



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK
University Assembly Meeting

*Thursday, April 22, 2010 • 2:00 p.m.
Dickinson Hall Auditorium*

MINUTES

I. Call to order

The president declared it to be 2 p.m., called the meeting to order, and welcomed those in attendance... The president acknowledged there are certainly other attractive alternatives for such a fine spring afternoon, and thanked people for making this choice...

II. Review of minutes

The president called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the September 18, 2009, meeting of the University Assembly, as posted on the [Faculty Senate web site](#). The minutes were approved as posted.

III. President's comments

Ford wore a black suit, he said, in honor of his swan song. The last four years as Assembly president have been "a true experience." (He noted that the ambiguity of the phrase wasn't entirely unintentional.)

Ford said he couldn't have done it without the team of people who shared leadership with him. He recognized Pete Tschumi and Rosalie Cheatham, who had served long and well on the Faculty Senate executive committee and helped him enormously during his first term as president. He recognized also the yeoman's service on the Faculty Senate executive committee of Andrew Eshleman, pointing out that he had been an active voice in the Senate, "and so I asked him to be more active."

Ford said Laura Smith-Olinde's polite comment to him a couple of summers ago about some matter of business before the Senate led him to recruit her to stand for the office of parliamentarian. Her presence, he said, has been welcome and valuable.

Ford recognized Earl Ramsey, who has served as vice president for both Ford's terms. Ramsey, he said, "has done a lot, much of it behind the scenes, serving us all well."

Ford next recognized one who's served four years on the executive committee as the immediate past president of the Assembly and two years before that as president—one he knows is looking forward to moving on, at long last. Fred Williams gladly accepted a

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plaque from Ford, and in a very Williamssesque gesture, assured the Assembly that all these plaques were bought with "Ford's own personal money," so that not a penny of University funds was spent for them.

And Ford thanked Judith Faust for her seven years' service on the Faculty Senate executive committee and as secretary to the Assembly and the Faculty Senate. He called her "very helpful to me," and were she a person who could blush, she would certainly have done so. Instead, she fondly told him she wouldn't proofread the inscription on her plaque.

Finally, Ford made known to the Assembly the stellar academic performance of UALR's student athletes. The Faculty Senate in its meeting last week passed a resolution honoring that performance, and Ford asked the secretary to read excerpts from the resolution, the full text of which is appended to these minutes. Athletic Director Chris Peterson accepted a framed copy, and gracefully gave credit to his coaching staff and to the faculty of the university, saying the excellent academic experience they provide is the context for success.

IV. Election of the Assembly president

Ford reminded the Assembly that the constitution charges the Assembly's committee on committees with developing a slate of candidates for the office of president of the Assembly every two years. He presented the slate, which contained a single name, that of Andrew Eshleman. Ford called for nominations from the floor. **Cheatham moved, Tschumi seconded, the election by acclamation of Andrew Eshleman as president of the University Assembly. The motion carried on unanimous voice vote.**

V. Report from the Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE)

Steve Edison, codirector, reporting today at the close of ATLE's third year, said one of the highlights was certainly when North Central came and said nice things about The Academy being one of the best programs on campus. He invited Assembly members, especially faculty, to visit [their website](#), and discover all the teaching-related resources there.

Carol Thompson, codirector of the Academy, took the podium and commented on growth. ATLE has involved 385 faculty members this year through a variety of activities. One, Shadow and Share, pairs a seasoned faculty member with a new faculty member. They visit each other's classrooms, talk, and work together, then come share what they've learned at a luncheon. There have been eight teaching demonstrations over the year by McMillan, Flinn, Cheatham, Geissler, Hemphill, and others. There were book discussions last year about student-centered learning, and talk about teaching at 10 on Wednesdays in the ATLE office. They brought Dr. Maryellen Weimer to campus for a two-day visit to talk with faculty about her perspective on learner-centered teaching...

Plans for next academic year, subject to change with the input of faculty, include the following: Lecture series, fall, spring, and summer. Distributing articles about teaching, some radical, and getting together for discussion. Enlisting faculty for an open-classroom project. Continuing Shadow and Share. Developing an ongoing assessment process.

Thompson called attention to the Distinguished Teaching Fellow award program. There were five winners last year, four this, and the path toward the award is detailed on the web site.

And finally, Edison and Thompson paid tribute to Dave McAlpine, an inaugural director of the Academy, and sent an anticipatory welcome to the new codirector who will be onboard by fall.

VI. Remarks by Provost David Belcher

The provost began by saying that when he can push himself away far enough to get an overarching perspective, he sees this as having been a truly good year for our institution. It has felt tough, though, for a couple of reasons: one is certainly budget, and the other is the extraordinary endurance run of nine separate accreditation cycles coming around in a single academic year, including nursing, systems engineering, construction management, audiology and speech pathology, theatre arts, and law (and no, he reminded the Assembly, the latter two are not the same thing). Two others were campus wide, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and NCATE. The provost is proud to report that we have done extremely well on every one of these nine fronts. He acknowledged our colleagues who worked so hard and made these all work.

Next year there will be only four accreditations. We're going to launch a look at revising our undergraduate curriculum, the work to be led by a task force. Nominations are in, and the task force will be appointed before the end of the semester.

The other big item on the agenda is the revision of our strategic plan. A few months ago, we solicited input from the campus community, and received 550 submissions. We're going to have a sort of executive summary of an accountability report on the plan, and seek further input. The first questions headed your way, maybe as early as tomorrow will be something like these: What goals, pledges, and promises should we keep? What new stuff should be in there? Where should we be in five to seven years, and what will it take for us to get there?

Crossing the Finish Line: If you read one book about work over the summer, it should perhaps be this one. The provost read about it in an article in the New York Times, and then Mike Watts called, recommending it. The authors use the entering class of 1999 and look at their experience. The conclusions are compelling. It's dry, but the conclusions are sobering, affirming, exciting, and humbling. One example: The best indicator for how students will do in college is how they did in high school—with this finding, the authors affirmed us.

The provost asked that President Ford come forward to be embarrassed. Ford was, he said, appropriately assertive on the issues: Final passage of Faculty Roles and Rewards. Passage of university promotion and tenure guidelines not once, not twice, but three times. Encouraging more junior faculty to get involved in faculty governance. Being a steadfast advocate for faculty and students. For these reasons and many more, the provost said, "he deserves this plague... I mean, *plaque*."

VII. Remarks by Chancellor Joel Anderson

The chancellor picked up where the provost left off by commending Richard Ford on his work as president of the Assembly and Faculty Senate. The chancellor observed that he's done a really fine job, *and* that it was fun working with him. The chancellor welcomed Andrew Eshleman as Ford's successor.

Chancellor Anderson noted that he was the second president of the University Assembly. All through the years, he said, there have been very conscientious and hard working people who have assumed the work and done it well.

Thought about digging out and dusting off the speech he gave at the beginning of this academic year, which, as full as it was, seemed to pass for me in the blink of an eye. He did acknowledge that some of us may have found it interminable, which reminded him of the turtle crossing the road who was mugged by two snails. The police showed

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up, and asked the poor turtle what had happened. "I don't know," he said. "It happened so fast."

Here are some of the things that happened for us this year:

- Implemented electronic PAFs.
- Migrated e-mail to Google. (A very, very big change.)
- Completed the university-wide promotion and tenure policy.
- Roles and Rewards II's recommendations are pending, coming a couple of years after R&R I.
- Stellar performance by the women's basketball team. (He expects them to make a habit of it—good for them, and for the whole institution.)
- Construction of the EIT building, a process begun eleven years ago with the first legislative appropriation for the building.
- Record enrollment.
- Campus campaign—had 47% participation this year, slightly lower than the previous year, while the amount contributed, \$438K, was a bit higher.
- Seventh annual racial attitudes conference, with the highest-ever attendance.
- Nine accreditations. (Glad there weren't ten, because there were times when he thought if we had had another one, the provost would have pulled out what's left of his hair.)

The chancellor had some good financial news, but to be prefaced by a cautionary note: When it comes to the economy, we're not entirely out of the woods yet. Signs are still mixed. Last Saturday, the *Democrat-Gazette* carried a story about the Federal Reserve's beige book—said that in all but one of the regions across the country, things are looking up. The one exception was the St. Louis region, which is ours, where conditions were described as "softening." In Arkansas news last week, the Department of Finance and Administration is holding firm on their downwardly revised revenue projections. Unemployment is a bit higher, though still lower than in the rest of the country. The chancellor wants us not to be overconfident about what we're facing in the next six to twenty-four months.

As we started building next year's budget a few months ago, things looked worse than they do now. The General Assembly finished its session without doing anything too adverse for us. Last Friday, the Board of Trustees met and did approve our request as submitted. Now we know what the tuition rates and the revenue will be. With these increases and some tightening elsewhere, he said, we're going to be able to do some good things: We should be able to do something with salaries, both classified and non-classified. (Not an accomplished fact without Board of Trustees' approval, but he wouldn't be surprised to get it.) We should be able to complete our planned increases for classified employees as set by the legislated pay plan. For non-classified staff (faculty and professional staff) we should have a 2% merit-pay pool. That might sound modest, but a few months ago, we were looking at no salary increases anywhere.

Another thing that has changed is the increase in our facilities fee. Fayetteville made the case that their short-term and long-term maintenance of facilities need was so significant that they got the increase they requested, which will top out at \$6. By comparison, ours is chicken feed. We started out last year with \$1, and are going to \$3 now. The General Assembly, the chancellor said, has generally done well by higher education over the years, but they do not generally provide us the dollars we need to maintain buildings or construct new ones. The facilities fee to students is one way to meet the need. Bonds will still be necessary for big projects, and part of the facilities fee will be dedicated to debt service as well.

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Two major bond issues and their construction projects will begin soon. Building projects create noise, raise dust, lose trees, disrupt parking—are generally a nuisance while they’re happening. He encourages us to imagine *what will be* when we’re confronted by annoying construction. The best news is that we’re able to undertake all these projects without touching the money for other things on campus.

The chancellor reminded the Assembly that we depend on two major revenue streams that account for about 90% of our total expenditures: 40% comes from tuition and fees, and the rest is appropriated funds.

In conclusion, the chancellor said, our strategic plan still guides us.

In some ways, it’s been a hard year, and he appreciates everyone’s work in getting through. The purchasing freeze and hiring freeze weren’t easy. One of the most impressive achievements of the year, the chancellor believes, is that as the year has gone on, our students have barely noticed the difficulties we’ve met and dealt with. He thanked the University Assembly for how we have protected our students and their interests. We’re doing the work of building the powerhouse university this can be, he said, and through the end of this year, we’re on course.

The chancellor received applause from the Assembly.

IX. Open forum

President Ford called for matters members wished to bring before the Assembly for discussion. None were brought forward.

X. Adjournment

There being no further discussion and no further business to come before the Assembly, the president adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Faust, Secretary