

## Remarks of Pat Bauch to University Faculty-Staff Meeting

September 13, 2000

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Thank you. It is a pleasure to be with you this morning.

Our university stands at the threshold of a journey into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, poised to join the ranks of the top fifty public universities in this country. Monies realized from faculty research grants continue to grow, an increasing number of academic programs are receiving national recognition, our freshman class has the brightest and best students we have ever attracted, our student-athletes are graduating at a higher rate than the rest of the student body, and we have just employed 73 new, talented faculty members who represent the best investment of resources this university can make. Yes, indeed, things are going very well for us (now that we have redeemed ourselves after our loss to my alma mater, UCLA) and we have a productive relationship between the faculty and administration to thank for this. In my dealings with President Sorensen, Provost Barrett, and our Vice-Presidents, I am convinced we owe them a large debt of gratitude for their support, leadership, hard work, and enlightened and wise decisions on our behalf. Yes, we are fortunate.

As we embark on a new journey, a number of challenges continue to face us. Faculty salaries need to be brought to the southeastern university average, if not the national average; new resources need to be found for the enhancement and reward of teaching; and initiatives are needed to enrich our working environments and how we want to be together as a university community, to mention a few.

I will address these priorities in a moment, but first I would like to remind us that the purpose of the Faculty Senate, in the mix of relationships that define us as a community, is to aid the university in making judgments on questions of policy, development, and operations, in our continuing quest for excellence. We have an important and influential role in determining how we shall travel this road of excellence together. The priorities we establish, the initiatives we undertake, and the themes that guide us determine our destination.

Our top priority remains the same—to raise faculty salaries to the southeastern university average. We woefully trail our counterparts at institutions such as the Universities of Georgia and Florida. To address this priority, the Financial Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate annually produces a comprehensive study of SUG salaries (Southeastern University Group) to reveal inequities such as salary compression. This summer we passed a resolution requesting that student tuition increases be reflected in faculty salary increases. While it was not possible at the time to accomplish this goal, we will continue to pursue it. This year, President Sorensen committed all new State monies to faculty and staff salary increases. While this is praiseworthy and much appreciated, it will not close the gap between our salaries and those of our neighboring institutions. As we continue to work on this issue, we have strong support from President Sorensen and Provost Barrett. The reality we face is that the university is dependent on State subsidies, which are voted on each year by the Legislature. Due to the passage of HB 204, which commits two-thirds of all new State monies from the General Education Fund to raising K-14 salaries to the national average, we face an even tougher uphill battle than we did in the past. We cannot be complacent. As distasteful as it may seem for some, the faculty and staff need to remain strong players in the legislative budgeting process. Our Legislative Action Committee continues to work hard on our behalf. We need your support in these efforts.

Our second priority is to enhance the resources faculty need for the improvement, recognition, and reward of

teaching. We are working to increase the weight of teaching in the determination of merit raises, to improve computer and multi-media technical support, and to fund a Faculty Development Center. The Academic Affairs Committee forwarded a number of recommendations to Provost Barrett that we believe will contribute toward these goals. As a result, we have the ear of Dr. Priscilla Hancock, Associate Vice President for Information Technology, on how we might reach some of our goals through a new relationship with the Faculty Resource Center, which recognizes our pedagogical concerns. Provost Barrett recently assembled a Distance Learning Ad Hoc Committee to examine technical and other issues associated with new instructional technologies. We will continue to play a key role in these initiatives and keep you informed.

Our third priority follows on the Faculty Senate's resolution of last March that states in part "... we reaffirm our commitment to promote respect for and celebration of diversity in all aspects of university life, and to dismantle racist structures and practices in all their forms..." We are now in the process of establishing a Faculty Diversity Leadership Council and a Faculty Diversity Executive Committee. These groups will be responsible for the ongoing promotion, oversight, and evaluation of the Faculty Senate's first initiative arising out of our resolution, which is to develop Anti-Racist Training Teams among the UA faculty for the purpose of reaching our goal of becoming an anti-racist, multicultural institution over the next ten years. Soon I will send letters of appointment for membership in these groups to faculty members who have communicated to us their interest in this initiative. Our first activity will be an Orientation Workshop on Sunday afternoon, October 1 from 1:30-4:30 in conjunction with *Crossroads*, a social justice group which provides anti-racist education and training. We urge you to attend this important orientation, not to raise necessarily your awareness and understanding of anti-racism, though it may do that, but to orient faculty toward a possibility of becoming an anti-racist, multicultural institution and how we might strategically plan to achieve this goal. Today or tomorrow you should receive an invitation to this orientation. I strongly urge all faculty who can possibly do so, to attend this brief workshop. You will be the determiners of whether this initiative has a possibly of success at The University of Alabama. It may well define who we are to become in the new millennium.

Briefly, other initiatives under development in the Faculty Senate include the establishment, on an experimental basis, of a committee on Faculty Life.

This new committee is charged with fostering the community and working life of our faculty. Besides the diversity initiative, this committee is working on such matters as mentoring programs for new faculty and revisions to our Mediation and Grievance Document.

Among other things, Faculty Senate initiatives also include: more generous and flexible faculty reimbursement policies for travel and other expenditures, and guidelines and procedures for the annual review of Deans and Department Chairs by the faculty.

Our Faculty Senate Web Page provides links to our agendas, minutes, resolutions, and other documents, which describe the activities of the Senate. I urge you to access frequently the Senate's Web Page to keep abreast of the issues. We welcome your questions and input.

Lastly, I would like to address briefly the narrative themes, which I would like to see guide our work this year, namely unity and collaboration. To demonstrate these themes, I saved the story of a recent accomplishment of The Faculty Senate until now. Late last Spring, University Recreation Services proposed a new schedule of fees for faculty and staff use of the University's recreation facilities. A resolution by the Senate protested what we considered an imposed and exorbitant hike in fees. This summer, negotiations involved lengthy meetings with members of the Faculty Senate and the offices of University Recreation Services, the Vice President for Student

Affairs, and President Sorensen. Call it "Shuttle Diplomacy." These negotiations resulted in a successful outcome in which we were able to directly influence the establishment of these fees at a lower level. President Sorensen generously provided a \$100,000 subsidy to University Recreation Services to cover the cost of the higher fees enabling faculty and staff to pay considerably less for the use of these facilities than originally proposed.

I invoke this story of accomplishment, while certainly not the most significant issue ever to face the Senate, to say that by tapping into the spirit of working together toward common goals for the common good, we can achieve far-reaching results. This great university has a long tradition of excellence, cooperation, and unity -- a winning combination. We need to demonstrate that winning attitude and unity of purpose to successfully navigate the challenges that lie ahead. In our never ending quest for the discovery of new knowledge, improved teaching, and cutting-edge technologies, we need more than ever the support of our constituents, whether we are asking them for private contributions or requesting support from our State Legislature. United we stand, together we reach out. Ours can be the legacy of good companions on the journey and right relationships among us. Thank you.