

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 8, 2005 – 3:00 PM – 307 FERGUSON

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: John Mason, Mathew Winston, John Vincent, Marcia Barrett, Wolfgang Bertsch, Priscilla Davis, Wythe Holt, Clark Midkiff, Robert Moore, Nick Stinnett, Tatiana Takiropoulou-Summers, Jerry Weaver, Margaret Garner, Bob Sigler

GUESTS: Joanna Hutt, Dialog; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Saori Hasegawa, Journalism Student; Chris Ott, Crimson White

The minutes of the February 8, 2005 Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting were approved.

The first item on the agenda was the candidates for the **Ombudsperson** election. The candidates are Garry Warren of Engineering and Walt Robbins of C&BA. The ballots will be sent out to the faculty on Thursday. There will be two weeks allowed for voting.

The Faculty Life Committee in conjunction with the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee presented the "**Child Day Care Needs at The University of Alabama Resolution**". An amendment to the "therefore" clause was accepted by the Faculty Life Committee and now reads "at reasonable, partially subsidized cost to users" rather than "at no or low cost". The phrase "and give a preference for the remaining spaces to," was added in the "Be it further resolved" clause. The phrase "Faculty Staff Benefits Committee" in the "therefore" clause was changed to "Faculty Senate". A top priority in a faculty survey last year was the need for child-care benefits. Oklahoma, Florida and Virginia have on campus child day care centers exclusively for faculty and staff children. West Virginia subsidizes off campus day care for children. The issue was raised concerning the timing of the resolution since there is a lot of new construction in progress on campus, the emphasis placed on faculty/staff salary increases and deferred maintenance costs. The method of using a resolution to raise this issue was questioned. It was expressed that this issue has already been addressed and will open the window for negotiation. The Steering Committee voted unanimously to forward this resolution to the Senate for a vote and would basically support the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee. There was discussion of a resolution concerning elder care.

The **Plus/Minus Grading System** ballots are being distributed among faculty members. This issue has been addressed several times in the last two to three years. Discussion included the request to choose a system and stick to it, how the voting will be applied (Item #1 has continue, eliminate, neutral votes) and that this change, if accepted, would not make any significant change in the Grade Point Average overall (.04% difference). A Plus/Minus forum will be held March 9 at 3:30 PM in 140 Bidgood. The Provost, SGA representatives, Robert Moore and Bob Sigler of the Faculty Senate and others will conduct the forum.

The report on **Higher Education Day** in Montgomery included comments that the commitment by two constitutional officers and four members of the Legislature to support the higher education package presented by Governor Bob Riley was unprecedented. The presidents of higher education institutions in Alabama collaborated on the higher education

package that was presented to the Legislature. The package included requests for the State of Alabama to pay Peehip benefits (\$5 million) and to pay the University's contribution to the retirement system (one million dollars). A 4% salary increase request for faculty/staff was included. If 4% salary increase is exceeded by AEA, that amount would be matched. There were four buses used to transport the participants to Montgomery. Gordon Stone was praised for his speech and leadership. HEP has published a booklet and their website has been updated. Following the rally in Montgomery, Alabama and Auburn faculty, staff and students met and a chair was reserved at each table for a Legislator. Higher Education Day was a success measured by any standard.

A meeting of the **Alabama Council of University Faculty Presidents** was held following the Higher Education rally in Montgomery and was attended by Vice President Mathew Winston. Among the issues discussed at the meeting was a proposed bill going to the Legislature this week concerning students being evaluated based on their understanding of course material but no student may be penalized because they subscribe to a particular position on scientific views. The ACUFP has requested that the Legislature participate in the development of an education bond issue to take care of deferred maintenance. Discussion included the composition of Faculty Senates of other institutions. The increase in ACHE powers is probably not going to go forward. The moratorium on new programs put in place by ACHE in September of 2002 may or may not be renewed. Any school can bypass ACHE and go to the Legislature for approval for new programs. Any school not in the state system can proceed without the approval of ACHE. There are some two-year schools offering four-year programs. The State Legislature sets the number of students that makes a program viable. HEP only takes a position when it is unanimous among its members. Approximately fifty Legislator's spouse or child works in a community college. The advisor for the University student newspaper is the Director of Student Media, a division of Student Affairs and at the present time is a staff member. Another issue from the ACUFP meeting was the promotion of students graduating from college earning more money rather than the emphasis being on learning and education. Members of the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee were given figures indicating that the University Athletic Department paid the University for overhead in the amount of one million dollars two years ago, last year one-half million dollars was paid and this year \$40,000 was paid. Overhead includes billing, payroll, etc.

The University of Alabama contributed 20% of the books for the "**Books for Baghdad**" project. The books that were not used were sold and the proceeds used to purchase additional equipment.

John Mason received a favorable phone call supporting the passage of the resolution apologizing for slavery and the influence of the resolution seems to be ongoing.

Vice President's Report – (*Mathew Winston*) The voting on the "**Academic Integrity in Intercollegiate Athletics: Principles, Rules and Best Practices**" passed two amendments concerning diversity in admissions and stipulation of the choice of a major. The vote on the final document will be at the end of March.

Secretary's Report – (*John Vincent*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The language of **Appendix H** has been redrafted and seems to be acceptable. An additional rewording concerned the intellectual content and ownership of electronic course material. The rewording will state "faculty instructors and teaching assistants". There will be a meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee to finalize Appendix H. It will then be brought to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and then to the Faculty Senate.

Financial Affairs – (*Wolfgang Bertsch & Karen Steckol*) This committee met two weeks ago and distributed data concerning fees and costs of health care programs. The rate for qualified participants, the rate for those with 25 years in the system, the possibility of some being grandfathered in and the severity of contributions was discussed. The difference of the lesser payment made by Wisconsin's Athletic Department compared to the University Athletic Department payment was due to Wisconsin paying only interest while Alabama is paying interest and principle.

Research & Service – (*Clark Midkiff & Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers*) Tatiana sponsored "**Student Latin Day**" with 500 people attending. This was 75% of students taking Latin in attendance.

Faculty and Senate Governance – (*Robert Moore & Jerry Weaver*) Walter Robbins and Garry Warren are the candidates for **Ombudsperson**. Garry Warren has approval for a four-month sabbatical and will be off campus for those months. There are the two other ombudspersons will be on campus during that time. The Steering Committee saw no problem with his absence should he be elected. The ballot will be sent out to the entire faculty for a vote.

Mathew Winston suggested that a letter of appreciation be sent to **Keith Woodbury** for his diligent maintenance of the Faculty Senate website and all of the Senate's list serves. He has spent a great deal of time doing this and has not been a member of the Senate for the past two years. The Steering Committee approved this unanimously.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) Margaret asked for suggestions for a change of format for the **Legislative Breakfasts**. There have been only two held this year and it was stated that more should be held. Some suggestions were for a panel discussion and some speakers were suggested.

Discussion included the State of Alabama budget, the General Fund and salary increases.

Everyone was encouraged to vote on the Plus/Minus ballot.

Meeting adjourned 4:15 PM