

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

October 15, 2002 – 3:30 pm – Ferguson Forum

MINUTES

Absent: Karen Burgess, Carol Donovan, Jeff Richetto, Nick Stinnet, Veretta Barnes, Elvis Pate

Guests: Steve Reeves, *Tuscaloosa News*, Joanna Hutt, *Dialog*, *Crimson White* representative.

Roll call and quorum declared.

The September 17th Faculty Senate meeting minutes were approved.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee nominated Bill Andreen, Marvin Johnson, Jim Otteson, and Amy Ward and nominees to fill vacancies on the *Faculty Participation in the Selection of Deans and Department Chairpersons Committee* and the *Evaluation of Academic Programs Committee*. There were no other nominations from the floor.

The first order of the meeting was to inform the Senate of recent events concerning reallocation and to ask for a sense of the Senate on the general direction to take on this issue. The Chancellor and the acting President were asked to speak with the Steering Committee. Senator Mathew Winston gave a report that dismay was expressed to Chancellor Portera concerning his decision to change the dental plan used by the University to the plan used by UAB and UAH with no consultation with the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee. The committee had worked extensively on this issue, considered three dental plan options, and chose one to recommend. The Chancellor said he was not aware of the committee structure that and would respect that process in the future. He also said there would be no new buildings without maintenance costs being included in the building budget. The committee was concerned about the medical coverage benefits enjoyed by the University and wish to maintain our excellent coverage.

President's Report – (*Steve Miller*) There will be a meeting next Tuesday morning at 7:00 am at UAB with the Chancellor, Presidents and Faculty Senate Presidents of each campus. A report will be given at the next Faculty Senate meeting. Steve attended the Board of Trustees meeting and continues trying to meet Board members and inform them of important issues and concerns of the faculty. A number of letters have been written to some members of the Board. Prior to the Presidential Search Committee meeting copies of comments, emails and the ASA letter were sent to all members of the committee. The emphasis on academic qualifications that presidential candidates should have was brought up at the first meeting, with a request to delete the CEO references in the presidential search document. Minor changes in the wording of the document were made. The request did bring this issue to the table for discussion and the members were made aware of the importance to faculty for the new president to have the appropriate academic background. John Mason, working with Norm Baldwin, conducted a faculty survey that revealed of 340 respondents 70% supported or strongly supported reallocation. It is felt that the faculty is not being given an opportunity to have the proper amount of input into the reallocation process. President Mason appears to see the process as one of recommendations being

forwarded to him with the final decisions being made by him. President Mason said that the final reallocation plan would be returned to the Reallocation committee and the Faculty Senate Steering committee for review. The Reallocation committee is composed of twenty-one members. After a request from the Faculty Senate to President Mason and Dean Olin, two additional faculty members were added. A resolution was composed and shown to President Mason before presentation to the Faculty Senate. He felt that it was too soon to take that type action and wanted the entire university budget to be on the table before any action was taken by the Senate. The resolution expressed great concern about the decision-making process regarding reallocation. There is also concern about the speed of the reallocation process limiting the reaction time of the Senate and the severe time limitations for the Reallocation committee to make critical plans and decisions for the future. The Steering Committee decided that a letter to the President expressing these concerns would be the proper action to take at this time. After a copy of the letter was shared with the Steering Committee, there were suggestions that it should contain stronger wording and include quotes from the Faculty Handbook and Faculty Senate by-laws which contains the basis for shared faculty governance and that an explicit request for a reply be included. John Mason reported that the Reallocation Committee has met four times and has not made any decisions. President Mason attended the first meeting but has not attended the other three. The chair of the Reallocation committee requested cost-saving suggestions to be submitted by last Friday. Only a few suggestions were received. Some suggestions included that several entities on campus become self-supporting and to review all allocations. There has been a 36% increase in administration, 20% increase in staff, 9% increase in faculty and a reduction in enrollment. An effort is underway to obtain more detailed budget information, particularly the dispensation of monies by the University. The reallocation process followed by the University of Louisville (former Louisville President Carol Garrison is now President of UAB) began a three-year process and faculty had strong input in the decisions that were made. It was asked if the reallocation process followed by Chancellor Portera at Mississippi State had been addressed by the committee and the answer was that it had not been discussed. It was suggested that the University cannot be all things to all people and that the decision should be made that this is an educational institution and all efforts should be directed in that direction. It was suggested that the Senate compose its own reallocation document, send a strong letter and continue to monitor the reallocation process very closely. The point was made that the experience and expertise of Senate members are not being used.

A resolution from the Faculty Life committee commending the **Safe Zone** student-led organization that provides education and resources to faculty, staff and administrators to create a visible network of volunteer allies for students seeking information and assistance regarding sexual orientation was presented to the Senate. Discussion included the points that the "whereas" with the reference to "practicing nondiscrimination and inclusion in the classroom and in the curriculum" could possibly affect the teaching methods and decisions of the faculty, the effect and timing of this resolution during this critical budget situation and that information about this organization should be relayed to the faculty. It was proposed to change the wording in the first "whereas" to read "has affirmed its support of diversity and nondiscrimination" and strike the curriculum clause. The resolution was passed by the Senate and will be sent to all the faculty members.

Reports from Committees –

Financial Affairs Committee – (*Keith Woodbury & Catherine Davies*) There was consensus by this committee that a public statement should be made concerning the omission of consultation with the Faculty Staff Benefits committee by administration concerning decisions made regarding the University's health benefits.

Announcements -

There will be a debate about grade inflation and the decline of academic standards tonight at Ferguson Theater at 7:30 PM.

The Legislative Breakfast will be Thursday, October 17 at 7:00 AM at the Four Points Hotel with Governor Don Siegelman as guest speaker.

It was reported that the budget reallocation figure of \$16 million dollars is based on three assumptions: that state appropriations will increase 3% per year for the next five years, the SUG averages will increase 3% a year for the next five years and there will be an 8% tuition increase over the next five years.

Copies of a draft of the "*Alabama 2010*" document was distributed with a request to review the document at next month's committee meetings, and share any suggestions for changes.

There will be a called Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting on October 22 at 3:00 PM in 307 Ferguson.

5:05 PM Meeting adjourned