

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

AUGUST 27, 2002 – FERGUSON FORUM – 3:30 PM

### Minutes

**Absent:** none.

**Guests:** Dr. Barry Mason, Interim President of The University of Alabama, Jim Holliman, Professional Staff Committee representative, Veretta Barnes, Office/Clerical/Technical Staff Committee representative, Elvis Pate, Maintenance Personnel Committee representative, Dr. Timothy Heaven, UAB Faculty Senate Chair, John Smith, UAB Faculty Senate Chair Elect, Enrique Gomez, Graduate Student Association representative and Joanna Hutt, *Dialog*

President Steve Miller opened the meeting with a welcome to all senators, acknowledged new senators and gave an overview of the summer activities of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. He also read a poem "Mockingbirds"\* by Mary Oliver with the theme of the willingness to be attentive. Comments by the Faculty Senate President included the goals of faculty being partnered with administration and others to move forward with vital issues and being attentive to faculty issues and the larger university. This includes diversity and inclusion. He pointed out that there are many hearts and parts of this institution and all need to work together to move UA into the future. The officers, past presidents, guests and others were introduced. Everyone was encouraged to read the Wythe Holt's History of the Faculty Senate. Bob Sigler, Parliamentarian, explained the rules of order of the Senate meetings and the process of working initiatives and issues through the committee structure.

This summer President Mason created a committee headed by Dean Tim Greene to address enrollment, recruitment and retention of students and improvement of campus atmosphere and image. Maps of campus have been posted on University grounds and new campus direction signage has been placed on the interstate. Dean Olin is chairing the University Budget Reallocation committee, with Senate Vice President John Mason the Faculty Senate representative on that committee. John will be reporting progress and developments to the Faculty Senate. Student Affairs has initiated Healthy Campus 2010 to address health care for students and faculty, academics and programs. Senator Jim Eddy is the Faculty Senate representative on this committee.

Rules were suspended to allow President Barry Mason to speak to the Senate. After comments about the creation and past impact of the Faculty Senate on the growth and maturity of the University, he stated that the Faculty Senate is a very strong voice with the interest of the faculty as top priority. One of the most important responsibilities of the faculty of the University is to protect the academic integrity of the institution. He commended Steve Miller for his cooperation and willingness to lead the Faculty Senate but also stated that Steve has maintained his independence and that he will not compromise his beliefs and the integrity of the Faculty Senate. He pointed out that groups and committees make more progress where there is less social cohesion. Debate and input will result in developments that are for the greater good of the university. As Interim President, Dr. Mason said that it would be foolish for the university to drift while a search is on for a permanent president. Focus must be on the issues and not personalities. One of the

primary issues is student enrollment and retention. When student enrollment is down one hundred students, the University is less \$350,000 in tuition dollars. The second issue is the efficient use of University resources. The two worst things are fear and complacency. Creative thinking and breaking from the past to make dramatic changes will carry this institution forward. The goal is to articulate and develop our vision for the future. Decisions must be made concerning the type of institution we want to be. UAB is a medical facility and UAH is technical/scientific — how does UA want to be identified and what image should be projected? Last year freshmen enrollment was down 400-500 students. Preliminary indications are that freshmen enrollment is up nine to ten percent this year or one to two percent of the total enrollment. Dean Judy Bonner will chair a task force to determine what steps should be taken to retain students and improve the image of the University. Dr. Mason asked the Senate to give some thought about someone to serve on this task force. Some issues that could be considered would be freshman and sophomore mandatory class attendance and reviewing grade inflation. Few Friday classes and University sponsored Thursday night gatherings should be reviewed. The budget will remain the same, however, budget reallocation and management of resources is being discussed in Dean Olin's committee meetings every two weeks. The goal has been set to be in the fiftieth percentile of SUG within five years. SUG gave zero percent raises this year. We want to be a top tier public institution without affecting our rich tradition. Once the very broad goals have been embraced, each unit must reach out to its stakeholders. Our goals must be empowering and enriching to gain support. Dr. Mason thanked the senators for their hard work, unselfishness and willingness to serve the University. The question concerning the different stakeholders was answered with the faculty being a strong stakeholder. Others are students, staff, the Board of Trustees, alumni, caring and passionate people who embrace our vision and become involved. It was suggested that the Faculty Senate invite members of the Presidential Search Committee to their meeting. Dr. Mason agreed that this process is vital and reviewed some of the qualities that the new president should possess. This process should be completely open with input from everyone. Asked if he was a candidate for the presidency, Dr. Mason answered that he was not at this time. Concern was expressed that funding from state external sources was not being considered. Dr. Mason said that discussion included raising tuition eight percent a year for the next five years and proportionately increasing the amount of scholarships. Increased enrollment would definitely be helpful. An example: a possible one hundred dollar application fee would increase funding, while deferred tuition and other examples were given. The issue of the propriety of paying the head football coach one and a-half million dollars a year was questioned. Dr. Mason answered by saying that this money is not state money, it is all privately and athletically funded. There is an "arms race" in the Southeastern Conference. Five coaches in the SEC now making more than a million dollars a year. Athletics is enormously important and ticket prices are increasing. The athletic budget is at the fiftieth percentile of the SEC. University President's salaries are increasing, with the President of the University of Tennessee making over \$700,000 a year, and Dr. Sorensen leaving the University of Alabama for a salary at South Carolina of \$450,000 a year. Our focus should be on winning with integrity and honor and increase the graduation rate of athletes. Our basketball athletes have an overall GPA of 2.8. The NCAA did not find "lack of institutional control" or "failure to monitor," however, due to the actions of boosters, the University suffered severe sanctions.

The motion was made and seconded to suspend the rules allowing Dr. Tim Heaven, UAB Faculty Senate Chair, to address the Senate. UAB has had an interim president, Dr. Mack Portero, and now a new president, Dr. Carol Garrison from the University of Louisville, has been selected and will take office on September 1, 2002. Chancellor Mack Portero is seriously addressing developing a University of Alabama System PAC by attempting to raise a significant amount of money. The political process of the State of Alabama makes it difficult to obtain increased education funding. Constitutional reform is an issue of the

UAB Faculty Senate. The two solutions would be repairing the constitution or replacing the constitution through a constitution convention. Health care is also being considered on both campuses. UAB has had three plans to consider, *Viva*, *Blue Cross-Blue Shield* and *United Health Care*. The cost of each plan was reviewed — complaints included long waits, appointment scheduling and access to the system. The success and process of UAB's review of deans and chairs was brought up. The faculty has not pursued this during the administrative changes but shared the paperwork they have developed with our Senate. It was pointed out that confidentiality of feedback is difficult to maintain in small academic units. The information obtained through this process is very useful and it is important to have the support of those being evaluated.

Harry Price of the Senate Operations Committee presented the proposal of inviting a representative from the Graduate Student Association to a seat in the Faculty Senate. This will be voted on at the next Senate meeting, since a change of by-laws would be needed.

The co-chairs of each committee were introduced and commented upon the issues they will be addressing and dates and times of meetings.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Beth Macauley & Garry Warren*) Emails will be sent to committee members reminding them of their meeting Tuesday, September 3. Issues they will be addressing are: solutions to decreased class attendance including possible mandatory class attendance by freshmen and sophomores, promotion of academic integrity and grade inflation.

**Research & Service** – (*Subhabrata Chakraborti & Jim Eddy*) They will be meeting soon.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Catherine Davies & Keith Woodbury*) This committee will be meeting next Tuesday, September 3 at the Bruno Library. Issues they will be addressing: budget reallocation, faculty salaries relating to regional average, faculty being paid nine or twelve months, sources of funding for the University, technology related to teaching, and health care collaboration with UAB.

**Faculty Life** – (*Wythe Holt & Nick Stinnet*) This committee will meet next Tuesday at the Law School. Issues are: integration of faculty, same sex partner health benefits, maternity leave policy and external funding.

**Planning & Operations** – (*John Mason & Matthew Winston*) This committee will meet next Tuesday at 3:30. Issues are: reallocation and resources with the colleges, review building maintenance costs and efficient use of space, staff salary increases, the issue of the dean's reallocation of \$3.4 million next year and \$2.4 million the following year, new revenues and recycling.

**Student Affairs** – (*Clark Midkiff & Jeff Richetto*) This committee will meet next Tuesday at 3:30. Issues are: Greek integration, student quality of life, and other issues.

**Senate Operations** – (*Harry Price & Frannie James*) This committee will meet next Tuesday at 3:30. Issues are: attendance and senator absences, continue to review organizational process, apportionment of senate seats, working with Arts & Sciences to attain an election of senators in a timely manner.

**Ad hoc Faculty Leadership Review Committee** – (*Norm Baldwin*) This committee has worked for two years to begin a system of feedback for deans and chairs. A survey of 400 faculty members requesting input about competencies and skills that deans and chairs should possess will be conducted. Existing instruments are being reviewed for the feedback process.

**Legislative Agenda Committee** – (*Margaret Garner*) Higher Education Day has been set for March 13, 2003. The attendance last year was 2500 and we would like to top that number this year. It was asked for sensitivity for students that attend advocating funding for higher education. PSA's have been prepared and will be circulating in the media. Everyone was encouraged to become a member of HEP. Increased benefits for members are being discussed. Another *Constitutional Reform Seminar* is in the planning stages. Legislative breakfasts with current candidates will resume on September 24.

**Strategic Planning Committee** – (*Margaret Garner*) Chancellor Mack Portera has accepted the Strategic Planning document, however, the preface was not accepted. The committee will meet and bring the document back to the Faculty Senate.

**New Business** – Bob Sigler, Parliamentarian explained that "new business" means issues that have come through the committee structure.

**Old Business** – None

Meeting adjourned 5:15 PM

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\* MOCKINGBIRDS by Mary Oliver

This morning

two mockingbirds

in the green \_eld

were spinning and tossing

the white ribbons

of their songs

into the air.

I had nothing

better to do

than listen.

I mean this

seriously.

In Greece,

a long time ago,

an old couple

opened their door

to two strangers

who were,  
it soon appeared,  
not men at all,  
but gods.  
It is my favorite story —  
how the old couple  
had almost nothing to give  
but their willingness  
to be attentive —  
but for this alone  
the gods loved them  
and blessed them —  
when they rose  
out of their mortal bodies,  
like a million particles of water  
from a fountain,  
the light  
swept into all the corners  
of the cottage,  
and the old couple,  
shaken with understanding,  
bowed down —  
but still they asked for nothing  
but the dif\_cult life  
which they had already.  
And the gods smiled, as they vanished,  
clapping their great wings.  
Wherever it was  
I was supposed to be

this morning —

whatever it was I said

I would be doing —

I was standing at the edge of the \_eld —

I was hurrying

through my own soul,

opening its dark doors —

I was leaning out;

I was listening.