

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 13, 2009 – 3:30 PM – 2002 SHELBY HALL**

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: Karen Steckol, Clark Midkiff, Marcia Barrett, Melondie Carter, Marci Daugherty, Rona Donahoe, Margaret Garner, Steven Hobbs, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Michael Martone, Ed Stephenson, Harold Stowell, John Vincent, Ray White

ABSENT: Jeanette Vandermeer, Lowell Baker, Carolyn Cassady, Jim Hall, Katrina Ramonell

Roll call and quorum check by President Karen Steckol.

GUESTS: Cresandra Smothers, Dialog

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee minutes of September 8, 2009 were approved.

President's Report – (*Karen Steckol*) According to the Provost the **climate survey** will be returned to different groups and constituencies and then disseminated.

The **maternity leave policy** will be discussed in the meeting with the Provost on Thursday, October 15, 2009. The concerns are extensive absences and equal benefits for faculty and staff. There would possibly be less flexibility concerning workload agreements between chairs and employees with this proposed policy.

The lack of involvement from concerned primary parties such as black faculty and staff in formulating plans for the use of **Foster Auditorium** will be corrected.

A total of four names have been submitted to the Provost for the **Deans and Chairs Committee**. Two will be appointed to serve.

President Witt will address the Faculty Senate meeting next Tuesday, October 20, 2009. Susan Petty of the Purchasing Office and Gordon Stone will address the November meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Strong arguments were expressed to the **Intercollegiate Athletic Committee** by President Karen Steckol concerning additional seating at Bryant-Denny Stadium for faculty members. The University of Alabama's response to the NCAA textbook case was released to the public.

Vice President's Report – (*Clark Midkiff*) No report.

Reports from Committees –

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) Assistant Provost Mark Nelson met with the Academic Affairs Committee last week and shared the review timeline and other information concerning the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee. The Academic Affairs Committee has proposed a “Resolution on a Prologue and Learning Goals for the Core Curriculum”. There has never been a set of principals in place underlying the core. The committee wanted feedback from the Steering Committee on the proposal and plan to share the document with Mark Nelson and the Oversight Committee. The background of the Core Curriculum is stated in the proposed resolution.

“The Core Curriculum was created in 1982 and conceptually has undergone little change since its inception. Since its inception, the Core has not had an accepted guiding statement of its philosophy, rationale or goals despite several efforts by the faculty to create such a statement. In 1991, a Task Force on the Goals of the Core Curriculum was created, which worked on the issue through Spring 1995. However, the recommendations of its reports were never acted upon. In the 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 academic years, the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee (CCOC) continued the work of the task force. In spring 1997, the CCOC presented the provost a proposed revised core curriculum that included a philosophical rationale and a list of goals. This proposed core included all the requirements of the state-mandated core curriculum as part of the State of Alabama’s State Articulation and General Studies Agreement. The suggestions of the CCOC were never acted upon. In 1998, another task force was formed to examine the core curriculum, but this committee never got as far as making recommendations for changing or retaining the Core.

Thus, the Core Curriculum, as initially created, was a political compromise that had no adequate explanation of its purpose and goals. The consequence has been an ever growing laundry list of courses, in a wide range of areas, with no framework to tie these courses together. Although the State Articulation and General Studies Agreement led to the number of courses comprising the Core being reduced significantly in the mid 1990s, this has been an aberration as the composition of the Core has since continued to grow in a similar manner to before the Agreement. This has resulted in a lack of a clear understanding on the part of the faculty as to how best to advise students and no clear understanding on the part of the students as to why they are taking these various courses.

Consequently, The Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, on behalf of the Faculty Senate and working from the results of the past attempts by the faculty to identify the purpose and specific goals of the Core so that courses comprising the Core will be selected to achieve those goals, wishes to propose the creation of a Prologue and Learning Goals for the Core.”

There was discussion concerning the establishment of one committee to deal with rules and one to deal with the philosophical aspects of the core. Ray White suggested the original documents be made available to the faculty as a whole allowing their suggestions and input to be considered. His point was the general lack of communication to the faculty as a whole regarding several important issues regarding the core. The order of the communication and discussion avenue to be followed for the proposed resolution was

discussed. Steven Hobbs suggested the resolution should go to the Senate twice. The first time would be for discussion and input with that information taken back to their colleagues for their input, then a second time for a vote. Margaret Garner suggested holding forums for faculty members to attend and voice their questions, opinions and concerns. President Steckol suggested placing the history of the core curriculum on the web along with a listing of those approving the document; requesting the Provost send the proposed resolution to the Deans to distribute to the chairs to distribute to their faculty; having a presentation of the proposed resolution to the Faculty Senate for senators to take back to their faculty; sending an email to the entire faculty with a set deadline for receiving all feedback with the Academic Affairs Committee taking that information to incorporate into the document and voted on by the Faculty Senate; and recommends John Vincent and Marcia Barrett of the Academic Affairs Committee to set up a meeting with Mark Nelson. The document will be attached to the agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting next Tuesday, October 20 only if the co-chairs have met with Dr. Nelson.

Faculty Life – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) The Provost has accepted two separate versions of the **faculty climate survey** to be administered in November. The Steering Committee has had no input on the composition of the instruments. There was a question concerning administering the survey every year. There will be further discussion with the Provost to clarify some issues with the survey. Use and lack of sick leave will be among issues in further discussion with the Provost concerning **maternity leave**.

Financial Affairs – (*Katrina Ramonell & Steven Hobbs*) A meeting will be held with Vice President Lynda Gilbert on December 1. Everyone is invited to attend. The University has a new scientific purchasing contract with DWR.

Information Technology – (*Ray White & Jim Hall*) The Information Technology Committee continues to attempt to set up a meeting with John McGowan. There was some confusion whether on-line **syllabi posting** is mandatory or voluntary. It is voluntary with an October 1 deadline. Changes can be made up to the first day of classes. Several expressed the opinion that internet access on campus is definitely slowing down. Several technical issues will be brought up with McGowan as soon as a meeting time and date can be determined.

Research & Service – (*Ed Stephenson & Harold Stowall*) The Research and Service Committee met today and discussed the method used to process internal **pre-proposals** at the University. This discussion began due to complaints from faculty who had written pre-proposals and were not fond of the process by which they were declined. The committee in a general sense determined there was no better way of evaluation than the current system. The Research Office issuing a better policy statement stating how things would work beforehand rather than minimal information afterward would be an improvement to the system. The committee felt that there should be a more formal method of declining a pre-proposal. There should also be a well communicated statement concerning pre-proposal deadlines. Most SEC schools use the same system the

University uses. Several institutions request people with specific qualifications in the discipline to look at the proposal and give feedback. Specific earmarking and available funding was also discussed. It was also suggested to have a pre-proposal web site.

The **Research Misconduct Policy** continues to progress with the Office of Research accepting all recommendations from the Research and Service Committee. The Council of Deans will also add input to this document. The plan is to present this policy to the Faculty Senate in November with a vote to be held in December. There was some question concerning abuse of the accusation process such as malicious or false accusations.

Faculty & Senate Governance – *(Marci Daugherty & Michael Martone)* An election will be held for two members of the **Mediation Committee and Ombudsperson**. Qualifications of the nominees were discussed particularly pertaining to the definition of faculty. The University has one definition and the Faculty Senate has another. Mediation Committee members would have to be tenure or tenure-track faculty with not more than 50% administrative duties. Nominations will be taken from the floor.

President Steckol reported the University of South Carolina dismissed all untenured faculty due to a 25% cut in their budget with faculty vacancies left unfilled as well.

President Steckol will address the Faculty/Staff meeting next week.

The Health Fair will be held this week with the flu mist available for people under 49 years of age.

Meeting adjourned 6:00 PM.