

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

March 19, 2002 – 3:30 PM – Ferguson Forum

Uncorrected Minutes

Roll Call and Quorum Check by Keith Woodbury

ABSENT: Bill Chaplin, Beth MacCauley, Gary Taylor, Jimmy Williams, Anup Agrawal, Sharon Beatty, Mark Nelson, Ashley Evans, Jennifer Husman, Jerry Rosiek, Michael Triche, Susan Vrbsky, Debra Nelson-Gardell

Guests: Joanna Hutt, Dialog and Crimson White representative

The February 19 minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

The following slate of officers were elected for 2002-03: President Steve Miller, Vice President John Mason and Secretary Keith Woodbury.

ACTION ITEMS:

A Resolution Creating a **System of Faculty Feedback for Effective University Leadership** was presented for discussion. The committee has worked on this for a year and a half with great efforts made to find a compromise. The positive points of this feedback system are that it is good management, increased faculty communication with deans and chairs, and deans and chairs would have the opportunity to improve needful areas in their schools, colleges, or departments. The resolution would create a committee named the "Faculty Leadership Review Committee" that would be composed of members outside of the Senate who will create an instrument, electronically administer the instrument, disseminate the results, and be accountable to the Senate. Ten members will constitute this committee with at least one of the ten having expertise in survey research. Non-Senate members shall serve three-year terms with one third of the members completing a term every year. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation of Deans and Chairs Committee will serve as initial members. The frequency of leadership review shall be no less than once every two years with a more precise time to be determined later in the process. The five-year review will remain in place, but the necessity of this review was questioned. The necessity of the five-year review will be considered after two complete cycles of the new feedback system. Questions concerning the proposed system included what would be the impact of the new feedback system, would this be just another faculty poll, would it have the same importance as the five-year review, would it affect re-appointments, and would it be mandatory? The instrument will be designed with faculty input and will include open- and closed-ended questions. The limited pool of people with performance evaluation expertise was considered, and the proposal was amended to include that experts in performance evaluation be consulted in carrying out the functions of the Faculty Leadership Review Committee. Concerns about sharing the results of this feedback process, making the instrument too narrow in scope, privacy, and retribution were expressed. The resolution passed with one dissenting voice vote.

A resolution creating an **ombudsperson** was considered by the Senate after discussion and rewording by the Steering Committee and the presenter, Marvin Johnson. The issues of male and female representation and ethnic representation were addressed. The low number of minority faculty members would limit those that could serve and could possibly polarize the nomination process. Amendments to change "gender" in section six to "gender

and diversity," and to add "ethnic diversity shall also be a consideration" were approved and the resolution passed.

The next action item was the **Resolution Calling for Higher Faculty Salaries** brought forward by the Financial Affairs Committee. This included a chart plotting the faculty salaries compared to 1998 salaries adjusted annually for inflation and a table comparing UA salaries with SUG and national average salaries. The SUG average has actually surpassed the national average in the last few years. The points were made that resolutions continue to be passed by the Faculty Senate concerning the increase of faculty salaries with little result, that staff be added to the resolution, and that changes in the wording of the resolution should be made. Statistics about staff salaries were not included in the chart. The committee did not consider merit pay. The need for development of other funding sources for salaries and other ongoing expenses of the University was strongly voiced. The funding dependence on the State legislature is inadequate, has been inadequate in the past, and there is no indication that it will improve in the future. An amendment was proposed to reword the resolution calling on the administration to formulate a plan to enhance faculty salaries and to present this plan to the Faculty Senate. An amendment also proposed that the following be added: "Whereas, the administration has identified faculty salary increases as its first priority." The final statement in the resolution reads as follows: "Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate at The University of Alabama expects President Sorensen and his administration and the Board of Trustees to continue their efforts to enhance faculty salaries in the upcoming year and succeeding years until UA salaries meet or exceed the SUG average and to formulate a plan to achieve these goals and to present this plan to the Faculty Senate)." The amendments and the resolution were approved. Everyone was encouraged to contact the Governor, representatives and senators to adhere to the 2/3-1/3 split in the education budget.

Concerns of faculty regarding the timing of **Spring Break 2003** (the second week of April) were discussed. One advantage would be the opportunity for faculty and staff to spend time with their children since this spring break would coincide with that of the county and city schools, Shelton State, and Stillman College. This break would be later than usual, and there were concerns about the academic impact and attentiveness of such a break with only two weeks left in the semester. This will also impact Honors Week. The motion was made and approved for Spring Break to remain as planned to coincide with the city and county schools, Stillman College, and Shelton State for the year 2003 only. The motion also emphasized the importance of continued dialogue about the timing of Spring Break.

The best time for another **Constitutional Reform Seminar** was opened for discussion. The timing of the seminar will affect the attendance. Since the first seminar was held on a Friday, the next should be on a Tuesday or Thursday. The first seminar had around 35 individuals attending. A motion was made and approved to hold the second seminar in early Fall, 2002.

President's Report (*Norm Baldwin*). Dr. Sorensen was very appreciative of the show of support following a question and answer period at the last Faculty Senate meeting. He welcomes anyone contacting him concerning any issue. This would avoid circulating misinformation about any issue pertaining to the University. The Provost expressed her thanks for the support for Higher Education Day and encouraged continued support for reform of the Strategic Planning Initiative (SPI). The letter from Dr. Portera to the Task Force on the SPI was discussed. He stated that there would be no changes implemented before a campus review and appreciated the suggested revisions and hard work of the Task Force on the Strategic Planning Initiative. The Provost suggested that Honors Week may be moved due to the later Spring break in 2003. She also requested support for a possible

tuition increase proposal in the future. Roger Thompson, Registrar, addressed faculty concerns regarding Tuesday final exam grade deadlines. The deadline for submission of grades has been moved to 10:00 PM and will not be moved any earlier despite the fact that Saturday final exams have been eliminated. Various measures have been put in place to ensure the security of grades submitted online. Some professors are contacted at random to verify grades, particularly those submitted after 8:00 PM. Grades may be submitted on Saturday from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM and from 12:00 PM until 8:00 PM on Sunday. The double login for submitting grades has been eliminated. Student e-mail addresses will be added to the web roll. By next fall, faculty will be able to download the web rosters into Excel file for grading purposes.

The President reminded committees to turn in year-end reports.

It was requested that the Financial Affairs Committee (FAC) review inequities and disparities in salaries between academic disciplines. The FAC was also asked to study the merit system, including how merit standards are employed and implemented.

The **Legislative Agenda Committee** urges everyone to contact the Governor, representatives, and senators concerning the ongoing consideration of the education budget in the Legislature. Higher education is in great need for the two-for-one split of the monies in the Education Trust Fund.

New Business. A resolution regarding the Alabama Scholars Association's activities was discussed without a full quorum in attendance. The resolution asks that the Faculty Senate request that a disclaimer be included in their communications indicating that the Alabama Scholars Association is not affiliated with The University of Alabama. Discussion included giving this issue to a committee, having the President of the Senate write a letter to the ASA, contacting the President of the University about writing a letter to the ASA, contacting University attorneys about the ASA, and taking time to pause and reflect on the issue before responding or giving no response at all. It was also suggested that the senators be contacted by e-mail for their input and recommendations and/or vote concerning a response. The Alabama Scholars Association sent correspondence to state legislators telling them to "stand up and be counted" if they did not want to spend money on diversity activities that "promote racial division, political indoctrination, and abuse of children." After consideration and discussion, the issue was referred to the Faculty Life Committee.

Meeting adjourned 6:00 PM