

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

MARCH 15, 2005 – 3:30 PM – FERGUSON FORUM

APPROVED MINUTES

ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE: Amilcar Shabazz, Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers, Harold Elder, Caryl Cooper, Dee Goldston, Kagendo Mutua, Marcus Brown, Jay Lindly, Mitch Shelton, Michael W. Parker.

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Jeff Richetto, Seth Appiah-Opoku, Steve Woski; Grant Savage, Walt Enders; Karen Burgess, Jim Leeper; Tonyia Tidline, Joan Atkinson.

GUESTS: Joanna Hutt, Dialog; Marlin Caddell, Crimson White; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Saori Hasegawa, Public Affairs Journalism Student; Jim Holliman, Professional Staff Assembly.

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary John Vincent.

The February 15, 2005 Faculty Senate minutes were approved.

Nominations and the election of officers was the first item on the agenda. There were no nominations from the floor. The following were elected unanimously – Mathew Winston, President; John Vincent, Vice President and Karen Steckol, Secretary. They will take office in April with the new Senate meeting on April 19th. New senators will be elected by April 1. The 2004-05 Steering Committee will meet on April 12 and the 2005-06 Steering Committee will meet May 10.

A "**Resolution on Child Day Care Needs at The University of Alabama**" was presented to the Senate by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and the Faculty Life Committee in collaboration with the University Benefits Committee. This resolution originated in the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee and was drafted at their request. One change to the resolution was made in the last paragraph adding the phrase "and give preference for the remaining spaces to" making it clear that day care programs should give as much preference to faculty and staff as possible. The need for day care benefits was one of the top priorities listed by faculty in a Faculty Life survey conducted a few years ago. Rose Towers day care center will merge into the new Child Development Research Center, however, it does not fully serve the needs of faculty and staff. This resolution requests more day care services to meet the needs of faculty and staff. To have high quality affordable child-care would require the University to subsidize the cost of such care. There is a federal funding source that would pay child-care services for students. The University would be eligible for one percent or higher funding above Pell Grant disbursement. This must be applied for before the end of April. A letter will be sent to President Witt with this information included. A question was asked concerning student faculty ratio of those children in the child-care program. The Faculty Senate passed this resolution unanimously.

The **ombudsperson election** has two candidates at this time to replace Philip Johnson whose term ends in 2005. Those candidates are Garry Warren of Engineering and Walt Robbins of C&BA. Their vitas are on the Senate webpage. Everyone was encouraged to vote and to encourage colleagues to vote. This is a faculty –wide election and will

conclude March 24. The results will be announced March 25. Reminders will be sent out to faculty members to vote.

There is a faculty-wide vote being conducted concerning the **Plus-Minus Grading System** initiated by the Office of Academic Affairs and voting is by paper ballot. The ballot should be placed in an envelope and then placed in another envelope addressed to the Office of Academic Affairs. This is an academic issue and everyone is encouraged to vote. There is concern that the faculty response will be low and the majority vote could possibly be neutral.

The Senate will not nominate and recommend faculty members for appointment on CUC because none of the five faculty appointments on the Committee on University Committees (CUC) expires at the end of this year (August 15, 2005). The terms of Wythe Holt and Rona Donahue continue for one more year. Three of the five available slots on CUC are held by Karen Steckol, Keith Woodbury and Marvin Johnson. Their terms continue for two more years. Next year the Senate will vote for two vacancies on CUC.

A copy of an email sent by Kelly Gregg stated that The University of Alabama contributed almost 20% of the books collected for the "**Books for Baghdad**" project. Proceeds from the sale of books not needed were used to pay shipping costs and to purchase equipment to include in the shipment.

Vice President's Report – (*Mathew Winston*) Mathew reminded the Steering Committee that they have one more meeting on April 12 before the completion of their duties for this year. The College of Arts and Sciences needs more nominees for the open senator slots. In the fine arts division of A&S, 3 candidates had been nominated for the 3 openings; in natural sciences, 1 candidate has been nominated for the 4 slots; and in the social sciences, the number of candidates is not certain for four slots. Each senator was urged to check on the term expiration as a representative in the Faculty Senate. Terms for this year expire on March 31. Those wishing to continue to serve were encouraged to make certain they are nominated.

Secretary's Report – (*John Vincent*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) This committee met with Dean Dahl concerning **Appendix H** of the Faculty Handbook. Appendix H addresses ownership of copyrights. A University attorney has assisted in the rewording of the appendix. Another meeting will be held to finalize Appendix H.

Faculty Life – (*Wythe Holt & Nick Stinnett*) No report.

Financial Affairs – (*Wolfgang Bertsch & Karen Steckol*) This committee has been addressing health care issues and presented statistics obtained from the Office of Institutional Research. The committee made the recommendation that the University look into grandfathering in and paying the difference of those already hired at a perceived 10 year vesting. Those that retire with less than 25 years service, for each year under 25 years, pay a two percent penalty of the institution's retirement cost in PEEHIP (health insurance program for retired faculty) for each year under 25 years. Any new faculty should be informed of this policy and it was felt that this would adversely affect recruiting new faculty members. Administration has not forwarded financial data to this committee at this point since it has not been compiled. Monthly premium costs were given. The committee has more work to do on this issue. The Faculty Senate expressed its great appreciation to Wolfgang Bertsch for his service since he will be retiring at the end of this year.

It was noted by Karen Steckol that the **Sustained Growth Committee** has not met this

semester. This committee deals with methods to accommodate the projected 28,000 students attending the University within the next eight to ten years.

Research & Service – (*Clark Midkiff & Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers*) – No report.

Faculty and Senate Governance – (*Robert Moore & Jerry Weaver*) No report.

Student Affairs – (*Caryl Cooper & Priscilla Davis*) No report.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) The strength of the **Education Budget for Higher Education** is looking favorable. The next Legislative Breakfast will possibly be held April 8.

The report on **Higher Education Day** was given. The attendance was the second highest ever for this event (2500 – 3000). Two constitutional officers, Governor Bob Riley and Lt. Gov. Lucy Baxley along with several Legislators attended Higher Education Day. They expressed unqualified commitment to the proposed higher education budget with a four percent raise for faculty and staff, payment of the University's share of state retirement costs and payment of the University's expense of PEEHIP. This has always been paid for K-12. If AEA has an increase in salary allotment, higher education will receive a matching amount. The presidents of the fifteen higher education institutions led by Dr. Mack Portera of The University of Alabama met and presented a unified budget for the very first time.

Higher Education Partnership has several task forces with the alumni group headed by Cliff Davis. This year 140 alumni attended a workshop for advocacy and issues affecting higher education. This group represents those that can effectively advocate for higher education in their communities.

Wolfgang Bertsch is the Senate representative on the **University Research Advisory Committee**; he questioned the methods used to determine those receiving funding. It was suggested to forward this comment to the CUC.

Reports from CUC will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Office for access to anyone wishing to review those committee reports.

Faculty & Staff Benefits – (*Natalie Adams*) This committee will meet next week and recommend the formation of a task force to address the issue of maternity leave for faculty on this campus. There is no maternity leave policy in place. If anyone is interested in serving on this committee, please contact Natalie Adams.

Meeting adjourned 4:30 PM

RESOLUTION ON CHILD DAY CARE NEEDS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Whereas, The University of Alabama provides fine day care for 48 children in its University Child Care Services, and fine care for 42 more children in its Infant Laboratory and its Child Development Center, all under the aegis of the College of Human Environmental Sciences; and

Whereas, these programs will be consolidated and the number of openings expanded, to provide even better child care in a new facility currently nearing completion (the Child Development Research Center); and

Whereas, the consolidated program will provide child care for only 116 infants and

children, in a relatively costly and relatively inflexible all-day laboratory teaching/learning setting; and

Whereas, the waiting lists for the existing programs are very long, and most likely the waiting list for the consolidated program will also be long; and

Whereas, one of the greatest needs described by University of Alabama faculty in a recent survey conducted by the Faculty Life Committee of the Faculty Senate was the need for more child care, at reasonable cost, and of a flexible, regular nature not necessarily a part of a student learning situation, so that personnel are better able to perform their duties in the University; and

Whereas, a recent report of the American Council on Education and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation concerning the challenges to the success of women in U.S. academia, authored by a panel which included ten prominent university presidents and chancellors, called for better child care in order to help level the playing field for women in higher education; and

Whereas, the University seeks to recruit faculty and staff who are young and likely with small children and/or to have children, and whose salaries are relatively low, so that affordable daycare would be an important recruitment/retention tool; and

Whereas, the University has commendably embarked upon a program of raising faculty and staff salaries, but concomitantly there has been an increase in the cost of some benefits for faculty and staff;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama that the University provide, at reasonable, partially subsidized cost to users, high quality on-campus daycare services for the children of faculty, staff, and students which would operate on a flexible schedule, beyond the existing 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. time period and on a spot or portion-of-the-day basis; and

Be it further resolved that the consolidated child care program to be offered in the Child Development Research Center have a large number of its spaces reserved for, and give a preference for the remaining spaces to, the children of faculty, staff, and students, and that the cost be partially subsidized by the University so that faculty, staff, and students would pay 70% of what non-University parents will pay, for example \$350 per month if the non-University price is \$500 per month.

**FACULTY REFERENDUM ON
PLUS/MINUS GRADING SYSTEM FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

March, 2005

Please mark your ballot, place it in a sealed envelope to insure the confidentiality of your vote and then place the sealed envelope in a second envelope with your name on it and return your ballot to the Office for Academic Affairs, 254 Rose Administration or 870114, by Friday, March 18, 2005.

Please indicate: your academic division _____

Item #1

I wish to continue plus/minus grading.

I wish to eliminate plus/minus grading.

_____ I am neutral on the grading system.

This issue shall be decided by a majority of faculty and a majority of undergraduate degree granting divisions who vote to continue or eliminate plus / minus grading. If the majority wishes to eliminate plus/minus grading, the change will take place fall semester, 2005. If the majority wishes to continue plus / minus grading, then the votes cast for Item #2 will be counted to determine if there will be a change made to the grading system used. If one of the three choices for changing the current grading system does not receive a majority of the votes cast, a second vote will be taken to decide the issue between the two choices receiving the most votes.

Regardless of how you vote on Item #1, please also vote on Item #2.

Item #2

If the faculty votes to continue plus/minus grading system, I wish to:

continue the present system as it is (compute plus/minus grades as part of a student's GPA (with 4.33 for A+, 4.0 for an A, 3.67 for an A-, 3.33 for a B+, 3.0 for a B, 2.67 for a B-, ...)).

record plus/minus grades on a student's transcript but do not include in the calculation of the QPA (In other words, students receiving a B+, a B, or a B-, for example, would all receive 3 quality points per unit.). Examples of institutions that record plus / minus grades on the transcript but do not use the plus or minus in the calculation of the QPA include: Texas Tech, West Virginia University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

_____ only record "plus" grades and give an additional .5 quality point for each "plus" (B+, 3.5, C+, 2.5, D+, 1.5). Examples of institutions that give pluses but no minuses include the University of Florida, University of South Carolina, and the University of Tennessee.

The SUG survey indicated that the following institutions do not use plus/minus grading:

Auburn University, Georgia Tech, LSU, Oklahoma State University, Texas A&M, Ole Miss (except for Law School), and the University of Texas (except for graduate school).

The following institutions use plus / minus grading:

The University of Delaware, University of Houston, Virginia Tech, and North Carolina State University.