

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Faculty Senate Meeting

August 29, 2000

Welcome to another academic year, one that I expect to be a fairly important and productive one for us.

During the summer, as you can note in our Steering Committee Minutes on the Faculty Senate Web Page, we accomplished a number of important activities. I would like to review them briefly here, but encourage you to check out our Web Page. As you know, the Steering Committee acts in the name of the full Senate, so if you have objections about anything we have done, said, or are doing please let me know.

The following are not in any order of importance, though clearly some issues are more important than others.

1. Don Lawrence (Pay Roll Manager) and Charlotte Harris (Associate VP for Human Resources) presented the University's program for mandatory payroll direct deposit. There were no stated objections from the Steering Committee members regarding this program.
2. George Brown (University Recreation Director), Charles Brown (Senior Associate VP for Student Affairs) and Jill Tappen (Assistant Director for Recreational Services and University Recreation) presented a new recreation fee structure for faculty and staff use of the University's athletic and recreation facilities. At our April meeting, the Senate passed a resolution objecting to the proposed fee structure. During the summer, we have been in a number of meetings and conversations with President Sorensen and the University Recreation Department. President Sorensen proposed to subsidize Faculty and Staff fees. Keith Woodbury, Dorothy Martin and the Financial Affairs Committee had a productive meeting with George Brown and others in which a compromise was reached. The final schedule of fees has been sent to the Faculty. The Senate still remains opposed to these new fees. However, we formally thanked President Sorensen for his subsidizing these fees to keep them low, both for faculty recruiting purposes, and to assist financially the faculty and staff in their use of our recreation facilities. A plan to renovate and build new facilities was included in the presentation. (See Steering Committee Minutes for May 16, 2000.)
3. I proposed the establishment of a new Faculty Life Committee for the Faculty Senate to deal with issues of faculty concern related to the faculty and university community, which are neither primarily academic nor financial in nature, nor primarily concern students. Examples include diversity issues, faculty mentoring, and relations with the greater Tuscaloosa community. Currently members include Rob Ingram and Wythe Holt as co-chairs and Joanne Terrell and Cornelius Carter as additional members. We are looking for another 1-2 members, if you are interested in switching committees. (Please see one of the co-chairs.) The Faculty Life Committee will operate as an ad hoc committee and will be evaluated at the end of the year to determine whether it should become a permanent standing committee of the Faculty Senate.
4. A Resolution requesting a 5.5% raise in faculty salaries from new State funding plus a raise in tuition was sent to President Sorensen. In addition, the resolution requested that a percentage of tuition be set aside each year for faculty salary increases. At this time, the President felt that he could not request additional salary monies beyond the amount allocated through the State budget; however, he promised to continue working on salary increases; also he supports an incremental tuition increase until such time as UA tuition is on a par with the other system campuses. Currently, tuition is lower at UA than at the other campuses in the system. The Finance Committee will continue monitoring this situation.
5. This summer, a proposal was brought to the Steering Committee concerning Domestic Partner Benefits.

While many supported the content of this proposal, the decision was to ask that it first be taken through the proper channels; that is, the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee and then to Bob Wright before it would be brought to the Senate, if necessary. The vote was split 4-4 concerning this procedural matter. Later in this meeting we will be asking about Senate priorities for the coming year. If this issue is viewed as important enough to Senate members to bring to the Senate floor at this time, we will do so.

6. Considerable progress was made this summer concerning the Faculty Senate Resolution on Diversity. I have appointed a Diversity Executive Council comprised of the Executive Council of the Faculty Senate expanded to include Rhoda Johnson and Dexter Gordon who have graciously agreed to serve the Senate in this capacity. This Council will evaluate input from the Faculty Diversity Leadership Council and other faculty members concerning executive decisions such as an extended contract with Crossroads, the group presenting the Orientation Workshop on Diversity in October. Rob Ingram will report more on this later in the meeting.
7. The Legislative Agenda Committee and all of us will have an uphill battle concerning new monies from the State Legislature this year. Margaret Garner will speak to us later about the need for some urgent strategic planning. I would again urge everyone to join the Higher Education Partnership, if you have not already done so, and to urge your colleagues to join. We will need your support more than ever.
8. ACHE has decided, as they are mandated to do so by law, to gather faculty workload data this year. We need to think about how UA will respond to ACHE. Again, Rob might be able to give us an update on this.
9. Lastly, there are many important issues with which the Faculty Senate has been dealing this past year and over the summer. The Steering and Executive Committees of the Faculty Senate met several times this summer to attempt to prioritize these issues. As you will note in the agenda, Norm Baldwin will distribute a survey in order to obtain your input as to the importance of some of these issues. Please be candid.

We have an important and meaningful year ahead of us where, acting as a strong body with everyone's participation, we can contribute to the well being of our university, its faculty, staff, and students. I thank you ahead of time for your commitment to the Faculty Senate and to the work that lies ahead. Thank you.

Patricia A. Bauch

Faculty Senate President, 2000-2001