

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 18, 2008 – 3:30 PM – 150 SHELBY HALL**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE:** Sheila Black, Shane Street, John Vincent, Lonnie Strickland, Jerry Weaver, Karern Burgess, Steve Thoma, David Arnold, Norm Stein, Jeanette VanderMeer

**ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE:** Seth Panitch/Pieter Visscher; Roy Maize/Stuart Usdan

**GUESTS:** Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Cresandra Smothers, Dialog; Gordon Stone, Higher Education Partnership

Roll call and quorum check by Vice President Clark Midkiff.

The minutes of the October 21, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

Gordon Stone of the **Higher Education Partnership** organization began the meeting by passing out a brochure titled “Grassroots Advocacy”. The Higher Education Partnership organization is an advocacy group giving a voice to higher education in the Alabama Legislature and in policy making decisions. The HEP represents 150,000 votes. The Faculty Senate members were encouraged to seek out state legislators in face-to-face meetings and ask the question, “What do you plan to do about the Education Trust Fund budget?” The State of Alabama’s education funding comes from income sales tax causing great fluctuation in state budget allotments for education. No one knows how long the current economic downturn is going to last. Gordon Stone recommended that a team be formed to contact legislators living in this area to encourage their support of higher education. In Alabama 74% of children raised in families with no high school education are rated below the poverty level and 32% of children raised in families with a high school education live below the poverty level. In families with a four-year degree only 9% of children live at the poverty level. This is the impact education has on the population of Alabama. The cost of a college education has gone up with the value of that education increasing greatly in value. Higher Education Day will be March 5, 2009 in Montgomery. All Faculty Senate members were encouraged to join the Higher Education Partnership. The question was asked if the two-year college system problems have had an impact on Alabama. There seems to be no particular impact for the most part at this time.

**President’s Report** – (*Karen Steckol*) Efforts are underway to improve faculty attendance and participation in graduation ceremonies. At the **Board of Trustees** meeting Athletics Director Mal Moore committed an Athletic Department million dollar gift per year to academics. It was also announced **Bryant-Denny Stadium** will be expanded. This will impact student enrollment as well as increasing revenues.

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

**Secretary’s Report** – (*Jeanette VanderMeer*) Filling in for Jeanette VanderMeer, Clark Midkiff asked for any guests attending the meeting today.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The Academic Affairs Committee did not meet since they attended the Financial Affairs Committee **budget presentation**. One issue being considered is salary caps and the lack of merit pay for full-time Temporary and Contract Instructors. The issue of **sabbatical** limitations will also be pursued.

**Faculty Life** – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) This committee has been charged with finding methods to increase faculty attendance and participation in graduation ceremonies.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Katrina Ramonell & Steven Hobbs*) Dr. Lynda Gilbert gave a budget presentation at the meeting of this committee on November 4. The meeting was open to all Faculty Senate members.

**Research & Service** – (*Ed Stephenson*) This committee did not meet in November. This committee will review the Research and Creative Activity Misconduct Policy when received.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*John Mason & Michael Martone/Marci Daugherty*) One faculty member for the **Merger and Discontinuance Committee** and two faculty members for the **Mediation Committee** will be elected at the December 9 Faculty Senate meeting. Additional nominees are needed for both committees. President Karen Steckol sent an email to all faculty members requesting nominations.

**Student Affairs** – (*Melondie Carter & Carolyn Cassady*) The Student Affairs Committee met with Dr. Mark Nelson and Kathleen Kramer on November 4 to discuss student issues. Methods should be developed to make faculty members aware of various campus organizations needing faculty mentors/advisors. A \$65.00 allotment is available to faculty members per class for entertaining students. This enhances the faculty/student relationship. Faculty providing a student-friendly office atmosphere was another point discussed in the meeting. Faculty should be alert to students in distress and any fraternity initiation hazing. The organization of the textbook committee continues to be in progress.

**Legislative Agenda** – (*Margaret Garner*) Increasing HEP membership and organizing personal meetings with State Legislators are ongoing projects for the Legislative Agenda Committee. Membership dues are reasonable and can be a payroll deduction. There are three levels of membership with benefits available at each level.

#### **Reports from Other Committees –**

As a member of the **Vice President for Research Committee**, Clark Midkiff reported that the committee has met several times with interviews to begin next spring. The number of candidates has been narrowed and on site visits will begin at the beginning of next semester.

Dr. Mark Nelson has been selected to be the Vice President of Student Affairs.

The **Undergraduate Program and Services Committee** met Monday, November 17 to discuss outside classroom interaction with student teachers, emergency family assistance, expanding teaching/learning center, mentoring/advising, the direction and perception of the University, student/teacher ratio, increased enrollment and the student's view of the value of an education.

**Old Business** – The **Evaluation of Deans and Chairs**, Appendix A, document was presented to the Senate. The committee was made up of two deans and several department chairs with Lowell Baker as chair of the committee. The past policy was the faculty had to vote to review a dean. The faculty wanted a guaranteed review. The fifth year review would include the question whether the dean or chair should be retained. The Provost would have the “faculty retaining the dean” vote and the dean and provost would have the “faculty retaining the chair” vote. Basically the new policy states that the chair or the dean will be evaluated every year with the fifth year including the retaining question. There are approximately 25 questions with an outside company handling the survey. There will be a comment section and those will be included in the report verbatim. The responder's identities will be anonymous. SACS requires that deans and chairs be reviewed. The survey instrument was composed by the Evaluation of Dean and Chairs Committee along with Bob Smallwood, Assistant to the Provost for Assessment. Discussion included the methods used to assure anonymity for survey participants and data composition and access. The Faculty Senate approved the document with two abstentions.

#### **Announcements –**

The **Mental Health liaisons** have been appointed for each college/school. Training through the Counseling Center has been completed. The intent is to recognize distressed students early and direct them to proper resources.

The **University Student Health Center** has achieved external accreditation by the same agency that has high standards for ambulatory medical centers. Site visits have been completed with another accreditation expected.

Meeting adjourned 4:45 PM.