Notes from The University of Alabama Faculty Senate

February 21, 2017

* Coach Bill Battle, Director of Athletics, addressed the Faculty Senate. Coach Battle provided an operational overview of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, the role of the Department in educating student-athletes, and a summary of his tenure as Director of Athletics. Coach Battle emphasized that preparing the University’s student-athletes for success in life is the Department’s top priority.
* Jon Dever, Associate Athletic Director for Student Services, addressed the Faculty Senate. Mr. Dever provided an overview of the academic achievements of the University’s student-athletes. Each year individuals and teams garner significant conference and national academic honors.
* President Meester provided an overview of the University’s response to the recent Executive Order on immigration and travel. Additionally, she summarized messages received from senators. President Meester moved to establish an ad hoc committee (five members) to gather data, monitor the changing policy environment, and make recommendations. This motion was approved; nominations are being accepted.
* Vice President Donahoe, in her capacity as chair of the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee, provided an overview the process to verify dependents listed by UA faculty and staff, and responded to questions from the Senate membership.
* The Academic Affairs Committee met with Judy Thorpe (Director, Office of Disability Services) regarding priority registration for students registered with ODS. Work continues on the Emeritus Faculty policy.
* Nominations for Faculty Senate officers closed at the conclusion of the February 21st meeting. President Meester and Vice President Donahoe are standing for reelection; Dr. Chapman Greer is the nominee for the office of Secretary. Nominations are being accepted for a vacancy on the Merger or Discontinuance of Academic Units committee.
* The Information and Strategic Communications Committee reported on work towards developing a more structured process for managing the Faculty Senate website. The Committee will be meeting with OIT regarding policies regarding personal cellular phone use for university business.
* The Research and Service Committee presented its response to the University’s strategic plan for research. A particular point of emphasis is the need to strengthen research by supporting existing UA faculty, in addition to new hiring.
* The Student Affairs Committee presented a recommendation to change the name of the committee to *Faculty Life*, aligning with the renamed Division of Student Life. The Division of Student Life plans to place greater emphasis on community health issues, including alcohol and substance abuse. Work towards establishing a SANE program in the community continues.
* Elections for senators whose term will begin Fall 2017 are coming soon. Keep up with notices so that you can be involved in our faculty governance!
* Don’t forget the faculty senate website has more comprehensive information regarding their meetings and activities: facultysenate.ua.edu