

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

March 9, 2004 – 3:00 PM – 307 Ferguson

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: John Mason, Mathew Winston, Roy Ann Sherrod, Nick Stinnett, Catherine Davies, John Vincent, Wolfgang Bertsch, Margaret Garner, Bob Sigler, George Franke, Bob Moore, Karla Carmichael

ABSENT: Steve Miller, Mohammed Sharif, Don Hooks, Caryl Cooper, Margaret Rice (resigned as co-chair)

GUESTS: John Dew, Director, Office of Continuous Quality Improvement; Lisa Harris, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs; Bill Findley, Director, Institutional Research and Assessment, Holden McAllister, Alabama Observer; Marlin Caddell, Crimson White; Joanna Hutt, Dialog

The minutes of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting on February 10, 2004, were approved.

John Dew, Director of the Office of Continuous Quality Improvement, began the meeting with a **SACS** status report on the Compliance Certification process and the Quality Enhancement Plan.

The preparation of the Compliance Certification report is underway and includes eleven core requirements, sixty-one comprehensive standards, requirements for evidence, the verification and edit committee and the remaining time line. There are representations from all colleges in the preparation of this document. Almost all requirements for evidence must be documented on the web site in some manner. Lisa Harris is the Chair of the Verification and Edit Committee with the duty of verifying and editing assuring clarity and comprehensiveness of the documents. The time line is to acquire all information from faculty by the end of the semester. The Strategic Plan is not in place and finalized at this time. There are further meetings to be conducted on this issue with input forthcoming from students, faculty, administrators and assistant and associate Deans. From this information a very rough draft will be composed and presented to the Council of Deans. The plan has to be imbedded in the SACS information. Course syllabi and faculty credentials are a huge part of the preparation of the University report to SACS. Everyone was urged to share with colleagues the importance of this process to the University. Another major part of the process is the Quality Enhancement Plan including a core team, active and collaborative learning grants, exploring excellence in teach week and scholarship of teaching team. The active and collaborative learning in first year classes is lower than in comparable institutions. The Quality Enhancement Plan will focus on that issue. The Biology Department, History Department, Department of Communications and Human Environmental Sciences will have representatives on the core team and will take a look at how the large freshmen classes are being taught in their disciplines. Each college and division will have the latitude to decide the course they would like to pursue. There will be resources available to them as they pursue this issue. Jack Allen, Executive Director of SACS, will be coming to The University of Alabama on April 13 and would possibly like to meet with the Steering Committee. Information about the SACS process has been in

Dialog and there is a link on the UA web page. It was emphasized that this SACS report has been a collaborative effort of many people. The security of faculty information was questioned. The information had been given that there would be a password in place to access that information and protect that information. The Provost made the determination that most faculty information is public in most cases. The decision was not communicated to the faculty. The advice was to eliminate private information from the vitae such as phone number, address, age or other private information. If changes are wished in these documents, those changes will be made by the OIR office or can be made by the faculty member and faculty will be informed about this process.

Proposed revisions to Senate Bylaws was the next issue on the agenda. It was suggested that the committee accept all proposed changes without debate with the exceptions of "B" "C" and "I" and to make the changes on the web page and alert the Senate. "B" addresses the power of the President to appoint special committees. The committee will tweak "B", "C" and "I". It was proposed that the Parliamentarian have speaking privileges, not be allowed to make a motion/amendment or to have voting privileges. The process of issues coming to the Senate other than the process of going through the Steering Committee was discussed. It is in the constitution that five agreeing faculty members can place an issue on the agenda for the Senate's consideration. The preferable process is to go through a committee for review and recommendation to the Steering Committee. There can be a time limit set for presentation and discussion of any issue. The President can set these limits unless it is over-ridden by the Senate. It is the responsibility of the President to control the flow of the business the Senate addresses. Various methods to control the use of the meeting times were discussed. The motion was made by Mathew Winston and seconded by John Vincent to accept all proposed changes to the bylaws with the exception of "B", "C" and "I". The changes will be emailed to the Steering Committee for input or changes. The vote to pass the motion was unanimous.

Correction, omission, and suggestions:

(A) In Part II, Section Three, part 12C of the by-laws, "if" should be "whether."

(B) I think the President of the Senate should ALSO have the power to establish "Special Committees." I also think that non-Senators appointed to "Special Committees" should have the vote on those committees.

(C) To give the Parliamentarian "floor privileges" may mean that he or she has the right to vote. Please investigate. If not, what is the difference between the privilege of speaking, and "floor privileges"?

(D) Something very important has been omitted in the second line of the section on the Parliamentarian, after the word "serve" and before the words "as recommended". What I THINK goes in there are words to this effect: "for a year's term. Procedure in the Senate shall proceed as".

(E) While I know the Committee has deliberated strongly on this, I think the following would be a better way to state what has been substituted in part 6 of the Ombudsperson material: "Gender and ethnic diversity shall be a prime consideration in selecting

candidates."

(F) With all respect, I see no reason for deletion of the language, apparently from what is now the beginning of part 9 of the Ombudsperson material, which urges people to pick any of the ombudspeople, not just the one from their part of the University, and to check with more than one if the first one does not help.

(G) The second and third sentences of part 9 of the Ombudsperson material should be reversed so as to become, respectively, the third and second sentences.

(H) I would add the following duty to those of the Secretary of the Senate, in part 3 of those provisions: "The Secretary shall also record the attendance by name of each visitor having floor privileges pursuant to Article III, Section 3, paragraph 4, of every attending member of the press, and of other special visitors to the Senate."

(I) To clear up confusion, I would add the following to Article IV on amendments to the Bylaws, at the end of what is already there:

"Amendments to proposed bylaw changes may be proposed from the floor, and voted on, at either of these two meetings." An alternative is more palatable to me, but is likely to produce more confusion: "Amendments to proposed bylaw changes may be proposed from the floor at either of these two meetings, but may be voted on only at the second of them."

Fall Break – There was 80% support for the Option One proposal including the Wednesday prior to the Thursday and Friday in the Thanksgiving holiday break. One senator stated that he cancels his Wednesday classes but informs the students the week before. His concern was that the students would include Monday and Tuesday in their Thanksgiving break. There were no complaints from students that they were losing a day of classes for which they had paid tuition. It was suggested that the academic calendar be adjusted to make up the missed classes. There was a motion and a second to adopt Option One and ask that the academic calendar reflect equivalent class time semester to semester. Discussion included beginning class earlier and other adjustments to have contact time equal semester to semester. The vote was to pass this motion with two abstentions. John Mason will convey this resolution to President Witt and Provost Bonner.

Mathew Winston presented further information concerning "**bona fide**" **campus-wide organizations**. A copy of a plan used by Emporia State in Kansas was handed out. The Planning and Operations Committee has considered this issue and in their research found the plan used by Emporia State. The use of the UA postal distribution system was the catalyst for the issue of identifying "bona fide" campus-wide organizations. The regional postal organization ruling was that the regulations did not allow Alabama Scholars Association free mailing through the UA postal system. The main concern of the ASA was that a flyer announcing a speaker was denied free mailing through the UA mail. This speaker was sponsored by an organization connected with the Law School but was not certified by the Law School and had not followed proper procedure to qualify for free mailing privileges. It was suggested that an organization should be co-sponsored by a

department or division and that would qualify them for free mailing privileges as long as it pertains to a campus-wide issue. A motion was made by Roy Ann Sherrod to maintain the former stance of the Faculty Senate. There was a call to question. The vote to pass this motion was unanimous.

The next issue on the agenda was the **firing/dismissal of some staff members** by the University. There is the rumor that the monies from those firings would be reallocated for faculty salary increases. It could be said that any cuts made by the University could be allocated to faculty salaries. It was strongly suggested that more accurate information be acquired and this situation would not be under the Faculty Senate's authority and should not be addressed. Whatever the situation is, it is affecting the morale of University employees. The quality of services being cut was questioned and the point was made that outsourcing would affect the loyalty of an employee to the University. The advantage of outsourcing is that if there is dissatisfaction with the performance of services, another source can be sought. The point was made that the issue of due process in the dismissal of employees is an issue that the employee should handle. The Steering Committee will do some research and discuss this issue at the next Steering Committee meeting. The faculty has expressed that they wished any job losses be through attrition. There was further discussion concerning the possibility of faculty salary increases.

The "**Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution on Academic Freedom and Tenure at the University of Southern Mississippi – Responding to a Request from the Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Mississippi**" Resolution was presented. According to the resolution the President of the University of Southern Mississippi, Shelby Thames, fired two tenured faculty members and seized their computers, suspended them from their academic and professional duties and instituted proceedings to remove their tenure. It states in the resolution that the faculty members had been vocal in their criticism of the President. The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Senate voted 40-0 no confidence in President Thames. The two main concerns about this resolution are that there was a request for UA support on this issue and there would be the possibility of this occurring at other SUG institutions. The point was made that our Faculty Senate is not privy to all the information about this situation. It was suggested by Margaret Garner that a statement be issued in support of academic freedom and tenure without naming a specific institution. John Mason and Mathew Winston stated that a request for support did not come from USM's Faculty Senate. The motion was made that the Steering Committee not propose a resolution concerning this issue and that a statement of support for academic freedom and tenure be issued. There was a call to question. An amended statement to substitute for Margaret Garner's was proposed and rejected by a vote of four in favor and six opposed. John Vincent suggested that a well-written statement supporting academic freedom and tenure be sent directly to the USM Faculty Senate. The proposed resolution by Margaret Garner and seconded by John Vincent is: "Be it resolved that The University of Alabama Faculty Senate firmly expresses its support of the value of academic freedom and tenure." The revised motion is that the Faculty Senate does not accept the proposed resolution – "Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution on Academic Freedom and Tenure at the University of Southern Mississippi – Responding to a Request from the Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Mississippi" and that a statement be written expressing support for academic freedom and tenure. The motion passed with one no and two abstentions.

The "**Faculty Senate Resolution: Faculty Senate Apologizes for the Role of the University of Alabama in Slavery and Requests that the Administration Do So, Too**" composed by Al Brophy was presented to the Steering Committee. This resolution suggests that markers be placed on the graves of slaves buried on campus, suggests that the buildings on campus named for slaveholders be renamed, suggests that the administration consider a similar apology and that reparations be paid to descendants of people enslaved

on this campus. After further discussion a motion was made to refer this resolution to the Faculty Life Committee.

Nominations for Senate Officers are: John Mason for President, Mathew Winston for Vice President, no nominations for Secretary (Roy Ann Sherrod cannot continue in this office). Nominations and the election will be held at the Faculty Senate meeting next week. An email reminder will be sent to Senate members concerning nominations.

A list of faculty members indicating a preference for a position on the **University Committees on Committees** was handed out. Nominations are not restricted to this list. Mathew Winston is the Faculty Senate's representative on CUC. The Faculty Senate makes a recommendation to the President of the University. Rona Donahue and Wythe Holt are continuing members. There are five faculty members on this committee with three members to be elected.

There have been 140 responses on the **ombudsperson** election. There will be a reminder sent to the faculty that this Friday is the ending date to vote on ombudsperson. A run off will begin next week if needed.

The Steering Committee will meet with John Dew on Thursday, March 11 at 3:30 pm.

President's Report – (*John Mason*) No report

Vice President's Report – (*Mathew Winston*) An individual named Keyes is soliciting funding for a research project on dating.

Secretary – (*Roy Ann Sherrod*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*John Vincent*) No meeting due to Health Care Benefits Meeting.

Faculty Life – (*Karla Carmichael & Nick Stinnett*) No report.

Financial Affairs – (*Catherine Davies & George Franke*) Vice President Kerry Kennedy made a presentation to the Financial Affairs Committee in November. It is available on the Faculty Senate web site. There was a follow up in February asking for answers to some unanswered questions. Those have been provided and will be posted on the web site.

Planning & Operations – (*Mohammed Sharif & Mathew Winston*) No report.

Research & Service – (*Wolfgang Bertsch & Don Hooks*) The Delaware presentation included performance measures for research and service. The main thing that was revealed was that faculty members are putting in more than forty hours a week. This will reveal to the Legislature the workload of the faculty members. The concerns about ACHE in the past have been the lack of funding for their data collection activities. There was a concern that research institutions would appear that they were less productive than institutions without those research abilities. This issue should have continuing monitoring.

Student Affairs – (*Caryl Cooper & Steve Miller*) No report.

Senate Operations – (*Robert Moore*) No report.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) Approximately 2,000 people attended **Higher Education Day** in Montgomery and was well supported. There was an outstanding showing of students. Nineteen checks were presented from the students for higher education advocacy. The membership in Higher Education Partnership must be increased

at the University and increase the involvement of the faculty. Huntsville has one-third of their faculty as members in this group. There are a number of student organizations that are members of the Higher Education Partnership. Margaret Garner is the Chairman of the Board of the Higher Education Partnership for the State of Alabama. A debt of gratitude is owed Margaret for her dedication and hard work on behalf of higher education. The Legislative Agenda Breakfasts will continue and a date will be set in the near future. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

The Alabama Academy of Science is asking for assistance. There is a bill before the Legislature that will allow teachers to teach creationism at their discretion. The Alabama Academy of Science is attempting to defeat this bill.

Meeting adjourned 5:30 PM