

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

September 11, 2001 - 307 Ferguson - 3:30 PM

(Corrected Minutes)

ATTENDED MEETING: Norm Baldwin, Keith Woodbury, Steve Miller, Bing Blewitt, John Mason, Don DeSmet, Harry Price, Alvin Winters, Margaret Garner, Dexter Gordon

GUESTS: Joanna Hutt, Dialog, John Macklin, SGA, James Perrian , Emily Craft, Crimson White

The minutes of the August 21 meeting were approved.

The meeting began with John Macklin and James Perrian presenting a proposal to post **student evaluations** on the web. They requested the formal teacher evaluation resolution be presented at the next Faculty Senate meeting. The SGA has been working on this for a number of years. Other institutions have this in place including Tennessee, Ole Miss, Vanderbilt, University of Georgia, Texas A&M, Florida and other institutions. The SGA feels that the Open Records Act gives them the legal right to access teacher evaluation information and that The University of Alabama should release that information to them in an electronic mode. It was brought out that this information could possibly discourage students from taking difficult courses since they would know the tendencies of the professor. The Steering Committee was assured that this information would not be used in a "witch hunt". There were questions concerning the logistics of posting the information, the grade curve on classes with a small number of students, a new professor, teaching a new course, how useful would this information be, the possibility of the information being used to harm a professor and the reporting system. The Steering Committee consensus is that the majority of faculty will be opposed to this proposal. Some faculty would be willing to support the proposal but would it be undesirable to force this on their colleagues. It was suggested that an opinion on the legality be obtained from the Attorney General with discussion about what would come after an opinion was given and how valid that opinion would be. There was a concern that this information on a web page would be accessible by anyone and privacy is a major issue since the evaluation would become part of the professor's personnel file. The other point was shouldn't the public have access to this information. Those institutions with this on a web page are password protected. The possibilities of action to pursue are:

- *Support the proposal 0
- *Oppose the proposal 2
- *Not opposed (passively support/respect for law) 2
- *Attorney General opinion 8
- *Support some other system (voluntary) 5
- *Poll entire faculty by e-mail 3

The point was made that if the opinion of the Attorney General were requested, the response would depend on the way the question is phrased. The comment was that the SGA came to the Faculty Senate asking for their support. A motion was made to put this issue of posting student evaluations on the web on the agenda for the next Faculty Senate

meeting, have a "timed" discussion and ask the senators to take this issue back to their departments. They will then inform them that an e-mail poll of the faculty would be made two weeks later asking them to vote and this would give a general sense of how the faculty views this issue. Included in the discussion was the request to keep the responders anonymous and that the question on the poll of the faculty be carefully phrased.

Fall Break - The SGA proposes coordinating a fall break (Oct. 8-12) with the Tuscaloosa city and county school calendar. The students will have an opportunity to vote for or against this proposal. Alternatives were a Monday and Tuesday fall break with school beginning on Monday, not Wednesday or a full week at Thanksgiving or beginning school a week early with the fall break. Changing the academic calendar could impact many situations such as the length of summer school terms and must be thought through carefully.

A motion was made and seconded (with an amendment to assign a liaison) to elect the following people to serve on the **Quality Council**: Mary Alice Fields, Music Librarian, Tom Lee, Endowed Chair of Accountancy, Ken Wright, Professor of Health Sciences and Athletic Training Education with Norm assigning a member of the Planning and Operations committee as the liaison. These faculty members were among those that reported to the President of the Faculty Senate that they would be willing to serve and will be presented at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

The Steering Committee voted by acclamation to purchase, with **year-end funds**, a new computer and printer for the Faculty Senate office and the possibility of purchasing a laptop computer next year. A request was made for remaining funds be used for a speaking and writing workshop and to set aside funds for the President of the Faculty Senate to travel to Montgomery as needed.

After the non-acceptance of an African American into a sorority or fraternity, the Steering Committee was asked to give suggestions on a plan for the future. Suggestions included The University of Alabama charging fair rental value for the space occupied by sororities and fraternities with no subsidizing by the University. The discussion included the points to address institutional systemic racism and barriers to African Americans being pursued for rush. It was also suggested to invite Dr. Sybil Todd, Vice President of Student Affairs, to report progress made in this area and Dr. Sorensen, President of The University of Alabama, to the Steering Committee meeting for discussion of this topic. It was stated in the resolution to revisit this issue and to monitor progress. Pursuit and retention of black faculty was suggested to be a top priority and concern. Student reactions included - we're just here for four years - we will be shunned - pressure was being felt. It was also expressed that the total attention should not be put on one African American not being accepted into a sorority, it should be focused on changing ourselves.

These are some of the options:

- *Fair rental value position
- *Reaffirm current position
- *Non-Melody Twilley
- *Support coalition
- *Ask administration/take lead
- *Don't react-pull back

*Study (more information)

*Continue with black faculty retention

*Faculty Senate request white Greeks submit plan on how they plan to deal with next rush

Dr. David Beito requested permission to present a resolution to privatize the Greek system at the next Faculty Senate meeting. It will come under "New Business".

Bing Blewitt presented a resolution (*attached*) praising Dr. Pat Hermann for his racial diversity efforts. It was approved by the Steering Committee and will be presented to the Faculty Senate at the next meeting.

RESOLUTION Commending Pat Hermann

Whereas, Professor Pat Hermann has been a leading figure in the struggle for increased racial diversity in the Greek system and

Whereas, his efforts have led to an increased campus awareness and interest in solving these difficult problems and

Be it resolved, the Faculty Senate would like to recognize the tireless efforts of Professor John "Pat" Hermann and express our sincere appreciation.