

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

Ferguson Forum – April 15, 2003 – 3:30 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

President John Mason, Vice President Mathew Winston and Secretary Roy Ann Sherrod conducted a Faculty Senate new member orientation at 3:00 PM in Room 300 Ferguson. New member packets with Faculty Senate information such as Faculty Senate roster, future meeting dates, Senate history, constitution and by-laws and other information sheets were given to each new member. Following this meeting, the regular Faculty Senate meeting was convened.

President John Mason presented an engraved gavel and an autographed book of poems by Billy Collins, the Poet Laureate of the United States, to Steve Miller and expressed thanks and great appreciation for the excellent job he did as President of the Faculty Senate 2002-03. Past Presidents of the Faculty Senate were introduced and appreciation was expressed for their wisdom and service.

Secretary Roy Ann Sherrod called roll and declared a quorum.

Absent: Torin Alter, Nanda Hopenwasser, Karen Burgess, John Petrovic, Jessica Lacher-Feldman, Carol Drolen

The minutes of the March 18th Faculty Senate meeting were approved with the following corrections: President of SGA Jerry Arsanault was corrected to read Jeremiah Arsanault; mug fee discounted by 20 cents, not 20 percent; Susan Hamill is a full professor; and the sample institutions under "Resolution on Choosing Academic Administrators" were selected from the institutions where senators received their degrees with Indiana omitted and Syracuse added. Changes in the by-laws concerning ombudspersons were presented at the March meeting to be voted on at the April meeting.

The "**Resolution Honoring The University of Alabama Students**" commending them for their selection for the "USA Today Academic All-American Team" was presented to the following students: Kanna Anne Ellis, Gabriel Cliff Walvatne and Laura Jean Medders. The bound resolutions will be forwarded to those students not present today: Sarah Brickenden Adair and Allison Judith Kellogg. The first "Whereas" of the resolution read: "Whereas, five University of Alabama students have been named to the 2003 *USA Today* All-USA College Academic Team, the largest number of students from UA ever named to the *USA Today* team in one year and the most named from any college or university this year, claiming five of 83 sports on the list".

The President of The University of Alabama, **Dr. Robert Witt**, was introduced. Dr. Witt's comments began with the information that this will be a very difficult year financially for the university with limited progress being made in the Legislature and that the present session of the Legislature will probably end without the presentation of a budget. The University will prepare several budget drafts with one assuming level funding from the state, and several drafts will assume one or more levels of reduction or reallocation. Action or lack of action by the Legislature on tax reform will affect the budget greatly with voter approval being the greatest issue. The education of voters concerning tax reform

is critical. It is very possible that the University will go into the new budget year depending on the Rainy Day fund, tuition and fee increases and reallocation as the budget is constructed. The tuition and fee increase amount is not known at this time. To determine this increase, peer institutions and financial needs for the coming year will be considered. To be level with the other institutions within the UA system, the University would need an 18% increase. The University of Alabama remains below most SUG institutions. Faculty salary increases will remain a priority. Dr. Witt stated that since we are so far below the SUG average his comment may stretch the bounds of reason but he has difficulty becoming comfortable with a multi-year goal to become average in terms of our salaries. He realizes that reaching the SUG average would be a significant step forward but his feeling is if we set that as a goal and work for multiple years to attain that goal, we will as a faculty and staff incur very significant costs. An average salary structure is not consistent with the quality of faculty and staff at the University, is not consistent with aspirations to hire stronger people and over a multiple year future would almost certainly mean significant attrition. The University would be no better than its faculty and staff. Dr. Witt will in the near future be recommending that we stretch that goal and become more aggressive. He feels that the quality educational experience at the University is high enough and a presentation of well-documented information would support a substantial tuition increase. Financial aid for financially challenged students would be provided in any tuition increase. A major issue to be decided in the next thirty days is the construction of a new residential hall to be ready by the fall of 2004. Paty Hall is scheduled to be demolished in 2004. In a period of growing enrollment and the effort to provide student housing which would assist in the recruiting of students, the decision is a critical one. Dr. Witt was asked to comment on the equitable salary proposal but was asked by the committee to postpone his comments until he could meet with the committee. After going through the proposal twice, his reaction was that he understood what the committee was trying to accomplish. The problems seen by Dr. Witt included the differential between starting salaries and recognizing one starting professor's salary may be as much as 50% more than another professor's starting salary. Judgment of the relative value of the disciplines that make up the University must be considered, as unfortunate as that may be, and that the realities of the values of the market must also be considered. The reallocation process determined by Interim President Dr. Barry Mason and the Reallocation Committee will be followed under Dr. Witt. The reallocations will be to require certain operations, credit and non-credit continuing education programs, to pay applicable fringe benefit costs or to start the process of covering their fringe benefit costs providing \$625,000. Administrative charges to auxiliary operations for services provided centrally will be increased by ½ of one percent providing \$100,000. The maximum full-time hour tuition charge level will be lowered from 18 to 17 hours generating \$200,000. Interest on interest in the sense of that interest remaining with the academic or administrative unit will be discontinued producing \$1,200,000. Energy costs will be reduced 2 1/2% in 2003-04 saving \$125,000. The budgets of the Bryant Center marketing operation and the Bevill Center cost-sharing program will be reduced saving \$235,000. There will be a summer school budget reduction of \$200,000 leaving an additional \$700,000 reduction to be spread across academic units including the Provost's office. A copy of these proposals will be sent to the President of the Faculty Senate to be distributed to the Senate. The question was asked if Dr. Witt would actively opposed any effort to impose post tenure review with the answer being that post tenure review is not on his agenda but he would not state that he would actively oppose such an action since that would be inappropriate at this time since he has not received such a proposal. Dr. Witt was commended for the action taken to improve the Russell Student Health Center. It was asked if there is concern about duplication within the UA system. A group will be considering this issue but there is now a statewide effort to look at this with a report possibly presented next fall. A question was asked concerning the increase in administrative charges to auxiliary operations not being applied to athletics and Dr. Witt's view of the relationship of academics and athletics. The

cost will not be applied to athletics due to NCAA sanctions and the loss of revenue due to those sanctions. This will be reconsidered when that situation is over. A strong athletic program is in the best interest of the University according to Dr. Witt. Some positive results are increased giving to academics due to the support of the athletic program and increased enrollment. Dr. Mason developed a vision statement during his service as Interim President and Dr. Witt was asked if he would be developing such a statement. He asked for more time since he has only been here six weeks, however, he feels that The University of Alabama is and should be the "flagship" institution and he is looking at other "flagship" institutions to determine those values and qualities and then determine what the University is lacking. He will develop a distinctive vision statement to direct us in the future.

The members of the Senate had a "break out" session to determine co-chairs of the Senate committees. Those co-chairs are: **Academic Affairs** – John Vincent and Garry Warren; **Research & Service** – Wolfgang Bertsch and Don Hooks; **Financial Affairs** – Catherine Davies and George Franke; **Planning and Operations** – Mohammed Sharif and Mathew Winston; **Student Affairs** – Caryl Cooper and Steve Miller; **Senate Operations** – Francine James and Harry Price; **Faculty Life** – Karla Carmichael and Nick Stinnett. Liaison committee members should always report to one of the Faculty Senate officers any issue that would have an impact on the faculty.

Action Items:

Bob Sigler was elected **Parliamentarian** unanimously.

This proposed change to Article II, Section 10, items 7 & 8 of Faculty Senate Bylaws regarding the "Protocol for the selection of ombudspersons for The University of Alabama, and a description of their responsibilities" was presented at the March meeting with a vote to be taken at the April Faculty Senate meeting. The change reads:

**"PROTOCOL FOR THE SELECTION OF OMBUDSPERSONS FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, AND A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES"
Senate Operations**

7) Candidates shall have the following qualifications:

a) tenure, b) rank of associate or full professor, *and* c) at least ten years of service as full-time faculty members with teaching and research responsibilities

8) Candidates shall not be:

a) current members of the Faculty Senate, b) current members of the Mediation Committee, *or* c) current ~~or former~~ administrators; ~~except former Department Chairpersons~~

It was suggested to divide the changes into two parts for a vote. The vote on Section 7 with the addition of the word "and" was approved. Opposition was expressed to the change in Section 8 with the opinion that a faculty member with a grievance would not be comfortable discussing that grievance with anyone that had been an administrator and that person could not be objective as an ombudsperson. In the first election, a person was elected that had formerly been an administrator. Marvin Johnson stated that he had personally found several qualified people that were willing to serve and felt that there should be multiple nominees for the open ombudsperson position and that the entire faculty should be allowed to vote. The point was also made that the faculty is fully capable

of determining the qualities of a nominee in terms of making fair decisions. The proposed change would only exclude administrators who were not department chairs. Former department chairs would be allowed to serve with the only exclusions being the Provost's office or Dean's office. The point was made that a person could serve as an administrator and return to faculty with the faculty status always fixed as their priority. A call to question was passed. (26 for, 8 opposed) The vote on Item 8 was 25 in favor, 9 opposed and 2 abstentions. The change in the by-laws was approved.

The three current **ombudspersons** nominated, according to the criteria stated in the by-laws, Sara deSaussure (Salli) Davis to replace Amy Ward. All three were contacted to add names to the list. Two responded with the report that they are comfortable with Salli Davis' nomination. Wythe Holt spoke in support of Salli after serving with her in the Senate in the past. In the discussion, it was stated that an election could not be held with only one nominee and there should be a slate of candidates. The protocol for the selection of ombudspersons for The University of Alabama states "ombudspersons shall be elected by the faculty in conjunction with Faculty Senate elections every year – there shall be three ombudspersons and the three ombudspersons shall function as a nominating committee by identifying candidates for election each year. Every effort shall be made to nominate multiple candidates and to rotate representation through the various departments and colleges over a period of time". A "point of order" was called to return to the motion on the floor concerning the nomination of Salli Davis. A call to question was made and seconded. This vote was 26 in favor, 7 opposed and 3 abstentions. The nomination of Salli Davis passed. According to the bylaws this election should have been done February/March in conjunction with Faculty Senate elections.

The resolution supporting Susan Hamill following implementation of suggested changes from the Steering Committee was presented. A friendly amendment was suggested to delete the second and third sentences. The friendly amendment was not accepted by the committee.

Proposed Resolution in Support of Susan Hamill

"Be it resolved by the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama that we stand with our colleague, Law Professor Susan Pace Hamill. We commend her willingness to research the controversial issue of the present tax structure of Alabama. We defend the legitimate independence of her research. While we recognize the rights of citizens and scholars to engage in critique of her research and her conclusions, we decry any attempt to silence her or to limit her academic freedom by personal attacks. We believe that any personal attacks against our colleagues are also attacks on the freedom of speech and the academic freedom of all of us."

Discussion included the opinions that Professor Hamill has not been attacked personally but only criticized for her opinion. Professor Hamill believes she has been attacked personally for her stand on tax reform based on biblical morality. The opinion was expressed that some other instances of controversial research could result in the same smear tactics. Also, that the Senate should not be involved in this issue since it infers if you are not for her stand on tax reform, you are immoral. It was pointed out that regardless of your personal stand on tax reform, personal attacks should not be tolerated. Criticism should be based on facts concerning the issue. There was a call to question, seconded and passed. The vote on the resolution was 26 for, 8 opposed and 2 abstentions.

The **Tax Reform Resolution** is one that other institutions in this state have passed. If passed, this will go to the Governor and the Legislature in support of tax reform. It was pointed out that the resolution does not address sales or property taxes specifically. It was

accepted to remove the word "higher" in the sixth "whereas". The opinions were expressed that it was not the business of the Faculty Senate to deal with this issue and that higher funding does not necessarily result in better quality education. This was countered with the opinions that there is direct and supporting evidence that funding does result in better quality education. There was a call to question with only four negative votes. The vote regarding the resolution was 23 for and 6 opposed.

The **Tax Reform Petition** has been approved at other institutions and the Senate approved the President, John Mason, sending the petition by email to the faculty for those to participate with response due by May 2.

John Mason will be attending the **SEC Faculty Governance Conference** and will report back to the Senate following the meeting.

It was reiterated for Liaison member on University Committees to report any significant issues that their committees might consider and/or to email the minutes to John Mason.

Norm Baldwin reported on the **Ad hoc Faculty Leadership Review Committee**. Two years ago a resolution was passed for the Faculty Senate to form a system of feedback for Deans and Chairs. This committee has worked on an instrument and shared this with the Deans and Department Heads. A survey should be prepared next fall.

Meeting adjourned 5:15 PM