

corrected minutes

Highlights

- [ACCUEP reviews ACHE viability & performance-based university funding](#)
- [Outreach supplement to Faculty Handbook approved](#)
- [Plus/Minus grading faculty referendum](#)
- [Dental plan needs to provide more info on maximum benefits](#)
- [Teaching technology at UA being assessed for additional support](#)
- [UA web policy is reviewed again](#)
- [E-mail security](#)
- [Crime growing behind the Strip](#)

3:30pm --- Ferguson Forum

- Senate Roll Call & Quorum Check --- (*Ray White*)
 - Senators absent: Scott Bridges, Lori McKinnon, Peter Clark, Keith Woodbury, Marcia Winter
- Approval/Correction of September Minutes --- (*Ray White*) --- [*e-mailed*]
 - September minutes were approved with one correction

• President's Report

◦ **Mediation committee**

The Mediation Committee requested 2 temporary members to fill one semester terms for Spring 1999, due to sabbaticals for J.W. Harrell and Steve Tomlinson. The Steering Committee recommends Nancy Rubin and Phillip Johnson. In addition, beginning January 1999, two appointees are needed for full terms; the steering committee recommends Martha Morgan and Barney Cargile.

◦ **ACCUEP meeting**

The Alabama Council of College and University Faculty Presidents (ACCUEP) met for its Fall meeting on the UA Campus on November 14, 1998. The agenda included discussion of the ACHE Viability criteria and how the campuses were dealing with it, and update on the implementation of the State Articulation and General Studies Act, and an update on issues related to university governance. A major discussion centered around Performance or Incentive Based Funding. At the present time there are no specific criteria and the Chief Academic Officers have urged further study. Nancy Barrett, Provost, spoke briefly on the issue of Performance or Incentive Based Funding and the current position of the Chief Academic Officers. ACCUEP members voted to send a letter to the Chief Academic Officers, the Council of Presidents and ACHE members expressing concerns about

- the lack of clear goals for the initiative,
- the need for more data on the cost/benefit of these efforts in other states that have adopted this approach,
- clarification about who will pay for the costs for generating the data,
- concerns that the costs of generating the data will be passed on to the institutions, further reducing the higher education budget,
- what proportion of the budget or new money would be allocated for performance or incentive based funding increases, and
- whether or not the ACHE Faculty Panel will have an opportunity to review the performance or incentive based indicators prior to adoption.

- **Outreach Document - –final approval**

On October 16, 1998, Dr. Barrett wrote to me announcing the approval of the Outreach Document and the language of Chapter 2 in the Faculty Handbook, which was submitted by the senate and revised through a small group, comprised of Deans Ron Rogers and Cully Clark and Amy Ward and myself. The document entitled, "Outreach and Academic Citizenship: A Guide to Documentation and Evaluation", will appear in its entirety as an appendix.

- **Quality Director John Dew addresses the senate**

Dr. John Dew is the new Chair of the Quality Initiative. Four projects are now underway. The Steering Committee agreed to invite John to the senate to give an update on the initiative. John Dew, Director of Quality gave a report on activities of quality council and four task forces described in previous Senate meeting. He invited faculty participation in these and future projects. The current projects are reviewing the university data bases, the overall hiring process and student customer services. Dr. Dew has met with the Deans of various colleges; the Physics Department and Social Work Department has requested assistance from his office.

- **Vice President's Report --- (Rob Ingram) --- no report**

- **Reports from Senate Committees**

- **Academic Affairs --- (Marvin Johnson & Marion Paris)**

- **Plus/Minus grading policy**

A draft ballot was presented and extensive discussion followed. Ray White suggested that one more option be added to the ballot: deleting A- and A+ from the current system; he suggested that the resulting four options would cover most of the expressed sentiment, so we could proceed with getting a ballot out, rather than arguing about what options should be included. It was generally acknowledged that a second ballot would likely be needed if a majority of the faculty voted for changing the grading system, given the variety of alternatives that would be included on the first ballot. There was general agreement that a second ballot, if required, would be restricted to the two most popular options selected in the first ballot.

According to a poll taken by the SGA, students are overwhelmingly opposed to the current system. However, several Senators pointed out that many students erroneously assumed that all A- grades would convert to A's; in fact, many A- grades would probably be B's in a system without +/- . This assumption was also made in the statistical analysis done by Academic Affairs, but it is hard to do otherwise. Harvey Kline objected that the SGA poll was poorly sampled and offered his polling expertise to perform a statistically meaningful poll. Rob Ingram responded that student opinion was pretty clear and that faculty should attend to it. Meetings were proposed to air opinions of students and faculty. Carmen Taylor responded that student' opinion, along with faculty input, *was* considered in the deliberations of the Academic Affairs Committee. The SGA put out a summary of student's' comments. Students want a compromise on the grading system and the ballot offers options to do this.

Marvin Johnson reported that the Crimson White had declined to publish data concerning Plus/Minus unless it was paid for as a space ad. Dialogue" has published quite a bit of information concerning this issue and faculty has been sent relevant information via e-mail multiple times. It was observed that it may be difficult to have a quorum in December for a vote on the plus/minus ballot.

Margaret Garner asked for a sense of the Senate, asking– whether the Senate should vote now on a ballot or review it and be ready to recommend something to the Provost at the next meeting." Bob Sigler motioned to suspend the rules and bring this issue forward under New Business to vote on the ballot today. This motion was voted down. A majority of the Senate then voted to wait until the

next Senate meeting to vote on a ballot. Ray White asked if there were going to be any organized faculty/student discussions *before* the ballot was finalized. Margaret Garner asked if faculty-wide forums with the SGA or with the Senate only is wished by the Senate? Marvin Johnson responded that SGA representatives have attended Academic Affairs meetings on two separate occasions. Philip Johnson asked for student's' views on the ballot.

Margaret asked if the Senate would like to hear from one of the SGA representatives present at the meeting. The vote was affirmative. The representative stated that students were at The University of Alabama to obtain an education, to grow into better citizens. In his opinion, everyone should work together. The grading system is not crucial to success. The SGA did not have the funding to perform a better polling procedure, but felt that their results did accurately reflect student opinion. He recommended that the Senate move forward, turn to the faculty, obtain a vote and proceed with it. The students felt the ballot was fair but that the option of how to get rid of A- was not on the ballot and that this option should be added.

Wythe Holt then proposed that a potentially fifth option should be added, in which A+ would have a value of 4.33 and a cumulative GPA would *not* be capped at 4.0. Bob Sigler made the motion that if a quorum was not present at December meeting, an electronic vote be taken and waive the quorum. This was voted down.

- **Financial Affairs** --- (*Robert McLeod*) –

- Concordia's dental plan for the University of Alabama currently has open enrollment. However, sufficiently detailed information about maximum allowed benefits is not yet available. The Benefits Advocacy Committee was contacted and is in the process of sending more information to the faculty to be considered before the November 25th deadline. The rate is well below that of Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the new company guarantees the current rate for two years. Concordia has also added to the accepted dentist's list.

- **Planning & Operations** --- no report

- **Research & Service** --- no report

- **Student Affairs** --- no report

- **Senate Operations**

- This committee has been charged by the President to look into the Vice President position being converted to a President-Elect position.

- **Reports from Senators on University Standing Committees**

- **Information Technology Committee** --- (*Ray White*)

- John Snider gave a report on the history of distance learning at UA; he recently made a multi-year proposal to President Sorensen to more fully support faculty use of teaching technology
- A subcommittee was formed to investigate how to improve the support for teaching technology on campus. It was pointed out that there are too few staff to support existing multimedia classrooms, much less any additional ones that are being constructed. There was general agreement that multimedia classrooms should be functional when an instructor walks in to use it, and that help should be readily available when there are equipment failures.
- University web guidelines, which can be found at www.ua.edu/webpol.html, are being reviewed again, having never been ratified when they were brought up more than two years ago. The major issue of contention in its previous review was the request that "The content of unofficial Web Sites shall be in good taste, related to the educational mission of the University, and specifically, to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the document and pages taken as a whole shall not appeal to prurient interest. "

- **New Business**

- **Computer privacy**

Marcus Brown gave a presentation on the lack of privacy in our use of computer use: e-mail. He advocated the use of PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) software with our e-mail software to allow us to "digitally sign" our e-mail, to ensure that it comes from us. It is easy to tamper with e-mail to falsify the apparent sender. This software can also be used to encrypt e-mail, if desired. Links to this software and some instructions for its installation and use are now on the Faculty Senate Web site, under "Faculty Resources"

Declining safety of 14th Ave

Wythe Holt pointed out that crime is rising on 14th Ave ("crack alley") behind the Strip and that police has lost 1/4 of its police force. The University is not supplying its pledged police officer to the 14th Ave precinct, due to lack of funding. Bob Sigler commented that this is another instance of the impact of inequities induced by the Mercer study. University Police are not paid competitively with the surrounding community. The Planning and Operations Committee will plan a meeting with Steve Tucker of the University Police Department to investigate this and bring it forward at the next regular meeting of the Senate.

Meeting Adjourned 5:00 PM
