

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 8, 2011 – 3:00 PM – ROOM 2002 SHELBY HALL**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** Karen Steckol, Clark Midkiff, Jeanette VanderMeer, Lowell Baker, Melondie Carter, Rona Donahoe, Steve Emens, Margaret Garner, Brian Gordon, Jim Hall, Steven Hobbs, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Seth Panitch, Ed Stephenson, John Vincent.

**ABSENT:** Marcia Barrett, DoVeanna Minor, Osiris Molina, Katrina Ramonell.

**GUESTS:** Cresandra Smothers, Dialog.

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee minutes of January 11, 2011 were approved with corrections.

**President's Report** – (*Karen Steckol*) The University of Alabama's varsity **cheerleaders** won the national championship for cheerleading. UA's Athletic Department will not purchase championship rings for them according to their long-standing policy. Possibly the Cheerleader's Alumni Association will purchase the rings.

The Steering Committee discussed an appropriate response to an isolated incident of a student using a racial slur regarding another student. President Witt issued a statement emphasizing that the University finds this behavior unacceptable and offensive and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Steering Committee will review previous senate resolutions concerning diversity to trigger further discussion.

The letter from Jeff Elrod, SGA Senator, will be referred to the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee. The letter referred to condemning the recent racial slur incident and the living-learning communities on campus. This raises a question concerning the University's efforts to produce diverse communities in the early years of the college experience. In this student's perspective the University has developed a fuller sense of community particularly in Parker-Adams and Harris Hall. Following relocation of living-learning communities these halls will be demolished and replaced by Greek communities.

The Faculty Senate has been proactive regarding a respectful, appreciative and all inclusive learning environment. Jim Hall suggested asking Dr. Witt to give his evaluation of social system results using the current diversity strategy and to seek information concerning the actions of other institutions to bring about social system changes. Further discussion included fraternity and sorority property and finances, student learning levels and social system backgrounds, education, awareness and accountability for inappropriate behavior by groups and individuals. Some of these suggestions will be discussed with Provost Bonner.

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

**Secretary's Report** – (*Jeanette VanderMeer*) Letters expressing intent to run for Faculty Senate offices were presented from Clark Midkiff, nominee for Faculty Senate President and Jeanette

VanderMeer, nominee for Faculty Senate Secretary. A senator and steering committee attendance list was distributed. Those with excessive absences will be contacted. The suggestion was made to review the attendance rules before the fall Faculty Senate meeting.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The Academic Affairs Committee met the first Tuesday of February with discussion of faculty electronic office hours as the sole discussion item on their agenda. Committee members expressed no interest in all-electronic office hours for faculty members. Contents and current updating of the Faculty Handbook were discussed.

**Faculty Life** – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) The Faculty Life Committee has maternity leave recommendations prepared for discussion.

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

**Information Technology** - (*Jim Hall & Osiris Molina*) No report.

**Research & Service** – (*Ed Stephenson & Brian Gordon*) No report.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Rona Donahoe & Steve Emens*) There is a slate of two Faculty Senate officer candidates and one nominee for Ombudsperson. The slate of Senate officer candidates will be presented to the Faculty Senate in February and the Senate officer elections will be held at the Faculty Senate meeting on March 22, 2011. The Ombudsperson election will be conducted by a poll of the entire University faculty supervised by the Provost.

**Student Affairs** – (*Melondie Carter & Seth Panitch*) The Student Affairs Committee met last week. Margaret Garner and her team presented a student health program at the meeting. There are multiple health plans and resources available for students. Margaret will email health care information to Karen Steckol for distribution to the entire faculty. Every division on campus has a mental health liaison to be a point person from the team at the counseling center.

**Legislative Agenda** – (*Margaret Garner*) April 7, 2011 is Higher Education Day in Montgomery, Alabama. Gordon Stone will address the full Faculty Senate meeting next week at the February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

President Steckol has pursued a project requesting retired faculty members donate their caps and gowns to the University to be used by those without access to graduation regalia.

The University of Alabama's graduation requirements were discussed along with grade point averages and transfer of courses and credits.

Research committee and compliance issues were discussed.

Meeting adjourned 4:20 P.M.