

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 13, 2006 – 3:00 PM – 206F SHELBY HALL**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** John Vincent, Mathew Winston, Jeanette Vandermeer, Shane Street, Steve Shepard, Douglas Lightfoot, Carolyn Cassady, Karen Burgess, Marcia Barrett

**GUESTS:** Cresandra Smothers, Dialog; Keith Woodbury, Rona Donahue, Natalie Adams

The minutes of the May 9, 2006 Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting were approved with one correction.

The current chair and chair-elect of the CUC, Rona Donahue and Keith Woodbury began the meeting with an update on the status of the **Research Advisory Committee**. The following synopsis was contained in the draft for the Research Advisory Committee: “Several years ago, as part of committee consolidation, the University eliminated the Research Grants Committee, and left standing the Research Advisory Committee. However, the present duties of the RAC are only to review internal grants. Furthermore, the Office for Research would like to have a faculty committee as a consultant body, and it is desirable to have this committee in place by Fall 2006. Therefore the immediate past and present chairs of the Committee on University Committees, with consultation from the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, will create a committee description and initial composition for Fall 2006. The Committee on University Committees will take official action in the 2006-2007 academic year”. It has been determined by faculty and administration to establish a committee to advise the Office of Research. The Provost requested that the CUC work with the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and others to accelerate this process. The proposed definition of duties for the Research Advisory Committee is to “advise the administration on matters of policy, both internal and external, which will foster research productivity throughout the University”. The proposed definition of duties for the Research Grants Committee is to “provide advice to the Vice President for Research on the use of University funds available for individual faculty research, with specific responsibility for policy relating to the application and grants award process. The committee will receive and evaluate grant applications, make recommendation concerning RGC grant awards, and administer such grants and any intellectual property associated with them”. The proposed composition of the Research Advisory Committee would consist of fifteen voting members: thirteen members would represent the research faculty (3 from A&S, one from science/mathematics, arts/humanities and social/behavioral sciences, and one from each of the remaining colleges/schools (C&BA, CIS, CCHS, Continuing Studies, Education, Engineering, HES, Law, Nursing, Social Work and Libraries (to be determined), a Faculty Senate representative, and a graduate student representative (to be determined). The proposed composition of the Research Grants Committee would essentially remain as it is now. Area A: Physical and Biological Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering; A&S (4), Engineering (3), HES (1), Education (1), and CCHS (1). Area B: Social and Behavioral

Sciences; A&S (2), C&BA (2), Education (2), Communication (1), HES (1), CCHS (1), Nursing (1), and Social Work (1). Area C: Arts and Humanities; A&S (5), Law (1), and Communication (1). The Library would have one member along with a Faculty Senate Representative included in the membership. Based on reviews over the last two years, it appears to be a need for an overriding chairperson to be appointed in addition to the three subcommittee chairpersons for Areas A, B and C. There was further discussion concerning the areas of representation. The definition of research was questioned. The Vice President for Research can determine how broad or narrow the definition of research is to be. It was stated that the Reporting Channel for the Research Advisory Committee should be the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs rather than the Vice President for Research. The ultimate goal is to establish a body to work in parallel with the Office of Research to increase, foster and develop research internally and externally for the University with a probable emphasis on external. Concern was expressed about the size and extremely broad representation on the Research Advisory Committee, and that the committee would become ineffectual because accurate advice and information was not available through this committee channel. Those serving on this committee should be research active and well-versed enough in research issues to give dependable and accurate advice on policy issues. A method discussed to accomplish this could be year-to-year membership rotation between the colleges to be more representative of the research being done on campus without expanding the membership number. The disadvantages of this would be the disassociation of some faculty members and the difficulty in administering the rotation. Another suggestion was to establish a Steering Committee to interact with the Vice President of Research through senior faculty membership. The establishment of a separate committee with a more narrow research definition to foster research productivity throughout the University could be another option. Restricting membership by category was suggested such as; a history professor, three engineers, etc. The process used by the CUC for committee appointments is to refer to the committee preference survey forms submitted by faculty members. The only exception departing from that list is the membership of the CUC itself. The Office of Research has dealt with policy issues such as intellectual properties regarding patents, the export policy, the Animal Care Committee, and the Institutional Review Board. It was suggested that the Research Advisory Committee charge as stated is very broad and should be narrowed. It was suggested to include the statement from the Provost in the committee charge; "to provide the Office of Research and the Office for Sponsored Programs with faculty input as they establish policies and procedures that govern research administration". After further discussion, it was decided to recast the charge and composition of the committees, and to address this issue at the July meeting of the Steering Committee. The current reporting channel for the Research Grants Committee is the Academic Affairs Office and the Office of Research. It was suggested that further oversight is needed.

The **Maternity Leave Committee Report** was presented for discussion with Natalie Adams representing the Benefits Committee. It seems there is not a campus-wide maternity leave policy. The Provost convened a committee to study this problem. The committee discovered that the topic should be family-friendly initiatives. It has become commonplace for private industry to provide family-friendly benefits. There is a bill

before Congress now that could possibly make these benefits mandatory in the future. The committee found in their research that universities are lagging behind in providing for these employee needs. The profile of the college professor has changed. More females are in the higher education field, and more men are part of family caring members. The Cooper report of 1995 revealed the top 25% of campuses (94 universities) had 20 family friendly policies. These are referred to as “leadership campuses”. There are no campuses in the southeast included in this category. The recommended policies and programs to put The University of Alabama at the forefront of the Southern University Group include state of the art wellness programs for faculty and staff; family leave; child and elder-care programs; faculty and staff and child tuition benefits; designated work-family coordinator; part-time tenure track; tenure-clock extension; dual career hiring; child care facility; evening child care; faculty sabbatical; flexible spending accounts; work-family policy handbook; employee assistance program and child care reimbursement for work-related travel. Some of these policies are in place at The University of Alabama. One of the primary purposes of this report is to support the University in marketing itself as family-friendly. Standardizing and distributing leave policy is one of the main goals. The current procedure used on campus was discussed. The committee’s primary issue was to stop the tenure clock for birth or adoption of children. This would also stop the sabbatical clock. A handbook, dual career hiring/job placement assistance, and a designated director would be low cost benefits. Significant cost benefits would include a wellness program (currently underway at UA), part-time tenure options, extension and development of child care and child care reimbursement for travel. Retention of faculty, productivity of faculty and a morale boost are just a few of the major impacts of providing some of these benefits. This report and issue have been referred to the Faculty Life Committee for follow-up in their September meeting.

There was no prior notification of the elimination of the **Dean of Student’s Office**. This information was found in an article in the Crimson White. The Student Affairs Committee in the fall meeting with Margaret King should ask for information concerning the absence of communication concerning administrative decisions.

John Vincent met with President Witt concerning the **budget**. The Board of Trustees meeting will be held on UA campus. It is open to the public. Building and road projects, renovations and bond issues will be addressed by the Board. There will be a raise for faculty and staff. The University budget will be increased from \$519 million to \$565 million dollars. This is an 8.3% budget increase. The increase is basically uniform between resources and services, administration and academics. Tuition will increase for in-state students \$207 per semester. The tuition for a year will be just over \$4,000. UA is on the low side of the average for in state tuition. Out-of-state tuition will be increased from \$13,560 to \$15,294. This is a better than ten percent increase. UA has student recruiters in Florida, Texas, Georgia, Virginia, one of the Carolinas and will eventually cover the southeastern states. There has been dramatic shifts in-state in students choosing the University. There should be an increase in National Merit students next year.

Copies of the **2006 Community Climate Survey** were handed out to the Steering Committee.

**Creative Campus** will be headed up by Hank Lazer. This is an effort to get more community involvement in the arts. The responsibilities of Hank's position as assistant academic vice president will be shifting from undergraduate issues to this; this has brought about the search for a new assistant academic vice president.

The **Graduate Dean search** was discussed. Any comments should be sent to the Graduate Council.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Marcia Barrett & Martin Evans*) There is an effort to determine a consensus regarding Appendix A of the Faculty Handbook, **Review of Department Heads and Deans**. The committee will continue to review this issue.

The status of **health insurance for graduate students** was questioned. It is assumed that it is in the budget and more information will be sought.

There was discussion of the search for the director of the **Wellness Center**. A decision has not been reached.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 PM