

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 6, 2012 – 3:00 PM - #2002 SHELBY HALL**

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: Clark Midkiff, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Jeanette VanderMeer, Marcia Barrett, John Vincent, Rona Donahoe, Lowell Baker, Wesley Church, Robert McLeod, Carolyn Cassady, Ian Stancu, Ed Stephenson, Melondie Carter, Seth Panitch.

ABSENT: Charlotte Herrin, Katrina Ramonell, Brad Hodges, Margaret Garner, DoVeanna Minor.

GUESTS: Cresandra Smothers, Dialog.

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee minutes of December 6, 2011 were approved. The January Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting was cancelled. Steering Committee minutes of February 14, 2012 were approved with corrections.

President's Report – (*Clark Midkiff*) President Midkiff attended the meeting of the UA Board of Trustees announcing the appointment of Dr. Robert Witt as **UA Systems Chancellor**. Dr. Judy Bonner will act as interim president. There is no appointment for an interim provost. There was discussion of the role of the Faculty Senate in the selection of the next University president.

There will be a joint Faculty Senate and Professional Staff Assembly **luncheon meeting** on March 8 at 11:30 A.M. in the Ferguson Center Mortar Board Room.

Wesley Church and Deidre Leaver-Dunn will compose a resolution regarding the Alabama **HB56 immigration** law.

Vice President's Report – (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn*) No report.

Secretary's Report – (*Jeanette VanderMeer*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) A meeting of the Academics Affairs Committee will be held Tuesday, March 27 with Lorne Kuffel to discuss methods to increase student's response rate to the Student Opinion of Faculty Teaching surveys conducted at the end of each semester. Cell phone use to respond to the survey would be an advantage but this has not proven feasible up to this time. This could be researched again as a solution to the low response. Division, department and course level data is needed for comparison.

Faculty Life – (*Lowell Baker & Wesley Church*) The Faculty Senate Smoke Free Campus Resolution passed on February 14, 2012 has been sent to the Provost. The resolution will be forwarded to the Student Government Association, the Professional Staff Assembly and the Office, Clerical and Technical Staff organization. The progress of any action concerning the resolution will be monitored.

Financial Affairs – (*Robert McLeod & Katrina Ramonell*) The Financial Affairs Committee has contacted Bill Jones, UA System’s Director of Government Relations, requesting someone with knowledge of the funding formula speak to the committee. Ira Harby has been recommended and will speak to the Financial Affairs Committee on April 3 at 3:00 P.M. in 254 Rose Administration Building.

Information Technology – (*Carolyn Cassady & Brad Hodges*) Joe Benson’s meeting with the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and the Provost was cancelled. He will attend the next meeting.

Carolyn Cassady sent an email to the Provost at her request listing the three points of information technology concerns. The first was important information technology issues are not being handled in a timely manner and included examples. Part of this problem has been the split duties of the Vice Provost of Information Technology between The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and The University of Alabama in Huntsville. It appears this will be resolved by duties at UA being restored to full time. The second point was decentralization among several organizations such as OIT, CIT and various groups at each college causing confusion among faculty members regarding the responsibilities of each group. The third point was the lack of clarity concerning the role of faculty in Information Technology’s structure. The UA Standing Information Technology Committee seems to have little input into the organizational structure now in place or in the proposed new structure which does not have an IT Standing Committee listed at all. It was suggested the power point presentation given by Ivan Foster McGowan be repeated at the Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting.

Research & Service – (*Ian Stancu & Ed Stephenson*) The Research & Service Committee met with Kevin Stephens, Director of Procurement, to discuss procurement issues. Alabama State Law specifies any purchase over the amount of \$7,500 from a vendor must be placed for bids. The intent of the bid law is to prevent unfair buying practices. One of the problems is the bid company purchases from the original supplier and resells the item to the University resulting in extra costs. Some companies will not participate in the bid process at all. The University has 120 standing bids at \$7,500. If the minimum bid law was increased to \$15,000, there would be 30 standing bids and if the bid law was increased to \$25,000, standing bids would decrease to 15. For research continuity the same item should be purchased from the same company. Paperwork to do this has increased. Carolyn Cassady made the point that equipment repairs must be justified and slows service calls dramatically.

Bringing reimbursement for international travel expenses more in line with the IRS/State Department rate is being addressed by the Procurement Office. Increasing reimbursement for domestic travel expenses is also being considered.

Post-doctoral issues continue to be addressed by the Research & Service Committee.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*Rona Donahoe*) Faculty Senate officer elections will be held at the March 27th Faculty Senate meeting. Steve Miller has been nominated for Faculty Senate President, Steve Katsinas for Vice President and Rona Donahoe for Secretary. The Ombudsperson election is held the same time as the senator elections. Mindy Nancarrow (Art History) and John Rutledge (Music) have agreed to serve. A third faculty member from Arts & Sciences is needed.

There have been some discrepancies in OIR's data for senator allotments for each college/school. Some of the problems might come from the Banner classification when faculty members are hired. Sending the data to the Deans to verify was suggested. A clear cut method must be in place before obtaining data from OIR for next year's election of senators.

Student Affairs – (*Melondie Carter & Seth Panitch*) The meeting scheduled with Mark Nelson was cancelled. It will be held the first Tuesday of next month.

Legislative Action – (*Margaret Garner*) Over 2,000 were in attendance for Higher Education Day in Montgomery and UA students had two full buses. Media coverage was good. About twenty UA faculty and students met with the Tuscaloosa delegation. Topics discussed were higher education funding, the 2/3 1/3 expectation and the impact of the economy on State government.

The Alumni task force meeting had over 100 alumni from the thirteen campuses attending. There were discussions about how alumni can help their respective campuses and higher education in general by being active and communicating with their representatives.

The Higher Education Partnership celebrated its 15th year anniversary in 2012.

Meeting adjourned 4:25 P.M.