

Faculty Life Committee Year-End Summary 2017-2018:

Committee members: James Gilbreath, Julia Cartwright, Andrea Glenn, Kelley Schoger, Daiquiri Steele, Adam Knowlden, Michelle Hale.

James Gilbreath & Bill Martin were co-chairs from April 2017 – August 2017.

Julia Cartwright took over from Bill in September 2017.

Overall, there have been ~7 policies that we have focused on as a committee from September.

- 1) Daycare opportunities & policies regarding inclement weather.
- 2) Temporary Housing.
- 3) Gym membership.
- 4) Maternity/paternity leave.
- 5) Development of a website for new faculty.
- 6) Hayes' Charge of UA/UAH/UAB
- 7) Faculty surveys.

1) Daycare

There is a significant need for daycare on campus. There are long waitlists to get into certain daycares around Tuscaloosa.

The committee did some data gathering to determine how extensive the problem is.

⇒ It's a massive problem. E.g. Some daycares have long lists and limited places & have some slightly unconventional methods for requiring parents to sign up.

Faculty and Staff Benefits committee are also working on this. They are putting forward a charge for a separate daycare facility on campus. We are composing a resolution in support of this proposal. This needs to be done. With increasing hires = more potential for daycare issues. This is not going to go away.

Other concerns include inclement weather – we are working to try to implement some support on campus in instances when local schools close, but the university does not.

2) Temporary Housing.

The university has very limited accommodation available for incoming faculty. A few colleges have access to some property for temporary living, at the discretion of the dean. These limited accommodations are heavily oversubscribed – there is clearly a market to expand this.

Many other universities have support for new faculty, including temporary housing.

We are drafting a proposal to suggest that the university invests in some accommodation for incoming new faculty and staff, especially those from further afield, who would greatly benefit from having a temporary residence in order to establish an identity (SSN) and bank account etc.

3) Gym membership.

The university are very proud of their sporting heritage and have multiple facilities across campus. Many other universities offer free membership to their faculty and staff.

James and I met with the director of the Rec Center to negotiate allowing free access to faculty and staff. As they are a separate franchise, total free membership is apparently out of the question. We countered that offering free access to facilities for a couple of days a week would be beneficial to the faculty and staff bodies as a whole, especially in the interests of supporting the 4th pillar of the UA system – to promote a healthy work:life balance.

We have drafted a proposal to suggest a pilot study over the summer in which the Rec Center would allow free access to faculty and staff during time periods that are typically low frequency. We are in the process of finishing this.

The idea is that it would provide both the senate and the rec center with valuable data with which to determine the cost/benefit ratio for the proposal.

An additional consideration is that a program such as Wellbama may be able to incorporate a similar benefit through participation in a program.

4) Maternity/Paternity Leave

This is also a subject that has been worked on by the Faculty and Staff benefits committee – they drafted a proposal to suggest maternity leave for staff.

We support this motion, and hope that it will be expanded on in the future.

We also propose that language in the handbook be gender-neutral to highlight equality within the family unit.

5) Development of a website for new faculty/current faculty.

We have been working on an idea to implement a new website with which to provide information for incoming and current faculty about the Tuscaloosa area in general. This website would provide a useful tool for staff and faculty to learn information ranging from where the post offices are, to how to open a bank account, as well as providing an example of overall budgets based on living expenses. Many universities have similar tools that are invaluable for those that are not local to the area, and this information is not currently available in a single place for UA staff and faculty.

James, Julia and Barb Dalhbach (Strategic Communications) met with Monica Watts (Ass. VP for Communications) and Andy Rainey (Director of Web communications) to discuss the idea of this website. The conclusion of the meeting that they are very supportive of this action and would be happy to build the website. However, the question of where it should be hosted came up. HR seems like an obvious platform, and we are hoping to meet with the HR director to discuss this soon.

Additionally, the concept of how to acquire all of this data and who would maintain it is a significant issue. While some minor data mining could be done by the committee, it was judged that this would need to be undertaken by an individual over a period of time.

Barb and James (both in libraries) mentioned that there is an internship opportunity within libraries for data conservation and curation. Maybe a student intern could spend a summer gathering this information, and later interns could work to update the material?

Julia, James and Barb met with Sybil Bullock – who is the internship coordinator in the College of Communications and Information Sciences – to discuss the possibility of having a summer internship project for a student. She was in support of this idea and was going to take it further within her college. One question of advising came up – and there was the question of whether this could be overseen by someone in HR, with some updates provided to the Faculty Life committee. We are still following this up.

6) Chancellor Hayes' Charge

We discussed the charge from Chancellor Hayes at length during multiple committee meetings, and highlighted that the charge could be something that affects multiple committees. Both encouraging research, and promoting some work/life balance.

Overall, there was concern that a bus tour would require significant planning, and some faculty and staff may not be that interested in visiting other places.

Some departments already have collaborative conference between the three UA campuses.

This topic was raised at the BOT meeting, and with little interest from UAB (lots from UAH!), the conclusion was that it may be a good idea to have common issues highlighted in some sort of online platform – which may also provide a basis with which to encourage collaboration.

7) Faculty Surveys

The committee went through the Climate Survey data and highlighted various areas where problems may have arisen. Additionally James and Julia met with the Title 9 lawyers to ensure that there were no responsibilities as required reporters.

We discussed the idea of sending out another survey to the faculty, but decided against that at this point, as multiple surveys have been launched recently, including the Mindat survey.

As a final point, I would like to urge that the members of the senate please update their faculties about issues that the senate are raising. On more than a number of occasions, I have been contacted by people (and friends) suggesting that the university open a daycare or that free gym membership be offered. This highlights that some of the hardwork that these committees are doing is not being passed on to our colleagues. We want the senate to be shown to be a driver of change in the university, and without the senate members passing on this information, our colleagues are non-the-wiser regarding ideas and policies.