

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2009 – 3:30 PM – 150 SHELBY HALL**

APPROVED MINUTES

ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE: Sheila Black, Martin Evans, Douglas Lightfoot, Katrina Ramonell, Shane Street, Karen Burgess, Laurie Bonnici, Janis Edwards, Angela Benson, David Arnold, Clark Midkiff, Srinath Viswanathan, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Wesley Church

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Thad Ulzen/Jim Leeper; Diane Sekeres/Wayne Urban; Lee Pike/Jason Battles; Cassandra Simon/Ellen Csikai; Bronwen Lightenstein/Rona Donahoe, Michael Martone, Mathew Winston

GUESTS: Michael George, University Registrar; Teresa Shreve, University Supply Store; Chad Tindol, University Legal Counsel; Lee Keys, Counseling Center; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Linda Hill, Dialog

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The minutes of the December 9, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting were approved as amended.

President Karen Steckol emailed two articles from the Chronicle of Higher Education to the Steering Committee. The articles were titled “Rejecting the Academic Fast Track” and “Why Graduate Students Reject the Fast Track”. Better work-life balance was the main theme of these articles.

Michael George, University Registrar, and Teresa Shreve, University Supply Store Director, began the meeting by stating there are two new legislations from Congress affecting higher education. The legislations are “**Higher Education Reauthorization Act**” and “**Higher Education Opportunity Act**”. A section of this legislation mandates textbook publishers to bundle and unbundle their formats, pricing and copyright dates for the previous three editions must be provided and the revisions within the textbook must be defined to determine if the student actually needs the latest version. Faculty members are required to disclose either the ISB number or the author and copyright date of text course materials and their cost to the maximum extent possible. This information will be made available to students through an attachment to the online class schedule. The registrar is required by July of 2010 to make these adjustments. If the textbook information is not available at the proper time, a “To Be Determined” classification has been authorized by Congress. Teresa Shreve, University Supply Store Director, stated the current procedure will continue to be in place. According to State law the Supply Store must share textbook information with local book stores within 48 hours. Course and textbook information will be posted on the Supe Store website. Faculty should supply inclusive information concerning their classes such as kits, optional books, calculators, etc. This will enable students to verify the total cost of taking a specific class. This in turn will assist students in reducing their education cost. Efforts are underway to eliminate a gap between the schedule of classes on the web and the information received at the Supe Store.

Lee Keys, Counseling Center, and Chad Tindol, University Legal Counsel, addressed the Senate concerning interaction with distressed students. In the mid-90s the Air Force Academy began the development of one of the most effective suicide prevention programs in the country. General Mormon, Air Force Academy Commandant, stated, "Suicide prevention is the responsibility of each one of us. Effective suicide prevention means we create a community that provides assistance long before someone becomes suicidal". Lee Keys said that this premise is at the core of our community's efforts in working with distressed students and suicide prevention. The ethic of looking out and caring for one another is the most essential ingredient in these efforts. Faculty members are in the position of having the most interaction with students and should respond within the parameters of their role. Anxiety associated with dealing with distressed students makes the response less effective. Taking the mentalhealth.edu online course was recommended to reduce anxiety by becoming familiar with the issues. Consultation with the college/school mental health liaison would also be a positive step along with contacting mental health personnel within the Counseling Center. The involvement of a faculty member in a situation in just the right time and just the right way can reduce the amount of time invested in dealing with these situations. The over-involved faculty member will invest much more time. The under-involved faculty member will also eventually invest more time. Facing the problem and dealing with it is the best course of action. One senator questioned the proper way to deal with a disgruntled student. Chad Tindol, University Legal Counsel, advised in a general statement to uphold the boundaries and limits for all students regardless. Past situations have revealed that the less those boundaries and limits are upheld the more the situation escalates. Other questions dealt with privacy issues, legal responsibilities, appropriate responses to a distressed student, available resources, misbehavior of a student and crisis intervention. A student can be advised to seek assistance but they cannot be forced to do so. The University has in place liability insurance for faculty members covering actions within the line and scope of their employment. There are personal liability insurance policies available through educational professional organizations. In an annual year five to eight percent of the enrollment receives counseling and therapy. Go to MyBama and click on the mental health icon or go to mentalhealth.edu to access the mentalhealth.edu course. It is a thirty minute course with stop and start features to accommodate various schedules. Approximately seven to eight hundred faculty and staff have completed this course. Each senator was encouraged to take this information back to their colleagues.

President's Report – (*Karen Steckol*) There will be a meeting on Friday, January 30 at 2:00 PM to recommend students for the **Outstanding Alumni Student Award**. Carolyn Cassady, Liza Wilson and Katrina Ramonell volunteered to serve.

The Faculty and Governance Committee is in the process of organizing steps to install a seventh Faculty Senate Committee. This will be an **Information Technology Committee** to address any problems and oversee technology developments on campus.

The senators were encouraged to attend the candidate interviews for the Vice President for Research. The Faculty Senate has a specified time to meet with the candidates. Itineraries will be emailed to the entire Senate for their information.

Vice President's Report – (*Clark Midkiff*) No report.

Secretary's Report – (*Jeanette VanderMeer*) No report.

Reports from Senate Committees

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The Academic Affairs Committee is proposing a change in the Faculty Handbook. This change primarily revises wording to reflect the method used to report grades currently. One senator pointed out that “Section C – Reporting Grades” and “Section E - Changing Grades” are very different in character. “Section E” gives policy statement but omits directions on method used to change a grade. “Section C” gives directions on how to report grades. Should changing grade instructions be included in “Section E” was the senator’s concern. The point was well taken and will be addressed in the near future. The charge to the Academic Affairs Committee was only to update the language. The vote of the Faculty Senate was to approve the change in the Faculty Handbook unanimously. The Academic Affairs Committee will meet in February with Judy Thorpe, Director of Office of Disability Services, to address accommodations for special needs students.

Faculty Life – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) The Faculty Life Committee will be working with Bob Smallwood, Assistant to the Provost for Assessment, to develop a faculty satisfaction survey.

Financial Affairs – (*Katrina Ramonell & Steven Hobbs*) No report.

Research & Service – (*Ed Stephenson & Shane Street*) No report.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*John Mason & Michael Martone/Marci Daugherty*) The CUC has begun collecting data from faculty members concerning committee preferences. There are twenty-two committees and senators were encouraged to indicate preferences for committee membership.

Student Affairs – (*Melondie Carter & Carolyn Cassady*) A web site listing student organizations in need of faculty advisors is under consideration. A meeting will be held next week with Stacey Jones and Kathleen Cramer, Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. The Student Life Committee will meet the following week to discuss the recommendations.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) The Legislative Breakfast date has been changed to possibly February 13 depending on the availability of Legislator guest speakers. The importance of Higher Education Day in Montgomery on March 5 was discussed. Higher Education Partnership membership was encouraged. Fair and equitable treatment for higher education by politicians is a goal of the partnership. That would be sharing good times and bad by K-12 and Higher Education institutions. Consideration by faculty members for students participating in the event was requested. Rallying alumni and friends to higher education advocacy will be the topic of a dinner on March 4 in Montgomery.

Reports from Other Committees

President Steckol represented the Faculty Senate at a fraternity and sorority retreat in Columbiana. The charge of President Steckol was to report how faculty members view fraternities and sororities on campus. The elimination of the GPA requirement for student football ticket allocation by fraternities and sororities sends the wrong message was one example used. The lack of proper motivation as University students is indicated and this molds the faculty's perception of fraternities and sororities.

Meeting adjourned 4:45 PM.