

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14, 2004 – 3:00 pm – 204 B FERGUSON

### UNAPPROVED MINUTES

**ATTENDING:** John Mason, Mathew Winston, Bob Sigler, Marcia Barrett, Margaret Garner, Wolfgang Bertsch, Jerry Webster, Nick Stinnett, Bob Moore, Clark Midkiff

**Guests:** Joan Garrett, Crimson White; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News

The minutes of the August 24, 2004 Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting were approved.

The first item for discussion was the "**Resolution for the Establishment of a Natural Environment Preservation Committee**" presented by the Faculty Life Committee. The University of Alabama is located on a beautiful campus and with continuing construction it is felt that someone should have a specific charge to protect and monitor those activities. The resolution recommends that a University committee be established composed of faculty selected by the Faculty Senate, administration and others with the majority of the committee composed of faculty with the chair having voting privileges. If approved by the Senate, the recommendation would be sent to the University Committee on Committees. The Steering Committee recommends that a member of the Campus Master Plan committee and someone with landscaping and architect experience be included in this committee perhaps as ex officio members. It was suggested to change administration to staff and to recommend that the reporting channel would be directly to the President. The Faculty Life committee accepted the suggestion to have the administrators, faculty and staff recommended by the CUC and appointed by the President of the University. The majority of membership would be faculty. It was decided to leave the number required for the committee open. The changes will be made in the resolution and forwarded to John Mason. The Steering Committee voted to approve the resolution with the amendments.

The "**Resolution for the Adoption of a University Policy Opposing Racist, Sexist, Anti-Semitic, Anti-Islamic, Homophobic, Ethnic, or Other Bigoted Statements on Campus and Prohibiting the Use of University Funds or Facilities by Those Making Such Statements**" was brought forward by the Faculty Life Committee. The point was made that the University should adopt a policy condemning any bigoted statements made on campus. The resolution refers to an incident at Ferguson Theater where a comedian appearing on stage made bigoted and maliciously aggressive comments toward a student in attendance. Everyone agrees that this was a shameful and deplorable act, however, there was no knowledge beforehand that the comedian would take this path. The point was made that other organizations and groups are omitted in the resolution. The issue of freedom of speech is involved but freedom of speech does not mean you can say anything that you want, about anyone you want, anytime you want. It was felt that Student Affairs responded appropriately to the situation. There should be restrictions in place that an entertainer could not verbally attack any person or group in the audience. If the University employs an entertainer and offers the use of its facilities, the entertainer should be under contract with specific restrictions in writing that occurrences of hate speech and bigotry would not be tolerated. Free speech zone locations and the situation of passing through and hearing what you would prefer not to hear were discussed. It was suggested that persons dealing

with any situation of this type be given appropriate training. The classroom application such as teaching the Criminal Justice course which includes sexual harassment and other situations were also discussed. The statement was made that the University should take a strong stand on this issue. The resolution will be modified by Bob Sigler and Wythe Holt and forwarded to John Mason. It is tabled until the next meeting.

The charts on distribution of chair/departmental means from the "**Faculty Feedback Survey for Department Chairs**" and "Observations and Recommendations concerning the data generated by the Faculty Feedback Survey for Chairs" were distributed to the Steering Committee. This is a distribution of departmental means. Ten of the 52 Department Heads had a score of less than three on the question concerning keeping the faculty informed about pertinent issues. This document will be reproduced for the Faculty Senate's meeting next Tuesday. It was suggested to have the documents (the committee report, the means and the distribution of means on each question) posted on the Faculty Senate web site.

The "**Resolution Expressing Thanks to Norm Baldwin and Other Members of the Faculty Leadership Review Committee for Their Work in the Development and Use of Instrument for Obtaining Faculty Feedback on the Leadership of Deans and Department Chairs**" was presented by the Faculty Life committee for discussion. This project was at least four years in the process. It was suggested to alter the phrase Department Heads to Department Heads/Chairs in the second line of the resolution. It was suggested to replace the second clause in the resolution with "Whereas, efforts by the Faculty Senate to collaborate with the Council of Deans in the development of an evaluation method were unsuccessful; and". The suggested changes and the resolution were approved.

The next item on the agenda was the Carolyn Dahl memo to Provost Bonner regarding approval of **Appendix H of Faculty Handbook** by the Council of Deans in May 2002. The memo states that the Faculty Senate approved Appendix H revisions, however, no one remembered approving the document. The Faculty Senate records will be searched for further information concerning this issue. The main concern is the revised document that has been approved by the Council of Deans and forwarded to the Senate. It was suggested that "Pending Issues" be continually listed at the bottom of the agenda for those items needing further action. The document will be referred to the Academic Affairs committee. There was further discussion concerning intellectual property rights especially the right of faculty to sell, lease or rent prerecorded or digital courses. It is implied that someone could present the material in a classroom and that teaching skills are not necessary.

Copies of a letter from Bob Olin to Provost Bonner were handed out to the Steering Committee members. John Mason received an email from a member of Modern Languages and Classics stating that the **interim chair** (a failed chair search) had been appointed but "interim" had been dropped and he was appointed for three years without any faculty discussion. The Russian major disappeared from the catalogue. An Arts & Sciences committee had approved giving certain core requirement designation to four Russian courses. The Faculty Handbook states that when an interim is appointed there will be another search conducted as quickly as possible. The interim dean emailed his faculty stating that there had been a mistake in appointing him for three years.

The discussion pertaining to the **Pledge of Honor** brought out the points that some students are unaware they sign a Honor Pledge among the many forms filled out to attend the University. The Code of Honor is not enforceable. It was decided not to address this issue.

**President's Report** – (*John Mason*) Eric Wilder was the **student attacked** Saturday night on the lawn of his fraternity. He was stabbed in the head area and taken to DCH and air lifted to the UAB Hospital. He has undergone surgery and has been placed in a medically induced coma. There was discussion about any action the University could have taken to prevent such an attack. It was suggested that the Faculty Senate state strongly that this action was totally unacceptable. The University Police has an officer stationed at each party on campus. Fraternities were required to place a fence around the back of their houses. There is no method to totally close the campus and prevent undesirables from entering campus. There seems to be an undesirable element reappearing on The Strip. There would no method to determine someone dangerous until they do something to call attention to that fact. Anyone dealing with a disruptive situation should call the University Police at once. John Mason will make a statement concerning this issue at the Faculty Senate meeting next Tuesday.

The **social with the Deans** will be October 12, 2004, at Indian Hills Country Club from 5:30 until 7:00 PM. This will be for the Deans and Faculty Senate Steering Committee and Officers.

Copies of the **proposed operating budget for The University of Alabama** was handed out. This budget will be voted on at the Board of Trustees meeting on Friday. For the first time ever, in 2005 tuition and fees will be about the same as state appropriations. It was felt that grant and contract dollar amounts were low. The Financial Affairs Committee will review the budget.

**Vice President's Report** – (*Mathew Winston*) The Faculty Senate web page is not up-to-date. The old photo is still posted. The term "liaison" has not been changed to "representative". The heading on the faculty leadership review documents should read "chairs and heads".

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Clark Midkiff & Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers*) The list of committee members of the CUC are being reviewed for accuracy.

**Legislative Agenda** – (*Margaret Garner*) Discussions are underway between **HEP**, three UA lobbyists and Legislators and other appropriate representatives. Margaret Garner will end her chairmanship of the HEP term and will serve on the Executive Committee. Jim Baker, former Secretary of State, will be the new chair. There is a commitment to build a strong link to the business community. There will be a membership push in the near future. When people within the higher education realm are members, it impresses the business community and demonstrates that many people are interested in the Higher Education Partnership goals. The SGA presented a check to HEP from nineteen student organizations and are successful in getting the students involved. The membership fee to HEP is only one dollar a month and will remain low to allow everyone the opportunity to join. There are benefits of reduced costs of air travel, hotels, rental cars, etc., if one joins the highest membership level. HEP is tax deductible since it is advocacy for education. Enrollment forms will be available at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Meeting adjourned 5:10 PM