

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
May 6th, 2008– 3:00 PM – 206F SHELBY HALL

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: Karen Steckol, Clark Midkiff, Jeanette Vandermeer, John Vincent, Marcia Barrett, Lowell Baker, Katrina Ramonell, Ed Stephenson, John Mason, Michael Martone, Melondie Carter, Carolyn Cassady, Margaret Garner, and Rona Donahoe (Parliamentarian).

GUESTS: None

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary, Jeanette VanderMeer

The minutes from the April 8, 2008 Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting were approved. President Steckol asked members to print an individual copy of the minutes when they are distributed by e-mail in order to avoid having Linda Knowles making printed copies for future meetings.

President's Report – (*Karen Steckol*) – The first item mentioned was a report from a large committee formed out of the UA Graduate Council regarding plans to move to electronic theses and dissertations. The new electronic format would be optional beginning fall, 2008 and become mandatory in fall, 2009. After some discussion, a decision was made to invite someone from the committee such as Vivian Wright to visit the steering committee and discuss this proposal. John Vincent reported that Hank Lazer has called a 10 a.m. meeting for tomorrow (5/7/08) in Gorgas Library to discuss the new NIH requirement regarding publication of research reports. The purpose of this meeting will be to decide how UA will handle this new requirement. John Vincent and Michael Martone are Faculty Senate Steering Committee members who were invited to attend this meeting. The second item involved an e-mail that John Mason forwarded to President Steckol from another faculty member. The University's I.T. department has decided to discontinue dial-up access to the UA server by faculty working from home, effective mid May. President Steckol will contact the Provost to learn more about this decision and the person faculty need to contact. The third item concerned President Steckol's recent South Carolina meeting with the Presidents of the Faculty Senates at the SEC schools. Several items were discussed during that meeting:

(1). All of the schools represented had large Faculty Senate budgets ranging from \$50,000-80,000 annually. President Steckol talked with the Provost and she is willing to consider a Senate budget proposal. However, she cautioned that if a budget was adopted for the Faculty Senate, then she would abide by that budget. Currently, the Provost has been willing to fund individual requests for funds made by the Faculty Senate President. The salary for Linda Knowles, Secretary, is paid from the Provost's office, plus travel expenses for the Senate President to the Board of Trustees meetings and the recent meeting in South Carolina.

(2). For all of the SEC schools, the President or Provost addresses every Senate meeting to present information and is available for a question/answer session. The UA Provost said she is willing to attend every Senate meeting and to answer any questions, but she did not feel comfortable addressing every Senate meeting. John Vincent mentioned that other schools that have their President or Provost attend the meetings do not have the open access and frank discussions that we have with the UA Provost. Currently, the Senate Steering Committee meets for 2 hours, twice per month with the Provost. A suggestion was made to invite the President and/or Provost to attend a Senate meeting in the fall.

(3). In every SEC school, except UA, the Faculty Senate President receives some perks. Examples of the types of perks are: (a) mandatory teaching load reduction, (b) funds provided to the department to replace the duties preformed by the Senate President, (c) at Auburn University, the Senate President receives a two-semester sabbatical following the term in office, (d) preferred parking and/or (e) a faculty salary stipend. Currently at UA, the course reduction is left with the Dean of the Senate President's college or school and several of the past Senate Presidents, plus the current President, will not receive any reduction in workload or any monetary reimbursement to be used to assist with the extra duties. All of the SEC schools recommended a two-year term for the Senate President. Several Senate Steering committee members felt that a mandated two-year term for Senate President would limit the number of individuals willing to serve. After discussion, a decision was made to ask John Mason, as chair of the Faculty Senate Governance Committee and a past Senate President, to form an ad hoc committee composed of several of the UA past Senate Presidents to develop a resolution or proposal regarding the matter of perks.

(4). Five of the twelve SEC schools have post tenure review processes. The group agreed that UA currently has a post tenure review process. There is disagreement with how the schools define "post tenure review".

(5). Mr. Sly Slive, President of the SEC, told the group that a billion dollar deal over a 15 year period, will be made with the schools regarding ABC television. It might be possible that we could ask that a certain percentage of the money that comes to the university be designated for academic purposes. Currently, the contact with the SEC and ABC television is being negotiated. The Provosts of all the SEC schools might be better able to ask for this caveat since they have more authority as a group than senate presidents. A decision was made to refer this matter to the Senate Financial Affairs Committee for further investigation and report back to the Steering Committee. Clark Midkiff also suggested that the Provost be contacted and invite the current financial officer for athletics to come to the Senate Steering Committee to address this matter.

(6) UA is the only Faculty Senate in the SEC that does not have a Faculty Grievance Committee. However, the University does have elected Ombudsmen.

Margaret Garner asked about the current status of the Alabama Council of Faculty Senate Presidents. According to past Senate President, John Vincent, the group has not met in the last two years.

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

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

Senate Committee Reports –

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) – No report.

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

Financial Affairs – (*Katrina Ramonell & Steven Hobbs*) - No report.

Research & Service – (*Laurie Bonnici & Ed Stephenson*) - No report.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*John Mason & Michael Martone*) – No report.

Student Affairs – (*Carolyn Cassady & Melondie Carter*) – Melondie Carter reported that many students are unhappy with not receiving any tickets for football games. President Steckol said the UA Intercollegiate Athletics Committee will meet tomorrow (5/07/08) and will discuss this matter.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) – She talked with Bill Jones today and he indicated it is time to “bring out the troops”. He suggested that all faculty contact their Alabama senators and ask for \$25 million additional funding for higher education. President Steckol sent an e-mail to UA faculty with information from the Higher Education Partnership about the proposed education budget and asked faculty to contact their Alabama Senator. May 19th will be the last day for the Senate to act on the proposed education budget.

Reports From Other Committees:

Lowell Baker, Senate representative to the Committee on Selection of Deans and Department Chairs, reported that the committee has been meeting with Bob Smallwood to draft two instruments. The two instruments will gather information regarding the Faculty Perceptions of the Dean or Faculty Perceptions of the Department Chair and will be administered electronically every other year. Drafts of the instruments were provided for the Faculty Senate Steering Committee members to preview. The electronic surveys would be managed by an outside agency. The committee will meet on Friday, May 9th to review/discuss the survey instruments. The Provost will have the final approval of the documents.

Announcements:

Margaret Garner said The University of Alabama has purchased a 30-minute, online training program to assist faculty and staff with the identification of students who may be experiencing mental distress. The purchase of the training program was funded by the Student Affairs Leadership Council. Margaret requested feedback from the group about the best way to approach faculty about completing the training program. Completion of the training program will be required for all Student Affairs staff and all student workers. Margaret talked with the Provost and plans are to discuss this training with the Council of Deans and Department Chairs and to let them decide how best to handle training with their faculty and staff. The consensus of the Steering Committee was that a mandatory approach is probably necessary in order to have a large number of faculty participate.

Michael Martone raised his concern about the recent closure of the University's MFA program at the Shakespeare Theatre. John Vincent said if this closure of a program affects the employment of faculty, then the matter must go to the UA Committee on Merger and Discontinuation because there are steps that must be followed for termination of a program. President Steckol agreed to talk with Provost Bonner about this matter and report back to the Steering Committee.

Michael Martone also reported that the Media Board has plans to terminate production of the UA Yearbook soon due to limited purchasing. He said the Media Board has a volunteer student staff, but the staff of the Media Board actually does all of the work. The question was raised about how the University would maintain a historical record once the Yearbook is no longer published.

Meeting adjourned 5:10 P.M.