**FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**DECEMBER 5, 2017 – 3:00 P.M. - #213 AIME**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDING:** Donna Meester, Rona Donahoe, Chapman Greer, Ozzy Molina, Merit Eyal-Cohen, Ajay Agrawal, Mike Kreger, Angela Benson, Ibrahim Cemen, Julia Cartwright, James Gilbreath, Clark Midkiff, Barbara Dalbach, Robert Findlay, Amy Dayton, Seth Bordner, Charlye Adams, Amy Traylor, John Vincent, Dominic Yeager.

**ABSENT:** Peter Johnson, Brad Tuggle.

**GUESTS:** Cresandra Smothers, Strategic Communications.

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Chapman Greer.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of November 7, 2017 were approved.

**President’s Report –** *(Donna Meester)* There will be a review of the music played on Denny Chimes following a complaint about the playing of Christmas/religious carols.

The topics discussed in the meeting with the Provost were reviewed including the proposed tax bill putting caps on student loans and a focus on ensuring students graduate with skills the labor market is seeking.

**Vice President’s Report –** *(Rona Donahoe)* No report.

**Secretary’s Report –** *(Chapman Greer)* A survey is being composed to ascertain the interest of faculty to visit other campuses in the UA system.

**Diversity, Inclusion & Equity:** The committee met withMallet Assembly that provides independent living community to diverse group of students. The committee will be meeting monthly with the new Vice President for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity, Dr. Christine Taylor. On the Menorah issue, the committee reported that Menorah displays are not allowed several places on campus such as Gorgas House, President’s Mansion and Rose Administration building. The letter written by this committee made points including - special permits are not equally required, it is divisive not allowing Menorah to be displayed next to the Christmas/holiday tree. Some positive points - displaying the Menorah would promote diversity and tolerance, would create an inviting, respectful and inclusive campus environment. The letter presented by the committee has already been sent to President Bell and Provost Whitaker with no response as of this date. The committee will compose a resolution to be voted on by email by the Steering committee and to be presented at the Faculty Senate meeting on December 12, 2017.

**Research & Service – (***Ajay Agrawal & Mike Kreger)* The committee’s letter to Provost Whitaker requesting information concerning the progress being made on faculty recruitment and hiring is ready with comments and suggestions incorporated into the letter which will go forward. The interim Vice President for Research is John Higginbotham. Some of the information requested will be difficult to acquire and some requests will place more work on faculty, particularly those members of a search committee.

**Faculty & Senate Governance –** *(Angela Benson & Ibrahim Cemen)* There are two nominations for the Mediation Committee vacancy – Joann Oliver, College of Nursing and Cassie Smith, A&S (English). An information sheet will be attached to the agenda for an acclamation vote at next week’s meeting. A request for nominations for two vacancies on the Merger and Discontinuance Committee was sent December 4, 2017.

**Faculty Life –** *(Julia Cartwright & James Gilbreath)* The Faculty Life Committee continues to work on the day care and parental leave policy clarification issues. The policy states two weeks leave for twelve month employees. Nine month faculty members already have a generous leave policy in the Faculty Handbook. A resolution is forthcoming from the Office, Clerical and Technical Association and the Professional Staff Association. The financial concern is addressed by others taking over additional responsibilities. Further discussion on the leave policy included early tenure and promotion, application for extensions and enforcement of the current policy.

The committee is continuing to work on temporary housing for new faculty. The co-chairs will be meeting with the Executive Director of University Recreation Friday morning concerning free membership for gym participation. One of the suggestions was to restrict faculty usage to one or two days at certain times when usage of the gym is at the lowest. Recreation is an auxiliary of the University and lost revenue would have to be replaced. The committee felt including wellness as an advantage of promoting faculty use of the recreation facilities would be advantageous.

A meeting will be set with Linda Bonin, Strategic Communications, concerning the development of a web site for incoming and new faculty containing information about local activities, housing, businesses, referrals and other points needed by someone new coming into the UA community.

Training is needed for students in the area of etiquette, respect and appropriate behavior toward others. It was suggested the committee contact Bama Bound to discuss integrating such training into their program. Residential advisors and other suggestions could possibly be a great help in this area. Harassment training was discussed.

**Information Technology & Strategic Communication –** *(Clark Midkiff & Barbara Dalbach)* The University of Alabama Information Technology Committee met last Thursday morning. Security of financial and personal information seems to be the primary concern following an internal and external audit by Delta Risk Company showing some areas of concern. IT has insurance and will follow up on those recommendations to keep costs low and secure data. Software purchasing was discussed.

**Financial Affairs –** *(Robert Findlay & Peter Johnson)* The Financial Affairs Committee met with representatives from the Concur accounting program. Some changes have been made in conjunction with suggestions made during the meeting. Anyone wishing to meet with a user group over lunch monthly with Concur representatives please notify Robert Findlay.

The Financial Affairs Committee has set January as a target for a meeting with administration concerning start-up funding.

**Community Affairs –** *(Amy Dayton & Seth Bordner)* The Community Affairs Committee is working on a letter to send to the House and Senate concerning the proposed tax bill affecting higher education.

**Student Life –** *(Charlye Adams & Amy Traylor)* A Student Care and Well Being program is available for students needing the basics of life. There is also a food pantry and extra dining dollars can be donated through MyBama. The committee is looking at other institutions to determine ways to educate students about these resources. Donations may also be made to the Reach program.

**Academic Affairs –** *(John Vincent & Brad Tuggle)* There will be lengthy meetings to finalize the Faculty Handbook. Committee structure not including tenure-tenure-track faculty in an ongoing Dean’s search was discussed. Tenure and tenure-track faculty can vote to expand the committee to include non-tenure track faculty.

The Campus Master Plan Committee met and the plan presented to the committee was the same one presented to the Board of Trustees. The plan is being reconsidered due to a proposed building intruding on the Bryce lawn. There are three different campus master plans – the campus, athletics and the library. There is an expansion proposed for the Business School. There continues to be overall fluidity to the expansion plans.

The Faculty Senate will meet in Ferguson Forum on December 12, 2017.

A resolution concerning displaying the Menorah will be composed and sent to President Meester to be attached to the agenda for next week’s meeting discussion and voting.

5:00 P.M. Meeting adjourned