

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 12, 2005 – 307 FERGUSON – 3:00 pm**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** John Vincent, Wythe Holt, Tatiana Summers, John Mason, Mathew Winston, Jerry Weaver, Priscilla Davis, Bob Sigler, Karen Steckol, Clark Midkiff, Bob Moore, Marcia Barrett, Nick Stinnet, Margaret Garner   **GUESTS:** Joanna Hutt, Dialog; Marlin Caddell, Crimson White

The Steering Committee meeting opened with discussion regarding making committee assignments. A meeting will be held Monday, April 18 to assign senators to Senate committees and University standing committees.

The Steering Committee minutes of March 8, 2005 were approved.

Karen Steckol gave a report regarding **PEEHIP**. The University of Alabama lobbyist, Bill Jones, gave the Senate Financial Affairs committee information comparing **SUG** and universities. The figures pertained to those that remained under Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance coverage and did not choose to participate in **PEEHIP**. The Financial Affairs committee voted to recommend that the agency responsible should grandfather in those already employed at the University before October 1. The administration should look into how many people this would affect and determine the cost. The committee recommends that anyone applying for any type employment at the University be given a current information sheet outlining the new guidelines and current cost. It was also strongly suggested that the employee sign such a sheet acknowledging that they had received the information. The committee also recommends that any current employee should be informed with a summary sheet with the current cost and offer a meeting with HR to clarify the issue and answer any questions. Some see this issue as a deterrent to employing mid-career faculty and other positions. The State of Alabama increased the employer cost 19%. Concerns expressed were that the cost of health care will continue to rise and the cost will be passed on to the employees, the budgeting for retiring employees, and the number of those retiring with under 20 years and those over 20 years. The Financial Affairs committee requested that the President of the Faculty Senate, Mathew Winston, write a letter and/or meet with the University President and Provost outlining the grandfather issue. Wythe Holt seconded by John Mason made a motion that the Faculty Senate Steering Committee endorse the information presented by Karen Steckol and Bob Sigler and empower the President of the Senate to discuss these matters with the appropriate University officials. This motion was approved. The Steering Committee will continue to work on this issue over the summer.

The University Benefits Committee is considering two resolutions at the present time. One deals with **elder care/dementia** with only one facility in town with a maximum of 25 clients and a waiting list. The costs are \$40.00 for 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM or \$20.00 for a consecutive five hour period that you choose. This is a United Way agency supported by 17 area churches and fund-raising events. This resolution requesting that the University

wholly or partially subsidize such a program should pass at the Benefits Committee meeting on Thursday. Natalie Adams, an outgoing member of the Faculty Senate, and Kate Ragsdale, Associate Library Professor, have drafted a resolution pertaining to University faculty maternity leave policy. The current policy does guarantee leave but does not specify a length of time. The faculty member according to the Faculty Handbook will negotiate with the department head or dean concerning the length of time they will be absent. A condition that must be met under the current policy is that their classes must be covered before the leave can be granted. There are varying degrees of discrepancies all across campus regarding the granting of **maternity leave**. A committee of ten is being formed to draft a new maternity leave policy. The resolution most likely to be passed at the Benefits Committee on Thursday will present to the University President the names and chair of this committee. University staff employees are not given paid maternity leave. It was suggested to change the phrase "maternity leave" to "parenting leave". It was suggested to include staff in this resolution. The Benefits Committee will consider these suggestions at their Thursday meeting. There is an objection to recommending more cost inducing issues to the University at this time.

The **Professional Staff Committee** is now being organized and will be meeting Thursday. There is no supporting organization for maintenance employees.

John Mason handed out copies of letters from Dr. Witt, Dr. King, Dr. Gilbert and a tenure report. There are two or three colleges that do not have a single African-American tenured faculty member. One of the Senate committees might possibly want to pursue this issue. In 2002 the Senate passed a resolution requesting a **fall break**. There will be a fall break in October, 2006. School will not begin on the Monday of the first week of classes but will begin on Wednesday because there are 74 class days in the fall and 72 in the spring. Adding a two-day fall break will make the semesters even. There were questions concerning if all faculty members would be given the fall break. The space in Rose Towers will be used as storage. Wythe Holt will ask Dr. Witt if that space could be made available for day care facilities for faculty members. Items two and three in the Senate's **health care** resolution was rejected by administration. The prescription drug deductible request to lower the cost to \$25.00 was also rejected. Item number one seems to agree if it can be shown that other SUG institutions have a frozen ratio. The Benefits Committee is trying to determine percentages at other institutions between the subsidy and the part that is paid by the faculty member. The Senate proposed that the percentage in 2004 that the University paid in total health care costs be contrasted to the percentage paid by faculty and staff in premiums, co-pays and deductibles and that the ratios remain constant in the future. In 2002 the University began reducing their contribution to health care costs. The Benefits Committee has been asked to propose additional health care tiers.

Dr. Witt's commitment is to increase faculty staff salaries. There was discussion of the amount of the percentage of salary increases for higher education.

Meeting adjourned.