

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

April 9, 2002 – Room 307 Ferguson – 3:30 PM

### MINUTES

**Attending:** Steve Miller, John Mason, Keith Woodbury, Norm Baldwin, Bing Blewitt, Alvin Winters, Terry Royed, Bob Sigler, Beth Macauley, Wythe Holt, Marvin Johnson, Bill Keel, Don Desmet, Margaret Garner, Harry Price Guests: Priscilla Hancock, Associate Vice President for Information Services; Academic Affairs and Joanna Hutt, Dialog

It was voted to approve the March 12 Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting minutes.

Priscilla Hancock, Associate Vice President for Information Services, made a presentation concerning the **Data Warehouse** with a request for input and reaction from the Steering Committee and Faculty Senate since the timeline is escalating. Members may email their response to Dr. Hancock. UAB has a data warehouse system in place and the UA Systems Office became interested in acquiring the system for the Tuscaloosa and Huntsville campuses. This system is a doable data solution and is apparently cost effective, since the system has already been installed and that same expertise brought to the other campuses would reduce the cost considerably. The system would improve analysis and decision-making. It would expedite the process of report writing and other projects and could be installed within a nine-month period. There would be training for the users of the system. The security of the information in the Data Warehouse, the use of the information and the purpose of the system was questioned. Further discussion included the points of faster research reports, prior information being available, man hours will be reduced, the expenditure of a large amount of funds and improved querying abilities. The reaction from the Faculty Senate should be reported by the end of this month. This issue was referred to the Financial Affairs Committee.

The Faculty Life committee made a report on proposed changes in the **Maternity Leave policy** of the University. After approval of the Steering Committee, these proposals will be taken to the Provost for preliminary consultation. The first change would separate sick leave and childbearing leave. Part of the proposal would be a parenting leave policy giving faculty members up to three months of "fully paid" parenting leave at the option of the faculty member to deal with the socialization of their family. The length of childbearing leave would have the addition of "periods which may be as long as six months or less, at the option of the faculty member," with adoption being included and with the age of the adoptee being eliminated. A proposed addition to sick leave policy is that it "could be used for the serious illness or death of a child, partner or close family member or other extreme personal circumstances." Any feedback should be sent to Wythe Holt and Jerry Rosiek by email. The sense of the Steering Committee was to move forward with this issue.

It was proposed the **Ombudsperson** election proceed. The process will be to ask for nominations from the floor of the Faculty Senate meeting. Those nominees should have given permission for their name to be brought forward and should have information about the duties involved should they be elected. An email will be sent to the entire faculty with names to be submitted to the Administrative Assistant's office. The name of the ombudspersons will be placed on the University web page under "Faculty Resources".

**Senate elections** are almost complete with the Arts & Sciences and Community Health Sciences results to be received by the end of this week. Each committee should present a five-minute report on activities of this past year and pertinent issues to be considered next year. Re-elected senators with poor attendance records will be discussed by the President and Senate Operations Committee.

**Surveying the faculty** has been done the last two years with the last one being conducted last summer. It seems that the priorities are being driven by faculty salaries, and that remains essentially the same. An informal survey of the Steering Committee will be done without doing a formal survey of the faculty. It was suggested that the next faculty survey be done during February since more faculty would be in place at that time, however, the work load is much more during that time period.

The Task Force for **System of Faculty Feedback for Effective University Leadership** will be formulating an instrument over the summer and will be petitioning input from members of the Steering Committee.

The progress of diversity in the **Greek system** was reported, with the recommendation system being problematic for those without contacts or history. It was found at a national meeting that this seems to be a regional problem and is being taken to the Pan-Hellenic organization and to a Southeastern panel. There are those continuing to work on a deferred rush. The fraternities and sororities have been challenged to invite five African-Americans per chapter to pre-fall functions.

After a meeting with all the Vice Presidents and the President, **Fall Study Days** was not supported by the Administration, with the main concern being the party image of the University and cost of extra pay for working staff. The extra two days would be added at the beginning of the semester and the staff would work the extra days during Fall Study Days since this break would be for students only was one of the arguments of administration. The Faculty Senate President will be attending future Executive Staff Meetings.

The question was asked if a **resolution on salary and tuition increases** would be proposed by the Steering Committee. A two to three percent raise has been mentioned for faculty and staff but it is dependent on available funding that may not be there. It was mentioned to reaffirm the resolution passed last year asked for a series of tuition increases to pay for salary structure increases and for the Board of Trustees to come up with a plan for meeting these continuing funding deficiencies. The original resolution could be attached with the original date and the reaffirmation date also. The Steering Committee agreed to this action.

A proposed letter addressed to the **Alabama Scholars Association** was presented to the Steering Committee for consideration. This is in response to the resolution introduced at the Senate meeting last month by the College of Engineering. It is felt that many faculty and staff are looking to the Senate for leadership. A web-based article associated with a national organization falsely accused/criticized the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Life Committee co-chairs. The accusations included infringement of first amendment rights. The letter reinforces the ASA's free expression rights, but also raises concerns of faculty both inside and outside the College of Engineering. A second letter was proposed for consideration expressing the beliefs that all academics have the right to speak out on any topic, the right to freedom of speech and to petition the legislature. Included in the letter also was reaffirmation of the "Resolution on Faculty Support for Diversity" passed by the Senate on March 21, 2000, and reaffirmation of support for The University of Alabama policies on Diversity, Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination. The Faculty Senate has

taken strong positions supporting anti-racism, anti-sexism, and diversity. It was proposed that the Senate to take a minimal reaction path and adhere to "setting the record straight". The opinion was expressed that this course of action would not be successful. Discussion included all aspects of reactions by both the ASA and the University parties involved to the action or actions taken by the Senate. The point was made that this situation was taking up valuable time that could be focused on diversity actions. To have freedom of speech does not require listening or doing what is said. The concern was expressed that to ignore this and not respond would be perceived as a weakness of the Faculty Senate and that to reaffirm the Senate's beliefs is critical. It was proposed to compose a short statement, along with a copy of reaffirmation of the resolution passed last year. The vote, after discussion of points the statement should include, was six in favor, one opposed and one abstention. Wythe and Norm will compose the statement of minimal response and submit to the members of the Steering Committee. With approval, this will be the response with others retaining the right to respond as individuals. It was suggested to post the final response on the web site.

Appreciation was expressed to Norm Baldwin for his outstanding service and leadership as President of the Faculty Senate this past year.

5:40 PM Meeting adjourned