

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting

June 10, 2003 – 101 Student Services Center – 3:00 PM

### Unapproved Minutes

**Attending: John Mason, Mathew Winston, Garry Warren, John Vincent, Nick Stinnet, Bob Sigler, Steve Miller, Francine James, Margaret Garner, George Franke, Catherine Davies, Caryl Cooper, Wolfgang Bertsch, Guest: Joanna Hutt, Dialog**

The meeting began with Norm Baldwin's presentation of two surveys regarding the **faculty feedback for deans and chairs** with a request for input from the Steering Committee. An ad hoc committee was established over two years ago following the absence of cooperation from the deans. The Faculty Senate decided to design and implement a feedback system to be conducted more often than the current process of every five years. Information from UAB and SW Missouri State was integrated into the instrument along with closed and open-ended questions concerning the qualities and abilities that deans and department chairs should have to successfully perform their jobs and duties. The goal is to implement the survey this fall with funding to be provided by the Faculty Senate. It was suggested to have more information available for the Senate meeting about the process to develop the survey, how the information gathered would be distributed and some idea about the timeline to be followed. Some deans expressed the opinion that this process violates the Faculty Handbook and that the Committee for the Selection of Deans and Department Chairs should be establishing the evaluation process. The opinion was stated that the Senate is within the established boundaries and their charge is to communicate information to their superiors. In the past, three resolutions have been approved by the Senate concerning the issue of faculty feedback for deans and chairs. It was pointed out that a permanent mechanism should be in place to continue this process following the committee members gradually dropping out for a variety of reasons. The mechanism of administering the survey would tentatively follow this process: a survey would be sent out to the faculty with a connection to an internet site in order to fill out the feedback survey, this would then go to Testing Services, the results would be sent to each dean and department chair that the survey input applied. The following year the feedback results would be sent to deans, department chairs and their superiors. Confidentiality is crucial to the process and it was suggested to have the results sent directly from Test Services, however, the point was made that the information should certainly be reviewed by a minimum number of the committee members for quality control. It was suggested that the ad hoc committee meet with Barbara Talmadge of Testing Services and review the process assuring that any problems were addressed. Steve Miller made a motion to take the issue of the feedback survey for deans and chairs to the full Faculty Senate for approval. The Steering Committee approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the nomination of member(s) for the **Faculty Participation in the Selection of Deans and Department Chairpersons and in the Evaluation of Academic Programs Committee**. The Senate Operations Committee noticed that there were vacancies on this committee. John Freeman and Judith Burry-Stock have terms that end in August. James Otteson is on sabbatical (term ends in 05) and Amy Ward are on this committee. A slate of names is submitted to the President of the University for his selection. There are four committee positions for faculty members and it

was suggested to submit a name as an alternate in the absence of James Otteson. Appointments would be effective August 15. The duties of this committee of two deans, two departmental chairpersons, and four faculty members (selected from a list provided by the Faculty Senate), as well as a representative from the Faculty Senate with a faculty member chairing the committee, includes monitoring and recommending any changes desirable in policies and guidelines for faculty participation in the selection of deans and departmental chairpersons and in the evaluation of academic programs. Other duties include offering proposals for changes in the mechanism for faculty participation for consideration by the University community, screening proposals for change from other sources, and coordinating discussions and study by the faculty, deans, chairpersons and Central Administration of any proposed changes prior to their approval by the President. It was suggested that the duties of the committee members accompany the names submitted to the President. A motion was made and seconded to submit the following names for this committee: Garry Warren, Bob Halli, Scott Bridges and Subhabrata Chakraborti with two to be selected as committee members and one as an alternate for James Otteson. The Steering Committee voted unanimously approving this slate of names.

John Mason, President of the Faculty Senate, emailed the Steering Committee members asking for faculty names to serve on Search Committees for the four Vice President vacancies: Vice President of Financial Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Research and Provost. Of the six names submitted for the various search committees, Dr. Witt selected five of those names with two serving as chairs of the committees.

The "**Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics**" is a group advocating reform in intercollegiate athletics, created by and representative of faculty senate leaders at Bowl Championship Series conference schools. The Arkansas faculty has joined the coalition and there are individual faculty leaders on other campuses. The discussion centered on whether the Faculty Senate wishes to join this coalition. Margaret Garner made a motion and it was seconded that the Faculty Senate join this organization. The only downside to this merger would be the time commitment. Discussion included the relationship of athletic ventures to academics. The vote by the Steering Committee was unanimous to join the "Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics".

The "**Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics Proposed Statement on the ACC Expansion Plan**" dated June 2, 2003, was the next item discussed. The Presidents of North Carolina and Duke have expressed reservations about this expansion and the impact it would have on the welfare of athletes. The point was made that the SEC has more teams in their conference than the ACC would have after this expansion. This expansion would also negatively impact the conference losing those institutions. Nick Stinnett made a motion and it was seconded that the Steering Committee support this statement against the growing commercialization of college sports, the effect on students and student-athletes and the decreasing connection between athletics and academic values. The Steering Committee vote was 7 in Favor, 2 Opposed, 2 Abstentions.

The substantial increase in **Recreation Center fees** is of great concern to the faculty and is above the agreement reached with Dr. Sorensen in 2000. A copy of the "Resolution from the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee, May 19, 2003" was handed out. This resolution states that the increase is considered excessive in light of the present usage fee(s), a Student Recreation Center fee increase schedule recommended in June, 2000 by then University President Andrew Sorensen and the planned increases in faculty/staff insurance and parking fees at a time when salary increases are expected to be low or non-existent. The request was to reduce the proposed fee increase to be more consistent with the June 2000 proposal and to subsidize the faculty/staff cost of Recreation Center membership so

as to make such support a true faculty/staff benefit. The SUG schedule of recreation facility fees puts UA at the top. A family of two 16-17 year-old children and two adults would cost \$1000 a year for use of the swimming pool facilities. A point that will be made during a meeting with UA President Witt will be that faculty is at the low end of the salary scale and the high end of recreation fees. It is felt that faculty is subsidizing parking and recreation facilities on campus. The parking is being developed for students. The emphasis in the request for a reduction should be on the health and welfare of the faculty in connection with the "Healthy Campus" campaign. Further discussion concerned the available facilities, continued fee increases and comparable facilities in other institutions. It was suggested to consult with UAH since their facilities are outstanding. It was pointed out that there is a statement in George Brown's (Director of University Recreation) letter to Dr. Witt referring to a proposal to renovate the Aquatic Center weight room into a UA faculty/staff health and fitness center while stating that no funding source has been identified. It was expressed that this would be a perfect time to approach the Athletic Department about subsidizing these facility renovations. At this time, the Athletic Department is in a budget crisis due to lack of income dictated by the NCAA sanctions. The UA Athletic Department was not eligible to receive their share of seven million dollars distributed to each SEC institution by the SEC. A portion of the Aquatic Center's budget is covered by the Athletic Department since some athletes use the facility. The fee increase should go into effect on August 15. The increase will have the greatest impact on young families with children. In a meeting with Dr. Witt, John Mason will attempt to negotiate a reduction for family membership in the outdoor facilities and stress that other reductions are needed. Catherine Davies made a motion with a second from Nick Stinnett to support the resolution from the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee. The Steering Committee voted unanimously to support this resolution. Further discussion concerned the reduction of benefits for faculty and staff and that the University has made major investments in the "Healthy Campus" campaign that could be used as a connection in the meeting.

The Inter-fraternity Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the Pan-Hellenic Association at The University of Alabama presented a "Statement of Vision and Values" as a platform to have "rush" return to the original date. The "Greek Self Assessment Board" is mentioned in the document and a request was made to determine what this organization is, the charter, advisors and any other information that could be obtained. This board will evaluate chapters based on their scholarship, philanthropic involvement, alumni relations, and risk management practices. Nothing concerning diversity is mentioned in the accountability section of this document. It will be communicated to Dr. Witt that the Faculty Senate expects measurable success in this area. Some faculty complained to Dr. Witt that "rush" interfered with classes. Departmental exams for chemistry came in the middle of "rush". The Crimson White stated that fraternities would have "rush" twice in the fall, one before and one after classes begin. The African American fraternities have "rush" in the spring. This gives an opportunity to determine which students successfully complete their first semester of studies. The opinion was expressed that it is implied consent by the University to lease land to fraternities and sororities at a very minimal fee a year for the use of the property. The Faculty Senate was not consulted before the decision was made to change "rush". The Black Faculty and Staff Association expressed at a luncheon their priorities of issues and this issue was not a concern. They were concerned that if the Greek system was integrated, the impact would be on the black fraternities and sororities since the white fraternities and sororities would pursue their "rushees" and this would negatively impact their finances. It was suggested to ask Dr. Witt what his criteria for diversity would be for the future. The "Coalition for Diversity and Inclusiveness" committee background was discussed. The group was formed out of the Senate with Rob Ingram and Pat Bauch heading their efforts. The Provost provided funds for a group to come in and conduct workshops. Other groups on campus

demanded the same amount of money to bring in their speakers. This committee is continuing to meet.

Pat Hermann has been quoted in the media as a liaison for diversity issues. John Mason began inquiries since Pat Hermann is not a member of the Faculty Senate. Norm Stein during his term as Faculty Senate president ten years ago informally asked Pat Hermann to keep abreast of diversity developments. There is concern that Prof. Hermann is being quoted and is being referred to as the Faculty Senate Liaison on diversity. Although there is agreement with his stance on some issues, it was felt that he should not be allowed to speak on behalf of the Senate. He is not a senator and has not been a senator for quite some time. The Steering Committee suggested that John Mason write a letter to Pat Hermann stating that the Faculty Senate supports his leadership in the struggle for increased racial diversity in the Greek system but the Faculty Senate needs to speak only through its elected representatives and unanimously resolve that he no longer represent himself as the Faculty Senate liaison on diversity. It was also to be requested in the letter for Pat Hermann to e-mail some dates and times for his requested meeting with officers of the Faculty Senate. The Steering Committee voted unanimously for this letter to be composed and sent to Pat Hermann with copies to Dr. Robert Witt, President of the University, Mr. John McMahon, The Board of Trustees, Chancellor Mack Portera, Provost Judy Bonner, Dr. Kathleen Cramer, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Janet L. Griffith, University Relations.

Dr. Robert Witt appointed Dr. Judy Bonner as Provost of the University indicating that stability and continuity was needed for this position with the other vice president vacancies not filled at this time. There was some concern by some Steering Committee members that there was not a national search for this position and there are national searches for other high administrative posts. She has been appointed for a three-year term and there will be a national search at that time according to John Mason.

John Mason asked for suggested names to participate in the Freshman Convocation Committee. Hank Lazer spoke to the Steering Committee about this at the May meeting. John Mason will attend with the first meeting being held Thursday at 3:00 PM.

**Legislative Agenda Committee** – *(Margaret Garner)* The tax proposal put forth by Governor Riley will face a battle before the public votes in September. Strategies to organize grass root support are very important and the message that there will be some people who will pay less tax under the plan should be publicized. There will be lots of work to be done before September.

The Steering Committee will meet with the Provost on Thursday, June 26 at 3:30 PM in here office. The next Steering Committee meeting will be July 22 at 3:00 PM in 101SSC.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM