

## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

**10-7-2016**

**Present-** Kyle Chandler, Claire Abernathy, Mary Donaghy, Hans Hacker, Win Bridger, April Sheppard, Manu Bhandari, Pradeep Mishra, Brinda McKinney, Annette Bednar, Jody Long, Debbie Shelton, Larry Morton, Amber Wooten, Bruce Johnson, Suzanne Melescue, Nikesha Nesbitt, Mike McDaniel, Greg Phillips, Richard Segall, Sharon James, David Holman, Gwen Neal, Claudia Benavides, Loretta McGregor, Jeonghee Choi, Amy Pearce, Shivan Haran, Joe Ford, Aiqun Hu

**Proxy-** Jollean Sinclair for Phillip Tew, David Gilmore for Bob Bennett,

**Visitors-** Chairs council rep, Marika Kyriakos, Tom Moore, W.B. Maynard, Doug Whitlock

### Call to order-

Quorum established. Meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m.

### Opening statements-

Mike McDaniel reminded all senators, proxies, and visitors to sign the sign-in sheet so there is an accurate record of all in attendance. This signature needs to be legible for accuracy.

McDaniel asked if all were in approval of the minutes and if any changes were needed. With none given the agenda was approved by acclamation.

McDaniel stated the senate now has Win Bridges serving as parliamentarian.

### Approval of the minutes from 9-16-16

McDaniel asked if all read the minutes and if any corrections were needed. There were minimal corrections and minutes were accepted with those amendments.

### First order of business-Guest Speakers

McDaniel stated some have voiced concerns and questions regarding campus safety and about disaster evacuation plans, especially with the changes and new construction taking place around campus. **Jon Carvell**, safety and emergency management coordinator on campus was present to address the senate and attempt to answer questions and alleviate concerns.

Jon Carvell acknowledged concerns and stated he wants to bring ease in the minds of everyone regarding emergencies and disasters. This is a very important issue and “emergencies need to be manageable in the face of chaos”. He explained current plans in place and answered questions. He was

willing to return anytime there are additional concerns. Carvell brought up an evacuation map of campus showing current emergency routes for first responders. This map will continue to be updated as construction projects are completed. One of the most advantageous practices of the disaster team is to present scenarios and put them into practice. One such scenario was carried out on May 24<sup>th</sup> and involved a simulated air craft crash on campus. Points of consideration are the events that transpire after, areas of escape or shelter, and the number of people who could be impacted. Carvell pointed to the map and explained how red lines are potential escape routes even though they may look like closed roads. These pathways can be opened if the need arises. The goal is to plan, exercise, and implement in a timely manner. Carvell opened the floor to questions.

Bill Maner voiced concerns about the area of campus near the fine arts and music building. With the removal of the road to cross the railroad tracks and no escape route to the west, what plan of escape is there?

Carvell- The current barriers in place will be removed to accommodate high volumes of people and vehicles.

Maner asked if A-State has the equipment to remove barriers that are in place.

Carvell- Yes, facilities management does possess the equipment to remove barriers. We would also have the ability to use sidewalks and allow cars to evacuate on the southern routes. Walking paths and other routes will be opened as needed by UPD, JPD, and facilities.

Maner wondered if it is expeditious to have all cars going out on 12 feet of sidewalk.

Carvell stated A-State also houses ramps at the armory houses that can be put into place to allow more driving spaces that may currently only be walking paths.

(?????)-"Once construction is complete the maps will be updated and new routes will be established?"

Carvell- Yes, and current maps have emergency routes noted by red lines and specific names. Usually these names coordinate with the name of a street they once were or how they are accessed.

(?????)- The issue is no one knows the emergency routes or where to find these maps.

Carvell noted that the maps are online. Emergency handouts are also given at the annual benefits fair.

McDaniel asked if there are also times when A-State occupants need shelter instead of evacuation routes. Carvel replied yes. There are times when people will just have to sit in buildings until storms pass or water levels to go down.

April Sheppard commented that during the summer they called Jon to practice an evacuation scenario at the library. They planned around a boiler explosion and mapped out escape routes to perform an evacuation. Actors were used and it was extremely helpful.

Carvel thanked Sheppard for her comments and stated he would love the opportunity to perform such practice scenarios in every building on campus. He urged all faculty members to be in touch and contact him if needs arise. Also, he wanted to remind everyone that any alert from A-State will be sent via e-mail, text message, or posted on the A-State website. There will never be a time when alerts will be

sent via “Robocall”. These “Robocalls” are a hoax. McDaniel thanked Carvel for addressing the senate and introduced the next guest speaker----Dr. Doug Whitlock, interim chancellor for A-State Jonesboro.

Dr. Whitlock began by noting an error in the Jonesboro Sun article regarding enrollment. This will be corrected and numbers will reflect accurate enrollment. He went on to discuss his teaching background in journalism and computer science at Eastern Kentucky. He understands his interim status only and at 73 years old he is not seeking a long term appointment. Whitlock said he knows some may have concerns his mindset could be parochial or he may try approach A-State with an Eastern Kentucky stamp. He stated after performing multiple accreditation site visits he appreciates the fact that there are always many solutions to multiple problems. Most Universities revolve around teaching, research, and service, but all have their own unique culture. He went on to share stories about his wife, granddaughter, football, and his first visits to Jonesboro. Whitlock commented on his first impressions of campus:

1. Quality and dedication of the faculty, staff, and administration
2. Everyone seemed to have a sense of place, reasonable stewardship, and a good relationship with other schools.
3. A-State has a research role in the steel automotive industry
4. “Unique opportunities” in business global supply chain management

Whitlock stated there may be some who have been employed for many years who run the risk of not appreciating how good it can be. “Please do not get jaded and lose site that this is an exciting place to work”. He then stressed the importance of the need for a culture of shared governance. This involves transparency and trust however, some decisions must be made immediately with justification given later. This is why trust is imperative. Whitlock directed the senate in a thumb exercise. The results were later declared something inconsequential yet can still make one feel uncomfortable, so surely significant decisions would make one feel uncomfortable. Whitlock then read a joke and made further comments stating he wants to be visible on campus and looked forward to meeting and working with everyone.

### **Old Business**

McDaniel stated Greg Phillips would read a new letter and would entertain a motion to adopt the letter as endorsed by the senate to be sent to Dr. Welch. The letter read as follows:

“Dear President Welch:

The A-State Faculty Senate thanks you for speaking with us on Friday, September 16, 2016. We look forward to building a strong foundation with you and Interim Chancellor Whitlock this year, but as we move forward, the Faculty Senate respectfully requests you to continue to address the following points of concern:

- 1) Communication from the ASU System to the campuses needs to be improved;
- 2) Communication within the A-State campus needs to be improved;

- 3) Our leadership must be committed to Shared Governance and transparency during the decision-making processes at all levels;
- 4) Our leadership must be committed to building a shared vision of the missions of our campus and of the system.

Based on our recent discussions, we believe that you share many of these concerns with us. It is our fervent hope that by working together we can address these points of concern to make A-State and the ASU System stronger and more effective.

Sincerely,

A-State Faculty Senate”

Greg Phillips made a motion to adopt the letter and David Holman seconded. Discussion followed with Kyle Chandler questioning if this was a different letter than the one from August. Phillips said yes, the August letter has been sent, responded to, and time lapsed with no response from the senate. This president needs to be more engaged so a new letter was sent to A-State employees for consideration.

Votes were as follows: 14 in favor of adopting the letter, 15 were opposed to adopting the letter, and 2 abstained from voting. Nays have it—motion failed.

### **New Business**

McDaniel discussed two shared governance proposals regarding benefits. The intention was to enter these into the minutes and table until the next senate meeting, but Dr. Welch needed a response by October 14<sup>th</sup>. McDaniel asked for more time and was given October 21<sup>st</sup>. The Senate was given the choice to vote today or have a call meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Phillips motioned to vote today and Haran seconded. Discussion as follows:

Amy Pearce- questioned if a member of the benefits committee would address the senate. McDaniel stated that Dr. Sinclair is proxy today and is on the committee. Jollean Sinclair, proxy for Phillip Tew, explained how the benefits committee met many times and ultimately voted in favor of both proposals as they were the best decision presented. A discrepancy was found on the website regarding current benefit rates. The rates listed on the website and the rates in the proposal e-mail sent to all employees were different. Sinclair gave the correct current rates for all benefits and stated that there will be no increase in premiums for the following year (2017)

Chandler voiced his concerns that most in his department are displeased that we are switching to Signa. We must ensure the quality of service stays the same, not just the rates. Holman reiterated with Blue Cross Blue Shield being very helpful and effective. Sharon James stated that Signa does not decide what A-State offers as benefits to its employees, it is A-State who makes the choice of plans and determines the level of coverage.

Phillips called the question. Bridges stated a call cannot stop discussion. Brinda McKinney stated she sent out the proposal and has had limited responses and is not opposed to a call meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup>. McDaniel asked the senate if they prefer to vote today, have a call meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup>, or vote electronically.

Dr. Pratt asked for a clarification for what specific issue is up for vote. Sinclair stated that proposal 1 is for all current health care rates to remain the same for 2017 with coverage from Signa. Claudia Benavides abstained because she received no response. Senate agreed to vote today and the motion carried by majority vote.

Sinclair then explained proposal 2 which addressed short term disability rates. The STD coverage will be changing to UNUM. Some employees will see an increase in premiums while others will see a decrease. The change will benefit most employees. The benefits committee considered all factors and once again voted in favor of proposal 2.

Phillips made a motion to approve proposal 2. Shivan Hiran seconded. Discussion followed:

McDaniel asked Sinclair if rates were currently guaranteed through Champion for the duration of an employee's employment. James states UNUM is a good quality provider and number 1 in the market. Hacker voiced concerns regarding premium increases. Sinclair said UNUM has assured A-State that any increases will be minimal. Bridges wondered if the 51 people with probable increases have been notified. Sinclair stated that is a question only Human Resources can answer. The question was called and the motion carried by majority vote.

### **Closing Remarks**

McDaniel wanted to tell senators "what's coming" in future meetings.

1. Xerox printer issue (did not go through shared governance, A-State signed a contract, no one seems to like the decision)
2. Early retirement issues
3. Shared governance piece in the faculty handbook
4. Proctor U

Please continue to bring any concerns to McDaniel. Motion to adjourn was made at approximately 5:10 and approved by acclamation. Next meeting scheduled for Friday October 21<sup>st</sup> @ 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wooten