

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 13, 2004 – 3:15 PM – 307 FERGUSON

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: John Mason, Mathew Winston, Roy Ann Sherrod, Steve Miller, Karla Carmichael, Nick Stinnett, George Franke, Bob Moore, Wolfgang Bertsch, John Vincent
Guest: Chris Otts, Crimson White

The minutes of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting of December 2, 2003, were approved with minor corrections.

The meeting began with a report from Bob Moore concerning the revision of the Senate by-laws. Frannie James and Harry Price from the Senate Operations committee have resigned. Bob is the new co-chair of this committee. More details with an old version and new version of the Faculty Senate by-law proposal will be presented at next month's meeting. This committee discussed having more details concerning the ombudsperson's election and duties. A recommendation will also be forthcoming regarding the restructure of Faculty Senate committees. The old by-laws speak of committee meetings with University Vice Presidents. That is not done on a regular basis at this time. There are overlaps of duties of Faculty Senate committees. It will be proposed to eliminate the Planning and Operations committee and the Senate Operations committee. Those will be replaced with a new committee titled "Faculty and Senate Governance Committee". One new larger committee would be able to operate more efficiently. The Planning and Operations committee considered last year the proposal to merge the Senate Operations committee with the University Resources and Priorities committee. This was not approved by University administration. Also the procedure to identify bona fide faculty organizations and the restructure of summer school terms were other issues considered by the Planning and Operations committee. These issues did not overlap other committee duties such as the Financial Affairs committee. The new Faculty and Senate Governance committee's duties would include the duties of the Senate Operations committee and other additional duties. More details will be presented at next month's meeting. Changes to the ombudsperson section of the Faculty Senate by-laws was presented at the September Faculty Senate meeting and was approved in the Faculty Senate meeting in October. This will be emailed to Keith Woodbury, the Faculty Senate web master, and to Bob Moore, co-chair of the Senate Operations committee for review, to be posted on the Senate webpage.

Wythe Holt, Law School senator, has expressed concerns about the method used to name a professor by the Law School Dean. Wythe has proposed some changes to be made in Appendix M of the Faculty Handbook. This deals with the University procedure of appointment of professorships and endowed chairs. This issue was referred to the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs committee and John will also discuss the issue with the Provost. John Mason has been named to a task force addressing the issue of naming University distinguished professors. John will forward the charge of this committee to the Steering committee members. The meeting is scheduled for January 22 at 3:00 PM.

President's Report – (*John Mason*) A beautifully framed print of the Faculty Senate resolution passed in the December 9, 2003, meeting in memoriam of H. Bailey Thomson will be presented to his family at the January 20, 2004, Faculty Senate meeting. Sheri Shuler will read the resolution. University colleagues and representatives will be present. The meeting dates of the Steering Committee with the Provost for the spring were emailed to Steering Committee members. These meeting dates are held the day after the Provost meets with the Deans. There will not be a meeting in March because it is close to spring break and the May date would be close to the end of the semester. The nomination for the Mediation Committee is Karla Carmichael. The Mediation Committee meets when there is an issue for them to consider. There were two instances last year and the Ombudsperson was also involved in the solution of these issues.

The preference forms for membership in the Committee on University Committees should be sent out in January. There is a shortage of forms and the date the forms will be sent is not known at this time. According to University by-laws, the Faculty Senate will recommend to the President faculty members to replace the three outgoing members. Faculty members comprise the majority of voting members of this committee. The CUC should have a graduate student as a member of this committee. It was pointed out that the SGA is not timely about student appointments to committees and that students are not attending meetings responsibly. It was suggested that the Graduate Student Association recommend someone for the CUC. The CUC selects virtually every member of University committees.

Vice President's Report – (*Mathew Winston*) The question was asked, "What has been done about the sexual orientation resolution passed by the Faculty Senate to be added to the list of things the University does not discriminate against." President Witt had said that once the budget cut had passed, this issue would be a major item. The previous President of the University had said the same thing and nothing was ever done. John will ask President Witt about this. It was pointed out that Harry Price should be replaced as co-chair of the Senate Operations committee due to his resignation. Caryl Cooper should be replaced since attendance at the Steering Committee meetings is not possible. John Mason as President usually appoints someone, however, the Steering Committee would be welcome to do so. Frannie James was replaced as co-chair of the Senate Operations Committee by Bob Moore and Frannie's replacement on the Senate is Kim Andrus.

Secretary's Report – (*Roy Ann Sherrod*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*John Vincent & Margaret Rice*) There was not a quorum at this committee's last meeting preventing any official action. Margaret Rice has resigned as co-chair of this committee. John Vincent will seek someone to fill this position.

Faculty Life – (*Karla Carmichael & Nick Stinnett*) No report.

Financial Affairs – (*Catherine Davies & George Franke*) Minutes are online.

Planning & Operations – (*Mohammed Sharif & Mathew Winston*) A copy of a letter addressed to Mike Butts, Manager of the Campus Mail Service, from Sheldon J. Gorovsky, Manager with the United States Postal Service, was received by each Steering Committee member. The letter addressed the Private Express Statutes issue and stated clarification of the Suspension for Certain Letters of College and University Organizations. There are six professional organizations listed on The University of Alabama web site: Alabama Scholars Association, Black Faculty and Staff Association, Capstone Women's Network, Alabama Scholars Association, Coalition for Diversity Inclusiveness, Web Tide and Women's Leadership Institute. These might or might not be

bona fide organizations of the University. These organizations were placed in the professional organization section when the University web page was redesigned. The letter states, "A simple test of this qualification (operational pursuit of the academic goals of the university) is to ask if the letters can be fairly characterized as university letters that could be placed on university letterhead paper." That still leaves open the question of the person/persons to make that determination. It was suggested a few meetings ago that the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs committee make that determination. The suggestion was met with disapproval of the majority of the Steering Committee. The procedure to determine bona fide faculty organizations will be discussed with the Provost. A link on the University web page does not constitute a bona fide organization. To qualify as a bona fide student organization an application must be filled out yearly and turned into the Dean of Students. Should faculty organizations have to apply and go through the Provost's office was a point included in the discussion of this issue. Faculty advice on what is a proper organization would definitely be needed. So the suggestion was for the organization to have a statement of their purposes to be given to the University Academic Affairs Office and then given to the Provost with their recommendation. John Mason asked the question, "Would this be something that could go to the Mediation Committee?" Nick Stinnett will research that question and report back to the Steering Committee. It could be argued that all intellectual thought and query could be called university business. Mathew Winston will state to the Provost that the sense of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee is to specifically look at the six organizations listed on the University web page and have faculty organizations submit every year a statement of their purpose, a list of the officers and consult with the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee for any assistance. It should be up to the organization to be proactive in applying for this status. One key would be if an organization did not come under a specific department or school. Would this policy discourage interdisciplinary activity? Could an organization just apply and qualify for free mail usage which would be according to federal postage laws? Would a group have to be bona fide to use University property such as rooms for meetings? There are several facets to the issue and a report will be forthcoming at the next meeting.

Research & Service – (*Wolfgang Bertsch & Don Hooks*) No report.

Student Affairs – (*Steve Miller & Caryl Cooper*) Report will be given at next meeting.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) In Margaret's absence, John encouraged everyone to make plans to attend Higher Education Day in Montgomery on Thursday, February 26. Bill Jones will be determining the dates for the Legislative Breakfasts. Funding for the Educational Trust Fund increased by 9.5% from October to December of 2003. The threat to the Teacher's Retirement Fund was discussed. In the discussion it was pointed out that meeting this threat head-on would be the correct method. John Mason will invite Bill Jones to attend the next Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting. The method of response was discussed which included a resolution, media attention, partnering with AEA and all of the institutions of Alabama for impact. Benefits are a large part of faculty remaining with the University however those benefits are shrinking. Karla Carmichael suggested that the faculty survey be conducted again and compared with the results from last year. It was pointed out that there is not an administrative advocate for the faculty. The faculty and staff are down about the budget and financial situation and see very little hope of any changes for the better. It was suggested to meet with Bill Jones and develop a plan to address the decrease of faculty and staff benefits. Letters to the Editor could be sent to the Tuscaloosa News. There is also misinformation in the media concerning the amount of faculty salaries. The threat to faculty benefits will be on the Faculty Senate agenda for the January 20th meeting.

Meeting adjourned 4:40 PM

