

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 13, 2013 – 3:00 PM – 213 AIME**

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: Steve Miller, Rona Donahoe, Steve Burch, Ed Stephenson, Joanne Hale, Carol Duffy, Melondie Carter, Reuben Cook, Donna Meester, Mangala Krishnamurthy, Charlotte Herrin, John Vincent, Rainer Schad, Margaret Garner.

ABSENT: Clark Midkiff, Jeannine Lawrence, Sierra Turner, Amy Taylor.

GUESTS: Dr. Robert Angus, Professor Emeritus, UAB Department of Biology; Aaron Traywick, Coalition of Alabama Students for the Environment; Caitlin McClusky, UA Alumae; Jimmy Taylor, SGA President; Cresandra Smothers, Dialog.

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Rona Donahoe.

Faculty Senate Steering Committee minutes of July 9, 2013 were approved.

President's Report – (*Steve Miller*) A senator urged the Faculty Senate to discuss the issue of guns on campus in view of the change in Alabama law concerning weapons. The UA policy now in place states: “Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms, ammunition, explosives, other weapons or dangerous chemicals by students on University property is not allowed as indicated in the UA Student Code of Conduct. However, students who have sporting, hunting, recreational, or target weapons for off-campus use may bring the items to UAPD for registration and free storage.” This issue was assigned to the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee. The University’s SGA Student Affairs Committee will work in collaboration with this committee.

Vice President's Report – (*Donna Meester*) Classroom assignments for professors are located so far apart it limits professor’s time with students and being physically present for their next class. This will be addressed in the next meeting with the Provost.

Secretary's Report – (*Rona Donahoe*) Any item to be added to the Faculty Senate’s calendar on the Faculty Senate web page should be forwarded to Rona or access can be given to the senator for any additions.

Commencement attendance was discussed. It was suggested to acknowledge donations with a letter stating the value of the donation for tax purposes. Contacting potential faculty retirees for regalia donations could begin with a letter from the Faculty Senate president to the Deans stating the purpose of regalia donations.

Dr. Robert Angus, Professor Emeritus, UAB Department of Biology, and a member of several organizations with environmental protection as their priority addressed the Steering Committee. Dr. Angus’s research focused on the effect of mines and urban development on streams and water quality. The Warrior coal field lies in this area and there are approximately ninety active mines composing a big part of economic impact on Alabama. The State of Alabama does not have a Department of Environmental Protection. Alabama has a Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). Part of the responsibilities of this department is to issue business

permits. A business proposing a new development or a new mine must first get a permit from ADEM to discharge waste water. If a new mine is proposed, a permit must be secured from the Alabama Surface Mining Commission. In the case of Shepherd Bend mine, a permit was issued before the rights to mine was in place. Part of the application for the permit must include detailed plans pertaining to the management of controlling run off. Some mines do not install or maintain proper management of controlling run off such as heavy metals and silt which have the potential to invade and pollute various waterways. The Shepherd Bend mine is special due to its location. It is directly 800 feet upstream and directly across the river from the Birmingham Water Works intake facility which provides drinking water for approximately 200,000 people in the northwest section of Birmingham. This mine has the potential of polluting the water shed, destroying the water source for part of Birmingham and damaging the habitat quality of organisms. Silt is very abrasive and would damage the intake pumps.

In 1884 Congress granted about 46,000 acres of land to The University of Alabama in reparation for the damage caused by the Union troops during the Civil War. For a year state geologists located parcels of land around central Alabama determined to contain minerals. In the late 1880's the Governor of Alabama sold some of the land under questionable circumstances. Since that time the University does not sell the land but leases mineral rights giving the University a good source of revenue over the years. The proposed Shepherd Bend mine is largely owned by the University. In 2007 Shepherd Bend Mining (LLC) submitted a waste water discharge permit application to ADEM which was granted in July of 2008. The Black Warrior River organization appealed the permit. The appeal was denied. Then the application goes to the ADEM Commission which approved the permit. The next step is the Surface Mining Commission which granted the permit to mine. The current situation is that all permits have been secured and the last step before mining can begin is to acquire the mineral rights from the major owner, The University of Alabama.

Aaron Traywick, Coalition of Alabama Students for the Environment (CASE), stated the student's concern is the official process for leasing or selling UA surface and mineral rights has not currently been followed for the Shepherd Bend property including the requirement of numerous administrative approvals and considerations by representatives and the UA Board of Trustees of the University System. For five years UA has stated they have no current plans to sell or lease property at Shepherd Bend. Several organizations officially representing the student body have passed resolutions expressing concern over the association of The University of Alabama with this mining project, including the UA Student Government Association, UAB Undergraduate SGA, UAB Graduate SGA, UAB Public Health SGA, and UAH SGA. Traywick stated their main concern is the Shepherd Bend mine would set a precedent for other intrusions on the environment of the State of Alabama. Traywick proposes an exit strategy should be conducted through UA's official process and a communication requesting UA's surface and mineral rights be removed for current consideration from the ASMC permit would be sufficient.

The Steering Committee unanimously commissioned Faculty Senate President Steve Miller, Vice President Donna Meester and Secretary Rona Donahoe to verbally communicate to UA leadership the consistency and unity of all three campuses to disallow leasing any land or mineral rights at the Shepherd Bend site.

Research & Service - (Steve Burch & Ed Stephenson) This committee will meet with the new Vice President for Research, Dr. Carl A. Pinkert, as soon as his schedule allows. There is concern about the Bio Safety Committee's activity and compliance.

Information Technology - (*Mangala Krishnamurthy & Clark Midkiff*) The Information Technology Committee reported there is a mobile app called Scholly (“scholarships”) for both the iPhone and Android. This site gives information about almost all available scholarships. A meeting was conducted with John McGowan to discuss information technology issues such as fiber optic connections and Internet II. McGowan will be co-chair of UA’s Information Technology Committee.

Faculty Life – (*Carol Duffy & Jeannine Lawrence*) The Faculty Life Committee met in July. The continuing issue is a smoke-free campus. Comparable statistics and data from other institutions continue to be gathered for a report.

It was suggested to invite Charlotte Harris, Director of Human Resources, to speak to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee concerning faculty life issues.

Student Affairs – (*Melondie Carter & Joanne Hale*) A few members of the Student Affairs Committee participated in welcoming freshmen to campus.

The University of Arizona provides scholarship aid information to their students through the creation of a data based web site. UA’s SGA requested this service be provided by the University. The scholarship data base for University students will be created as a senior course project.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*Charlotte Herrin & Amy Taylor*) An announcement will be forwarded to Steve Miller for email distribution requesting nominations for an Ombudsperson. The nominee must be from business or engineering, tenured, associate or full professor. Vacancies on the Faculty Participation on the Selection of Deans and Department Chairs Committee and the Merger and Discontinuance Committee will be filled by an election to be held this fall.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) Parker Graham was elected Vice Chair of Starz for the state.

HEP membership has declined since payroll deduction for membership fees was discontinued. The membership fee includes funds for defense against frivolous law suits. HEP is the advocacy group for higher education and has made inroads in influencing positive responses to higher education.

Steve Miller, Margaret Garner and others will meet to discuss promotion strategies to increase HEP membership.

Academic Affairs – (*John Vincent & Sierra Turner*) The Academic Affairs Committee will be reviewing the Faculty Senate mission statement and monitoring the progress of the Faculty Handbook.

It was suggested to invite Joe Bonner, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, sometime in the fall to speak to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee.

Financial Affairs – (*Reuben Cook & Rainer Schad*) The Financial Affairs Committee will plan a meeting with Dr. Lynda Gilbert, Vice President for Financial Affairs, following the Board of

Trustees approving the budget in October. UA's budget is based on last year's enrollment numbers. The concern is what contingency plans are in place in the event of an enrollment decrease.

The priorities for the new Faculty Senate are: smoke free campus, faculty handbook, gun legislation, student housing, and SACS reaffirmation.

The CUC has completed committee assignments and notifications.

William (Bill) Rabel from C&BA will serve as the replacement on the Faculty Participation in the Selection of Deans and Department Chairpersons and in the Evaluation of Academic Programs Committee.

Silas Blackstock will be the Faculty Senate Representative to the University's Textbook Committee.

Meeting adjourned 5:05 P.M.