

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 10, 2012 – 3:00 PM – 2002 SHELBY HALL**

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: Steve Miller, Rona Donahoe, DoVeanna Minor, Marcia Barrett, John Vincent, Charlotte Herrin, Lowell Baker, Wesley Church, Robert McLeod, Brad Hodges, Margaret Garner, Ed Stephenson, Melondie Carter.

ABSENT: Clark Midkiff, Katrina Ramonell, Seth Panitch, Ion Stancu.

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Media Relations/Dialog.

Roll call and quorum check by Secretary Jeanette VanderMeer.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of March 6, 2012 were approved.

Lowell Baker announced his retirement and the beginning of new employment at the University of Tulsa on August 15th.

President's Report – (*Steve Miller*) President Miller began the meeting with remarks concerning the role of the Faculty Senate in shared governance with the University administration and the standards he will follow as Faculty Senate President.

The location of the Faculty Senate meetings will be in the Ferguson Center Forum beginning with the April 17th meeting.

Faculty Senate President Steve Miller and Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee Co-chair Melondie Carter will be serving on The University of Alabama Presidential Search Committee.

Discussion of the accomplishments of the 2010-11 Faculty Senate and suggestions for the Faculty Senate President's address to the faculty/staff meeting included appreciation for raises, continuance of the spirit of joint governance, maternity leave progress, SEC awards and the relocation of the Environmental Health & Safety office.

Plans are underway to reach out to the leadership of campus organizations such as the Student Government Association and the Professional Staff Association and others in a joint informational luncheon.

Vice President's Report – The election for this office will be held at the April 17th Faculty Senate meeting. The two candidates are John Vincent (Chemistry) and Seth Panitch (Theater & Dance). The senator elected Faculty Senate Vice President was not re-elected to the Senate by his college.

Secretary's Report – (*Jeanette VanderMeer*) No report.

Academic Affairs – (*Marcia Barrett & John Vincent*) The Academic Affairs Committee met with Lorne Kuffel (Office of Institutional Research) and Ivon Foster-McGowan (Assistant to the Provost) to discuss response rates for Student Opinions of Instruction (SOI) since moving to online surveys. The perception was that response rates for the old paper surveys were very high

but the overall response rate for the campus actually was in the high sixties. The response rate in the online environment for the overall campus is around 43%. Methods to increase response rates include reducing the frequency of student surveys, telling the students how important the survey is, blocking grades until students complete the SOI, and giving grade incentives to students for participation. Comparative data will be given following the next SOI survey.

Mark Nelson, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Beth Bennett, (Professor and Departmental Chair/Communication Studies), co-chairs of the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee, have been invited to meet with the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee to discuss the temporary core curriculum designation of a math course.

Textbook order procedures and policies for students with disabilities is an issue forthcoming to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Faculty Life – (*Lowell Baker & Wesley Church*) A resolution written by Deidre Leaver-Dunn in opposition to anti-immigration legislation HB 56 was presented to the Steering Committee. Revisions of HB 56 are in a State Legislative committee at this time. Timing of passing such a resolution is of great concern in light of the April 17th being the last meeting of the full Faculty Senate until August. Points of discussion were the wording, intent, focus, components and impact of the resolution. Rona Donahoe will reword the resolution and circulate to the Steering Committee for input, suggestions and voting approval before bringing it before the Faculty Senate meeting on April 17th.

Although some progress has been made in revising the maternity leave policy, it was suggested that the Faculty Life Committee continue to press for improvements. Also the pursuit of a smoke free campus should remain a priority. The committee was urged to continue an effort to bring about a climate survey of the faculty. A survey has been identified that could be tweaked and serve the needs of the survey and institution.

Financial Affairs – (*Robert McLeod & Katrina Ramonell*) The Financial Affairs Committee met with Ira Harby. A power point presentation addressing the funding formula was given at the meeting and emailed to the Steering Committee. Impact and projections are based on the same growth rate. An average annual increase is computed in tax revenue which is used to forecast next year's budget. The average is 3.2% which results in \$150 million dollars less available this year. Except for the new formula, an additional \$190 million dollars would have been available due to economic growth. With modest tuition and enrollment growth the shortfall can be covered. Legislation has been introduced to fund legislation from a reduction in the Special Education Trust Fund. A budget presentation was made to the Steering Committee in the past by the Provost, but has not been made for the last three years. Thus, an opportunity for budget input has not been available to the Steering Committee.

Information Technology – (*Carolyn Cassady & Brad Hodges*) The OIT Committee is working on wording for NSF data management plans but is concerned about the timing of completion. Communicating and understanding information technology problems and the timely relaying information concerning problems and solutions by OIT is of concern.

Research & Service – (*Ion Stancu & Ed Stephenson*) The Research & Service Committee forwarded to the Provost documents concerning length of appointments for post-doctoral fellows. A survey of similar institutions revealed that all other institutions, with one exception,

either have no time limits on post-doctoral appointments or a five-year limit. The University of Alabama currently has a three-year limit. Only one other institution has a three-year limit.

Taking up most of last summer this committee dealt with the relocation of the Environmental Health and Safety Office which was displaced due to construction of a NOAA Water Research Building.

The Research and Service Committee monitors through Joe Benson, Office of Research, any issues needing attention. They also addressed increasing the minimum bid law from \$7,500 to \$15,000 and examined procurement policies and procedures.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*Rona Donahoe & Charlotte Herrin*) Seth Panitch, Theater & Dance, has been nominated for Faculty Senate Vice President. John Vincent, Chemistry, has also been nominated. The election will be held at the April 17th meeting of the Faculty Senate.

This committee will be reviewing the Faculty Senate By-Laws for corrections and revisions next year.

Student Affairs – (*Melondie Carter & Seth Panitch*) The Student Affairs Committee met with Mark Nelson, Vice President of Student Affairs at its last meeting. Nelson expressed concern that there is a need for more faculty members to take part in student organizations. Information about openings is available on student organization web sites, but is not easily accessible by faculty. The Student Affairs Committee hopes to play a more active role in making that information more available. There are over one hundred foster students enrolled at UA and this committee has made being more active in this area a priority. Providing more and available activities outside the Greek system for students is also an issue.

Legislative Agenda – (*Margaret Garner*) At the last meeting of the Steering Committee the issue of the “age of majority” for student participation in research was raised. A proposed new Amendment to the State Constitution stated “Age of majority for purposes of voluntary participation in research on college campuses. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the age of majority for the purposes of requesting voluntary participation by enrolled students in research activities on college campuses, within the State of Alabama, shall be 17 years of age”. After some discussion the age of 17 was changed to 18. Alabama is one of only three states to have 19 as the age of majority. This change will be pursued.

Reports from Other Committees –

Old Business - Committee members should be reminded to bring University Standing Committee issues before the Faculty Senate for discussion and direction before voting on the issue since they are a Faculty Senate representative to the standing committee.

It is very difficult to find an alternate to attend the meetings in the absence of a Senator particularly in A&S.

Meeting adjourned 4:55 P.M.

