

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
MAY 8, 2012 – 3:00 PM - #2002 SHELBY HALL**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** Steve Miller, Rona Donahoe, John Vincent, Reuben Cook, Robert McLeod, Carolyn Cassady, Ed Stephenson, Charlotte Herrin, Melondie Carter, Donna Meester.

**ABSENT:** Seth Panitch, Marcia Barrett, Carmen Mayer-Robin, Jason Battles, Ian Stancu, Dwight Hooper, Margaret Garner.

**GUESTS:** Cresandra Smothers, Media Relations/Dialog.

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Rona Donahoe.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of April 12, 2012 were approved with corrections.

**President's Report** – (*Steve Miller*) President Miller began the meeting with a discussion concerning UA graduation attendance and UA attendance policies. There were three commencements held this past weekend. Proper regalia for the commencement programs are expensive. The suggestion was made to contact retired faculty and others to donate robes for faculty use during commencements. Melondie Carter made a motion to name the project in honor of Karen Steckol, former Faculty Senate President, Senator and Committee Co-chair. The details will be discussed including storage areas, usage system and other issues.

Distribution of emails by the Faculty Senate President will be limited. Emails with academic and book store subjects will be sent by that specific department.

President Miller met with John McGowan, Vice Provost of Information Technology, to discuss methods to improve access to OIT personnel, consolidation of information technology committees and communication improvement between the committees, data base and management, OIT website accessibility, security, grant proposal process, the lack of response to faculty from OIT, and confusion concerning the process/person to follow/contact with technology problems and complaints. A list is to be composed of the most important information technology issues to be addressed and pursued.

The Presidential Search Committee has met. A website [uapresearch@gmail.com](mailto:uapresearch@gmail.com) has been established by President Miller for faculty input concerning the most important issues and traits to be addressed in the hiring of a new UA president.

The next meeting on May 24 of the Steering Committee will be at the Early Childcare Center. Part of that meeting will be focused on child care information.

**Secretary's Report** – (*Rona Donahoe*) President Miller and Rona Donahoe met with the representatives of the Student Government Association, Professional Staff Assembly and the Office & Clerical Technical Staff Assembly. One of the main concerns was accessible child care for faculty, staff and students. Another issue discussed was health care tiers. The \$26,000 health

care low tier has been in place for some time and should be increased. Rona Donahoe suggested creating a third higher tier.

The SGA continues to look at the plus/minus grading system. This has been reviewed by faculty for the last five to seven years. The SGA attendance at Faculty Senate meetings should be improved. Smoke-free campus and football block seating were other subjects discussed. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate and combine efforts to promote the most important issues. The child care issue will be part of the focus of the May 24<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting with the Provost at the Child Care Center.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The Academic Affairs Committee met with the Chair of the Academic Oversight Committee and Mark Nelson, Vice President for Student Affairs. The Academic Affairs Committee presented the issue of the math interim/provisional core course. The Math Department should have had a role in reviewing the course. The Oversight Committee receives about twelve new course proposals per year. About half go through the provisional process due to being late or some error being made. When the situation arises, Mark Nelson, the Oversight Committee Chair and the Department Chair review the proposed course. Sometimes the full committee overturns the decision of approval or non-approval. The committee suggested they give the provisional proposal to the subcommittee that deals with that particular area (science, history, etc.) for their comments. A course could be taught five times under the provisional category bypassing the proper procedure. It was suggested to conduct reviews twice a year or to increase the size of the committee. The Steering Committee will monitor this situation to assess any changes.

The Academic Affairs Committee recommends a review and update of the Faculty Handbook. The Academic Affairs Committee did the updating approximately two years ago. It was sent to the Council of Deans and UA Administration. No action was taken.

**Faculty Life** – (*Wesley Church & Carmen Mayer-Robin*) The Faculty Life Committee reviewed the Maternity Leave Policy and has learned the policy in the Faculty Handbook is the UA policy. The accepted Faculty Senate recommendations are to be guidelines for the interpretation of the maternity leave policy. Colleges and departments each have their own policies. The committee will continue to follow up this issue.

Corrie Perdue, Coordinator for the Graduate Parents Support Program, developed this program to provide child care assistance and housing for graduate students and was invited to address the Faculty Life Committee. Corrie Perdue and Natalie Adams are in the process of expanding this program (Work Life Center) for faculty. There has been no faculty input on this expansion. There is subsidized child care for graduate students through some local churches.

In a student survey 65% of students support the Smoke-Free Campus initiative. The Faculty Life Committee wants to move forward with this initiative with the implementation date of May 1 of 2013. The committee will be setting up meetings with the SGA, PSA and OCTS organizations.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Robert McLeod & Reuben Cook*) A detailed budget presentation to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee has not been made for some time. The Faculty Life Committee will be looking at a mechanism for input of financial priorities and will follow up on this presentation.

**Information Technology** – (*Carolyn Cassady & Jason Battles*) Carolyn Cassady and Jason Battles met with John McGowan, Vice Provost of Information Technology, and Patti Benton, OIT office, on April 27. Two and a half years ago John McGowan was asked to assist The University of Alabama-Huntsville with their technology program for three months because they lost the person in that position. He has been in that position for two and a half years dividing his time between campuses. UAH has four searches now in process to hire for their technology area.

A research scientist is being hired in OIT to assist the development of a Data Management Plan. There is backup and more storage for research and teaching at a data center in Atlanta. Internet 2 is being pushed by McGowan and he plans to increase publicity concerning this project. There are efforts underway to collapse the email system into one system so domains will mirror and all emails would be under one directory guaranteeing delivery of all email. Email addresses will not change.

OIT committees should be simplified. The UA Standing IT Committee, a large committee, has two members of each committee as liaisons to other University IT committees making liaisons to seven different IT committees. The UA IT Committee has met just once in a year and efforts have been to organize their committee and not toward campus IT problems.

There will be a survey sent to those using the Help Desk to determine the quality of service. Those working the Help Desk should communicate between themselves to determine any correlation between technology problems. Faculty members and others are confused about the procedure to follow and person to contact when they have technology issues.

The OIT web page is difficult to follow and to search for specific information with several pages having the notation “under construction.”

President Miller and Carolyn Cassady will assemble a bulleted list of technology priorities for the Steering Committee to review.

**Research & Service** – (*Ed Stephenson & Ion Stancu*) Joe Benson, Vice President for Research, has communicated to this committee to review and bring into compliance the Conflict of Interest document by August. This would have to be approved by the Faculty Senate with the document being presented at one meeting and voted on at the next meeting. The full Senate’s next meeting will be August 21. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee has full authority to act in the place of the Faculty Senate during the summer since the Faculty Senate does not meet in the summer months.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Charlotte Herrin & Dwight Hooper*) An Ombudsperson election will be conducted in the fall with a request for nominations being emailed to all faculty members.

There is not a chair of the Mediation Committee but one should be elected by the sitting members of this committee. It has not met since the last chair rotated off the committee. Elizabeth Versa has been requested to convene the committee, elect a chair and address the current issue. Pat Bauch of Education is retiring and will need to be replaced by the end of the year. The Faculty Senate votes to confirm the elected committee member.

The Faculty and Senate Governance Committee will give a report concerning the Mediation Committee at the next Steering Committee meeting.

**Student Affairs Committee** – (*Melondie Carter & Donna Meester*) The Student Affairs Committee will continue to monitor the Faculty Senate meeting attendance of the SGA representative and faculty involvement with student organizations. Methods to determine the group with a need will be discussed.

**New Business** – The possible closing of the Post Office at Ferguson Center will be addressed during the Steering Committee meeting with the Provost.

#### **Reports from Other Committees-**

**Faculty & Senate Benefits Committee** – (*Rona Donahoe*) The Health Care reserve looks good with a 2011 small surplus. The committee will meet over the summer to review the health care projections for the next three to five years. They are expecting a \$150,000 to \$300,000 increase in costs next year with health care reform. Flex-Care accounts will be reduced to \$2,500 a year which is federally mandated with a small administrative fee included. If health care reform should be eliminated there will not be a significant impact on the UA's health care plan with the exception of the elimination of coverage for dependents up to 26 years of age. The sub-committee is also looking at subcontracting the administrative costs of mental health parity. We do not have a drug rehabilitation type parity at this time.

George Brown, UA Student Recreation Center, spoke to the committee with the information that the fee structure has been revised eliminating the family membership plan. The Recreation Center has to generate their revenue with nominal assistance from the University. The committee asked about recreation center membership as a benefit. The committee has asked for actual costs associated with such a benefit which would be difficult to determine with several variables involved. Twenty percent of faculty and staff are currently members of the Recreation Center or the Aquatic Center.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 P.M.