

**Austin Peay State University Faculty Senate
Meeting of Thursday, September 23, 2021
Morgan University Center, Rm # 307 | 3:00 pm
Minutes**

Call to order - Senate President Jane Semler

Recognition of Guests: President Michael Licari, Vice Provost Lynne Crosby, Soma Banerjee, Talon Beeson, Blayne Clements, Corey Harkey, Sondra Hamilton, Melissa Kates, Bill Persinger, and Cecil Wilson

Roll call of Senators - Senate Secretary Gina Garber

Absent Senators: Ellen Brown, Notashia Crenshaw-Williams, Michael Dickins, Sue Evans, Christine Mathenge, Michelle Robertson, Amy Thompson, and Bing Xiao

Approval of today's agenda – Motion made, seconded, and passed to approve the agenda. A Senator opposed the vote in protest of an agenda item that was not added to the agenda before the start of the Faculty Senate meeting. Faculty Senate President Semler replied that we follow the Bylaws which states that an item must be submitted for the agenda, in writing, four days in advance of the meeting (Bylaws of the Faculty Senate of APSU, Article I, Section A, Number 1).

Approval of minutes from August 26, 2021 meeting – motion made, seconded, and passed to approve the August 26, 2021 minutes

Remarks

1. Senate President Jane Semler (5 minutes) – President Semler said the Strategic Planning Committee is working on identifying the core values of the University based on the feedback from the survey that was emailed to all employees. The University will be surveying students using the APSU chat bot. The next step is to work on the mission statement. President Semler invited faculty to provide their input for the mission statement. She said you can send her comments in an email since she is serving on that subcommittee and she would share them with the other members.

President Semler let the senators know how important it is for faculty to be seen outside of our classrooms on campus. She recognized that we are busy and in the middle of a pandemic, but she encouraged us to get out of our offices, take a walk with a colleague, or have a good conversation with a student. President Semler welcomed senators to share their upcoming events with her so she can share them with Faculty Senate. Here are a few:

- Wellness Wednesday (in the tent near the Art+Design building)
- Professional Communication
- Little Friends of Printmaking
- AP Day on October 2
- Football Game
- Faculty Senate Tailgating (please join us behind the Foy)
- Homecoming, October 9 (we will be tailgating at that game too)
- Percussion Ensemble, October 29

President Semler reminded everyone that we were going to discuss the peer review process during the meeting and encouraged the senators to give their comments to the Senate Secretary.

2. University President Dr. Michael Licari (10 minutes) – University President Licari shared the fall enrollment report. He let the senate know that the numbers fluctuate daily. The overall enrollment for the University is down by 5.6% compared to last year this time. We were reminded that the high school graduating classes are smaller so this is not a surprise. We welcomed more new freshmen than we did last year and our graduate enrollment is up 24%. Compared to the other LGIs in the state, everyone is down except for TSU who received federal money to issue scholarships and assist in paying student bills. TSU is the only institution that is up in enrollment, but this is one-time money and it will be interesting to see what happens down the road. President Licari also shared encouraging information about enrollment. He said that the Austin Peay Center at Fort Campbell is up 10% from last year and our international students are back to pre-COVID numbers. He recognized that we have work to do to increase our international students. The dual enrollment numbers have improved. He let us know that the dual enrollment numbers do not translate into tuition dollars. They do turn into future APSU students. Our first-year retention was at 67.7%. Our freshmen stayed at APSU for their sophomore year. He said APSU was like other LGIs in the state. Our retention rate returned to a five-year average of 63.75%. These numbers are typical for APSU. An interesting statistic is that we had a decrease in freshmen women and an increase in freshmen men.

President Licari said the COVID numbers have dropped on campus which was encouraging, but we have a long way to go before we can remove our masks. He announced that the university has expanded the testing operation to the household of any member of the APSU family. Additionally, he discussed the vaccination incentive plan that will begin on October 1st. He was happy to have meaningful prizes as incentives for the students and employees to win for being vaccinated. For example, he said there will be a \$2000 scholarship opportunity for students and a \$2000 bonus opportunity for employees to win. This will allow us to also be able to look at some real vaccine data for the University community.

The APSU Board of Trustees met last week. Mick O'Malley's and Katherine Cannata's terms are expiring. The Board elected Billy Atkins to be the chair and Don Jenkins to be the vice-chair. At this meeting, it was announced that APSU would be moving to the ASUN Conference which is a positive move for the University.

Motion made to extend time by 5 minutes made, seconded, and passed

APSU will be partnering with the Tennessee Secretary of State at the October 9th football game to register voters in the Foy parking lot. President Licari encouraged the faculty to send their students who are not registered to vote over to this event.

Comments | Questions | Answers:

C: There must be reliable Wi-Fi at APSU and in the buildings. The MMC building is having reliable Wi-Fi issues. This issue really needs to be addressed.

Q: Will there be weekly COVID Command Team emails from Michael Kasitz to the University? Is the COVID Team still meeting?

A: Yes, the COVID Team meets every Thursday then every Friday I send out my email message with the COVID information to the University community.

C: The COVID Dashboard is back up and working.

C: The numbers do not seem to be accurate.

C: The numbers are updated every weekday based on the self-reports.

3. Reports from Senate Committees

University Curriculum Committee Representative: Nancy Gibson (5 minutes) – The Committee met on September 13th with a full agenda.

Undergraduate Report: The Academic Regulations for Degree Completion will be updated to provide students who are seeking a second degree or major, and faculty advising these students, clear requirements. The CoE will be modifying the 6-8 grade Middle School (Social Studies) Concentration. CoBHS will modify the Political Science and Public Management programs, and CoSTEM will modify the Biology and Pre-Professional Health Minor, add seven new courses, and modify the Engineering Physics program.

Graduate Report: The graduate program will be updating the program of study and change of program of study information to be reflective of the new practice in generating the degree requirement information. CoAL proposed one new history course and seven new music courses. CoBHS will modify and add new courses in HHP and Nursing. CoSTEM will modify the Biology program and add five new courses. You can see the report on the Documents for Review page.

Board of Trustees Faculty Representative: Elaine Berg (5 minutes)

Trustee Berg reminded the senators that she was elected by the faculty to serve on the BOT and that she has a vote. The meeting was a day long so she will not be reporting on the entire meeting. It was routine. Information is on the BOT page on the Board Meeting Schedule and Materials link. These materials are posted in advance of the BOT meetings. Trustee Berg encouraged everyone to read these documents so if you have concerns you can let her know. She also clarified that people can attend via Zoom or attend in person in a small seating space. The executive sessions are private. Policies are approved which have already gone through the university's system before getting to the BOT. Trustee Berg serves on the following subcommittees: Academic Committee and Student Affairs Committee. If you have any concerns, questions, or issues contact Trustee Berg.

TUFS Summer Report, Soma Banerjee (5 minutes)

Soma Banerjee is the President Elect of TUFS. TUFS represents the 10 four-year public universities across Tennessee. It advocates for improvement of higher education and represents over 10,000 faculty across the state. He reported that MTSU conducted a survey that assesses faculty workloads across the state. The results of that survey showed that teaching online is more time consuming than teaching in person, faculty members are working more hours under the COVID conditions, faculty spent more time teaching and less time doing research, faculty work stress is up, and many of the nine-month faculty work during the summer. TUFS is communicating with the government representatives and looking into a variety of issues, concerns, and future directions such as online learning and the future of student evaluations. Soma Banerjee read the following quote: "No durable change happens at a university that faculty do not buy into" (Former APSU President Tim Hall).

Comments | Questions | Answers:

C: Soma Banerjee was thanked for his service.

Q: What exactly are you looking at in the student evaluations?

A: How student evaluations can be biased with gender or race. It has little to do with the content. Maybe APSU can build a more robust peer evaluation system instead of a heavy weighted student evaluation. Additional information needs to be gathered.

Motion to extend time by 2 minutes made, seconded, and passed

C: After additional discussion, President Semler thanked Soma Banerjee for representing APSU and for an excellent report.

Old Business

1. Peer Review Process Proposed Framework from the 2020-21 Faculty Red Committee (action item), Senate President Jane Semler (15 minutes) – President Semler said it was important to have a discussion and take a vote to see if we are in a general agreement of the framework. She let the senators know that our charge is not creating the language, but to be looking at the framework. If we are happy with the framework, then the RTP Policy Committee will formulate the details. If we have feedback, we can include it for the RTP Policy Committee.

Comments | Questions | Answers:

Q: To clarify, what do we mean by the word “framework?” Like we discussed at the last meeting, we think it’s too much and too many meetings for the college. Is this part of the framework?

A: We need to vote in general on either supporting an enhanced review or not supporting an enhanced review. Beyond that, we can provide our concerns and suggestions. We will vote on this again in the spring once the RTP Policy Committee brings the language forward.

C: “Enhanced” Does that mean in quantity, or the same number of reviews, but better?

A: The RTP Policy Committee will have to flush this out for us. Most departments are doing one review, but we will have to do at least two reviews. If departments are already doing two reviews then that should be enough. It does not have to be someone in your department, it could be someone outside of your department.

C: Senator Mickey Wadia said he is on the RTP Policy Committee and this came up when he was Faculty Senate President. Two things to remember: The previous Provost said in order to lower the student evaluation weight, more weight will be added to the peer review and that we would need to have more than one, probably two reviews. We want to simplify this process to have a little balance in the process.

C: The current Provost is in support of this process.

Q: Is this the same process for the online classes or is it just for on-ground classes?

A: This is for on-ground classes, but there will be something for online classes.

Q: Is this just for the first observation?

A: This is a just proposed suggestion. Your first meeting would be a formative meeting.

Q: Who would be evaluating / observing? My classes are on a MWF, so we meet on a Monday and then get a report on a Tuesday?

A: It does not say it will happen in consecutive classes.

Q: Who decides which class will be observed?

A: You and the observer make that decision.

C: I support the comments made by Dr. Wadia. The present framework is cumbersome. My concern is that we will get trapped in that sort of framework and we will end up just tweaking it. I agree that we should have more peer reviews, but maybe we should have a template by college.

Q: I have a suggestion about the procedure. I appreciate the hard work that went into this framework. The senator recognized that it took a lot of time. However, what if you teach online and on-ground? Why couldn’t we have one peer review of each? If you teach online

and in person, one review would have to be online and one review would have to be in person.

Motion to extend time by 5 minutes made, seconded, and passed

A: We are grateful to have Senator Wadia in the room who knows about this evaluation and the history of it. He can give us an interim report about the process?

Q: What would be the procedure to send something much simpler?

A: We could limit criteria and let them work out the details. We could suggest that we should have two peer evaluations if teaching online and in person. You would have one of each.

C: This might be complicated when a faculty member is coming in with years toward credit. This will look different.

Motion to extend time by 2 minutes made, seconded, and passed

A: I agree with you so faculty need to consider that very carefully. A brief discussion ensued.

Motion to extend time by 2 minutes made, and seconded, but did not pass

President Semler called for a vote to put forward Senator Jennifer Thayer's proposal to have an enhanced peer review process that would include two peer evaluations. If you teach 100% online, both of your peer reviews will be conducted online. If you teach 100% on ground, both of your peer reviews will be conducted on ground. If you teach both online and on ground, you will have one online and one on-ground evaluation.

All in favor of approving the enhanced peer review evaluation with Senator Thayer's suggestion.

Voting results: The motion passes with 27 for and 4 opposed.

New Business

1. Policy 7:012 Social Media Policy (information item) – Bill Persinger, Executive Director of Public Relations & Marketing, Corey Harkey, University Attorney, and Blayne Clements, Chief Audit Officer (10 minutes)

Blayne Clements addressed the Faculty Senate and let them know that the Social Media Policy started within his office. They were looking at APSU PR&M risks. They began to look at how APSU uses social media. This is happening at other universities. You can find these policies on their websites.

Corey Harkey reported that most of what is covered in the policy is about APSU-specific social media and their accounts. There have been reports of employees behaving badly that can impact our students. There has been harassment, influence of students by faculty, and the like that we need to have an important conversation about. There needs to be some kind of response for a person's behavior at APSU.

Comments | Questions | Answers:

C: Some of the language can be misinterpreted and that's why I have a problem with it. It can target woman or people of color. On page 3, section 5.6 seems to be a contradiction. It is difficult to police something like this. How would you be fair?

Motion to extend time by 5 minutes made, seconded, and passed

A: We have no plan to control your social media. When there has been a complaint, we investigate.

C: We do not have the resources to police everyone's social media accounts. We have read the comments to the Social Media Policy.

C: MTSU's Social Media Policy doesn't get into personal social media accounts.

C: Submit your suggested language and we will look at it to incorporate it into the final draft.

C: Just because personal use is not written in the policy does not mean you are immune from the consequences.

A: In the section "employees who choose to identify themselves at APSU..." What about my "About" section of my social media account where I am employed. What about section C?

Motion to extend time by 5 minutes made, seconded, and passed

Would I be allowed to post that I received a grant on my social media?

A: There is a difference when you are speaking as a private citizen versus speaking as an APSU employee. Speaking as an APSU employee can turn into a matter of public concern. Additional discussion ensued.

C: We reflect a brand daily whether on social media or in the classroom. These are extreme scenarios.

Q: This policy is so vague, but it ends in a possible termination of one's job. This needs to be removed. This makes me afraid to wear my APSU t-shirt.

Q: These sorts of things can create a disruption on campus. It disempowers faculty. This is very scary to some of us and can have a huge impact.

Motion to extend time by 5 minutes made, seconded, and passed

C: I hear you. Thank you for your feedback. We needed to hear this information from you so we can revise the policy.

C: Courts have jurisdiction over if someone wants to take you to court. However, this is a different when referring to APSU. This is another thing.

A: APSU can still take disciplinary action against you.

C: I am very uncomfortable with this structure and it lays the groundwork for someone else to come along and do something else with it.

Q: You have a line about getting a consent from all parties to include documentation for photographs, etc. How do you get documentation from a football game or another sporting event?

A: If there is a football game and you take a photograph, it is ok because it's fair use because it was taken in a crowd. However, if we take a photograph of you at a game

it's fair game and turn it into promotional recruitment materials, then the focus changes. Discussion ensued.

President Semler took a straw poll to remove the "Employee Personal Use of Social Media" personal use section from the policy. The vote was unanimous to remove it.

2. Update on University Budget – Mitch Robinson, Vice President for Finance and Administration (5 minutes) – Sondra Hamilton substituted for Mitch Robinson who was out of the office. She covered the old business first and said they just closed out the fiscal year and Mitch reported to the BOT who were interested in our financial reserves. He let them know that we will be working over the next years to rebuild our reserves. We have a remaining 18 million dollars for year 2022 in reserves. They will be making budget revisions in October to present to the BOT in December. Sondra thanked the faculty who served on the Budget Committee for their work.
3. CAFÉ - Melissa Kates, CAFÉ Director (5 minutes) Dr. Kates greeted everyone. She emphasized that the CAFÉ is for faculty and they are working as advocates for faculty. They are working through the nomination process for the Advisory Board. Academic White along with CAFÉ are working on the student course evaluation instrument. They want to improve faculty teaching. Additionally, she said that the Faculty Leadership Program, First-Year Faculty Program, and Mentoring are now under CAFÉ. The Advisory Board will be looking at the mission, vision, and values, as well as how to reach those goals. CAFÉ is working with Distance Education to create TechBytes that are how-to instructional videos. She is open to suggestions. CAFÉ space is in the Claxon building on the second floor.
4. Campus Food Service Bid - Cecil Wilson, Director of Housing Services (5 minutes) – Cecil Wilson had to leave before we got to him.
5. Update on University Strategic Plan and AA Strategic Plan - Nancy Gibson (5 minutes) – Nancy Gibson encouraged everyone to complete the survey that was sent out early in the semester which will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. The feedback will assist the Committee in developing the mission, vision, and core values for the University. The next meeting will be ranking the information received so far.

Motion to adjourn made, seconded, and passed

Meeting Adjourned at 5:05pm