

FACULTY SENATE MEETING
AUGUST 23, 2011 – 3:00 pm – Room #110 AIME

APPROVED MINUTES

ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE: Stevan Marcus, Maha Marouan, Mindy Nancarrow, Ion Stancu, Steve Katsinas, Wayne Urban, Jeanette VanderMeer, Wesley Church.

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Vijaya Sundar/Scott Arnold; Steve Miller/Jeremy Butler; Reuben Cook/Paula Robinson, Carmen Mayer-Robin/John Blitz.

GUESTS: Cresandra Smothers, Dialog; Stephen Swinson, Student Government Association.

Roll call and quorum check by Vice President Deidre Leaver-Dunn in the absence of Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The minutes of the April 19, 2011 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

President's Report – (*Clark Midkiff*) The University of Alabama President Robert Witt is scheduled to speak at the September 20, 2011 Faculty Senate meeting.

A remembrance event to honor The University of Alabama's response to the April tornado disaster and to celebrate "Tuscaloosa Moving Forward" will be held August 28 around Palmer Lake at 7:30 P.M. "UA Remembers" wrist bands were distributed to each senator.

The **Environmental Health and Safety** operation is being displaced due to the construction of a NOAA Federal Research Building. It was first planned to locate parts of the EHS operation not involving moving hazardous material on public streets to the Armory. The move to the Armory was delayed due to significant damage to the building caused by the April tornado. A faculty member was conducting research on fish stress reactions. Construction noise would seriously damage this research. Noise level tests were conducted to determine which equipment could be safely used. Everyone's concerns were addressed and satisfactorily resolved. It was reported there is a move to relocate Radiation Safety to Nott Hall Annex. Following a request by the Provost, Vice President for Research, Joe Benson, looked into the matter and sent President Clark Midkiff the following email:

"As a follow up to questions raised in her last meeting with the Senate Steering Committee, Provost Bonner asked that I update you on events associated with the move of Radiation Safety to the Nott Hall Annex. This building was the site of Radiation Safety for some time and contains infrastructure needed for the operation of the radiation safety program. The boiler failed in the 1990's and was not replaced. At that time some of the present day-to-day radiation safety activities were moved to the present EHS facility, however the Annex has continued to be used for some material storage and laboratory activities. During planning for the move of EHS, space in the Biology Building was considered, but it was decided that the Nott Annex had more and better space. The Annex needs some repair, but is structurally sound. Prior to occupancy by Radiation Safety this building will be renovated to insure it meets standards. Environmental Health and Safety has been involved in the decision-making process along the way and is comfortable with the outcome.

If I can provide further information and verification, please do not hesitate to contact me”.

Patricia Parmelee volunteered to serve as the Senate representative on the 2010-12 University Committee “**Institutional Review for Human Subjects (Medical)**”.

Provost Bonner has finalized and revised **the maternity leave policy** for female faculty and the policy will be posted on the Provost’s “Family Friendly” web site. Deidre Leaver-Dunn was commended on her dedication, hard work and perseverance concerning the maternity leave policy.

Dr. Karen Steckol served as Faculty Senate President for three years and Faculty Senate Vice President for two years. Karen was diagnosed with a serious illness during her first presidential term and has battled this illness with a positive attitude and great effort. She was absent for the April Faculty Senate meeting where outgoing presidents are honored for their service. Karen was recognized and honored at the June meeting of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. A monogrammed piece of luggage and the engraved gavel she used to preside over the Senate meetings was presented to her. The Faculty Senate gave Dr. Steckol a standing ovation. In Karen’s response she said she should be thanking the University and the Senate for their support and encouragement during her illness and during her years as a faculty member at The University of Alabama. She stated it was a labor of love and encouraged everyone to participate and be involved in University matters through serving in the Senate.

Faculty Senate Vice President Deidre Leaver-Dunn reported that the Provost has accepted a set of guidelines for the application of the current **maternity leave policy** in the Faculty Handbook. The Provost made comparisons of the maternity leave policy to benefits offered by Tuscaloosa employers, Southeastern Conference institutions and SUG institutions. The Faculty Handbook currently states maternity leave involves recovering from pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth and any resulting disabilities. Adoption is not part of the current maternity leave policy. This issue will be addressed separately since it would apply to male and female faculty members. The revised policy will apply to eligible nine-month female faculty members who are tenured and tenure earning. Anyone who earns sick leave or annual leave is not eligible for maternity leave under this policy. Leave is granted to cover the time necessary for the medical recovery period as defined by the individual’s health provider and to provide time for initial bonding with the child. Under usual circumstances this time is eight weeks. Leave is granted during the actual time period necessary. This applies during the regular academic year. If a female faculty member gives birth to a child the last day of class, the employee would not be eligible for paid leave. If a female faculty member gives birth to a child on the first day of class in August, she would be eligible for eight weeks of paid leave. If eight weeks is insufficient, the faculty member can apply for FMLA. During the semester of paid maternity leave, the faculty member may be relieved of classroom and classroom-related obligations. Department chairs will work with faculty members to determine reasonable administrative, research, and service expectations during the semester in question. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no faculty member will be relieved of teaching responsibilities for both the fall and spring semesters. No faculty member will have her teaching, administrative, research, or service expectations increased in subsequent terms as a result of choosing to take a teaching leave. The guidelines will be communicated to deans and department chairs at the beginning of every academic year. Everyone was encouraged to direct a faculty member with an unusual maternity policy situation to contact the Provost directly. The point was made concerning the inequities between nine and

twelve month faculty. The Faculty Senate Faculty Life Committee was encouraged to pursue that specific issue. The new maternity leave policy is an improvement and is a work in progress. The University should continue to make strides toward being a “Family Friendly” campus.

Vice President’s Report – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn*) No report.

Secretary’s Report – (*Jeanette VanderMeer*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) This committee will meet in two weeks. The agenda for the fall includes criteria for the selection of a faculty member for the **SEC Faculty Awards Program** established by the SEC Council of Presidents to raise the academic reputation of the SEC and generate media attention. Prizes for those selected are eleven awards at \$5,000 each and one award for \$20,000 with \$1,500 provided to each award winner for travel expenses to Destin, Florida for the presentations. Criteria for selection of the faculty members includes being a professor, having a record of extraordinary teaching including teaching students at the undergraduate level unless the department is restricted to graduate/first professional students and having a record of scholarship that is recognized nationally/internationally in the discipline. There is an October 1 deadline to submit the Senate’s recommendations to the Provost.

The Provost would like to reestablish the designation of University professor put in place during the presidency of Dr. Joab Thomas. The number was limited to 20-30 faculty members at a time. The committee was asked to develop criteria for the selection of candidates and this would give a pool of candidates for the SEC Faculty Award.

The topic of an internal assessment with measures and indicators of good teaching other than student evaluations for the purpose of tenure and promotion and perhaps annual evaluations is also being discussed.

Anyone outside the committee with suggestions should submit those to Marcia Barrett or John Vincent. A report will be given at the next Faculty Senate Meeting.

Faculty Life – (*Lowell Baker & Wesley Church*) The committee expressed thanks and deep appreciation to Deidre Leaver-Dunn and the Faculty Life committee for the years of hard work and perseverance concerning the maternity leave policy. Lowell Baker suggested holding a forum for input to advance a “Family Friendly” campus. The forum would be a way to approach, address and establish policy benchmarks. The committee will continue to work on the maternity leave policy.

Financial Affairs – (*Robert McLeod & Katrina Ramonell*) On October 1, 2011 mandatory Teacher’s Retirement System contributions increase from 5% to 7.25%, and to 7.5% the following October 1. According to actuarial standards TRS is underfunded. The concern is for the University to maintain their equal contribution and not shift an unequal portion to the employees for the solvency of the benefit plan. There is also concern about the impact of this issue on employee benefits versus salaries.

Information Technology – (*Carolyn Cassidy & Brad Hodges*) The Information Technology Committee will be pursuing the issue of a 24-hour computer help desk service and the termination of email for faculty leaving the University. The committee will question the efforts

concerning WiFi availability, engineering software, multi-media classrooms, establishing and maintaining web sites for departments and a campus-wide professional license. Cathy Rainey in the OIT office is the manager of campus site licensing.

Research & Service – (*Ed Stephenson & Ian Stancu*) The Research and Service Committee over the summer has dealt with the move of Environmental and Health Safety offices from their location to a continuing changing location. A possible meeting in two weeks with Joe Benson, Vice President of Research, will give the committee an opportunity to discuss and receive more information about the possible location future of EHS, biology storage and IRB complaints. The lack of communication, planning and consultation concerning the relocation of EHS and lack of crucial support for research was expressed. These issues will continue to be tracked by the Senate.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*Rona Donahoe & Russell McCutcheon*) In the spring the process to elect an Ombudsperson not from A&S, Engineering or C&BA was undertaken. There were three candidates and the process was progressing nicely except in A&S when the April tornado struck Tuscaloosa. Dee Goldston of the College of Education was elected. The Faculty Senate Bylaws and possibly the Constitution has some contradictions concerning Senate elections and the definition of a faculty member. The committee will be working on language and revisions to bring the two documents into agreement.

In reading the Senate bylaws one of the charges of the Senate is to overview the operation of the University standing committees. The two committees that should have been involved in the EHS move were not consulted. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee every year receives comments from faculty members about standing committees not functioning properly, not meeting, and not being included in a shared governance relationship with the administration. These will be the priorities of the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee. If there are any other issues for this committee to address, please forward those to Rona Donahoe or Russell McCutcheon. In the past the standing committees submitted annual reports to their reporting channel and copies were made available to the Senate President but this has not been followed for some time. Some committee chairs may not be qualified to serve. There are also some committee members who do not do their job. There seems to be a question whether letters notifying faculty members about their committee assignments have been distributed..

Student Affairs – (*Melondie Carter & Seth Panitch*) The Student Affairs Committee will meet in September considering two items. One of those items is the Graduate Assistant insurance coverage lapse and the sorority recruiting video. The Graduate Students who are not Teaching Assistants and are not paying their own tuition in the summer which is the vast majority of those in research are not eligible to use the recreational facilities and are having some difficulties checking out items from the Library during the summer.

Legislative Action – (*Margaret Garner*) The STARS and Academic Leadership retreat was held in August with great attendance and representation. There continues to be budget concerns for Higher Education. The ethics law prohibiting paying membership fees through payroll deduction seems to have impacted the number of members in HEP. A membership drive should be organized and membership forms will be brought to the next Faculty Senate meeting.

All senators were encouraged to participate in the Crimson Couch to 5K kickoff on September 7th and the November 13th event. As Senate leaders in your college each senator was asked to

encourage their colleagues to take part in this wellness and exercise activity. The number participating last year was 548 completing the plan. This is a competition and a \$1,000 prize goes to the college doing the best to use for health promotion.

5:00 P.M. Meeting adjourned.