty
- There is a section for instructors (4.b pg 64) promotion to assistant professor. That is not a subject in the purview of UPRTC. Clarifying process and making it more frequently used is something that would have to go through shared governance and would have to originate outside of the committee.
- Anyone can submit a proposal to shared governance. Language can be sorted out departmentally. Hans states he will need to look into this more closely. Promotion is in the name of the committee, but traditionally it has dealt primarily with TT faculty. If a NTT faculty is hired as an assistant professor, they have no mobility within the organization. There should be a uniform policy across colleges.
- Do we as a senate want to have committee to develop a proposal?
- Hans will ask UPRTC if that is something they want to get involved in as well as discuss with Will McLean the proper channels for proposal origination.

Timberly Baker--First read of Teams policy

- Presented proposed policy establishing the option to meet virtually while retaining all rights of physically present senator.
- See attached proposal
    - Decisions needed:
        - Eligibility to attend virtually
        - Senator choice or eligibility standard for virtual attendance (if second option is chosen, need to establish that criteria)
        - We voted last meeting for all senators to be able to have an option.
        - The option was left open because the motion at the last meeting was for temporary approval until a more formal proposal could be drafted
- Kacie motioned to utilize option A citing the vote from the previous meeting.
- Stephanie Gotay seconded the motion
- 1 opposed; no abstentions; motion carries
    - Implementation Needs
        - appropriate classroom will be needed consistently
        - Faculty would need to join from their university account to be counted as present and able to participate in votes
- Required in person meetings: would not have virtual offered during those meetings. Not punitive to be absent.
- Original discussion was that some distance faculty may not ever be able to come to campus. There is an allowance for those who could never come.
- This will be sent out for discussion prior to voting on the full policy.

Healthcare Coverage

- Do we want to put forth any resolutions?
- There could be a policy created for votes similar to this that is more fair than what was done in this case (one vote for each campus in the system). Because the Jonesboro campus has 60% of the employees, it seems irrational to give one vote to 60% of the employees and 6 votes to 40% of the employees. Ask board to consider weighting votes in the future based on % of employees employed on this campus?
- May need to do a list of outcomes; in other words the ways that employees are going to be affected by the decision to remove spouses from health insurance.
- We want to retain faculty, and this type of decision may make that challenging.

- Some question if it would it be possible to “grandfather in" those whose spouses are already covered and have the change affect new hires? There was a question about compliance. May be consequences of non-compliance.
- There was more than one issue. Want more time to think about it.
- How often has something like this happened? It may happen fairly regularly, but has not usually been a decision that was as impactful as this one.
- Timberly Baker will help draft a resolution. Kacie Altom, Anne McGee, and John Hershberger will help with review of the draft.
- Additional questions related to changes:
    - Are dental and vision insurance involved?
- What if spouse is not working but is old enough for Medicare?

Old Business

Committee Reports

Constitutional Review Committee

- Still looking for a couple of members
- Alex Sokolov, Julie King, Rollin Tusalem, and Kevin Berry

Meeting adjourned by John Hershberger at 4:52 pm

Minutes Recorded by Kacie Altom

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