

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
JANUARY 13, 2008 – 3:00 PM – 206F SHELBY HALL**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** Karen Steckol, Clark Midkiff, Jeanette VanderMeer, Lowell Baker, Marcia Barrett, Melondie Carter, Carolyn Cassady, Marci Daugherty, Rona Donahoe, Margaret Garner, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, John Mason, Katrina Ramonell, Ed Stephenson, John Vincent

**GUESTS:** Michael George, University Registrar; Teresa Shreve, University Supply Store Director

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of December 2, 2008 were approved.

Michael George, University Registrar, and Teresa Shreve, University Supply Store Director, began the meeting by reviewing the new **Higher Education Reauthorization Act**. A portion of this legislation has three mandates regarding textbook publishers requiring them to bundle and unbundle their formats, provide pricing and copyright dates for the last edition and define the revisions within the textbook to determine if the student actually needs the last version. The publisher is also required to provide formats other than hard copies. Faculty members are required to disclose either the ISB number or the author and copyright date of text course materials and their cost to the maximum extent possible. The registrar is required by July of 2010 to attach the information to the internet schedule of classes making textbook information available to students. The Supply Store has taken action to provide up-to-date textbook information to students in an effort to keep costs down. Efforts are being made to eliminate a gap between the schedule of classes on the web and the information received at the book store. The federal legislation makes it clear when information is lacking that it is reasonable to classify it as “To Be Determined”. The intent of the new legislation is pointedly toward “consumer friendly”. The technical aspects of classroom teaching were discussed. These representatives were requested to attend and make their presentation to the full Faculty Senate meeting on January 20 at 3:30 PM in 150 Shelby Hall. A textbook rental system is being considered for The University of Alabama.

Margaret Garner reported there is an increase in **mental health needs** based on veterans returning home, special services needed for post-traumatic stress disorders, special needs for students and other specific needs with a lack of additional funding for these critical areas. Mental health liaisons have been established in each college/school on campus to assist students with mental health needs. Some faculty members are concerned about their level of risk in offering aid to students. Chad Tindol, UA Legal Counsel, will attend next week’s Faculty Senate meeting to answer any questions about those concerns. Some specific questions concerned liability involved in assisting a student, proper reporting

channels when a problem is encountered, student refusal of assistance, faculty response after hours and student mental health resources.

**President's Report** – (*Karen Steckol*) January 22 and January 26 will be the meeting dates for the Faculty Senate to visit with the **Vice President for Research candidates**. An email reminder will be sent from President Steckol and be announced at the Faculty Senate meeting.

President Steckol asked for discussion concerning the establishment of a new standing committee on **Information Technology** for the Senate. There is a new Vice President for Information Technology, Dr. John McGowan. It was suggested the committee also look at communication and research resources. This issue was assigned to the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee.

The sense of the Steering Committee concerning **textbook costs** was to wait for a fully developed proposal from the SGA Textbook Committee. When the document is received, a vote will be taken. The document should be sensitive to the new federal legislation.

The **Mediation Committee** has members that have been mediated or are currently in the mediation process. The suggestion was made to make some sort of change to avoid this situation in the future. There is a definite lack of people willing to serve. It was determined to add the Mediation Committee to the CUC Committee Preference Form. The names of those indicating they are willing to serve will be referred to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty and Senate Governance Committee will arrange the addition of the Mediation Committee to the CUC Committee Preference Form.

Three faculty members are needed for the **Outstanding Student Alumni Award** on January 30 at 2:00 PM. Anyone interested should notify President Steckol. Katrina Ramonell volunteered.

**Vice President's Report** – (*Clark Midkiff*) Vice President Midkiff reported that Shane Street would be willing to serve as co-chair of the Research & Service Committee.

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

#### **Reports from Senate Committees –**

**Academic Affairs** – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) A faculty member pointed out a lack of a **research culture** in the Faculty Senate. The addition of a Vice President for Research will bring this issue forward. The proposed change for the **Faculty Handbook** was discussed. The changes are minimal such as tweaking the wording. The most change was under “Reporting Grades” stating, “Midterm and final grades are posted online via myBama. Instructions on how to use the online tool may be found on the Office of the University Registrar’s web page. Dates regarding when the online tool is available to you may also be found at this site”. The pay for **part-time instructor** issue

has been put on hold due to the economic situation and will be considered at a later date. This committee will be meeting with Judy Thorpe, Office of Disabilities, in February. Some students with learning disabilities have special needs for testing and adequate facilities.

**Faculty Life** – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) Bob Smallwood has been requested to put together a faculty and staff climate survey. He would like to attend one of the Faculty Life Committee meetings to get some ideas about questions for the survey. It was suggested that he also contact the Professional Staff Association for their input. Suggestions for faculty recognition will be emailed to the Provost. Lowell Baker attended the first UA-Cuba baseball game which ended in a tie. A baseball souvenir from the game has been placed in Dot Martin's office.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Katrina Ramonell & Steven Hobbs*) No report.

**Research & Service** – (*Ed Stephenson & Shane Street*) The **Misconduct Policy** has not been received by this committee. President Steckol will check on the status of this document and other pending issues and documents in the next meeting with the Provost.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*John Mason & Michael Martone/Marci Daugherty*) There will be Faculty Senate officer and senator elections in March. The following nominees for the officers at this time are: Karen Steckol, President; Clark Midkiff, Vice President; and Jeanette VanderMeer, Secretary. The Ombudsperson will be elected this spring.

**Student Affairs** – (*Melondie Carter & Carolyn Cassidy*) No report.

**Legislative Agenda** – (*Margaret Garner*) There will be a **Legislative Breakfast** on Friday morning, January 23, at 7:00 AM at the Hotel Capstone. Carolyn Benton will be sending an email for reservations. **Higher Education Day** will be Thursday, March 5 in Montgomery. Buses depart from Moody Music parking lot at 7:00 AM with breakfast and lunch included. Margaret Garner will be attending an education session with representatives from all thirteen institutions and asked for volunteer faculty members to ride on each bus and go over talking points. Transportation, attendance and questions for the Legislators were discussed.

There will be a forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa will be held Thursday, January 15, 2009 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Central High School Auditorium. Several questions were suggested by the steering committee members to ask the legislators during the forum.

Meeting dismissed 4:45 PM

