

CORRECTED MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

October 15, 1996

Ferguson Forum

3:30 p.m.

Highlights:

- [Meetings with Provost Barrett on Faculty Handbook](#)
 - [Sorensen addresses Board of Trustees](#), discusses faculty salaries
 - [Task force to study enrollment drop](#)
 - [New SGA officers presented](#)
 - [Academic Affairs committee discusses Core, plus/minus](#)
 - [Mainframe computer purchase delayed](#)
 - [Financial Affairs discusses Handbook, travel reimbursement](#)
 - [Benefits: HMO plan?](#)
 - [CIO Search](#)
 - [Research & Service committee meets with Sorensen](#)
 - [Student Affairs committee reviews Academic Suspension policy](#)
 - [Student Affairs reviews "Dining Dollars"](#)
 - [Senate Operations committee considers changes to the Senate Constitution & ByLaws](#)
 - [Legislative Agenda committee maps strategy with Sorensen, others](#)
 - [Campus Master Plan updated](#)
 - [Bryant-Denny expansion](#)
 - [Fire station location](#)
 - [University Press changes](#)
 - [Search for new Assistant VP for Human Resources](#)
 - [Resolution: Academic Suspension policy](#)
 - [University Calendar recommendations passed](#)
 - [SGA Exec VP speaks](#)
 - [SLIS future pondered](#)
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Members absent and not represented by an alternate: Selwyn Hollingsworth, Sharon O'Dair, Thomas Wolfe, Mark Weaver, Subhabrata Chakraborti, Ray Carroll, William Gonzenbach, Paul Stuart.

The [minutes for September 1996](#) were approved.

President's Report

Senate President Amy Ward reported that the Senate officers and Wythe Holt met with Provost Barrett and Bryan Fair to discuss the current draft of the Faculty Handbook, particularly with respect to some changes made by former Provost Taaffe. Ward reported that the discussions brought some agreement, some minor modifications, and some disagreements. The Provost was willing to discuss her reasons for many of the changes, which seemed a difference from the recent past.

Ward said that the draft of the Faculty Handbook would be on the Senate's web site within the week so that all faculty

could examine it. Ward requested that Senators provide their input through the committee co-chairs. It was hoped that input from any or all faculty could be completed in time for the November Senate meeting.

President Sorensen addressed the Resources & Priorities Committee with respect to the budget. The amount of money for salary increases is approximately \$2.8 million.

The Board of Trustees met on September 27. Dr. Sorensen's presentation at the meeting compared faculty and staff salaries to the average salaries of the Southern University Group (SUG). Our salaries are just below the 50th percentile, rather than the Board's long expressed goal of the 75th percentile. Sorensen expressed a deep commitment to raising faculty & staff salaries.

At a recent meeting with the President, Sorensen expressed a determination to find the reason for the enrollment drop this year, establishing two task forces to study the problem. A "Marketing" task force headed by John Hicks will administer surveys attempting to pinpoint the cause of the drop in enrollment. Three surveys will ask alumni, current freshmen and transfers, and student's parents. Senator Bill Gonzenbach is also involved in these surveys. A "Recruiting & Retention" task force will develop strategies. Sample posters were available to the Senators.

UA President Sorensen's installation ceremony is planned for October 18. In his inaugural address, Sorensen will be going over the points which comprise his vision for University. Sorensen will meet with the Senate on January 21st, and the Senate Steering Committee will meet with him on October 31.

Ward reported on a meeting with Provost Barrett. Barrett is considering changes in the Core Curriculum, and wants to appoint a committee composed of some members of the Senate Academic Affairs Committee and the University Core Curriculum Oversight Committee to address possible changes.

Ward has asked the R&S Committee to look at recommendations for library funding. The Financial Affairs and Academic Affairs Committees may also have some input, hopefully by the November Senate meeting.

Ward presented the newly elected SGA officers:

- Jessica Medeiros President
- Brad Elliott Executive VP, who will also serve as liaison to the Faculty Senate.
- Heather Stinson Chief of Staff
- Courtney Cunningham Executive Secretary.
- Matthew Duke VP of Financial Affairs
- Kevin Trimm VP of External Affairs
- Kent Russell VP of Student Affairs
- Jeremy Hilsman VP of Academic Affairs

Reports from Senate Committees

The **Academic Affairs** Committee met on October 1 and discussed the Core Curriculum Prologue and Goals, reported co-chair Peggy Jessee. Rebecca Oxford, chair of The Core Curriculum Task Force addressed the group and reviewed the history and background of the core curriculum. Provost Barrett has suggested that she wants more input into the revision of the Prologue and Goals, stating that perhaps they were not broad enough. The Academic Affairs Committee decided to postpone further discussion until after the Core Curriculum Committee met with Barrett. Two members of the Academic Affairs Committee will be present at that meeting.

The committee was asked to revisit the issue of plus/minus grading. Some students were reported to be at a disadvantage in competition due to the lack of a numeric value for "A+" of 4.3 to balance the "A-" grade. The committee asked for the history and background of this issue from the original committee, and is getting information on how other universities handle this problem.

Ray White, co-chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the Senate task force on mainframe computer acquisition seems to have had an impact: the decision to lease or purchase a new mainframe was postponed until the new Chief Information Officer has been hired, which is expected to be in January.

Ray asked the Senators present for feedback on computer plan and the task force's suggestion that many of the same needs could be met for as little as one-tenth the cost. One faculty member outside the Senate called the headline in the minutes 'incendiary'. Did any Senators who were present feel that the headline was unfair or incendiary? No such comments were expressed by Senators present.

Rona Donohoe, co-chair of the **Financial Affairs** Committee, reported that during their last meeting, the new draft of the Faculty Handbook was a major item discussed. The committee is also looking into reports that travel reimbursement requirements are extreme. Lynne April wants to know about any documentation requirements which seem unreasonable, and is very interested in clearing up any problems. It appears that the extreme requirements may be the result of misinformation.

Mike Conerly, chair of the Faculty/Staff Benefits Committee, will meet with the Financial Affairs Committee. Among the issues will be the recurrent rumor of an impending HMO plan for the University and suggestions of changes in the University's match for employee contributions to TIAA/CREF.

With respect to the search for an Associate VP for Information Technology (CIO), Donohoe reported that ads will run by the end of October with resumes expected by November 13. Interviews are planned before the Christmas holidays, with the new person on staff in January. Barry Mason is chair of search committee. The CIO position will be a full time job. Any internal candidates will have to give up their old job to take the new position.

Wythe Holt questioned whether the new position would help streamline administration, or cause additional administrative bloat. Donohoe responded that the administration continues to talk about downsizing, but it is not clear how this new position will affect that goal. Inez Rovegno asked where the money for the new position would come from. Some faculty complaints were reported about additional administrative positions in a time when we are losing faculty lines.

The Faculty Handbook has been a major concern of the **Planning & Operations** Committee, with a draft circulating through the committee. Co-chair Bob Halli said that some urgent issues concerning the University calendar had come up, and he would ask for a suspension of the rules to consider resolutions on this matter later in the meeting.

Nick Stinnett reported that the **Research & Service** Committee has been working on a recommendation for support of library in conjunction with the Financial Affairs Committee, and would appreciate suggestions and input. It is hoped that the recommendation will meet with a more substantial support than has been the case in the past.

Stinnett reported that the Research & Service Committee had a very positive luncheon meeting with President Sorensen today. Sorensen acknowledged that some disciplines have much less grant available to them, leading to a wide diversity of opportunity. Sorensen is aware of this, and he intends to use overhead from some grants to provide research support for other areas on a competitive basis.

Sorensen plans to provide substantial funds for the library. It was not clear, but Sorensen seemed to be planning for permanent funds rather than the temporary funding supplements that have been the case in the past.

The committee expressed its conviction that the importance of **service** needs to have greater visibility in the Faculty Handbook. Sorensen agreed, but said that the faculty should take responsibility for getting the necessary language in the Handbook. Sorensen is very committed to seeing much more 'outreach' service from the faculty.

Scott Bridges read in the newspaper that we have made a commitment to have the 'best athletic facilities' in the nation. What is our similar commitment for the library? Clemson has an arrangement such that all donations to athletics must contain some donations to academic areas. Could we set up a similar arrangement?

Bob Brooks, co-chair of the **Student Affairs** Committee, reported that the committee has been looking at the

Academic Suspension Policy, especially with respect to the policy on re-admittance after suspension. The committee has recommended that the readmission decision be done in the colleges rather than in the Office of Admissions, and has a resolution to that effect for today's business.

Student Affairs co-chair Bob Sigler discussed the "Dining Dollars" controversy, beginning with a brief history of food service on campus, particularly focusing on the perceived deterioration over several years. The University invested \$6 million from a bond issue to improve the facilities, and Aramark invested \$1.3 million, Aramark and the University both expect to recover their expenses over time. In return for this investment, Aramark owns all the food franchises on campus. Students were asked for their preferences, but were asked to choose between a full meals & board plan and the 'Dining Dollars' plan. It comes as no surprise that they chose the 'Dining Dollars' plan, but they were not given enough choices to get their true preferences on the issue. Once Aramark makes back the money invested in the facilities, the University gets 13% of the income. In conclusion, the committee recommends that the Senate take no action in this matter.

Wythe Holt said that the **Senate Operations** Committee is looking into possible changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution & Bylaws to modify the committee structures. The goal is to allow more openness and democracy in handling business. The Senate Operations committee has been invited to join with the Committee on Committees to follow through with Provost Barrett's expressed intent to streamline the University committee structure. Holt expressed some reservations about the proposed changes, but also sees some advantages.

The Senate Operations is also charged with investigating absences from the Senate meetings, and Holt suggested that all Senators should communicate the reasons for absences to the committee.

Scott Bridges reported that the **Legislative Agenda** met with President Sorensen on September 18 and raised the question of defining the faculty role in lobbying. Sorensen suggested that faculty should focus on particular issues:

- Faculty salaries. Sorensen plans to talk with Governor James on this issue.
- Universities role in economic development in the state.
- Considering relationship with K-12 and outreach to junior colleges and Auburn.

The committee met with Dr. Barrett who is concerned with issues that will improve student recruiting and retention. Barrett listed three issues that need to be emphasized:

1. The University can make students successful.
2. We need to keep more of our brightest students in state.
3. We need research status to attract young talented faculty to this institution.

Dr. Robshaw emphasized that graduating students need to be prepared for jobs upon graduation and that this needs to be emphasized in marketing the University. Robshaw will have a report for the President and Provost by Thanksgiving.

UA lobbyist Bill Jones gave a report, mentioning the untimely death of state legislator Michael Figures, who was a graduate of the UA Law School & Stillman College. Some activities are planned to honor him.

The next activity of the Legislative Agenda Committee will be to present Bill Jones with planks to improve economic development in the state. The next meeting will be with Bailey Thompson, who did a study of the expenses of higher education in the state.

Bridges predicted that faculty should be hearing very shortly about activities that will bring legislators to our campus and will press our issues with legislators leading up to the beginning of the state legislature's assembly in January.

Reports from Senators on University Committees

Rhoda Johnson reported on the meeting of the Campus Master Plan Committee on Oct 12, with 12 members present.

Jeff Nabors gave an update on the (1992) master plan. The start of a new Bevill building was noted, funded by a Department of Energy grant.

The expansion of Bryant-Denny Stadium is expected to be completed by 1997. Other topics discussed included the Thomas street redevelopment and the completion of the Ferguson food court. The Student Services building was put on hold, and the question of its impact on campus parking & transportation was discussed. The committee noted the need for a close working relationship with the Parking Committee. The Master Plan Committee would like to have a more proactive role in the future. Quick response to a fire call was discussed, particularly with respect to the location of the new fire house.

Margaret Garner asked whether a fire truck could get behind Rose. (This is important due to the presence of a child care center there.) Wythe Holt insisted that we must have a new fire station close by the campus! At present, we have significantly reduced coverage! There was an agreement on a site, but it has fallen through.

Rhoda Johnson responded that Nabors says they are looking at other sites.

Larry Clayton reported on the meeting of the University Press Committee. There have been two very significant changes recently. Malcolm McDonald retired as head of the press, and was replaced by Nicole Mitchell, and Barbara Chotner has taken over as chair of the University Press Committee.

Don DeSmet reported that Provost Barrett addressed the University Plans Committee. She stated that she wants to improve the graduate program, the undergraduate program and research at the University.

Old Business:

Margaret Garner reported on the search for an Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, the position currently held by Hubert Kessler. A second interview was recently concluded with a leading candidate.

New Business:

Resolution from Student Affairs.

Whereas, the Student Affairs Committee has reviewed the Academic Suspension Proposal, found it acceptable and has no substantive comments to add, now therefore

Be It Resolved that the University adopt this proposal.

During discussion of the resolution, it was noted that the only major change was that reinstatement of suspended students is moved from the Admissions Office to the colleges. The Student Affairs Committee sees this as an improvement. It was noted that suspension is a rare sanction anyway, and that most of the work for suspension is done in the Deans' offices. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Bob Halli moves suspension of the rules for consideration of a set of resolutions from the Senate Planning & Operations Committee. Wythe seconded, and the Senate voted suspension. The resolutions concerned the University Calendar.

By way of background, Halli explained that the second term of summer school overlaps with the high school calendar, thus making it impossible for university students involved in high school activities to take many courses here in the summer. This can be remedied by sliding both Interim & Summer terms forward one week. But problem this causes is that Interim term would overlap the last day of the final exam period, which is scheduled to take 7 days. The recommendation of the Planning & Operations Committee is to reduce the exam schedule to 6 days by skipping two Tuesday-Thursday periods that aren't used anyway.

The recommendations from Planning & Operations are as follows:

1. Given the benefits of a six-day examination period in Fall and Spring Terms, the fact that only two examination slots are now scheduled on the seventh day, and the fact that the normal scheduling of Tuesday and Thursday classes does not use the TR 10-10:50 and TR 1-1:50 time slots, **we recommend** that the practice of scheduling final exam slots for the time periods TR 10-10:50 and TR 1-1:50 be discontinued.
2. **We recommend** that the final examination period for the regular Fall and Spring Terms consist of six days, beginning on a Monday and ending on a Saturday.
3. **We recommend** that classes for each regular Fall and Spring Term begin on a Wednesday and end on a Friday. With holidays for Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and the day after Thanksgiving, each Fall Term will contain 45 MWF class meetings and 30 TR meetings. [This is the minimum required to attain the SACS mandated 2250 contact minutes per semester for a three credit-hour course.] With holidays for Martin Luther King's birthday observance, Spring Break, and Honors Day, each Spring term will contain 45 MWF class meetings and 31 TR meetings.
4. **We recommend** that classes for each Spring Term begin on the first Wednesday following January 4 and that classes for each Fall Term begin on the first Wednesday following August 19. [When January 4 is on a Wednesday, the official celebration of the Sunday New Year's Day is Monday which would leave only Tuesday, Jan. 3 for testing, orientation, etc. This Fall schedule allows for a minimum of four business days between the last day of examinations and Christmas Day, for the collection, processing, and mailing of grades.]
5. **We recommend** that Interim Term and Summer Terms be scheduled so that the week following the completion of second Summer Term's examinations is free.
6. We note that with the elimination of the seventh day of examinations, the Interim Term/Summer Term schedule can begin either on the Monday immediately following the completion of the Spring examination schedule or one week later. **We recommend** that the positioning of this block take into account not only the established bounds of the University's Fall and Spring Terms but also the dates for the opening and closing of elementary and secondary schools both locally and throughout the state. If both positions work effectively, **we recommend** the earlier to extend the August break.
7. **We recommend** that , when semester schedules are solicited, departments be informed of the examination schedules for those semesters, so faculty may take this information into account as they see fit in selecting times for their classes.
8. **We recommend** that, in the second Summer Term, classes not be ended at 5 PM on the last class day (Thursday) and that examinations not be scheduled for that evening. [Doing so blocks out evening classes which need the Thursday time to make up their required duration. There are only five examination slots scheduled and these can easily be accommodated on Friday and the first two slots on Saturday. (This is not a problem for the first Summer Term because classes end on a Friday and there are no scheduled Friday classes to conflict with Friday exams.)]

The recommendations were considered and passed one at a time Only recommendation seven received any negative votes, as some senators expressed the fear that this might appear self-serving on the part of the faculty.

Brad Elliot, the executive vice president of the SGA, asked to speak to the Senate. Wythe Holt moved that he be given the privilege of the floor. On behalf of the students, Elliot expressed the following concerns:

- Students were concerned about the lack of a numeric value for 'A+.' One suggestion was to remove 'A-' as an option. This would give a student with all As a 4.0 QPA.
- Students were also concerned about the University Calendar, and Elliot felt they would be pleased with today's resolution.
- Concerns about Library funds and library hours were raised recently by students.
- Elliot noted that in order to spend the entire \$200 required by the 'Dining Dollars' plan would take \$12 per week, and given the prices in the renovated food court, this would be very easy to spend.
- Students were concerned that Dead Week be honored by the faculty.
- Elliot also expressed concern about the apparently partisan involvement of faculty in the recent SGA campaign. Some students felt that certain faculty were too outspoken in their endorsements or opposition to some candidates.

Margaret Garner gave an update on the task force considering the future of the School of Library & Information Studies, which first met on October 11. Provost Barrett charged the group to provide her input. She requested

1. An unranked list of options feasible for future directions.
2. Review of the pros and cons for each option.
3. Identification of the resources needed for each option described.
4. Descriptions of suggestions from faculty/alumni with regard to specific needs critical to the school.

Barrett made it clear that there is no intention to weaken or eliminate LIS, but only to strengthen it. Committee members are Ron Rogers (chair), Joan Atkinson, Dean Walburn, Chet Alexander, Gordon Coleman, Lou Singleton, James Yarbrough and Margaret Garner.

There being no further business, the Senate adjourned at 5:02PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcus Brown, Secretary

Back to the [Minutes](#)

Back to the [Faculty Senate page](#)