

FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 9, 2003 – 3:00 PM – 307 FERGUSON

CORRECTED MINUTES

ATTENDING: John Mason, Mathew Winston, Wolfgang Bertsch, Karla Carmichael, Catherine Davies, George Franke, Margaret Garner, Francine James, Steve Miller, Roy Ann Sherrod, Bob Sigler, John Vincent
Guests: Gilbert Crews, Tuscaloosa News, Tiffany Summerville, Crimson White

Minutes from the August 19th Steering Committee meeting were approved.

The Senate Operations committee opened the meeting with the proposed change to the by-laws concerning the election of **ombudspersons**.

Current Provision in By-Laws Regarding Nominations for Ombudspersons

10. The three ombudspersons shall function as a nominating committee by identifying candidates for election each year. Every effort shall be made to nominate multiple candidates and to rotate representation through the various departments and colleges over a period of time.

Proposed Change to By-Laws Regarding Nominations for Ombudspersons (initially proposed by Marvin Johnson) Changes recommended by Senate Operations shown in strikeouts (i.e., omit from Johnson's proposal) and italics (i.e., add to Johnson's proposal)

At least two months prior to the review of nominees by the faculty senate, an announcement shall be sent to the entire faculty *Faculty Senate* requesting nominations for candidates for the position of Ombudsperson. Any member of the faculty may nominate a candidate. This announcement shall be accompanied by a copy of the guide-lines, a list of current Ombudspersons, their term limits, and the academic units they represent (A&S, Business and Engineering, All Other). The names of all nominees shall be sent to the President of the Faculty Senate and to the Chairperson of the Senate Operations Committee and shall be circulated to the entire Senate at least one month before the nominees are reviewed by the Senate. Any faculty member who nominates a candidate may attend the Senate Meeting during which candidates are reviewed and approved may speak on behalf of their nominee. *These will be reviewed by Senate Operations Committee for candidates who meet the criteria. A slate of nominees will be distributed for election at the same time as Senate Elections.*

Concerns expressed regarding the proposed change included the questions, "What happens if there are five or six nominees?" and "What if one of the nominees does not want to serve?" It was suggested that nominations ultimately go to the Senate Operations committee to determine eligibility and balance of representation. The ombudsperson issue was put into action by the Faculty Senate to give faculty options other than the Mediation Committee. The Senate Operations committee is reviewing the Faculty Senate by-laws in its entirety with streamlining and clarification as goals. It was proposed to change a sentence on the third line in the ombudsperson proposal to read; "Any faculty may nominate a candidate by submitting the name, with the candidate's approval, to the Faculty Senate". The second line of the proposal should read; "...an announcement shall be sent to the entire faculty requesting nominations for candidates for the position of Ombudsperson". It was suggested to send the entire faculty an email with an available website link containing ombudsperson information. These changes will be sent to each member of the Steering Committee for review before the Senate meeting next week. The attending Steering Committee members voted to accept the proposed changes as stated above. Parliamentary procedure was discussed concerning the presentation of these changes.

The Provost has sent to the Deans a directive to **justify teaching loads of less than three courses per semester**. Discussion included the standards used by each school/department including teaching loads, research time, credit for performed services such as time served on dissertation committees and the importance of preserving time for teaching. This issue was given to the Academic Affairs committee.

An email received by President John Mason from a faculty member in Education was forwarded to the Steering Committee concerning **grading comprehensive master's exams in the summer**. Students are not allowed to take those exams at any other time. In the College of Education, complaints have been registered by Graduate Students that are teaching. Since the exams are taken in the summer and not graded until fall, the Graduate Students are not placed on payroll. The Faculty Senate had taken action on this issue in the past stating that a faculty member on a ninth-month contract should not be expected to engage in significant service activities in the summer. Any activity over and above what is stated in the contract should be included in the contract. Graduate students in the Psychology Department are required to enroll for a one-hour credit during the summer months, however, there is no corresponding obligation for a faculty member to be available during the summer. It was stated by a Steering Committee member that this is standard procedure by the sciences. It was decided by the Steering Committee following discussion that this is a department issue and should not be addressed by the Faculty Senate.

Volunteers, not necessarily members of the Faculty Senate, are needed to serve on the **Healthy Campus Initiative**. This broad-based committee was formed to address health issues including physical, mental and emotional needs of faculty, staff, students and community. The names submitted were: Matthew Curtner-Smith, Associate Professor of Kinesiology; Steve Nagy, Professor of Health Behavior; Patrick Dunn, Rehab Counselor; John Higginbotham, Rural Health and Lori Messinger, Assistant Professor, Social Work. More information concerning this committee should be made available on the UA web site. The point was made that according to faculty governance, by definition a committee that is in existence for over one year becomes a university standing committee and is responsible for replacing members and continuing its existence. It was suggested to have the chair of this committee discuss this with CUC.

President Witt has asked for the sense of the Steering Committee concerning **dismissing classes after 12:00 noon on November 26, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving**. It was

suggested that this would lead to students asking for more time off. Fall break has been discussed in the past but there would be only a week or so before Christmas break. Days would have to be added at the beginning of the semester to replace the missed day or days. Suggestions included dismissing classes Tuesday afternoon, keeping the dorms open and discussion of other holidays observed or not observed by the university. There was not support for dismissing classes early on Wednesday this year but was support for dismissal if the faculty had advance notice. The issue was given to Planning and Operations Committee.

John Schmitt and John Dew will present information about re-accreditation at the next Faculty Senate meeting. It was noted at the Steering Committee meeting with the Provost on August 28, Tony Freyer and Dick Bradt were recommended for membership on the **SACS Compliance Certification Team**.

There was discussion about **changing** the day and time of the **meeting with the Provost**. John Mason will check on changing the meeting to the fourth Tuesday of the month.

The Provost has requested that **performance measures** common to all three campuses be in place for the UA system. Each campus would then determine performance measures to assist meeting the goals for each institution. There was discussion of the criteria of Carnegie ratings. Dr. Witt's goal is for the University to move into Carnegie Level I. The UA is not in Carnegie I or II. The lack of a medical or vet school impacts that ranking. This will be discussed in the meeting with the Provost on Thursday.

Dean Olin did an analysis of the facilities of the UA. An audit is being conducted at the present time. John Mason will ask for a copy of that audit. The Provost will discuss at the next meeting with the Steering Committee the possibility of the University taking control of **classroom utilization**. In the past one person was in charge of scheduling classrooms but that has not been done in the last seven or eight years. Another issue that should be discussed at this meeting is handicap accessibility on campus. There are departments on campus that do trade classroom space and do have maximum handicap accessibility. In some cases, the direction to take for permission to swap classroom space is not clear and communications between departments and schools is not always conducted. This issue will be discussed in the meeting with the Provost. Deferred maintenance is a problem at the University.

A **reception for Deans** was decided for the date of Tuesday, October 14, 5:30-7:00 PM, at Indian Hills Country Club.

Vice President's Report – (*Mathew Winston*) The question was raised concerning the numbers of members of each committee and if those numbers are sufficient. A&S will be contacted concerning the election of two senators to fill their quota.

Secretary's Report – (*Roy Ann Sherrod*) Roy Ann made the point that roll is called for Faculty Senate meeting and some senators come in late. Not all senators are known and it should be their responsibility to notify her of their attendance. They should refer to the minutes of the last meeting to make certain they were not marked absent when they were present.

Academic Affairs – (*John Vincent & Garry Warren*) No report.

Faculty Life – (*Karla Carmichael & Nick Stinnett*) Benefits, domestic partner benefits, Supe Store, teaching loads, recreation center, recreation center boycott and petitions are issues this committee is considering. The committee members are making an effort to define a benefit. The library is considered a benefit.

The University is considering changes in **health care benefits**. The question was asked if the Faculty Senate wanted to have this on the agenda for the next meeting. Should a statement or resolution be composed addressing this change? It was suggested that Frannie get something to the Steering Committee and communicate electronically something to have on the agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting. The change is imminent. It was suggested to email an action/information alert to the faculty about this issue and send that a resolution could possibly be forthcoming. Another email following the Benefits Committee meeting would be sent with definite information. John will alert the faculty by email The Benefits Committee is being asked to make a recommendation with a very short time to respond and research the issue. A second health care company costing less than Blue Cross/Blue Shield would be offered to faculty and staff. This health care company would be almost useless out of state. If the Faculty Senate feels that this is not in the best interest of the faculty, they would inform them of this fact. The University dental care plan was changed last year without consulting the faculty. A list of questions composed by the committee to be asked in the meeting was handed out. The problem is not enough time has been given to consider this important issue.

Planning & Operations – (*Mohanned Sharif & Mathew Winston*) **Library fines and a parking space** at Ferguson for those using the Post Office were issues from last year. The request for this parking space was denied. John will locate the email concerning the parking space and forward to Mathew.

Financial Affairs – (*Catherine Davies & George Franke*) The **reallocation issue** will have to be considered again if the tax reform package does not pass. The committee is expecting a charge from the Steering Committee based on the tax reform vote. John Mason will request a meeting with Dr. Witt to address the situation of cuts estimated to be 6-8% translating into six to eight million dollars. An article written by Elmer Harris of Alabama Power was brought to the attention of the Steering Committee. This can be accessed through the Tuscaloosa News web site. .

Research & Service – (*Wolfgang Bertsch & Don Hooks*) This committee will meet soon.

Senate Operations – (*Frannie James & Harry Price*) This committee is considering revamping some **Faculty Senate committees**. The sense of the Steering Committee was asked concerning the size of a committee. Would a large size committee of twelve be able to work on issues was asked. The Financial Affairs and the Planning and Operations committees have overlapping duties. It was suggested that more than eight committee members would not be able to relate. It was felt that a large committee could possibly complicate their function. To change these committees would also change the structure of the Steering Committee. The more specific by laws are, flexibility is less. There is not a way to determine how important the issues will be that a certain committee will be addressing. A problem and concern is that University Committee on Committee reports have not been received and very little communication in the last few years. There should be a link between the Standing Committees of the Senate and the Standing Committees of the University. Existing committees should be by function not by structure. It was suggested that structure could not be totally ignored.

Student Affairs – (*Caryl Cooper & Steve Miller*) No report.

Meeting adjourned 5:10 PM