

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
March 13, 2001 - 3:30 PM - 309 FERGUSON

UNCORRECTED MINUTES

Attending: Pat Bauch, Norm Baldwin, Marcia Barrett, Keith Woodbury, Bing Blewitt, Wythe Holt, Steven MacCall, Bob Sigler, Don DeSmet, Bill Keel, Rob Ingram, Margaret Garner

Guests: Ms. Sandra K. Woodley, Director of Financial Affairs for Alabama Commission on Higher Education, Dr. Bill Finley, The University of Alabama's Director of Institutional Research and Joanna Hutt of Dialogue

Minutes of the February Steering Committee were approved.

President's Report - (*Pat Bauch*) The University Environmental Audit report has been received. Pat will check with Bill Andreen for his acceptance of suggestions from the Steering Committee after their review of the report and this will be referred to the appropriate committee. Shunta Vincent, Chief Justice of the SGA Judicial Board, forwarded a request for one faculty member designated by The University of Alabama Faculty Senate to serve on their selection panel for group interviews. Wythe Holt volunteered to serve. The meeting of the Alabama Council of University Faculty Presidents was held at Ferguson last week. Dr. Sorensen and Dr. Barrett spoke to the group concerning budgets and proration issues. This group filed a court brief supporting the appeal of the proration decision to protect K-12 from proration. This issue is still in the courts. ACUFP requested the Faculty Senates of all higher education institutions in Alabama support the "Proposal to Achieve Fairness During Periods of Proration" submitted by the Presidents and Chancellors of Alabama's Public Universities. An additional request for support for Presidents' Principles was made. The resolution (*attached*) passed by the Steering Committee will be reviewed by Rob Ingram. Rob will make appropriate changes in the language. ACUFP also passed a resolution to request Athletic Directors join the proration struggle publicly. Next week The University of Alabama and Auburn University Head Football Coaches will meet with legislators. All Steering Committee members were invited to attend this meeting which will be held in Montgomery. Pat will send e-mail with further details. Steven will make certain there is a link on the web page to ACUFP's web site. The University of Alabama is making an effort to assist ACUFP increase the number of people they represent. Employment information has been forwarded to them.

Sandra K. Woodley, Director of Financial Affairs for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and Dr. Bill Finley, The University of Alabama's Director of Institutional Research, were guests of the Steering Committee. Information regarding Faculty Workload Database and Program Viability was disseminated. Ms. Woodley gave a work background summation including four years with the Legislative Fiscal Office during the time the ACT 96-771 bill was passed. This bill requires that a system be designed which includes an electronic faculty unit record system with specific requirements established by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. Another bill was passed which required student data collection. Institutionally suggested revisions to the bill included limiting data to instructional activity to be reported in the aggregate rather than unit form. The model being followed by the commission is the University of Delaware (Middaugh) Information study. There will be an opportunity for input when the bill is introduced and the information concerning the introduction of the bill will be available on the Legislative web site. Some concerns were the omission of information about non-instructional responsibilities and time spent in research, the use of the information by the Legislature and the absence of a method for the full disclosure of faculty responsibilities. Institutional comparisons could not be made in an equitable manner. The commission would appreciate any suggested methods of assembling non-instructional data. Marcia Barrett will continue to monitor this issue and report any findings to the Steering Committee. A packet of information regarding Program Viability was given to each member of the Steering Committee. This information will be available at www.ache.state.al.us in April. Information included excerpts from the third annual report on Program Viability, the implementation process for ACT 96-557 and the proposed waiver review process. This will be voted on in May. The point was made that institutional commitment to elevate the non-viable program to viable status must be included in all waiver requests. This includes those programs without graduates. All concerns regarding this or any other point should be directed to Ron Rogers immediately. The commission requested suggestions/input from The University of Alabama regarding this issue. There were no recommendations or suggestions received by the commission.

Vice President's Report - (*Norm Baldwin*) The Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation of Deans and Chairs have been meeting with deans and will have a report in the near future.

Secretary's Report - (*Steven MacCall*) The election of new senators for 2001-2002 is ongoing. Some results have been received. The ad hoc nominating committee has contacted several people concerning serving as Faculty Senate officers but a complete slate has not been determined.

Academic Affairs - (*Don DeSmet*) A draft of Proposed Changes in Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Students was presented. (*attached*) After a discussion including concerns about the 10-week drop deadline, the abolishment of the "forgiveness" policy, mid-term grade reports to parents/guardians and zero course repeat policy, the proposed changes were accepted by the Steering Committee. This will be on the agenda for a vote at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Faculty Life - (*Rob Ingram & Wythe Holt*) No report.

Financial Affairs - (*Keith Woodbury*) Harry Price of Arts and Sciences has written to the individual members of the Board of Trustees requesting an evaluation of the Systems Office effectiveness and budget. He was not representing anyone other than his own views in his letter. A request for a resolution from the Faculty Senate was rejected.

Senate Operations - (*Norm Baldwin & Jim Taylor*) Wythe Holt has researched the Governance document. This document was put on hold until the Faculty Handbook revisions were completed and approved. This will be an item for the Senate Operations committee to take under consideration. A by-law change was considered making the Ombudsperson someone other than the Faculty Senate Vice President. By consensus of the Steering Committee, it was determined to remain as it is with a referral to the new Faculty Senate for any action they might determine.

Student Affairs - (*Dexter Gordon & Rob Ingram*) The Delayed Rush Report has been completed. It was suggested that some action be taken by the Faculty Senate to coincide with the release of this report. There was no reference to diversity in the report. It was agreed that Pat will talk with Sybil Todd and raise questions regarding the lack of progress toward integration of the Greek system and what is the plan to promote the diversity issue for the future.

Wythe Holt gave a report on his meeting with the Director of AEA, Paul Hubbert concerning the addition of higher education members to AEA. It was determined that the timing of this issue would not be appropriate and no action was taken by the Steering Committee.

Legislative Agenda - (*Margaret Garner*) The UA System Strategic Planning Initiative committee met last Friday and reviewed Task Force II with Priscilla Hancock. Questions were raised about the effect of this initiative on the business aspect of the institution. Dr. Charles Nash requested that those items that did not need faculty oversight be identified. The committee decided to ask the Information Technology Committee to review Task Force II. Another meeting with John Dolly to review Task Force III will be in the next few weeks. Pat will follow up with Board of Trustee member Sandral Hullett.

There will be another Legislative Breakfast meeting.

Meeting adjourned 5:45 PM

PROPOSAL TO ACHIEVE FAIRNESS
DURING PERIODS OF PRORATION

Submitted by: Presidents and Chancellors
of Alabama's Public Universities

Principle: Proration should be applied equally to K-12 and higher education.

1. Faculty and staff at all levels, K through university are the single most important element of public education. Each faculty and staff member deserves adequate compensation and fringe benefits. During periods of economic difficulty each deserves fair treatment and protection. Therefore, it is the position of Alabama's University Presidents and Chancellors that the salaries of the faculty and staff of Alabama's public universities should be exempt, along with the salaries of their K-12 counterparts, from the hardship of proration.
2. Proration should be applied equally to K-12 and higher education. The percentage of appropriations for K-12 from the Foundation Program and categorical aid programs for items other than the salaries mentioned in number one shall also be applied to higher education in determining the dollars subject to proration in both areas. The proration percentage shall be applied equally to both areas. Although state appropriations for higher education are not sufficient to cover salaries in higher education, in the interest of fairness and compromise, higher education will accept the same percentage to be prorated as K-12.

For example, if the salaries for K-12 mentioned above comprise 70% of their appropriated dollars, then the other 30% of their appropriated dollars would be subject to proration. In the same manner, 30% of the appropriation for higher education would be subject to proration. The declared proration percentage would apply to this 30% for both K-12 and higher education.

3. Any revenue improvements for 2000-2001 over current projections will be shared on a ratio of two thirds for K-12 and one-third for higher education.

D R A F T

Proposed Changes in Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Students

At present, we have a number of academic regulations that, for various reasons, require review and revision. In fact, overall, we need to establish a comprehensive, holistic strategy that provides for clear, logical regulations; flexible regulations that hold students accountable but that also provide a reasonable safety net for students making the transition from high school to the University; and rules that have a consistency of application.

Proposals

During freshman orientation (the summer prior to the start of the freshman year), forge a strong parent-student partnership. Incoming "traditional age" students will be asked to sign a waiver of confidentiality that will allow the University to keep parents informed of a student's progress during the freshman year. For parents that do not attend the orientation, we will mail information so that they can participate in the parent-student partnership. This information-sharing program mail also be used to include information about poor class attendance, midterm and semester grades, as well as to provide information on support services available on campus (through the Center for

Teaching and Learning and through advising units in the colleges).

2. Midterm grades (or Five Week Progress Report) for all freshmen

These grades (see #1) will be sent to the student, to advisors in the student's college, and to parents. The student services/advising areas in the colleges will devise programs for working with students whose midterm grade reports indicate academic difficulties. A proposal under discussion would be to have a Freshman Advising week in conjunction with the release of the Five Week grades so that all freshmen students would have some contact with advisors and would learn about available resources for assistance.

Midterm grades will be assigned at the end of the fifth week of the semester. Grades will be assigned using the standard ABCDF (+/-) grading scale. (Rationale: while the midterm grades will be of greatest value as an early warning to students who are in danger of failing a course, the grade reports are also important to students on scholarship who must maintain a 3.0 GPA in order to retain the scholarship.)

Faculty teaching courses with large freshman enrollments—particularly 100-level courses, should (whenever possible) include some significant course work that is graded and returned by the end of the fifth week of class.

Withdrawal from a class:

[Note: Information regarding withdrawal from class would appear as a standard item on all course syllabi.]

Change from the current 4-week period to drop a course with a grade of "W" to a 10-week drop date. Students who drop a course up to the 10-week deadline would automatically receive a grade of "W" in the course. (Rationale: in a 15-week semester, 7 ½ weeks is the midpoint. Many midterm exams or midterm assignments are due in the eighth week. A 10-week withdrawal deadline gives the faculty member one week beyond the eighth week to grade and return the midterm exam, and it gives the student a few days to decide whether or not to drop the course.)

Under normal circumstances, students would not be able to drop a course after the 10-week deadline. Under extraordinary circumstances, students may petition the dean's office in the college where the course is being taught to drop a course with a grade of "W" after the 10-week deadline. Such requests must be accompanied by significant supporting documentation to verify extraordinary circumstances. The petition will be reviewed first by the faculty member who will make a determination as to whether or not the grade of "W" is warranted. (Faculty members would have the option of referring such determinations to the Dean's office where documentation of extraordinary circumstances would be reviewed.)

During orientation and in subsequent advising sessions, the financial aid ramifications of students dropping courses must be made clear. Similarly, students who anticipate applying to graduate and professional schools will be advised about the potential negative impact of a transcript with many grades of "W" and about negative impact of the appearance of "grade-jockeying."

NOTE: See also items #4 and #8. The proposed withdrawal date has serious implications for the forgiveness and for a possible course repeat policy.

Academic Forgiveness

Eliminate Academic Forgiveness entirely. It is a policy that has been misunderstood (by students and parents), applied without any consistency from college to college, abused, and, due to changes in grading policies, is no longer needed. Coupled with a 10-week withdrawal deadline (at which point the student receives a "W"), and a more sensible Withdrawal from the University policy, the need for Academic Forgiveness disappears.

Eliminate the grades of WP and WF. (If a student fails a course, the student receives an F.)

In practice, the WF is rarely given. (Of W, WP, and WF grades for the period 1998-4 through all terms of the year 2000, only 597 "WF" grades were given of the 24,739 "withdraw" grades given.)

Withdrawal from the University.

The present policy calls for a student to make 10 to 16 stops along the way toward withdrawing from the University. Proposal: create a two-stop withdrawal involving the student's college (academic advising) and the Dean of Students office. The student receives a grade of W in all courses. Typically, the Dean of Students office will be the first place that a student goes to begin an official withdrawal from the University. The paperwork and inputting of information will be done in the student's academic division. Faculty will receive a memo outlining any new procedure so that they will be able to advise students about how and where to begin the withdrawal procedure.

Academic Bankruptcy – a policy (see p. 21 of current catalog) which allows a student to petition to withdraw retroactively from one academic term of work (all courses) due to “extreme personal, emotional, or financial circumstances so devastating...” – will remain as is.

Course repeat (and *grade replacement*) policy. Three options:

As is the case at present, a ZERO course repeat policy. (You took the course—you keep the grade.) Students at present can and do repeat courses, but the second grade does not replace the first in the student’s UA grade calculation.

Allow students to repeat ONE course. Only courses where the student received a grade of D or F would be eligible. The repeat policy would allow the student to *replace* the first grade with the second grade earned in the repeat. This replacement of the grade would only be for UA GPA calculation purposes. The transcript would continue to show both grades (and graduate schools and professional schools may choose to recalculate a student’s UA GPA including both grades).

Allow students to repeat TWO courses. Same provisions as above for the ONE course option.

3/12/01