

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2009 – 3:30 PM – THE FORUM – FERGUSON CENTER**

APPROVED MINUTES

ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE: Seth Appiah-Opoku, Sheila Black, Martin Evans, Jim Hall, Katrina Ramonell, Harold Stowell, John Vincent, Chapman Greer, Karen Burgess, Margaret Garner, Brent Hardin, Diane Sekeres, David Arnold, Kevin Chou, Clark Midkiff, Rona Donahoe

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Lew Silver/Paul Pecorino

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Dialog; Joe Sedita, SGA Representative; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The minutes of the September 15, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

Faculty Senate President Karen Steckol introduced The University of Alabama President Robert Witt. A report by President Steckol during a meeting of Southeastern Conference Faculty Senate Presidents was the only positive report given. All other SEC institutions are addressing budget cuts by eliminating programs, personnel and other methods with some facing as much as a 25% budget cut. President Steckol attributed the positive position of The University of Alabama to Dr. Witt's leadership and foresight.

Dr. Witt's remarks began with the statement that the University and other institutions of higher learning are working their way through a very difficult time. UA has had a \$56 million dollar budget cut in State appropriations with the possibility of additional pro-ration in the coming year. UA has come through this **budget** reduction without laying off any faculty or staff, cutting or reducing any program or slowing down or stopping any campus construction.

There is a three million dollar budget set aside for **new faculty** that does not include \$800,000 for fringe benefits.

The first factor that has helped protect the University during the **funding reduction** is the increase in students partially due to the treatment and opportunities for students at UA which is generating positive feedback from businesses, students and student parents. Growth in enrollment and growth in non-resident students is the second factor in this protection.

There are no **merit raises** for faculty and staff this year despite the fact that salary increases are of the highest priority. Last spring in a year with no merit raises the average

professor/associate professor salaries reached within three or four points of the SUG 75th percentile.

The University contributed \$450,000 to the health care program to minimize the increase in health **insurance premiums**.

Grant and contract activity increased eighteen percent and reached \$76 million dollars. Pure research support was up twenty-three percent or \$38 million dollars. Funds were put in place to aid graduate students working on research projects.

Funds are being increased for startup packages for **new faculty**. There are PhD's and doctoral students coming into a very soft job market. UA will start a program to reach out and recruit these individuals to spend a year in post-doc programs working with our faculty in their research programs. This will help UA faculty be even more productive.

In fall of 2007 there were 14,000 applications for the freshman class, 18,000 in the fall of 2008 and 19,500 plus for the fall of 2009. There will not be a new **enrollment** goal for the next twelve to eighteen months due to the economic atmosphere. Parents and students are choosing an institution close to home to reduce costs. There are 28,800 plus students enrolled in UA which is up 6 ½% or 1,700 students and an 8% increase in graduate enrollment. The freshman class is about 5,200 with the group as a whole averaging in the top 20% ACT scores. Over 1,000 had a 4.0 GPA or better. There were 83 National Merit Scholars at UA. There are a total of 103 for this year with 93 counting officially in the national ranking. Student recruiting efforts will be intensified in the coming year. The total number of recruiters has been increased from fourteen to twenty-three.

Television commercials to be aired during football, basketball and women's basketball broadcasts were shown. These commercials focused on demonstrating the benefits of The University of Alabama by emphasizing teaching, research and service "touching lives".

Construction projects include the new nursing building which is a little ahead of schedule and the third Engineering and Science Building will break ground in a few months with an already partially funded fourth building to be constructed next year. The final phase of the renovation of Lloyd Hall will begin in January. The Foster Auditorium renovation has begun with plans to commemorate the historical aspects of the structure.

The **Capital Campaign's** goal of \$500 million was exceeded with \$612 million dollars in pledges and contributions. The current financial situation of UA is stable and strong. Last week \$183 million dollars of bonds were taken to market. The issue was subscribed to over three to one. There were over \$600 million dollars in orders for \$183 million dollars in bonds. This is an indication that investors see the stability and strength of The University of Alabama. Dr. Witt remains optimistic concerning the University's purchase of the Bryce Hospital property. The University has put in place measures to deal with the very real possibility of additional pro-ration. Due to those measures the

pro-ration will not affect any college or school. The economic stimulus money adds \$14.7 million dollars to the 2009 and 2010 budgets and will be used for one-time expenditures. Financial planning already in place will deal with the absence of those funds in three years. Strategy and financial planning have dealt successfully with budget cuts in the past and will be successful in the future.

Dr. Witt was questioned concerning the proper recognition of the University's role in integration in the renovation of **Foster Auditorium**. Recommendations will be presented at the November 6 Board of Trustees meeting. Recognition will be given Vivian Malone, James Hood and Autherine Lucy in the plaza and in the auditorium. The focus of the renovation is to give future generations a detailed history of this structure.

The question was asked about the possibility of future **raises** for faculty. Dr. Witt answered that his belief is the bottom of the recession has been reached. If no more cuts are taken in UA's budget, the past pattern of raises can be restored. There is no higher priority than achieving faculty salary increases.

A senator raised the question regarding **co-habitants insurance participation**. President Steckol addressed the question stating the Faculty Senate Steering Committee has had discussions concerning this issue. UAB and UAH have instituted insurance coverage for this group. In the Steering Committee's opinion there is a possibility of significant backlash and feel this decision should be delayed due to financial and legal issues. Dr. Witt added that legal counsel is reviewing the policy of UAB and UAH and other institutions to determine the legality of this coverage in the State of Alabama. A thirty to sixty day time frame should bring about a decision.

The average quality of incoming students has increased with the average of the group being in the top 20% with perfect high school records. The average ACT score was 24.3. We still have students who fall below the average. The University gives opportunities to students with mediocre high school grades but have good test scores a chance to obtain an education.

Dr. Witt was questioned about ridership of the **campus buses**. Specific numbers will be obtained and forwarded to President Steckol. Routes have been changed and buses and vans have been added to the fleet. Students may dial 348-RIDE to connect with the Police Department when transportation is needed in off hours and insecure situations.

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

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The Academic Affairs Committee has reviewed the **core curriculum** document. A statement of learning for students will be drafted and presented to the Faculty Senate at the November meeting.

Mark Nelson, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice Provost, and chair of the University Core Curriculum Oversight Committee was invited to the October committee meeting to present an update on the work of the CCOC.

Courses designated as core courses will be reviewed by the CCOC over a five year period. Information is available on Dr. Nelson's website, accessible through the OAA website. Among the information presented to the committee were minutes of recent meetings, the rationale and procedures of the CCOC and procedures for obtaining a new core designation.

These documents are all publicly available at <http://viceprovst.ua.edu/academicaffairs/> and two Faculty Senators – Ed Stephenson and Liza Wilson – are members of the CCOC.

Faculty Life – *Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) The staff version of the **climate survey** will be sent out the first week of November.

Financial Affairs – *Katrina Ramonell & Steven Hobbs*) Representatives Susan Petty and Kevin Stephens of the **Purchasing** Department will address the Senate at the November 17th meeting. Specific questions should be emailed to them prior to the meeting. Vice President Lynda Gilbert will make a **budget** presentation at a December 1 meeting in Room 2436 in the Science and Engineering Complex. Everyone is invited to attend.

Information Technology – *Ray White & Jim Hall*) According to a report by this committee all academic buildings will be wireless within a year. Those with University laptops were encouraged to have them encrypted.

Research & Service – *Ed Stephenson & Harold Stowell*) The committee has been reviewing the **Research Misconduct Policy** to bring it into line with Federal guidelines. The completed document will come back to the Senate for a vote. The committee continues to review the selection process for **grant proposals**.

Faculty & Senate Governance – *Michael Martone & Marci Daugherty*) Election for the **Mediation Committee** will be held at the next Senate meeting with twelve nominations at this time. A senator requested a photo and a brief bio of each nominee be made available on the paper ballot if possible.

Student Affairs – *Melondie Carter & Carolyn Cassady*) The Crimson White reported the Alabama Atheists and Agnostics Association have **chalked** messages around Ferguson Plaza which were allegedly removed by a University maintenance crew. A senator reported the chalking was erased during the night when there was no maintenance crew working during those hours. The UA organization website has a list of chalking guidelines stating no chalking around the Ferguson Plaza or the Crimson Promenade. Efforts are made to notify the group and have them remove the chalking. Chalking cannot be done on a vertical surface and must be placed where rainwater will fall.

The Student Affairs Committee met with Kathleen Cramer. UA is focusing on retention and engagement of students with First Generation Students as one of their major efforts.

Eighty-three percent of those students are participating in the programs developed for this population.

Stacey Jones of Student Affairs will be making efforts to increase the number of faculty working with student organizations. A virtual site will be available in the Ferguson Center for students to get more information about student organizations and a physical site for students to sign up to participate in those organizations.

An Engaged Student Opinion survey was conducted in the spring of 2009. The results revealed that students had very little interest in the services offered at the Ferguson Center. The students want a Star Bucks and more study space.

The vacated Barber Shop space in the Ferguson Center will be used year round for Homecoming preparations. A community assessment survey showed forty hair cut locations within 1.5 miles of campus.

Legislative Agenda – Higher Education Day will be held in Montgomery on March 4, 2010.

Other committee reports –

The **Athletic and Academic Committee** will meet Wednesday, October 21, 2009.

Representatives to other committee that have not met should email President Steckol who will then contact the committees to find out why meetings have been delayed.

President Steckol as a member of the **Intercollegiate Athletic Committee** strongly expressed the faculty's desire to see additional and better faculty seating following the completion of the stadium expansion.

Meeting adjourned 4:55 PM.