

**ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OCTOBER 23, 2014**

The **Executive Committee** of the Athens State University Board of Trustees held a meeting with the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2014 in the Sandridge Student Center Ballroom. This meeting was to hear concerns from the two senates regarding the University.

Present were Macke Mauldin (Chair Pro Tempore of the Board), Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried, Tazewell Shepard, Dr. Robert Glenn, and Jackie Gooch. Jack Clarke served as facilitator for the meeting.

Faculty Senate members present were John Berzett, Dr. Sean Busick, Dr. Mark Durm, Dr. Mike Essary, Bonnie Heatherly, Dr. Lisa Hyde, Del O'Neal, Kim Roberts, Dr. Bebe Shaw, Debra Vaughn (spokesperson for the Faculty Senate), Dr. Darlene Turner-White, and Dr. Cathy Woodruff.

Staff Senate members present were Chad Adams, Laura Allen, Cathy Brett, Nancy Croomes, Trish DiLullo, Lynn Frank, Nicki Johns, Damon Lares (spokesperson for the Staff Senate), Penny Roberts, Suzanne Sims, and Dana Waldrop.

Dr. Sims-deGraffenried welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. Board members were introduced. Dr. Sims-deGraffenried introduced the facilitator, Jack Clarke. Mr. Clarke gave a brief bio and provided the ground rules for the meeting. Ms. Vaughn, as spokesperson for the Faculty Senate, read the following statement from the faculty senate:

The Faculty Senate would like to thank the Board of Trustees for your willingness to meet with us today and give us the opportunity to express our collective opinion. Our concerns revolve around leadership, shared governance and academic freedom, and financial viability.

In 2010, based upon results of the morale survey completed by Athens State University employees, Athens State University was recognized by the Chronicle of Higher Education as "one of the best colleges in the nation to work for."

In the press release about those results, Dr. Glenn stated that, "The Chronicle of Higher Education confirms what has been common knowledge in North Alabama for the last half-century, or so, and that is that Athens State University is one of the best places to work within higher education. Whenever you talk to a member of the faculty or staff it won't be long before they start talking about how much they love their work, and, how much they love working at Athens State. Whenever we have a vacancy on the faculty or staff you will always see a long list of applicants from other institutions because the great reputation of the institution draws people to it. The people here are the heart and soul of the institution and as long as we are smart enough to recognize and honor that fact, we will remain one of the very best places to work."

However, in 2014, as you know, the results of the survey reflected a vastly different work atmosphere.

As the Faculty Senate, we would like to reestablish the positive work environment referred to by Dr. Glenn in his 2010 statement. We are taking this opportunity to present our vision for a positive path forward related to leadership, shared governance and academic freedom, and financial viability.

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others toward the achievement of a goal. The Faculty Senate views that goal as a vibrant, viable, and resilient university, prepared to serve its population of students in the present and the future. The social influence of leadership works effectively only in an atmosphere of dignity and mutual respect, and the faculty crave the opportunity to collaborate with staff and administration in efforts to move Athens State University forward toward shared goals in such an atmosphere, as truly shared governance.

The Athens State University policy of shared governance states that, "Athens State University values shared governance. For the purposes of this statement, shared governance is defined as an environment where all members of the University community work collaboratively concerning all matters which serve to accomplish the University's mission and, either directly or indirectly, affect the academic environment at the University. Shared governance involves the full participation of the board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students concerning matters affecting the University, within their respective roles and responsibilities."

The role of the administration in shared governance states that, "The University President and the President's Cabinet have a primary responsibility to promote a collaborative and supportive working environment, and to protect, encourage, and recognize faculty and staff in the performance of their duties related to teaching, learning, student and institutional support, professional development, scholarly work/research, and community service. Toward this end, a primary responsibility of the

University administration in shared governance will be to maintain open and constructive communication between administrators, faculty, and staff as they work toward the common purpose of achieving the University's mission."

The Faculty Senate, as representatives of the faculty as a whole, approved and wholly supports these descriptions of shared governance for Athens State University. This social relationship, both publicly and in the working progression of the University in its sustainability for the future, needs to be re-established.

Ensuring future financial viability is also essential for Athens State University to continue to pursue its mission. There are always changing circumstances and financial risks for all decisions, but the light of day is essential to the evaluation of those decisions and a consensus of decisions and improves the likelihood that those risks are reasonable. The Faculty Senate believes that faculty's participating in the assessments of financial risks will strengthen the likelihood that those decisions will be sound, and future financial viability is more likely sustainable.

It is therefore with optimism that the Faculty Senate welcomes a future of productive collaboration and cooperation among the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff, which insures mutual commitment to positive leadership, shared governance and academic freedom, and the financial viability of Athens State University.

Mr. Clarke asked if anyone had questions. There were no questions.

Damon Lares read the following statement from the Staff Senate.

Our honorable board,

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to bring forward the concerns that the staff may have for this University. At the present time, we feel that the University is once again moving in the right direction. We will continue to work alongside the Administrators and Faculty to provide a quality educational experience to our students.

After reviewing concerns received from the staff, the Staff Senate voted to share them first with Dr. Glenn and allow him the opportunity to address them.

We are optimistic that Dr. Glenn will take these concerns to heart, ensure that they are addressed and provide updates to the staff.

Do you have any questions for the Staff Senate at this time?

Again, we would like to thank you for taking this time to meet with us.

Mr. Clarke asked if anyone had questions. There were no questions.

Mr. Clarke asked if anyone else from either the faculty or staff senate would like to make a comment. Dr. Essary read a statement regarding increasing our online education offerings. Dr. Essary stated that the University would improve finances by growing the online program.

Mr. Clarke asked for questions or comments from the Board.

Mr. Mauldin stated the four areas of concern from Ms. Vaughn's statement (academic freedom, leadership, shared governance and financial viability).

Mr. Mauldin asked Ms. Vaughn to provide specific issues with academic freedom. Ms. Vaughn stated that the Faculty Senate asked her to not comment.

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Mr. Mauldin asked Ms. Vaughn to provide specific issues with shared governance. Ms. Vaughn stated that the Faculty Senate asked her to not comment.

Mr. Mauldin asked Ms. Vaughn to provide specific issues with financial viability. Ms. Vaughn stated that the Faculty Senate asked her to not comment.

Mr. Shepard inquired if there was a list of exact concerns somewhere. Del O'Neal responded yes. Dr. Glenn stated that he received the list this morning and forwarded it to the Board. Dr. Glenn received the email at 8:39 am and forwarded it to the Board at 8:51 am. The Board members were in route to the meeting and had not seen the email. Mr. Mauldin apologized for not knowing about the list. Board members will review the list. Del O'Neal stated that it was the intent to get the list to the Board members yesterday but the Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate was out-of-town.

Damon Lares commented that the list of staff issues was given to Dr. Glenn yesterday. It was the intent of the Staff Senate to present the issues to Dr. Glenn first and let him have a chance to respond before presenting to the Board. Dr. Sims-deGraffenried thanked Mr. Lares for following the chain-of-command.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Clarke reiterated that there would be further communication on these issues.

Dr. Glenn announced that a taskforce would be formed to review morale concerns. Mr. Clarke will lead the taskforce.

Dr. Sims-deGraffenried congratulated the University and the College of Education on the successful NCATE visit. Mr. Mauldin echoed his thanks to all who played a role in the process.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.