

CORRECTED MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

October 21, 1997

101 Bevill Building

3:30 PM

Tom Novak, Senate Secretary, apologized for not having refreshments at the meeting. Fortunately, the crowd was not in a hostile mood, so Novak survived with no physical harm. To ease the tension, he joked that drinks would be on Dr. Sorensen at the Ferguson Center after the meeting. The Senate found the comment marginally humorous.

The [minutes for September 1997](#) were approved without corrections.

Address By Dr. Sorensen

Dr. Sorensen addressed the Senate about updating the University Facilities. But first he gave an overview of some of the University's recent accomplishments. He stated that the incoming class had an increase of 500 students and is the largest incoming class in seven years. Also, transfer students increased by 200, which is a 20% increase. The present enrollment is at 18,400, up 300 from last year. Dr. Sorensen attributed these increases to enhanced recruiting and a better job of retaining our existing students. The incoming freshmen had an average GPA of 3.0 and an ACT of 24.2, which are records for the University. Sorensen stated that there are 240 freshman enrolled in the Honors Program and 102 National Merit Finalists. He is pleased with the diversity of the class, which includes 14% African Americans.

Alcohol and drug abuse within the University community was briefly discussed. Dr. Sorensen stated that one out of eight students that live in dormitories live in a PACE dorm. Also, the University residence halls are at 100% capacity.

Dr. Sorensen commented on the Alabama Research magazine, which publicizes the research accomplishments of the University. Research at the University was at 49 million dollars for the 96-97 year, up from 32 million the previous year. Sorensen stated that the University was the only research school in the State to make the Princeton Review, and it is now ranked as a 2nd tier school in U.S. News and World Report.

Dr. Sorensen stated the University only receives 35% of its budget from state funding. He commented on the philanthropic gifts received through the University's campaign, which concluded at 204 million, with 93 million designated to specific programs.

Dr. Sorensen then briefly commented on the following building projects:

- River Road Park enhancement
- Razing of the McMillan Building
- Byrd/Park Adams renovation
- New Alabama Institute for Manufacturing Excellence
- Building
- Central steam plant
- Student Services
- Paty and Tutwiler Hall Food Services
- Ferguson Center
- Bryant/Denny Stadium

- Mary Burke Hall food services
- Barnard/Tuomey renovation.

A brief question-and-answer session followed. Bob Halli commented on transfer students and the Articulation agreement. Harry Blewitt asked why the fire station could not be moved across the street, and Scott Bridges suggested that a sound barrier be installed around the new fire station because of its proximity to the Moody Music Building. Ray White commented on strategies for dealing with state legislators, and Pat Bauch commented on the University losing good faculty because of poor salaries.

Faculty Senate President's Report

Margaret Garner, Faculty Senate President, thanked the Senate for its support and hard work on critical issues and initiatives. She urged the Senators to continue to check their email regularly so that information about emerging issues can be disseminated very quickly between meetings. She stated that the Steering Committee is trying to have as many reports available prior to the meeting so that the meeting time is used most efficiently. Garner also asked the Senators to check the web page and encourage their faculty constituents to do so as well. She then asked for suggestions to improve communications even more so.

Garner than gave the following updates:

President Sorensen invited Margaret Garner to meet with the Executive Committee, on September 30, 1997, to discuss ways that he and the executive committee could work together more effectively with the Faculty Senate. Garner solicited comments from the Steering Committee and prepared a report. The report should be available on the web page.

Garner informed the Senate that the steering committee meets monthly with the Provost. Garner also has additional meetings scheduled at two-week intervals. These meetings enhance communication between the senate and the Provost and are viewed as mutually beneficial. These meetings are informal, sometimes with an agenda concerning current issues and other times allowing open discussion according to interests. Issues of recent discussion have related to the State Articulation and General Studies Committee and the core curriculum, the Faculty Resource Center, Faculty Development part-time position, and extending the University catalog date so that some academic policies could be reviewed in a timely manner.

Garner informed the Senate that Amy Ward will be submitting a report following a meeting of the State Articulation and General Studies Committee, scheduled for November 7th.

Garner asked the Senators to encourage the faculty and departments to review and comment on the Provost's White Paper. It is not a plan, but rather it is intended to focus discussion and generate ideas about future directions and priorities for the University. Senate Standing Committees have been asked to review the document as it relates to their areas, but it is imperative that significant discussion and debate occur in the divisions and departments.

Garner informed the Senators that the Faculty Senate is a charter member of the Challenge 21 Vision Partners, an initiative begun a year ago to formulate a shared vision and strategic development blue print for Tuscaloosa County. The six priority issues include: Education (which is the top priority), Quality Living, Infrastructure, Economic Development, Government, and Private Sector Leadership. Copies of their initial strategies and announcements for two very important upcoming meetings were made available as handouts. The first meeting on October 28th involves the presentation from representatives of four cities where similar strategic planning processes were implemented. Garner urged the Senate to consider attending. The other meeting is a town meeting to give the community an update on the Challenge 21 achievements.

Reports From Senate Committees

Academic Affairs Committee

Jim Richardson, co-chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, informed the Senate that Dr. Hank Lazer, Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, spoke with the Committee at the October 7 meeting about proposed changes to academic policies and other issues concerning the Articulation Agreement.

Richardson informed the Senate that the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans had proposed a uniform, university-wide forgiveness policy. The proposed policy also allowed students to forgive up to 16 credits. The current policy has a three course limit. The intent of the proposed forgiveness policy was to simplify the policy and to remove the current loopholes that allow students to transfer within the university to a college with a different forgiveness policy. Currently, some departments do not allow certain courses to be forgiven. For example, a department offering a professional program with a limited enrollment may not wish to allow students to forgive courses prerequisite to the program. The committee considered the advantages of a uniform, university-wide policy to be outweighed by the infringement on the policies set by individual departments to ensure the quality of their graduates. Dr. Lazer concurred and agreed to ask the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans to reconsider the forgiveness policy. Richardson stated that if a new forgiveness policy is proposed in the future, it should be proposed in conjunction with the academic bankruptcy policy.

Richardson informed the Senate that Dr. Lazer spoke about the articulation agreement and the upcoming meeting on October 16 for all faculty. Provost Barrett has called the meeting to inform faculty about the articulation agreement and about a ballot on issues involving UA's core curriculum. Richardson said that Dr. Lazer commented that the implications for this ballot are not obvious and faculty should discuss the proposed changes before voting.

Richardson stated that the Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the current +/- grading policy not be changed at this time. Implemented in the Fall of 1994, the policy has not been in effect long enough for the first class which entered the University under the policy to graduate. Further, any change in policy should be initiated by a University standing committee which has examined the issue in detail.

Richardson also mentioned the topic of "Which catalog applies to students who return to the University after extended absences?" Dr. Lazer agreed to consult with the registrars office (Brenda Hunter) to learn more about this issue.

Richardson said the undergraduate catalog states that a grade of D is passing. Yet many departments require students to earn at least a C in certain courses to complete the program. An informal survey revealed a wide variety of policies used by departments across the University. Developing a university-wide policy on a minimum passing grade would be a very complex task. The committee recommended that no changes be made until a more urgent need for a uniform policy arises.

Financial Affairs Committee

Lee Pike, co-chair of the Financial Affairs Committee, reported that the Financial Affairs Committee met October 7th. Committee members were updated on activities that took place over the Summer. Reports were distributed and discussed concerning a hospice care complaint brought to the Faculty Senate. The committee subsequently generated a resolution on Health Care. In addition, the Committee was advised of a plan to fund expansion of the University Development Office. The Committee recorded its opinion of the plan and undertook to poll most of the college deans about their opinions of the plan. This material was forwarded to the President of the Senate on October 9th.

Planning and Operations Committee

Philip Johnson addressed the Senate on behalf of the Planning and Operations Committee. He stated that there is a strong push to located the new AIME building on the grassy knoll, across the street from the front of the Bevill Building. Rona Donahoe indicated that there were some civil-engineering concerns related to the soil and its drainage at the alternate location, behind MIB across Hackberry Lane. Wythe Holt said that the University should stick to its Master Plan if the plan is to have any integrity. Rona Donahoe also stated that an analysis of parking needs to be performed if the building occupies a portion of the existing lot across from MIB and Bevill Building. A significant

number of Senators felt that more information is needed before the Senate initiates any action with regard to this issue.

Research and Service Committee

Harry Blewitt, co-chair of the Research and Service Committee, expressed his displeasure with relocating the fire station. In defense of the selected location, Wythe Holt stated that the new location provides better access for the fire department.

Senate Operations Committee

Bill Andreen, co-chair of the Senate Operations Committee, reported that approximately one-third of the University faculty voted on the amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution. There were 247 yes votes and 8 no votes. The question of "how secret is the ballot?" if the ballot requires a signature.

Legislative Agenda Committee

Scott Bridges reported on the Legislative Agenda Committee. He stated that the committee met on October 14 and will be meeting with the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees this semester. He indicated that faculty salaries average \$6,000 less than the average of the Southern Universities Group. He also indicated that the committee will be tracking every legislator in terms of their voting record with respect to funding. Charles Leathers asked Bridges if the Faculty Senate was turning into a voting block. Leathers strongly voiced his opinion that the Faculty Senate should not be involved with lobbying since it does not involve academic matters. Ray White stated that, in his opinion, it does involve academic matters. Margaret Garner said that the faculty is being pushed into a corner, and that something needs to be done.

New Business

After agreeing to Marcus Brown's request for a friendly amendment to the resolution, Jim Richardson, co-chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, presented the following resolution from the Committee:

The Faculty Senate recommends that the current +/- grading policy not be changed at this time. Implemented in the Fall of 1994, the policy has not been in effect long enough for the first class which entered the University under the policy to graduate. Further, any change in policy should be initiated by a University standing committee which has examined the issue in detail.

Rob Ingram stated that the issue needs to be dealt with, not sidestepped. Richardson responded that more data is needed. Wythe Holt suggested that the Academic Affairs Committee continue to investigate this issue. Joe Benson stated it is a faculty issue, not an administrative issue.

After the discussion, the resolution passed by the following vote: 29 Yes and 5 No.

Rona Donahoe, co-chair of the Financial Affairs Committee, presented the following resolution on behalf of the Committee:

Be it resolved that:

- o the University Benefits Office staff and the Faculty/Staff Benefits Committee be commended for their efforts in providing additional health care coverage to University faculty and staff with no increase in premium levels; and
- o that the University Benefits Office should provide information that clearly lists all details of the extent and conditions of our BC/BS Health Plan's coverage (the most recent Group Health Care Plan booklet distributed to the faculty is dated January 1, 1992, and changes in coverage made since that time need to be included); and

- that the University Benefits Office staff be reminded that in addition to being facilitators and interpreters of BC/BS policies, they must also serve as advocates for faculty/staff concerns to BC/BS. The University is self-insured and should therefore help establish the policies by which claims are evaluated and, whenever possible, serve as advocates of the policy holders when reasonable claims are rejected by BC/BS; and
- that the faculty believe Benefits Office staff should, while striving for responsible fiscal management of the health care plan, hold the health care needs and concerns of the faculty/staff as their highest priority.

The resolution passed with a unanimous vote.

Harry Blewitt, co-chair of the Research and Service Committee, presented the following resolution on behalf of the Committee:

The Faculty Senate strongly endorses the decision by the President and Provost to keep the University of Alabama Press quarters on campus. This decision - see the attached letter from President Sorensen and Provost Barrett to Prof. Barbara Chotiner, Chair of the Editorial Board ([Attachment A](#)) - certainly affirms the centrality and significance of the Press to the academic life of the University.

The resolution passed with a unanimous vote.

Bob Brooks, co-chair of the Student Affairs Committee, presented the following resolution on behalf of the Committee:

WHEREAS The University of Alabama's purpose is to advance the intellectual and social condition of all the people of the state through quality programs of research, instruction, and service, (SOURCE: Undergraduate Catalog)

WHEREAS the expanded alcohol services provided in the Food Court in Ferguson has generated few sales to only a minority of the student population,

WHEREAS with the opening of Starbucks (non-alcoholic establishment) more students will congregate in the Ferguson Center in the evenings, which could lead to more student drinking at the Food Court into the late evening,

WHEREAS there is indisputable evidence that alcohol is directly involved in numerous tragedies and deaths, especially among the college-aged population (for example, the death of Scott Krueger, age 18, on September 29, 1997 at MIT, the death of Benjamin Wynne, age 20, on August 25, 1997 at LSU, multitudes of automobile related tragedies, and so forth),

WHEREAS the sale of alcohol by vendors on The University of Alabama exposes The University of Alabama to certain potentially large legal liabilities (for example, Donald Hunt, LSU student who nearly died in the August 25, 1997 incident at LSU, has filed suit against, among others, LSU),

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the faculty senate is opposed to the sale of alcohol in the Food Court within Ferguson Center.

This resolution was hotly debated. Wythe Holt stated that after polling the faculty of the law school on this issue, he and Bill Andreen would split their votes (one in favor and one against) to reflect the position of the law faculty. Charles Leathers spoke in favor of the resolution and stated that the University should not be involved in selling beer. He indicated that selling beer sends the wrong message to students. James Taylor agreed with Leathers, and Bob Brooks discussed the University's liability. Bob Halli then responded with an eloquent and passionate plea in favor of selling beer. Halli reminisced about his younger days as a student and how he enjoyed drinking a beer at the student union after a hard day of studying. Halli further stated that he felt the content of the resolution did not apply to selling

beer at the Ferguson Center.

The resolution failed by the following vote: 14 Yes and 17 No and 4 Abstain.

The senate adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Novak, Secretary

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Attachment A
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Copy of Letter to Barbara Chotiner:

Professor Barbara Ann Chotiner

Department of Political Science

College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Alabama

Box 870213

Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Dear Barbara:

Thank you for forwarding us the resolution form the Editorial Board of The University of Alabama Press regarding the proposed move of the Press offices. This will be a good opportunity for us to bring you up to date on our plans.

As you know, the decision to relocate the fire station from the stadium area to the MacMillan Building was made only recently and has necessitated that we find temporary quarter for the Press pending renovation of new space for the Press on campus. We have been working with Nicole Mitchell and a realtor to identify suitable rental space in a commercial office building. She has inspected several properties, and we understand a lease should be signed in the near future.

The plan is to move the Press on campus as soon as possible. One possibility is to move the Press into Gorgas Library in the space currently occupied by the School of Library and Information Studies(SLIS). This can only occur after SLOS moves into new quarter, possibly the McClure Building. In the interim, we have decided to renovate a building on the corner of Hackberry Lane and Campus Drive that we recently acquired from Bryce Hospital. This building, know as "Bryce B" is large enough to house several units. The Press, with some offices of University Advancement and perhaps some other units, would be compatible tenants. This building requires considerable renovation work and would not be ready for occupancy until next fall, even if we begin renovations right away. Consequently, temporary rental quarters will be needed for the Press.

It is possible that Bryce B will be the final home for the Press. Another possibility is that it will be an intermediate step to permanent location in the Library. In either event, it is our goal to move the Press to campus as soon as possible. Either site is far preferable to the current location of the Press; hence, the short term inconvenience will be outweighed in the end by the advantages of a modern, on-campus arrangement.

Again, we appreciate you bringing your concerns to us. Nicole has just informed us that this will be a banner sales year for the Press: over \$1 million in sales and our best year ever. Your strong support and encouragement is most welcomed.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Sorensen

President

Nancy S. Barrett

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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