

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

October 8, 2002 – 3:00 pm – 307 Ferguson

Minutes

Attending: Steve Miller, John Mason, Keith Woodbury, Norm Baldwin, Bob Sigler, Beth Macauley, Garry Warren, Harry Price, Jim Eddy, Subhabrata Chakraborti, Wythe Holt, Frannie James, Marvin Johnson, Mathew Winston , plus Joanna Hutt, Dialog

The September 10, 2002, Faculty Senate Steering Committee minutes were approved.

Rules were suspended to allow The University of Alabama Interim President Barry Mason time to speak to the Steering Committee regarding reallocation.

Dr. Mason began his comments addressing the draft **reallocation resolution** stating that some statements in the resolution would disenfranchise those whose support would be needed and that the resolution was premature. It is his opinion that conversation within the Reallocation Committee has not advanced enough to warrant a resolution. Dr. Mason addressed the issue of professional staff and pointed out that Dr. Sorensen reduced the executive staff by 31%. Faculty has three representatives on the Reallocation Committee and Dr. Mason made the point that the resolution was written before those recently appointed representatives had attended a meeting. The reallocation process requires some budget and accounting knowledge and, according to Dr. Mason, it will take some time for new members to acquire background knowledge required to make good decisions and recommendations. Dr. Mason stated that the lack of communication from the Reallocation Committee stems from some committee members being confused and uncertain about the reallocation process. Reallocation can be a positive process, not necessarily a negative process. With enrollment increases over the spring and summer, one-half million dollars will be available for reallocation needs. Dr. Mason believes if the decision were made at department levels, there would be an absence of information reviewed and discussions of issues by the Reallocation Committee. There are ten or twelve proposals for new buildings, however, a study should be made of the utilization of existing space. Other areas to be reviewed are research with the focus being on productivity, teaching remedial courses and redirecting resources. The direction of the University is to take dramatic steps to become a better institution. Dr. Mason stressed that he will not take any direction not supported by faculty members. He expects the Reallocation Committee to make recommendations and suggestions for him to formulate and present a plan. There is no intent to reduce faculty in this plan. To improve this institution, the library needs must be addressed, labs need to be upgraded, acquire the best students and advance academic goals. The point was made that good processes produce positive results. It was felt that the concern of faculty concerning reallocation is justified since they and their programs would possibly be affected and that the composition of the Reallocation Committee composed mainly of deans poses a problem. There have been two additional faculty members added to the Reallocation Committee bringing faculty representation to three. Dr. Mason stated that the number of deans correlates to academic affairs having 80% of the budget and they have been given instructions to hire conservatively. The deans were given a figure to hold in reserve to give back in the event a reallocation plan is not reached. Dr. Mason stated that he wants to engage everyone in debate and discussion concerning making difficult reallocation decisions and, hopefully, the deans will not be given a bill for them to pay.

There are plans to begin a University Capital Campaign in 2004. Cost cutting should be done with a strategic plan in mind with consideration of some entities becoming self-supporting. It was asked if the Reallocation Committee would vote on recommendations and how the recommendations would be achieved. Dr. Mason stated that it would be up to the committee. He intends to develop a plan based on the recommendations and bring that plan to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and back to the Reallocation Committee for consideration. It was expressed that a resolution was written and taken to Dr. Mason to relay the serious concern of faculty regarding the reallocation process and, again, it was stressed that information concerning reallocation is not forthcoming. Some reallocation decisions will be system-wide. In a survey of 340 faculty members, 70% support reallocation. To acquire and retain qualified faculty members, salary is not the only consideration. More developed programs and a better environment were some reasons qualified faculty left the University. The point was stressed that quality cannot be purchased. Dr. Mason stated that a meeting with the deans for discussion would be an option for the Steering Committee. A report deadline of December was given to the Reallocation Committee and the opinion was expressed that there are many questions, more data needed and time is very short for the preparation of a report. Discussion included the participation of faculty in governance and the structure of decision-making in C&BA. The report from the members of the Reallocation Committee included a request for each member to email by Friday three suggestions to save money. Dean Olin, chair of the committee, brought a report containing seven categories indicating professional staff has increased by 36% the last ten years with a 20% growth in technical staff and 9% increase in faculty. Additional information concerning athletics was given that a formula of 11% is used but what is included in that was not given. Final reallocation results will be determined by September 30, 2003.

There are four (4) **faculty member nominations** needed for two places on the Faculty Participation in the Selection of Deans and Department Chairpersons and the Evaluation of Academic Programs Committee. Nominations from the Steering Committee are Bill Andreen, Martin Baker, Marvin Johnson, and Amy Ward.

Academic Affairs – (*Beth Macauley & Garry Warren*) Hank Lazer spoke to this committee and discussed **grade inflation and class attendance**. The issue of grade inflation is still being debated. This committee recommends a statement concerning mandatory class attendance and, if there is a lack of response after one year, a resolution would be proposed. It was suggested that students sign a class attendance contract to be placed in their file. The University has a class attendance policy but it is not followed through on either side. There was discussion about taking class rolls. David Beito and Charles Nuckolls will give a report to this committee at their next meeting. As an outgrowth of these issues, a resolution was presented "*A Resolution for a Comprehensive Effort to Broaden the Culture of Academic Excellence Among The University of Alabama Students*". The purpose of this resolution is to obtain a long-term commitment to the resolution of issues like the high ranking as a party school where students are less likely to study and attend classes. Some concerns about the resolution are that the media would play up the negative points, and that students performing at a high level would be ignored. The opinion was expressed that those students participating in unacceptable behavior are a small percentage. It was questioned to whom this would be sent and the answer was the President, the Board of Trustees and the Provost. A point was made that Faculty Senate should keep resolutions to a minimum to strengthen their impact. A vote was in favor of returning the resolution to committee for revisions.

Faculty Life – (*Wythe Holt & Nick Stinnet*) It was suggested to this committee to shorten the "**Resolution on Reallocation**" and it was questioned whether this should be the form used to communicate with administration on this issue. It was proposed that the President

of the Faculty Senate write a letter to the President reiterating what was said in this meeting; that the faculty wants more inclusion in the reallocation process and including the points made in the resolution. Further discussion included the contents of the letter and revisions of the resolution.

A "*Safe Zone Resolution*" was presented for consideration. This resolution commends this student-led program providing education and resources to faculty, staff and administrators. The opinion was expressed that some faculty interpreted this as a demand that they be involved. An option suggested was to write a letter to the organization rather than a create a resolution. The majority of the committee decided to bring this forward to the Senate floor, with minor rewording.

Planning and Operations – (*John Mason & Mathew Winston*) Marvin Johnson made some brief comments concerning his proposal for establishing and maintaining equitable relationships in the levels of faculty salaries between Colleges and Academic Units of The University of Alabama. This proposal has no connection to the reallocation process. Some key points to consider before the next meeting are: this is a ten year projection with and without inversion percentages, this is not a plan to affect starting salaries, SUG averages or merit raises but addresses the highest level of allocation to academic units. This issue needs extensive discussion so the Steering Committee will have a special meeting in two weeks to work on this and other issues.

Meeting adjourned 5:20 PM