

## **A Letter from the Arkansas Tech University Board of Trustees**

Dear Members of the ATU Faculty Senate:

The Arkansas Tech University Board of Trustees is “vested by law with all the powers and authority to govern effectively and set policy for the institution in accordance with the laws of the State of Arkansas.” We take this responsibility and its purview very seriously. The collective efforts of the board, the president, faculty and staff share the common goal of seeking to fulfill the mission and vision of the institution. We can only do this, effectively, by working together in collaboration through shared governance and mutual respect for the individual roles which make up our collective body.

The board recognizes the challenges, frustrations and discontent which preceded this vote, which is recognized by working with the Association of Governing Boards to identify steps forward in an effort to be responsive to the campus community.

While we find this vote deeply troubling, the report of the ATU Faculty Senate contradicts the positive review conducted by the Higher Learning Commission affirming the university’s continued accreditation. The president’s assessment by the board, ATU’s track record of fundraising under her leadership, our recent increase in state appropriations, our increased four-year graduation rate on the Russellville campus, our increased three-year graduation rate on the Ozark campus and ATU’s A1 Bond rating with Moody’s Investor Service are further evidence of the success of the current administration.

The board remains confident in and supportive of the leadership, strategic direction and performance of President Bowen. She has led the university through a difficult, but necessary, restructuring process which has allowed the institution to continue its excellent stewardship and has placed it in good financial stability despite one of the most challenging times experienced by higher education, times which could not have been foreseen. As found in the bylaws of the ATU Board of Trustees, the president “shall be responsible for the supervision and management of the institution and for interpreting and implementing the policies of the institution and of the board.” We believe that President Bowen continues to lead the institution with integrity, compassionate character and steadfast leadership.

Members of the ATU Faculty Senate, along with colleagues across campus, carry out the vital mission of the institution, which is dedicated to student success, access and excellence. The passion and dedication of those whose voices were expressed does not go unnoticed. As stated in the recently released report from AGB, “this process will continue to be based on the value of constructive dissent embracing the collegiality that is so well defined in the university’s faculty handbook.” As voted on in a special called meeting on Nov. 29, the board charges President Bowen with leading and involving faculty and staff members in considering and acting upon, as appropriate, the recommendations from AGB.

Moving forward together, the future of Arkansas Tech remains bright.