

**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES  
MARCH 10, 2015 – 3:00 PM - #213 AIME**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** Steve Miller, Rona Donahoe, Charlotte Herrin, Steve Burch, Andreas Piepke, Ed Stephenson, John Vincent, Mangala Krishnamurthy, Reuben Cook, Rainer Schad, JoAnn Oliver, Kim Severt, Bob Riter, Joanne Hale, Pamela Payne-Foster.

**ABSENT:** Marilyn Handley, Donna Meester, Clark Midkiff, Patricia Parmelee.

**GUESTS:** Chancellor Robert Witt, Cresandra Smothers, Dialog.

Roll Call and Quorum Check by Faculty Senate Secretary Rona Donahoe.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of February 10, 2015 must be approved/corrected, along with the March 10, 2015 meeting minutes, at the April Steering Committee meeting.

**Dr. Robert Witt, Chancellor UA System** – Chancellor Witt reported on the status of the Presidential Search. The search committee has met twice and will meet again on Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. The headhunter consultant is pleased with the level of interest in the position. The search committee has spent a considerable amount of time discussing the characteristics sought in the next UA president. The Chancellor believes that focus must also be directed to the current characteristics of UA and what type of president is needed at this time. He also believes that the poor financial outlook for some state institutions will work to our advantage in this search, as several states are making significant budget cuts to higher education funding. Dr. Witt has suggested hiring a student assistant to search through the last year of Chronicle of Higher Education president position ads to compile a list of top, but unsuccessful, candidates for these positions. He also recommends putting together a PR packet which promotes UA graduate education and research to help recruit candidates having a strong research focus. The Search Committee will need President Bonner's help with this. Dr. Witt then took questions from Steering Committee members. He was asked how top candidates for presidential searches at other institutions can be obtained, when these names are typically not disclosed. Dr. Witt responded that while this may be true in some cases, the top candidates are public record for other presidential searches (e.g., University of Texas). Another Steering Committee member inquired about the number applications that have been received. Dr. Witt responded that we have received approximately two hundred total applications, with ~100 of these being "active". He was then asked about the search timeline. Dr. Witt said that although Ray Hays has announced a May 1<sup>st</sup> target date for a new president being named, he believes that the end of May is more feasible. He stressed the need to vet the final candidates very carefully, which will slow the process. The original timeline has interviews occurring in April. The Chancellor was asked whether the current list of applicants needs expansion. He stated that there are several good names on the list, but thinks it wise to expand it. The headhunter consultant has made several contacts and is awaiting answers from these individuals. Dr. Witt was asked whether there is a conflict between finding the best candidate for the position and finding someone who will stay at UA. He said that he believes it is possible to do both and will make certain that the candidates know that they will have the resources they need now and for the future. The largest barrier to attracting some candidates is the size of Tuscaloosa, but trailing spouse issues can likely be managed. Proximity to UAB was cited as an advantage. The University is in an excellent position, with 35,000 applications for fall 2015 admission. The message from the Board of

Trustees is to go out and use whatever means necessary to bring in the best candidates. After the final question, President Miller thanked the Chancellor for his time.

**President's Report** (*Steve Miller*) – President Miller followed up on Chancellor Witt's report to assure the Steering Committee that the President Search Committee will not “settle” for anyone but the most outstanding candidate for the position. At a previous Search Committee meeting, Miller asked a very pointed question about the autonomy of the new president with respect to Board control. Chancellor Witt stated that during his 9 years of serving as UA President he was never over-ruled by the Board of Trustees, although some of his decisions were not popular with all Board members. President Miller reminded the Steering Committee members about the breakfast with Dr. Damon Williams, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America), scheduled at 8:00 AM on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Dr. William's address that evening at 7:30 PM in the Moody Music Concert Hall. Miller stated that he intends to bring up the subject of Chief Diversity Officer with each presidential candidate. He also informed the Committee that he and Dr. Utz McNight, from the Department of Political Science, have been invited to speak about diversity issues to members of the Chi Omega sorority. President Miller asked committee members for their input to create a list of potential short- and long-term action items. Suggested items for the list included: Chief Diversity Officer, new University Standing Committee on Diversity (or expand the charge of the existing Equal Opportunity Committee), expanded Maternity Benefits for 12 month and contract faculty, Paternity Benefits, new on-campus University childcare center, finalize and post Contract Faculty Policy document, establish new D (Diversity) and M (Multicultural) core course designations and requirements, and a Graduate Student Association which is independent of the SGA.

**Vice President's Report** (*Donna Meester*) – No report.

**Secretary's Report** (*Rona Donahoe*) – Faculty Senate and Faculty Ombudsperson elections should be underway in all divisions. CIS, LIB, NURS, and HES were reported by Steering Committee members as not currently conducting an Ombudsperson election.

**Faculty and Senate Governance** - (*Marilyn Handley & Charlotte Herrin*) Senate officer elections will take place at the March 24<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate meeting. No officer nominations were made from the floor during the February Faculty Senate meeting. The final slate of candidates includes Donna Meester for President, Ed Stephenson for Vice President, and Rona Donahoe for Secretary. A vote on the proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate By-Laws (replace Legislative Agenda with a Community Affairs Committee; extend the role of Senate Parliamentarian to serve as an *ex officio* member of the Faculty & Senate Governance Committee and to attend all meetings of the Faculty Senate and Steering Committee, including meetings with the Provost) will also be conducted at the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting (see attachment). Committee co-chairs have participated in meetings concerning Task Force Report recommendations. Testing of electronic voting will take place over the summer prior to its implementation in the fall. Senator attendance issues are often due to elected alternates not attending meetings when needed.

**Research and Service** - (*Steve Burch and Andreas Piepke*) The committee will continue to push the Office for Research to publish a Research Vision Statement. The Research Advisory Committee is currently discussing this. Fifteen faculty are being recognized for their research on April 8<sup>th</sup> at the Bryant Conference Center. Each faculty member will receive an award and small stipend.

**Legislative Action** - (*Kimberly Severt*) Higher Education Day is April 9<sup>th</sup>. Activities are being coordinated with President Bonner and SGA. SGA is no longer providing funding for the buses.

**Academic Affairs** - (*Patricia Parmelee & John Vincent*) Committee members are frustrated and upset about the lack of information concerning President Bonner's resignation. This likely mirrors faculty feelings across campus.

**Information Technology** - (*Mangala Krishnamurthy & Clark Midkiff*) The Committee is working on Task Force Report #3 recommendations. The co-chairs reported to the committee about their meeting with Stephen Hood.

**Financial Affairs** - (*Reuben Cook & Rainer Schad*) The University is trying to move toward a standard summer compensation policy to eliminate disparity between policies currently used by divisions. The committee is investigating FLEX account policies, now administered by TASC, which place documentation responsibilities on faculty and fail to communicate with claimant when problems arise. Cook has complained to the Benefits Office about this and recommends that faculty filing claims log into myTASC to check whether payments are coming out of their account.

**Student Affairs** - (*Joanne Hale & JoAnn Oliver*) Committee met last week with the Graduate Student Association Executive Committee. Concern was expressed that graduate student voices are not heard through SGA and the GSA needs a budget independent of the SGA. GSA finds SGA funding rules (e.g., mandatory training) to be burdensome and irrelevant to graduate students. The GSA does believe that adding more GSA seat to the SGA will be helpful and therefore seeks financial autonomy. The only funding currently allocated for graduate students is the Graduate School Research & Travel Fund, which has strict rules and limitations, and does not address all needs. The Student Affairs Committee asked GSA to develop a list of needs for further discussion. Dean Francko is supportive of GSA but is hesitant to challenge Student Affairs. The Committee continues to work on Task Force Report #1 recommendations. The Office Student Affairs has acted on the easy recommendations, but has not addressed the larger items. The Committee will continue to push on these issues. The OSA agrees, in principle, with the issues raised, but cites more staff is needed to work with the SGA on election issues. Unlikely that major changes will be made until a permanent VP for Student Affairs is named. The Search Committee has recommended a list of final candidates for the position.

**Faculty Life** - (*Pamela Payne-Foster & Ed Stephenson*) The Faculty Climate Survey was submitted to Provost Benson and he will share it with President Bonner. Co-chairs will inquire about the status of the survey in the meeting with the Provost on Thursday.

**VP for Advancement Search** – The Committee will meet in two weeks to select approximately 8 candidates for April interviews.

**Committee on University Committees** – Committee work is on schedule. The committee staffing meeting will take place the week after Spring Break. OIRAS donated time to develop a new committee staffing code which enables committee staffing to be done electronically, based on committee preference survey results. The staffing meeting will now last 3-4 hours, rather than all day.

**Parking & Traffic Committee** – Proposal of using a floating parking fee scale was voted down by the finance sub-committee. Tickets need to be written for cars blocking intersection of University Blvd. and Hackberry Lane. Accidents have occurred at the intersection of Helen Keller and Campus Drive.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 P.M.