

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

AUGUST 31, 1999 - 3:30 PM - FERGUSON CENTER

UNCORRECTED MINUTES

Members Absent--Majeed Alsikafi, Ashley Evans, Marvin Johnson, Rhoda Johnson, Richard Lomax, Robert McLeod, Ann McFadden, Robin Rogers, Perry Wheless, Alvin Winters. Pete Morley was represented by Nagy El-Kaddah.

The minutes were accepted, with one correction.

A motion was heard to suspend the rules to permit Dr. Sorenson to address the Senate. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Address by Dr. Sorenson

Dr. Sorenson began by noting that there are always tensions in a research institution, even with respect to the notion of what research is and should be. Dr. Sorenson noted that there was what he would call "pure scholarship," i.e., intellectual pursuit untainted by political concerns, economic agendas, priorities established by funding agencies; but there was also research dictated by curious amalgam of political, economic and other stimuli. It is also important for the University to be involved in affecting the daily lives of real people living in Alabama, this country, and other parts of the world. Dr. Sorenson, as a symbol of the University, must be constantly aware of these tensions, of the need for real world involvement, of dedication and uncompromised research for its own stake, and research that has practical application.

As President of this University, Dr. Sorenson takes great pride in our multitude of faculty-inspired achievements. He then noted some of the great things that the faculty at this University are doing and have recently accomplished: a variety of programs in cooperation with local schools and the Children's Hands on Museum; a wonderfully innovative treetopology exhibit with a 35 foot platform to look down at the tops of trees, created by the Arboretum and Biology Department; a grant secured by Martha Powell and Amy Ward to pursue research on fresh water resources (in cooperation with the University of New Mexico; the recent high rankings in US News and World Report of the law school and business school; a grant by the College of Community Health Science to bring in high school teachers and students; the start of the exciting Blount Undergraduate Initiative, with 100 founding students, one who turned down Harvard to come here and another of who introduced Dr. Sorenson to Sister Hazel; new media classrooms on campus; grants from the FAA for research to reduce airplane crashes; a grant for the Department of Chemistry to bring high school students and teachers to campus, new work in distance learning; the increase in grants and contracts from 32 million dollars three years ago to the present 60 million dollars.

Dr. Sorenson also mentioned as noteworthy that the University has been spraying the campus for Y2K bugs; that the University's enrollment has increased (but that comes from in-state increases); that various construction projects have recently been completed or are in progress; that Student Services now has one-stop shopping, which should help students considerably; and that University staff are now wearing "hi" buttons. Dr. Sorenson said that contrary to rumors, he has not seen any proposals involving the division of the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Sorenson also spoke of and explained his support of the lottery and indicated his belief that he will be positioned to help make the program work in its intended ways.

Rob then thanked Dr. Sorenson for his comments and gave his President's report.

President's Report

Rob began by welcoming the Senators. He indicated that the Steering Committee this summer had approved a resolution urging the University and the Board of Trustees to support raising faculty and staff compensation by at least 3%, and the response was to provide such an increase.

Rob discussed the Provost's and faculty concern about the interaction of University policy on intellectual property and the creation of new types of property rights through the internet. The provost would like to establish an ad hoc committee to visit this and related intellectual property issues. The idea is to help protect faculty's rights to their property. The committee will consist of two deans, a representative of Seebeck, and three faculty. Rob asked for suggestions of faculty who might serve effectively on this committee.

Gene Marsh has asked faculty at the University to inform him of any situation in which a faculty member feels pressured by athletes or the athletic department with respect to the University's academic program and standards. Senators should pass this along to their academic divisions. If there are problems, they can be reported to either Gene Marsh or Rob.

Rob also noted that the Faculty Senate had extended invitations to various folks to address it, including Dr. Sorenson who spoke earlier; and state legislative representatives and members of the Board of Trustees. Dean Ron Rogers of the Graduate School will address us at our next meeting.

Rob also noted the Senate web page as a great source of information: our agendas and minutes are posted there, and various committee information.

Also, if there are problems with the Senate roster, especially if there are errors in e-mail addresses, please e-mail him or Norman.

Rob then asked Pat for her Vice President's Report.

Vice President's Report

Pat is head of an ad-hoc committee to look at the evaluation and reward of teaching. The committee will attempt to develop guidelines on how to evaluate teaching, and how to reward good teaching. Pat would like to have diversity on the committee--people from all parts of the university. The Senate Academic Affairs Committee will be expected to provide some leadership in this effort. If you would like to participate in this project, or if you know people in your college who have a passion for teaching and would want to participate in this effort, forward their names to Pat.

Reports from Senate Committee

The Financial Affairs Committee reported that it would be looking at the issues of sweatshop use by vendors licensed to use the University logo; university budget issues; pay equity; and external affairs resources.

Research and Service reported that the committee chairs met, they are gathering information to help formulate their agenda, and that we could look forward to a longer report next month.

Student Affairs reported that it has lost some members, gotten some new members, but had nothing substantive to report.

The Senate Operations Committee indicated that it is considering clarifications and changes to by-laws and will be working on the governance document.

Reports from Standing University Committees

The Quality Council met twice this summer and will hold a forum on October 19th at the Bryant Conference Center for faculty, a group identified by the Council as a "stakeholder" in the University. The Quality Council will help figure out exactly what it is that faculty members want.

Multi-Media Committee--Bing Blewitt reported that the committee was addressing how many classrooms to have on campus and how to keep the equipment in good repair.

Committee on Selection and Review of Deans and Chairpersons and Evaluation of Academic Programs--Pat Bauch reported that there has been some discussion of whether deans and chairpersons should be evaluated more frequently than once every five years and also a number of questions concerning the process of evaluation.

Grievance and Mediation Committee--Pat Bauch reported that the Provost has asked the committee to review Appendix D, with the possibility of some revisions.

Legislative Agenda Committee--Margaret Garner reported that the committee was now divided into four subcommittee, as follows:

1. Education subcommittee, chaired by Margaret and Kathy Randall
2. Outreach subcommittee, chaired by Katherine Davis and Cheryl Sparks
3. Partnership and Membership subcommittee, chaired by Jim Kellen
4. Communications subcommittee, chaired by Jerry Webster and Cathy Andreen

The Legislative Agenda Committee will hold a meeting on September 8th at Doster Hall. Margaret says we need a small army so that the burden of these important activities does not fall exclusively on a few people.

Old Business

Report on the merger and discontinuance document--we have proposed modifications, the provost appears sympathetic to them, and is passing them along to the Council of Deans for their consideration.

New Business

The Steering Committee developed a resolution on compensation, asking the Board of Trustees to develop a strategic plan to address and correct the University's failure to pay its faculty the regional average, and that the creation and implementation of this plan be made the Board's highest priority for the year.

The resolution, which was included with the Agenda, was debated. Bill Doty suggested that the first paragraph's use of the verb "lags" was unusual

and not entirely clear. The first paragraph was amended to use the verb "trail" instead of "lags". Jim Taylor called the question, and the resolution passed unanimously. The resolution, as passed by the Senate, is appended to these minutes.

Rob announced that Norman Stein would serve as ombudsman for the remainder of the calendar year.

Rob also announced that 55 new faculty members are on campus, and 37 former colleagues have left the University, for a net gain of 18 faculty.

The annual report from the Graduate School can be found on the University web site.

The meeting was then adjourned.

RESOLUTION REQUESTING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FACULTY SALARY PROBLEMS

WHEREAS faculty salaries in The University of Alabama System continue to trail regional averages by 10 to 15 percent, and

WHEREAS the State of Alabama has fallen well below regional and national norms in its support of higher education, and

WHEREAS these problems are not likely to be remedied in the foreseeable future without major efforts on the part of The University of Alabama System,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama requests that the administration of The University of Alabama System and its Board of Trustees develop a strategic plan for securing necessary financial resources from public and private sources to bring faculty salaries at least to the regional average and that development and implementation of this plan be made the top priority of the System and its Board of Trustees for the coming academic year.