

Minutes, Faculty Senate Meeting, 4/20/99

Members Absent: Majeed Alsikafi, Martin Baker, Norman Baldwin, Pat Bauch, Robert McLeod, Patricia Moyer, Robin Rogers, Jerry Rosiek, Alvin Winters.

Roll was called and a quorum was present.

The minutes from the prior meeting were read and approved by a roll call vote.

Presidents Report

Rob Ingram then delivered the President's Report. Rob commended Margaret for her two years of excellent service as President of the Senate. Ray also commended Ray White, who as Secretary of the Senate last year and Vice President the year earlier, did outstanding work in those position and in establishing a Faculty Senate web page.

Rob also indicated that he hoped that the Senate would utilize its committee structure to maximum advantage this coming year, with issues thoroughly deliberated in committee and brought to the floor of the Senate in good factual shape. Thus, the ordinary means of considering an issue is for the issue to be communicated to the appropriate committee chair or co-chair, or to one of the Senate officers. It is only where this is not possible that issues should be brought directly to the floor.

Rob also noted that written communications from Senate representatives to University standing committees might be a good way to keep Senators informed of issues before such committees and would cut down on Senate meeting time devoted to reports from standing committees. Rob encouraged all Senate members to use e-mail and the Senate web page to keep each other informed.

Rob also reported that Pat Bauch had agreed to serve as Vice President, if elected. (Pat was absent because she was presenting an academic paper.) The election will be held as part of old business.

Rob announced that the new faculty handbook is out and should eventually be on the web. Rob indicated that any Senator who wanted a hard copy without downloading may pick up a copy from the Faculty Senate office (461 Alston), the Provost's office, or deans' offices. (Rob brought a few copies to the meeting for distribution to any Senator who needed a copy immediately.)

Rob then turned to activities in Montgomery, both actual and metaphoric. The Higher Education Day event on April 8th was successful, with a good turnout. The House passed a budget with a 6.7% allocation increase for higher education. More important, new money in the educational trust was divided along the 2-1 historic ratio, which had been abandoned in the James years. Rob also reported that Paul Hubbert and the Governor had a legislative proposal to increase k-12 salaries to the national average. This proposal, while unobjectionable as a statement of principle, would in effect divert all new funding into bringing up k-12 salaries. People favorable to higher education expect to make a parallel proposal for bringing higher education salaries up to national levels. These proposals probably won't be enacted this year, but it is an idea that may reemerge next year. It is important to get our legislators to focus on the notion of parity in terms of pay averages. And faculty at the University must not become complacent if we are to continue to advance the cause of higher education.

Rob mentioned that the Higher Education Partnership ("HEP") is an important organization in keeping our issues in legislative play. HEP's effectiveness is tied to how large a membership it has. Membership is only \$12 per year, and Rob suggested that we should make a push to get more faculty enrolled. Margaret Garner observed that University membership in HEP is embarrassingly low. Membership forms include a payroll deduction option (\$1 per month). Faculty members can also join the University of Alabama Political Action Committee, which contributes to legislative races in Alabama. Also, the Legislative Agenda Committee will send a member to address departmental faculty meetings if requested to talk about faculty political involvement in service of higher education and the University.

Rob noted that the Faculty Senate will appoint four members of the University Quality Council, one of whom will be the Vice President. The Council meets monthly. Volunteers and nominations should be made to Ron.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education ("ACHE") is developing a faculty workload database, per legislation enacted in 1995. The database is supposed to track faculty work activity for individual faculty, including courses taught, student contact hours, etc. The Provost has asked the Faculty Senate to take an active role in shaping this process. Rob suggested that this is something that we need to follow closely, particularly with respect to what should and would not be included in the database.

Rob mentioned that there are additional issues that will likely arise during the year. Some of these are the following

1. Use of University Logo. Last year, the Senate began looking into University policy on child-labor issues when it licenses use of its logo to apparel and other manufacturers. President Sorensen is personally concerned with this issue, although the University is still in the process of developing an overall policy. This is not a unique problem, of course; other universities are facing the same issue.
2. Summer School Pay. Summer school pay, which is currently 7.5% of nine-month compensation per course, is another subject that the Senate might want to discuss. The University is currently interested in increasing student enrollment during the summer.

3. ACHE Program Viability. A number of programs, including Mathematics, have not met ACHE viability standards. Such programs have until the summer of 2000 to increase enrollment or provide ACHE with a justification for program continuation. The problems associated with program viability should be considered by appropriate Senate committees before the Senate as a whole takes up the subject.
4. Shared Governance Document. This project has been on hold during the process of revising the Faculty Handbook. There have been faculty, though, who have been working quietly on the Shared Governance Document, which should be a Senate issue during the coming year.
5. Senate By-Laws. The Senate should consider amending its by-laws, particularly to bring the by-laws up to date (given current Senate practices and procedures) and to add descriptions of the Senate committees.
6. Voting in Faculty Referenda. The recent referendum on pass/fail grading revealed that we need, but do not have, a policy on who is entitled to vote. We should try to develop such a policy during the coming year.

Rob then discussed assignments to Senate and University standing committees. Rob, with past President Margaret Garner and Secretary Norman Stein, made recommended committee assignments. Ordinarily, University standing committee assignments are coordinated with membership on the Senate committee most closely associated with the mission of the standing committee. Rob's membership recommendations departed from this approach in two instances. First, Rob suggested Bill Andreen serve on the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and to continue to serve on the Senate Operations Committee. Second, Rob recommended that Steve MacCall be assigned to the Information Technology Committee because of his expertise in this area.

Rob also indicated that he received a memo from the Provost explaining why the Senate has no representation on the Radiation Control Committee. This committee exists to comply with certain regulatory requirements and members have to be appropriately licensed, precluding Senate representatives.

Finally, Rob mentioned the importance of attendance at faculty meetings. Senators are permitted two absences; if you cannot attend, try to have an alternate from your college attend. And also try to call or e-mail the Secretary if you will be unable to attend. The Secretary's e-mail address is nstein@law.ua.edu, and his phone number is 8-1136. Bill Andreen, for the Senate Operations Committee, noted that a Senator may have to explain all absences if total absences reach three. Also, Bill noted that all Senators should have copies of the Senate constitution and by-laws, which can be downloaded from the Senate web site.

Rob then asked for reports from standing University committees:

Committee Reports

Debbie Novak, representative to the Human Relations Committee, announced that there will be two town meetings to discuss human relations issues on campus. The first meeting, for students, will be held April 27th, and the second, for faculty, May 3.

Margaret Garner, for the legislative agenda committee, asked people to consider contacting Tim Parker, who is promoting legislation that would add four-year institutions to the bill that would bring up other teacher salaries to the national average. In addition, there is approximately \$30 million unallocated educational-trust-fund dollars at present and Senators were encouraged to contact their legislators about allocating a portion of that money to higher education.

Old Business

Pat Bauch had been nominated for the office of Vice President at the last Senate meeting. No additional nominations were offered from the floor and Pat was elected by acclamation.

New Business

Rob announced that he had asked Bob Sigler to serve as Senate Parliamentarian. A motion was made from the floor to confirm the appointment. A second was heard and the motion was passed unanimously. Norman Stein made a motion to extend floor privileges to Parliamentarian Sigler, and this motion was also seconded and passed unanimously.

The Senate then voted unanimously to accept Rob's committee assignment recommendations. The meeting then adjourned and members of each committee met to elect chairs. The chairs, as reported by committee representatives to the Senate Secretary following the committee breakouts, were as follows:

- Planning and Operations: Marcia Evans and Jerry Webster
- Research and Service: Bing Blewitt & Steve MacCall
- Academic Affairs: Pete Morley and Marion Paris
- Student Affairs: Dexter Gordon and Jim Taylor
- Senate Operations: Bill Andreen and Bill Motes
- Financial Affairs: Norm Baldwin and Bob McLeod

