

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**March 11, 2008 – 3:00 pm – 206F Shelby Hall**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** John Vincent, Karen Steckol, Clark Midkiff, Lowell Baker, Marcia Barrett, Melondie Carter, Carolyn Cassady, Rona Donahoe, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Jenice “Dee” Goldston, Roy Maize, John Mason, Ed Stephenson, Shane Street, Jeanette Vandermeer

**GUESTS:** Cresandra Smothers, Dialog

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Clark Midkiff.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee minutes of February 12, 2008 were approved.

**President’s Report** – (*John Vincent*) Those colleges not reporting **senator election results** will be contacted before spring break. The Steering Committee meeting with the Provost was rescheduled. Interviews for the **Chief Information Officer** position are currently being conducted. The **Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA)** from the College of Continuing Health Sciences grant application was not approved. The circumstances surrounding the denial were discussed. The Provost forwarded the **dean/chair evaluation** document pertaining to the changes in Appendix A of the Faculty Handbook to the deans. The deans were to forward the document to the department chairs for feedback. The Faculty Senate approved the document unanimously. The SGA forwarded a copy of the **SGA resolution** recognizing student/faculty week. At the last Intercollegiate Athletic Committee meeting called to discuss only the stadium **block seating** issue, a three-page plan and a cover letter written by R. B. Walker was reviewed. The six sentence block seating plan stated in the plan was, “The first and most fundamental change for the 2008 season will be the addition of grades into the judgment criteria. As an academic institution student organizations should be rewarded for their academic and research pursuits and this will be reflected in the development of a block seating chart for the upcoming season. The office of Dean of Students currently maintains these group records. The SGA has enlisted Dr. Frank Thompson to develop a more objective ranking system. The SGA is confident that Dr. Thompson will be a valuable resource to enable the committee to raise the bar further on objectivity and accountability to students. The committee also plans to further expand the communication strategies to provide the most diverse and accomplished applicant pool for block seating”. Dr. Frank Thompson is in the Department of Communication Sciences. John Vincent expressed his disappointment in the inability of the SGA and Student Affairs to develop an equation as promised over the course of a year. An equation based on a 100 point scale suggested by John Vincent and Carolyn Cassady is as follows – 25 points for each of 4 parts; academics, stadium behavior, campus involvement and campus service. For academics the average GPA of the group would be multiplied by 25 and divided by 4. Stadium behavior ratings could be done one of two ways; 25 points as a base with 5 or 10 points deducted for every violation; or have a zero base and every year without a violation is an addition of 5 points. Campus involvement and campus service would call for one, two or three points for every activity the group is in on or off campus based on the type of activity for a maximum of 25 points. The block seating committee would decide what activity would receive what amount of points. The formula was forwarded as a recommendation.

**Vice President’s Report** – (*Karen Steckol*) The report concerning **Higher Education Day** in Montgomery included the estimated number attending, meetings with Legislators and the impressive enthusiasm of those attending the rally. The pursuit of personal information

concerning **retirement benefits** revealed, not including a reduction of benefits this past year, an increase of 10.5% for the Medicare supplement. Including this past year the increase is 7.5%. Further financial information is being developed and sought and will be shared with the Steering Committee.

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

The present Faculty Senate Steering Committee will meet April 8 with new officers in place.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Marcia Barrett & Rona Donahoe*) General priority **survey results** revealed faculty members in 60-40 percentage and 50-50 percentage in smaller colleges preferring salary increases over hiring new faculty. Distributions, percentages, difficulties encountered and the composition of the survey instrument were discussed. This committee is working on a report based on enrollment and new faculty position allocation information.

**Faculty Life** – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn & Lowell Baker*) No report.

**Financial Affairs** – (*David Arnold & Jeanette Vandermeer*) The handout “Comparison of Total Premiums, Co-pays & Deductibles Contributed by The University, Employees, Retirees & COBRA Members for Healthcare in 2005, 2006 & 2007” was distributed to Steering Committee members. Over 2005, 2006 and 2007 the number of contracts on UA's Blue Cross/Blue Shield **group health plan** increased. There were 1,347 UA retirees in PEEHIP in 2006 and 1,378 UA retirees in 2007. The concern was that UA faculty and staff members were paying more than the University was paying for these benefits. In 2005 employees paid 26.62%, 25.71% in 2006 and 26.57% in 2007. The grand total of all premiums, deductibles and co-pays paid by UA employees in 2006 was \$358,817. The total in 2007 was \$807,664. Under Hospital and PPO Doctor and Non-PPO provider co-pays and deductibles: the UA employees' cost for all co-pays and deductibles per year excluding prescriptions in 2006 was \$31,278. In 2007 the cost was \$151,471. This increase could be due to the higher cost of health care and catastrophic illness. Some co-pays decreased last year. UA's contribution in 2006 was 72.27% and 71.68% in 2007. Advantages and disadvantages of ordering prescriptions by mail order were discussed. This committee will continue to monitor this issue.

**Research & Service** – (*Shane Street & Ed Stephenson*) A review of the first draft of the **Conflict of Interest** policy has been done. Three major entities to be considered by this committee are: the Research Compliance Officer, responsible University official Vice President of Research, and the University Conflict of Interest committee. This committee is composed of four faculty members experienced in the administration of Federal Grants/Contracts appointed by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs; Associate Deans for Research in A&S, CCHS, CBA and Engineering; and a representative of the Faculty Senate. The Research Compliance Officer and a member of the University's Office of Counsel will serve as ex-officio members. Everyone will be required to submit an annual certification specifying what financial interest they may have in equities and in companies. Investigators will be required to file a new form on an ad hoc basis whenever circumstances change. The Research Compliance Officer will review certification and disclosure statements to determine whether a potential for a conflict of interest exists. Should the situation represent the potential for a conflict of interest and recommend development of a conflict of interest management plan; the RCO will work with the Investigator to develop the plan to manage, reduce, or eliminate the actual or potential conflict of interest. The plan will then be submitted to the University Conflict of Interest Committee (UCIC). The UCIC may recommend approval of the plan as developed or may recommend modification of the plan. Several things may be done as part of the management plan such as: public disclosure of

significant financial interests; monitoring of research by independent reviewers; modification of the research plan; disqualification from participation in all or a portion of the research project in question; divestiture of significant financial interests; and/or severance of relationships creating conflict. The final plan will be forwarded to the Vice President. Any appeal the Investigator is unhappy with may be appealed to the RUO. The RUO in turn will confer with the Provost. The decision of the Provost is final. The Provost is the final authority concerning divestiture and severance of relationships. There are concerns outside the Conflict of Interest Policy about the difference between consulting and contract research. Contract research is covered by the policy but consulting is not. The suggestion was that the University develops a definition of consulting and contract research. With the change of ex-officio to liaison and a statement that the liaison is a non-voting member of the committee, the document will be forwarded to Joe Benson. If the response is immediate, the current Research and Service Committee may have to meet the first week of April. The **Academic Misconduct Policy** has to be done in a very few months and is a Faculty Handbook change.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*John Mason & Roy Maize*) There is one nomination for each Faculty Senate office. There are no nominations for **Ombudsperson**. Many faculty members have been contacted. There will be a need for a new Parliamentarian since Dee Goldston will be on sabbatical next year.

**Student Affairs** – (*Carolyn Cassady & Melondie Carter*) This committee has been unable to schedule a meeting with those involved in the block seating issue. The student/faculty reception was well attended.

There was extended interruption of **internet access** last weekend. Emails could not be sent off campus. There was no notification of a shutdown to install upgrades.

The Campus Master Plan committee finalized their proposal to establish a University **Environmental Committee**. The name was changed slightly and committee composition changes were made. The proposal has been forwarded to John Mason of the CUC and the Provost. The **Graduate Policy Taskforce** met Monday, March 10. Any specifics and concerns should be referred to Rona Donahoe. The composition of the new committee was discussed. The purpose of the taskforce is to identify procedures and policies needed to improve the operation of the Graduate School. The establishment of an environmental committee and the addition of a Professional Staff Member on the CUC have been recommended to the Provost.

The **Media Relations Committee** will meet to choose editors and positions for the Black Warrior Review and the Crimson White. Discussion included “The Scene”, writers, and composition of the publications.

Congratulations and commendations were extended to John Vincent as he presided over his last Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting as Faculty Senate President.

The Steering Committee was invited to attend a “pig roast” hosted by the Tuscaloosa Sailing Club on Friday afternoon at 4:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned 4:30 PM.