

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

November 21, 2000
Ferguson Forum - 3:30 PM

Roll Call & Quorum Check - (Steven MacCall)

Absent Senators: Bill Chaplin, James Otteson (excused), Sharon Beatty (excused), Chuck Schmidt, Steve Miller, Anna McFadden, Wythe Holt

Alternates: Melondie Carter for Debbie Novak; Peter Logan for Terry Royed

October 17th Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes - Moved and seconded to accept

Guests: Dr. Tom Strong, Dean of Students, SGA Representatives Rebecca Brand, Laura Seltzer, Laura Lee and Annabel K. Stephens from SLIS.

The motion was made to suspend rules to allow Dr. Tom Strong and SGA Representatives to address the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Tom Strong, Dean of Students, stated that the evaluation of Delayed Rush is not complete. It did not go as smoothly as they would have liked and plans have been made to avoid those problems such as conflict with class schedules and exams. Dr. Strong reviewed the activities of his office including concerts, homecoming activities, family weekend, and handling the problems of students in crisis, etc. Dr. Strong demonstrated and emphasized the positive aspects of the Mascot Network including its availability to the University at no cost. Information available through this network includes information about students, faculty, and activities on campus, sales and swaps to name a few items. To gain access to this network go to www.mascot.com and sign in.

Rebecca Brand, SGA Vice President for External Affairs, presented information about a rally to increase **Higher Education Partnership membership** and a luncheon on Monday, November 27th, noon, 301 Ferguson with Gordon Stone speaking. The students challenge the faculty on the numbers gained for membership. SGA member Laura Seltzer and Laura Lee announced Saturday, April 7th for the **Capstone Event**. Volunteer faculty and students perform jobs for needy members of the community.

Financial Affairs - (Keith Woodbury and Deborah Martin)

The [Domestic Partner Benefits Resolution](#) assessing the probable financial impact of adoption of domestic partner benefits for The University of Alabama community was presented to the Faculty Senate by the Financial Affairs Committee co-Chair Keith Woodbury. This committee looked at the domestic partner benefits offered by other institutions. The projected approximate increased cost to The University of Alabama would be \$128,000 with a projected additional 4% increased enrollment. Life insurance per employee would not be an additional cost to the University. Fifty-six people are enrolled for tuition benefits with a projected increase of two people to this benefit. It would not be a significant financial burden to the University to adopt the Domestic Partner Benefit proposal. President Pat Bauch stated the rules for debate.

Margaret Garner voiced opposition not to the adoption of these benefits but to the process by which this was allowed to be brought before the Senate. Margaret voiced her opinion that this would open the door to the Faculty Senate reviewing every benefit proposed such as the issue of decreased insurance coverage for mental health counseling; and that this benefit issue has been selected out of many benefit needs for the consideration of the Faculty Senate. One question concerned the projected cost for the next five years. Keith answered that there would be no way to predict that figure. Several Senators voiced their support for this resolution; also, it was brought out that the Senate could act on any issue. This motion passed with two abstentions.

Faculty Life - (Rob Ingram and Wythe Holt)

The [Resolution in Support of Domestic Partner Benefits](#) was presented by co-Chair Rob Ingram of the Faculty Life Committee. The University legal counsel with no foreseeable legal problems reviewed the legal aspects of this resolution. The committee investigated how other universities implemented and adopted this program. The criteria presented are strictly suggested or an example of criteria that could be followed to determine those that qualify for these benefits. The discussion included the points that this was an equity and social justice issue, everyone deserves insurance benefits and this program would entice outstanding faculty to this institution. This resolution passed with four abstentions.

President's Report - (Pat Bauch) President Pat Bauch attended the **Board of Trustees** meeting where a strategic **initiative** was presented. Task forces comprised of individuals from all three campuses determined that collaborative efforts could be very beneficial in obtaining increased funding for higher education. After Senators read the initiative, they may direct any comments or suggestions to Pat.

There is **division** among faculty concerning the **Diversity Workshops** being conducted on campus by Crossroads Ministry. These divisions can become a public relations problem. Additionally, Pat emphasized that the spirit of the Diversity Workshops is to be inclusive, not exclusive. Pat proposed that an ad hoc committee be established to find a way to accomplish the goal of the Faculty Senate to provide an opportunity for all to be heard. The senators were certainly willing to consider a forum, but wanted to go forward with the Diversity Workshops. Some objections concerned funding for the forum, lack of openness and accessibility to express views, opinions not valued and lack of opportunity to participate. The **Diversity Leadership Council** will meet November 29th at 9:00 AM in 312 Ferguson and will discuss this issue further to find a solution acceptable to all.

Some Senators expressed concern that the **Evaluation of Deans and Chairpersons Resolution** did not pass the Dean's Council. Norm Baldwin will chair an ad hoc committee. Pat asked volunteers to serve on this committee. Martin Baker volunteered to serve.

A Faculty Senate Representative is needed to serve on the **University Food Service Committee**, which reviews contracts, catering and issues reports. Alvin Winters volunteered to be the representative.

Academic Affairs - (Steve Miller and Don DeSmet) - No report.

Planning and Operations - (Marcia Barrett and Bill Keel) This committee is looking at the Campus Master Plan and the ACHE workload database issue. The ACHE test prototype uses personal identification. The student database includes personal information with this information protected by Federal law but no such protection is in place for faculty. The University of Alabama-Huntsville is a test site and a copy of the data using the standards of the Delaware study is available. The pertinent question is what will be done with the information once it is gathered. Pat requested that this committee remain in touch with Steven MacCall and relay any information that could be placed on the web site.

Research and Service - (Bing Blewitt and OPEN) No report.

Student Affairs - (Dexter Gordon and Rob Ingram) No report.

Senate Operations - (Jim Taylor and Norm Baldwin) No report.

Standing Committees -

Faculty Staff Benefits Committee - (Keith Woodbury) This committee has had extensive discussions concerning the changes in insurance benefits that will be in effect in the near future. The committee voted to restore mental health counseling to the former 52-week coverage. Increased co-pay for prescriptions continues to be discussed. If you have any comments or questions, please refer those to Keith Woodbury.

Athletic Committee - (Norm Baldwin) The Athletic Department has increased football ticket allocations for faculty

staff to 4,500 tickets. If the demand is excessive in the future, the retired faculty will be limited to two tickets and possibly the staff with less than five years service would be allocated two tickets. These allotments are substantially larger than most of the Southeastern Conference institutions.

A reminder was given to committees to forward the minutes of their meetings to Steven MacCall, Secretary, for posting on the web page.

Legislative Agenda Committee - (Margaret Garner) A breakfast meeting was held last week with Howard Hawk as speaker. Howard Hawk has taken a judgeship effective the first of the year. Dr. Meredith and representatives from all state institutions met with Governor Siegelman who listened and expressed concern but made no promises. Of vital importance is increased HEP membership, which is the only organization that is an advocate for higher education. HEP is looking at other methods of fund-raising and the number of members in HEP will greatly affect those businesses interested in donating funds for higher education. There is a membership rally on November 27 and the Faculty Senate was encouraged to get 10-15 colleagues to join HEP.

Meeting adjourned 5:15 PM

Finance Committee Resolution Assessing the Probable Financial Impact of Adoption of Domestic Partner Benefits for The University of Alabama Community

Whereas, the adoption of domestic partner benefits is estimated to increase the enrollments of health benefits by no more than 4 percent [CUNY Group Study], and

Whereas, a 4 percent increase in enrollments for families will result in an increase in annual premiums paid by The University of Alabama for health insurance of only \$128,000, and

Whereas, the adoption of domestic partner benefits will not impact the amount The University of Alabama pays for life insurance, and

Whereas, the number of domestic partners estimated to take advantage of the tuition reimbursement benefits, based on the 4 percent increase, is two people,

Be it resolved, that the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama finds no significant financial barrier to the adoption of domestic partner benefits for the faculty and staff of The University of Alabama community, and encourages its adoption.

Faculty Life Committee Resolution in Support of Domestic Partner Benefits

Whereas, The University of Alabama accepts its responsibility to treat all employees equitably, and

Whereas, the current University benefits' policy discriminates against partners of unmarried employees, and

Whereas, provision of benefits to domestic partners is legal in the State of Alabama, and

Whereas, the provision of such benefits will have only a minor effect on university finances, and

Whereas, such benefits are provided by universities with which The University of Alabama competes for faculty and other employees, and

Whereas, eligibility criteria for such benefits can be made specific (see attached [example criteria](#)),

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama urges the University administration to extend all university benefits available to spouses of University employees to domestic partners of unmarried University employees (see attached [benefits](#)).

Example Criteria for Domestic Partner Benefits

The following criteria are examples of those commonly used by other universities in determining eligibility. They are provided here as examples that UA could adopt and to address the concerns of those who might see this program as

being too open-ended.

Those desiring such benefits must file an affidavit with the University declaring that:

1. They are unmarried.
2. They share the same residence and have been in a mutually exclusive partnership relationship for at least 12 months.
3. They intend to remain in this relationship indefinitely.
4. They are not related by blood or marriage to the degree prohibited for legal marriage in the State of Alabama.
5. They are jointly responsible for each other's welfare and share each other's financial obligations as evidenced by three or more of the following:
 - A joint mortgage or lease.
 - Joint ownership of a motor vehicle, bank account, or credit account.
 - A partner is named as beneficiary of life insurance or retirement benefits.
 - A partner is named as the primary beneficiary in the other partner's will.
 - A partner has been assigned power of attorney by the other partner.
 - Household expenses are shared by both partners.
 - One partner has provided more than 50 percent of the support for the other partner and that partner's dependents.

Further, they must agree to:

1. Notify the University in writing of any change in partnership status within 30 days of such change.
2. Identify the names of all eligible dependents and their relationships to the partners.

Benefits Provided

Domestic partners and their dependents shall be granted the same services and benefits as those provided to married spouses and their dependents, except where expressly prohibited by law. All University policies that affect employees, spouses, and their families also apply to employees, domestic partners, and their families.

12/10/00