

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

APRIL 19, 2005 – 3:30 PM – FERGUSON FORUM

APPROVED MINUTES

ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE: Noel Engebretson, Kari Frederickson, Jeff Richetto, Shane Street, Art Allaway, Gary Hoover, Natalie Adams, Dee Goldston, Allen Parrish, Clark Midkiff, Norm Stein, Barbara Chandler

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Karen Burgess/Jim Leeper

GUESTS: Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Joanna Hutt, Dialog

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Karen Steckol.

The March 15, 2005 Faculty Senate meeting minutes were approved.

President John Mason opened the Faculty Senate meeting and presented the new president, Mathew Winston, with a new gavel. In turn, President Mathew Winston presented John Mason with the gavel used in Faculty Senate meetings for the last two years. The gavel plate was engraved with the inscription, "John O. Mason, Ph.D., Faculty Senate President, 2003-2004 2004-2005". John was also presented a book entitled "America 24/7". The book cover had John's photo on it with an inscription inside the flap of the book cover expressing appreciation to John for his service as Faculty Senate President for two years.

President Mathew Winston opened the Faculty Senate meeting with a welcome to the senators. He noted that Wythe Holt, instrumental along with Chuck Holley in composing the Faculty Handbook, is retiring. Bob Moore of the Mathematics Department has done an outstanding job on the Faculty Senate Governance Committee. Bob will devote more of his time to research and will not be serving as a senator this year.

Mathew's comments included the review of four significant issues addressed during the administration of John Mason as President of the Faculty Senate. The first was the **resolution** passed by the Faculty Senate acknowledging and publicly apologizing for the existence of **slavery** at The University of Alabama. The administration considered an alternate **health insurance plan** (VIVA) to take the place of the self-insured plan in place at the University as administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield. The sense was that the alternate insurance plan (VIVA) would have been divisive and the advantage offered by such a plan would have favored the young and healthy. The cost of the self-insured BC/BS health plan would drastically increase as more people dropped out of the plan. John Mason and the Faculty Senate organized a campus wide meeting concerning the proposal to replace the University health plan, and the outcome was to retain the superior self-insured medical plan. The **Plus/Minus grading system** was the third issue. The faculty voted with a two-thirds majority to maintain the plus/minuses. Norm Baldwin, a former President of the Faculty Senate, headed the effort to formulate a method to **evaluate Deans and Department Chairs**. The information from the survey was given only to the Deans and Department Chairs with the identification of participating faculty

members kept confidential. The evaluations alternate yearly between Deans and Chairs.

An overview of the operation of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Steering Committee, function of the committees and meeting times and dates was given by Mathew Winston. The senators had a breakout session to elect co-chairs of their committees. Those elected were:

Academic Affairs Marcia Barrett John Vincent

Financial Affairs Jim Hall Jeanette Vandermeer

Research & Service Dee Goldston Clark Midkiff

Faculty Life Nick Stinnet Steve Shepard

Student Affairs

Faculty & Senate Governance John Mason Kim Andrus

Bob Sigler was elected **Parliamentarian**. John Mason expressed appreciation to Bob for serving as Parliamentarian during his terms as President of the Faculty Senate.

Officer Reports

President Mathew Winston expressed appreciation for Dr. Robert Witt's continued efforts to increase **faculty salaries**. It was noted that there has been very little discussion concerning how faculty will manage the projected increase in student population from 20,000 to 28,000 in the future. There are new dorms and facilities under construction. To conform to Dr. Witt's goal and the University mission statement, an adequate number of qualified teachers must be provided to maintain the status of a student-centered research institution. The Provost will establish a committee to consider the issue of maternity leave for faculty and staff and requested names of those interested in serving on such a committee.

Mathew Winston reviewed issues that could be coming before the Senate in the coming year and issues that have had action taken by the Senate. A resolution requesting subsidized or minimal cost child care for faculty and staff has been forwarded to Dr. Witt and is an open issue. There is possibly a gender equity issue on campus and could be addressed in the coming year. Medical coverage cost has been rising, and the health care resolution passed by the Senate asked for the \$75.00 co-pay to be reduced to \$25.00 in consideration of those with lesser salaries. It was lowered to \$50.00 per person limited to three people in the family. PEEHIP and our Retirement System should be monitored closely for any issue requiring action from the Faculty Senate and faculty members as a whole. TUARA is a new organization and voice for retiring and retired staff. The Professional Staff Assembly held their first meeting last week and will be a voice for staff member employees of the University. The Healthy Campus Initiative is another medical issue. Mathew Winston will be meeting with past Faculty Senate President Steve Miller to discuss this initiative. The University of Alabama Capital Campaign will be underway in the very near future. The extent of faculty involvement in this project has not been determined. Dr. Witt has made the decision not to replace the Vice President of Financial Affairs. This has delayed receiving financial information sought by the Senate. The pursuit of any of these issues will be at the discretion of the Senate committees and the Faculty Senate Steering Committee.

Vice President – (*John Vincent*) No report.

Secretary – (*Karen Steckol*) No report.

Year End Reports by Committees –

Academic Affairs – (*John Vincent*) The actions of this committee in the past year included monitoring ACHE issues, the intellectual property amendment of Appendix H of the Faculty Handbook, the Plus/Minus issue and investigating the termination of the Russian program.

Faculty Life – (*Nick Stinnet*) A Faculty Life Committee survey revealed that a priority of faculty members was child care. A child-care resolution was brought forward from this committee requesting subsidized or minimal cost child-care for faculty, staff and possibly students. Another resolution from this committee pertained to the preservation of the natural environment at the University. The priority of this committee was to keep benefit costs low and retain the benefits that are in place.

Financial Affairs – (*Karen Steckol*) Concern was expressed regarding the decision to leave the Vice President for Financial Affairs position vacant. Financial information requested by this committee in September has not been received. The reasons could possibly be the vacant Vice President for Financial Affairs position and the timing of the request. This committee has almost completed the work on the issue of employees of the University for less than 25 years paying more for their health benefits than people who have been at the University for 25 years or more. Suggestions have been passed along to the Senate and the administration. President Mathew Winston will be meeting with the President and the Provost to discuss this issue. The proposed six percent salary increase for teachers and four and one-half percent salary increase for faculty will more than likely cause budget cuts next year. The Financial Affairs committee should monitor this issue in the coming year.

Research & Service – (*Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers*) This committee explored the changes in the Office of Sponsored Programs and how these changes would affect faculty members. The Office of Sponsored Programs monitors audits and the adherence of faculty members to Homeland Security laws.

The **Institutional Review Board** that oversees human research projects on campus will be divided into medical protocol and a committee to handle all other issues. A new Senate representative will be assigned to the new committee.

Faculty and Senate Governance – (*Kim Andrus*) This committee managed the operation of the Senate and Senate committees and revised the Senate by-laws. They facilitated nominations and elections.

Student Affairs – (*Priscilla Davis*) The Plus/Minus issue was addressed by this committee and met with Dr. King concerning the construction of new dorms.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) The Legislative Agenda committee has a long history of concern for faculty and the lack of support for The University of Alabama and higher education in general by the State Legislature. The HEP was formed about eight years ago. The HEP is the advocacy arm of higher education in the state. Contributions are tax deductible, and the investment increases the influence of this organization.

Teachers in Alabama contribute over three hundred dollars a year to AEA. Everyone was encouraged to advocate among constituents for HEP. A Legislative Breakfast will be held May 6 at 7:00 AM at the Four Points Hotel. Bill Newton, current state budget officer, will

be the speaker. Higher Education Day is the single most important event conducted by HEP and was a tremendous success this year. Gordon Stone, Executive Director of HEP, is a lobbyist and advocates only on positions universally adopted by the University President's Council. Alabama and Auburn lobbyist offices have combined office space. A lobbyist firm has been hired to guide the universities through the budget process.

Reports by Senate Representatives on Meetings of University Standing Committees

Senate representatives were encouraged to determine the chair of their committee and make certain they are informed about meeting times and places. The CUC is to file with the Faculty Senate office the year-end reports from their committees.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee will be May 10 in 204B Ferguson at 3:00 PM. John Vincent will chair in the absence of President Mathew Winston.

Jeanette Vandermeer will report back to the Senate any issues that are brought up in the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee. This committee is considering a Wellness Program and will be meeting with Lynda Gilbert about this project.

New Business –

A Parent's Organization will be meeting this week and has proposed the development of a Parent's Council. This organization would serve the parents of University students.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 PM