

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

AUGUST 31, 2004 – 3:30 pm – FERGUSON FORUM

### CORRECTED MINUTES

**ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE:** Janis Nuckolls, Margaret Garner, Karen Burgess, Caryl Cooper, Margaret Rice, Mitch Shelton, Priscilla Davis

**ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE:** Shuhua Zhou/Annabel Stephens; Tonyia Tidline/Steven McCall; Jay Lindly/Philip Johnson; James Leonard/Alfred Brophy

**GUESTS:** Joanna Hutt, Dialog; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Jim Holliman, Professional Staff; Norm Baldwin; Marlin Caddell, Crimson White

Roll call and quorum check by John Vincent.

The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of April 20, 2004, were approved with one correction.

President John Mason welcomed everyone to the 2004-05 Faculty Senate and appreciation was expressed for the attendance and participation of each senator.

Norm Baldwin, Faculty Senate President 2001-02 and Chair of the Leadership Review Committee, was introduced. Norm gave an update on the **Faculty Feedback of Deans and Department Chairs** survey. The data was categorized and revealed that minorities and non-tenured track faculty and women gave their chairs a higher rating than did tenure track faculty and men. This could possibly indicate that chairs are treating minorities, non-tenure track and women faculty in a positive manner. Of 1,000 faculty members, 256 responded. Some concerns of the committee indicated in the survey were mentoring and faculty treatment regarding pay. Data has been sent to department chairs. There has been no response or communication from the department chairs to any of the committee members or Faculty Senate officers. The reason for this survey is to bring potential problems to the attention of Deans and Department Chairs. Norm and the committee have been diligent in seeing this project to fruition. The Faculty Senate gave an official thanks to Norm and the committee.

Wythe Holt presented an update on the **UA health care program** and the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee. A year ago in October the administration called a meeting of the Benefits Committee requesting approval of six changes with one week to consider and return a vote. The reasons for the haste were a new Vice President and the fact that faculty and staff would have to make a decision concerning participation by November. The committee reluctantly voted in those six changes taking effect January 1, 2004. The major change was a \$75 dollar per person prescription drug deductible, which especially impacted those in lower income positions. The University is self-insured and the goal is a reserve of four million dollars. The University did place \$1.2 million dollars into the fund. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee sent a message to University administration requesting an additional one million dollars be placed in this fund. Administration chose not to do so. Recommendations were made in a called meeting of the Senate in February to raise funds for health care that would not encompass co-pays or deductibles. Wythe Holt, Catherine Davies and John Petrovic, Senate members of the Benefits Committee,

agreed among themselves not to vote for new co-pays or deductibles until the University put more money into the system and researched methods addressing rising health care costs and, if there was an increase to University employees, it would be in the form of increased premiums. The administration presented the committee with sixteen ways to put more money into the reserve. The faculty does not have a majority on the Benefits Committee. Most members are professional staff. Many suggestions were considered including why the University has to be self-insured and not a member of PEEHIP and the investigation of a wellness program. A local company implemented a wellness program and their health care costs have declined for the last five years. In August the Benefits Committee came together for a meeting. The University proposed only two changes – to increase premiums, the University contributed \$800,000 to the health care reserve, and changes to the deductible plan. There are certain prescription drugs that do not have a generic equivalent. Blue Cross maintains a prescription formulary list that approves some drugs and does not approve others. There is a \$30 co-pay for prescription drugs that do not have a generic equivalent. The proposed change would be for the University to accept this formulary list. For drugs not on the list, a \$40 co-pay would be paid. The committee agreed to these two increases but added a request that the \$75 dollar deductible be lowered to \$25 dollars effective January 1, 2005. The committee realized that the revenue lost would have to be replaced and they voted for two of the original sixteen proposals brought to them by the University. These proposals were raising the Emergency Room co-pay to \$50 dollars and increasing the co-pay for non-surgical procedures (MRI, Cat Scan and Endoscopy, etc.) at one-day surgical centers from \$25 dollars to \$75 dollars. The current co-pay for surgical procedures at one-day surgical centers is \$75 dollars. The increases in premiums for single coverage would be increased \$10 with the University paying \$10 for a total of a \$20 dollar increase a month. The state is considering passing legislation stating that any state employee who participates in a health program that the state contributes money to must pay a minimum of 12 ½% of the premium. We now pay less than half of that for single coverage. The city of Northport increased their employee's premiums from \$25 dollars to \$100 dollars anticipating that this proposed legislation will pass and be implemented. For family coverage the premium will increase approximately seven dollars with the University contributing two-thirds of that cost. For health care for both spouses, the premiums will increase \$19 dollars a month. The University now has a \$1.5 million dollar surplus in the system. Costs are always more the second half of the year than the first part of the year. There has not been a single instance of catastrophic illness this year. Catastrophic illness is one costing in excess of \$100,000 or more in claims for a single cause. It is estimated that if the committee's recommendations are accepted the surplus at the end of the year will be \$1.2 million dollars. The committee has not been notified if their recommendations have been accepted. The committee also recommended that the University investigate the implementation of a wellness program at little or no cost to the employees. Nurse practitioners are now on the list. Soon at the new CCHS facility prescription drugs will be dispensed at a reduced rate. The Faculty Life Committee will possibly address the issue of the University ceasing to be self-insured. Employees earning more than \$26,000 per month pay a higher premium for health care than those making less than that amount. Increasing the \$26,000 amount and adding additional tiers will be discussed by the Benefits Committee. The Benefits Committee would welcome any suggestions. Thanks and appreciation was expressed to Wythe and the Benefits Committee for their hard work and protection of the interests of University faculty and staff. The Benefits Committee has twice requested the Board of Trustees and University administration exert political pressure to lower drug costs. There has been no response. The committee has also requested that a system-wide committee on health care be created to address the problem of increased health care costs. A systems representative attended the last meeting of the Benefits Committee.

An alleged gay-bashing incident occurred at a University Program sponsored event on

Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup> in the Ferguson Theater. This issue has been postponed until the next Senate meeting to allow further investigation into the facts. John Mason and Wythe Holt will report back to the Senate.

**President's Report** – (*John Mason*) There will be **construction** of only one additional academic building on campus with University funding, the Science Lab Building for freshmen. The construction of a Performing Fine Arts Center is on the list to be constructed with funding from private contributions. An **update** is needed from Senate liaison members on University Committees. Email notes on issues covered in meetings and/or minutes should be emailed to John Mason. Campus Master Plan issues will impact the faculty and information should be communicated to the Senate President in a timely manner. The **book drive** for Baghdad University and other universities in Iraq is underway with receptacles placed at the University Book Store in Ferguson and Tutwiler and two locations of the Alabama Book Store. Everyone was encouraged to promote this effort. The SGA has requested that the +/- **system** be abolished. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee felt that the number of students polled should be larger than the 864 students polled. The Provost has asked the SGA to poll a larger number of students. Anyone that is possibly impacted by this system and would like to have input should contact someone on the Academic Affairs Committee. Copies of **UA Preliminary Increases in Revenues & Costs for 2004-05** and **UA Six-Year Graduation and First-Year Retention Rates** were handed out. This information came from a Board of Trustees meeting in June. The reallocation returned to the Deans last year will now be permanent. Academic Affairs Committee will answer any inquiries.

**Vice President's Report** – (*Mathew Winston*) The term "Liaison" will be changed to "Representative" due to the right to vote issue for members of University Committees. Those members will be Senate Representatives and will have the right to vote as committee members. It was pointed out that the alternate health care plan proposed by the University last year was defeated. The plan could potentially have been particularly attractive to the young and healthy population resulting in increasing the cost of the original plan.

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

Committee co-chairs and committee members had a 15-20 minute breakout session to meet and discuss issues and meeting times and dates.

John Mason will email the University committee chairpersons of 2004-05 listing the names of the Senate representative reminding them to contact the Senate representative and that the Senate representative has voting privileges. Student committee participation is a problem. There are links on the Faculty Senate webpage for Senate and University committees. The Senate Representative on each University committee should communicate any issue that would have an impact on the faculty to the Faculty Senate officers.

**Faculty Life** – (*Wythe Holt & Nick Stinnett*) This committee met August 17 and is developing three resolutions concerning the establishment of a wellness program, the establishment of a campus environmental protection committee and an expression of appreciation to Norm Baldwin and his committee for the Leadership Review survey project. They are also considering conducting a faculty priority survey.

A point of interest was made that grant opportunities exist for the establishment of a wellness program. Information concerning this will be emailed to Wythe and Nick of the Faculty Life Committee.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 PM