

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

February 18, 2003 – 3:30 PM – Ferguson Forum

### Minutes

#### Roll call and quorum declared

**Absent: Catherine Davies, Carol Donovan, Jim Eddy, Nanda Hoppenwasser, Frannie James, Doug McKnight, Joshua Rothman.**

The January 21 Faculty Senate meeting minutes were approved with the following addition/revision: Second paragraph, fifth sentence – “Although several important issues were discussed, such as the strong opposition of the Faculty Senate to combining small colleges, the recommendation of the Steering Committee to the Senate to focus on a few critical issues and keep the response very concentrated was accepted.”

**President’s Report** – (*Steve Miller*) Senate elections will be held at the next Senate meeting. The process of developing a nominating committee has been fluid in the past, the Senate Operations Committee has been asked to develop a policy to determine such a committee that possibly could be added to the by-laws in the future. In the meantime Senate Operations will handle the upcoming nominating process. Anyone wishing to serve or make nominations should contact Harry Price or Frannie James of the Senate Operations Committee.

The **Pick-A-Prof** organization was on campus on Monday, February 17, and proceeded to the Office of Institutional Research to demand grade distribution information. This issue was passed on to the Provost and the University attorney. The President of the University was contacted and asked to hold the line and refuse to give grade distributions. It is possible that this will become a legal battle. The Pick-A-Prof service has been purchased by the SGA at the cost of \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. The Senate will be kept up-to-date on this issue. The University is not interested in complying at this point.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee and Financial Affairs Committee met with the Provost for the presentation of a budget **model** for the University. It was learned that the five-year plan that the Board of Trustees approved could have some serious ramifications. The plan was based on a three million dollar increase in state appropriations. Each one percent increase in state appropriations, a little over a million dollars, along with a possible two million dollar decrease, would mean a five million dollar swing. The Teachers Retirement System is requesting an additional 1.35 million dollars. This would bring the total close to a six and one-half million dollar deficit. The planned deficit was two million dollars, however, these changes would bring the deficit to 8.5 million dollars. The question was asked of the Provost, “Can there be reallocation of that magnitude without cutting programs?” and the answer was “no”. If, in fact these figures are correct, it was suggested that the Senate consider asking the Board of Trustees to postpone the effort to bring faculty salaries up to the 50% SUG average. It was also suggested at the meeting to increase tuition. Even though the fiscal future is dim, there are ways to work around some of the critical issues. The increase in tuition for next year could possibly be in double digits. The proposed “Scholarship Enhancement Fee” to be added to all tickets sold to all public events held on campus has been rejected. At this meeting, the letter to Dr.

Witt and Dr. Portera along with a copy of the Senate resolution stating that Dr. Nancy Barrett should be considered for retention was presented to Dr. Barrett. The relationship with Dr. Barrett and the Senate Steering Committee has been a good one. She has been forthcoming with any information that has been requested.

University of Texas-Arlington Faculty Senate President, Thomas Chrzanowski, was contacted for comments regarding The University of Alabama's new president, Dr. Robert Witt, former president of UT-Arlington. Their Senate meets six times a year with the Steering Committee setting the agenda. They meet with the President prior to the full Senate meeting to determine the issues to be addressed. The President and the Provost are present at the meeting and, if they wish, can make remarks at the beginning of the meeting. The comments were very positive with Dr. Witt's interaction with faculty being considered excellent. He was also an outspoken advocate and advisor for diversity on that campus. UT-Arlington's Faculty Senate meets for two days every quarter with the Vice Chancellor of Academics for the system with alliances and understanding issues being the results. Open channels of communication are the goals everyone should work toward. Dr. Witt has been invited to address the full Senate meeting in April and is excited about meeting the Senate. Dr. Witt has stated on several occasions that post-tenure review is not something he is interested in implementing. The Budget Reallocation Committee removed post-tenure review from the Budget Reallocation document. It was the only item that was changed in the document with sixteen in favor of removal and one abstention. This is off the table in official recognition but the point was made that it could possibly resurface in the future.

A report on the **Leadership Initiative** stated that for the past two years we have had a Women's Leadership Institute led by Dean Sara Barger modeled after high profile leadership training programs. It was felt that the benefits had been outstanding. There are many leadership activities on campus but it was felt that this initiative would be very beneficial. This proposed Leadership Initiative would bring together all leadership resources across many divisions. If the Senate supports this, a letter would be written to Dr. Witt encouraging the pursuit of establishing this initiative. Students, faculty and others would certainly benefit from leadership programs. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill offered training at 75% reduction in cost (rather than \$5,000 per person, the cost would be \$1,250). This would be one avenue that could be pursued. The Senate will be informed of the progress of this project.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Beth Macauley & Garry Warren*) The “**Resolution on Including Student Photos as Part of the Electronic Roster**” was presented by the Academic Affairs Committee. This resolution would provide the student's ACT card photo along with the class rosters the University now provides to course instructors via the internet (Tide Guide). The discussion included the points that this is a great idea, concerns that the information would be misused or that it would be misleading, it was felt that the information would be privileged and secure, questions about the cost, that the photo could possibly cause a pre-conception concerning diversity and that access should be electronically “user” friendly. This resolution was passed by the Senate and will be sent to Dr. Roger Thompson, Registrar, with copies to Dr. Barry Mason, Interim University President and Dr. Nancy Barrett, Provost. It will also be posted on the Faculty Senate web page. A reminder was made concerning cost. With budget constraints, prioritizing Senate recommendations could be a real possibility in the future.

Academic Affairs also presented “**Resolution on Grading**” requesting that the University implement a change on all undergraduate students' transcripts whereby in addition to listing the grade the student received the transcript also lists the grade point average of all grades given out in that class or section. This average class grade would be calculated

cumulatively over the course of students' careers, as students' grade point averages currently are, and that this cumulative average class or section grade also be recorded on all undergraduate students' transcripts. This resolution is an attempt to address grade inflation. Comments included the measure doesn't address grade inflation, useful information would be provided, useful information would not be provided, biased information would be provided, this measure would minimize students' effort and performance, certain courses could possibly have an outstanding number of excellent student earning "A's" which would not be a grade inflation situation, the size of the class would have a bearing on the averages, this measure does not measure the passion of the student, gives a method to evaluate students, difficult courses could possibly have the better students, in some instances only test scores are considered, auditions are held in music and theater for admission and evaluation with grades being the second consideration, opposition to this resolution has been more vocal than the support and that the purposes of grades should be internal university business and others should find other ways of evaluation. Sheets were handed out: The University of Alabama Undergraduate Course Grade Distributions – Spring Semesters 1981 to 1996, including Tables of percentages of A's in all Undergraduate Courses, Percentages of A's in 100-200 Level Courses in the College of Arts and Sciences, Fall 2000-Spring 2002, and "Where All Grades Are Above Average" by Stuart Rojstaczer of Duke University. One opinion expressed was that the University has a problem with institutional pressure concerning grade distribution. Class size is a concern and Math and English 101 & 102 gives A, B or C with no credit. Medical schools, law schools and employers use interviews along with grades for admission or employment. It was suggested to have a faculty web survey to have a sense of the entire faculty. An amendment was proposed and seconded to add "only in classes of eight and above". The amendment vote was passed. The vote on the resolution as amended was 15 in favor, 24 opposed and 2 abstentions.

**Faculty Life** – (*Wythe Holt & Nick Stinnett*) The Faculty Life committee presented the **"Resolution on Choosing Academic Administrators"** for discussion. This resolution asks the University for limits of five-year nonrenewable terms of office and that all academic administrators of the University – including the Provost, Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Deans, and Associate and Assistant Deans who deal with academic affairs –selected hereafter, they be normally chosen from the ranks of tenured faculty at The University of Alabama and normally returning to the ranks of the professoriate upon completion thereof of their performance in office, mandatorily reviewed by the faculty at least once during their term in office with the option of the Faculty Senate by three-fifths vote, at other times (but no more frequently than annually). The goal of this resolution is have in place those administrators with knowledge of the particular needs and history of the institution and have appreciation for the disciplinary demands of teaching, research, publication and tenure. The position of President, Department Heads and Vice President of Financial Affairs had been omitted. There were objections voiced concerning the five-year term limit. Speaking for the limit would allow more participation by many different people. The timing and repercussions of this resolution was a concern. The opinion was expressed that those with academic backgrounds tend to drift away from those concerns, with administrative issues becoming the priority. The University of Chicago, Princeton and Indiana University have this policy in place, it was claimed. There would be cost savings with the proposed temporary salary supplements. The question was asked if the Faculty Senate definition of a faculty member would apply to the qualified faculty for these administrative positions. The answer was that all tenured faculty members would be qualified. One opinion was that filling the positions in this manner would be "on the job" training. This resolution is only pro-faculty and not anti-administration. The key word "normally" gives flexibility to this resolution. The opinion was expressed that the administration should be serving the faculty and assisting with implementing the faculty's plan to serve the discipline. This resolution is addressed to the President of the University

and the Board of Trustees. The University tends to not hire their own. This reasoning could be that fresh thinking and different ideas are the objective. The vote to move this resolution forward was 19 in favor, 13 opposed and 10 abstentions. The subject of electronic survey of the faculty was again mentioned. Wythe asked if it would help those abstaining or opposing this resolution to split the issue from choosing faculty for administrative positions from inside and the five-year term limit. It was moved to return this resolution to the committee to split these issues and return it to the Senate for a vote. The motion was seconded. It was questioned why this resolution was being reconsidered but it can be reconsidered since it did pass the Senate. The vote to return the resolution to committee to divide the issues was: 26 in favor, 4 opposed. A web survey of the entire faculty on choosing the resolution with or without the term limit, or not at all, was suggested and will be done.

**Legislative Agenda Committee – (Margaret Garner)** Everyone was reminded to attend **Higher Education Day on March 13**. Transportation and lunch will be provided. Chancellor Mack Portera representing UA systems, Bill Walker representing Auburn University, Roy Johnson representing two-year institutions, Ed Richardson representing State Department of Education and Paul Hubbard representing AEA met with Governor Bob Riley. Business leaders and education leaders are all on board for the need for tax reform. The Governor appears to be saying the right things, wants to find solutions to funding problems with long-term solutions, and is in the process of “assessing the situation”. This committee plans to meet with President Witt after his arrival and prior to Higher Education Day to discuss issues. There is a potential short fall in the Education Trust Fund of \$100 million to \$300 million dollars in 2004-05 with additional costs related to PEEHIP and the Teacher Retirement System. These are predictions with many factions to be determined including the economic turnaround.

Meeting adjourned 5:05 PM.

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## **Resolution on Including Student Photos as Part of the Electronic Roster**

### **Academic Affairs Committee**

**Whereas** The University now provides class rosters to course instructors via the internet (Tide Guide) at the beginning of each semester and

**Whereas** student attendance appears to be positively correlated with academic success and

**Whereas** many faculty would find the use of student photographs to be helpful in maintaining class attendance records

**Whereas** The University already has digital student photographs taken in conjunction with each student ACT card

**Be it resolved** that the Faculty Senate recommends that The University seek ways to provide faculty and instructors with student photographs in conjunction with each class's roster.

February 18, 2003

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IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUING STRONG LEADERSHIP  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee wishes to congratulate the Chancellor and Board of Trustees on the selection of an outstanding new president for the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa.

Whereas, it is important to the well-being of the University to have some measure of continuity; and

Whereas, it will be helpful to the new president to work closely with someone very familiar with the academic affairs of the University; and

Whereas, Dr. Nancy Barrett has done an excellent job as Provost in that under her leadership the University has increased research productivity, grants, and contracts, and has increased in appreciation for diversity; has improved communications between the administration and the faculty; and has provided enhanced resources for faculty development and instructional activity and technology;

Therefore, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee recommends that Dr. Witt strongly consider Dr. Nancy Barrett to continue as Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs of the University of Alabama.

February 11, 2003