

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

MAY 10, 2016 – 3:00 P.M. - #213 AIME

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDING: Reuben Cook, Rona Donahoe, Darrin Griffin, Charlotte Herrin, Bill Martin, Donna Meester, Clark Midkiff, Steve Miller, Ossie Molina, Dana Patton, Robert Riter, Rita Snyder, Amy Traylor, John Vincent.

ABSENT: Charlye Adams, Ajay Agrawal, Amy Dayton, Chapman Greer, Rainer Schad, Dominc Yeager.

PRESS: Cathy Butler, Dialog.

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Robert Riter.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of April 12, 2016 were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – (*Donna Meester*) Interim Provost Whitaker has requested the formation of a group to review committee charges and membership. The group will consist of Chapman Greer, Charlotte Herrin, Patty Sobecky, Rona Donahoe, Donna Meester, Steve Miller and John Vincent.

The search for a new Dean of the Graduate School is ongoing. The committee is in the process of checking references and extending an offer to one of the candidates with a response expected within a week.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT – (*Rona Donahoe*) Vice President Donahoe will assume the role of the previous Vice President by reviewing and implementing the Diversity Task Force recommendations. Ongoing this summer will be efforts to implement changes in campus voting.

There is a proposal to merge two CCHS departments, Family Medicine and Internal Medicine. Vice President Donahoe expressed concerns about the lack of written faculty response to the merger and what positions the two chairs would occupy. Any alteration of a faculty member's position would bring the matter before the Committee on Mergers and Discontinuance of Academic Units assuming one of the chairs would have such an alteration. UA legal counsel verified that, based on the faculty handbook, this proposed merger does not trigger a review by the Committee on Mergers or Discontinuance of Academic Units because it will not result in the termination of any faculty appointments.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – (*Robert Riter*) Implementing Qualtrics for Faculty Senate elections will be worked on over the summer.

Steve Miller volunteered to be the Faculty Senate representative on UA's Committee on Committees.

A calendar of important dates such as the date for committee/representative elections for the Faculty Senate will be comprised and posted on the Faculty Senate web page.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS – (*John Vincent & Chapman Greer*) The Academic Affairs Committee continues work on the Faculty Handbook. The Mediation and Grievance policy is being reviewed by the University's legal counsel, particularly the grievance and internal process and the Tribunal

composition and responsibilities. Shane Street, former Ombudsperson, has offered his assistance in the review.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – *(Amy Dayton & Rita Snyder)* The Community Affairs will be organizing an afternoon gathering in place of the Legislative Breakfast.

The committee will be setting up a meeting with Dr. Samory Pruitt, Vice President for Community Affairs.

Josiah Bonner of the UA Systems Office has been invited to speak to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee.

FACULTY & SENATE GOVERNANCE – *(Charlotte Herrin & Steve Miller)* The Faculty and Senate Governance co-chairs and Secretary Robert Riter met today and synchronized the Faculty Senate calendar for next year. This will be used to send announcements concerning elections. Qualtrics will be used for announcements of candidates, dates and committee vacancies and should be ready for use before the fall.

A proposal to change the Faculty Senate committee name from Information Technology to Information Technology and Strategic Communication will be made along with a change in the bylaws to reflect this change.

The committee will be reviewing the Diversity Task Force recommendations with focus on sustainability issues.

There was discussion regarding speakers for Faculty Senate and Steering Committee meetings.

FACULTY LIFE – *(Dana Patton & Bill Martin)* No report.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – *(Reuben Cook & Rainer Schad)* There are efforts to change Alabama's State Retirement plan from a contribution plan to a defined benefit plan. A defined contribution plan is a plan that does not pay a specific benefit when you retire but allows you to save money in a tax-deferred account. The contribution plan provides a means for both employees and employers to contribute a steady stream of revenue into the participant's retirement account.

The defined benefit plan also called a pension is a plan that pays you a specific amount of money, either per month or in a lump sum when you become eligible for retirement benefits based on salary and years of service.

The change, if approved, would apply to new employees or possibly give new hires or current employees an opportunity to join or opt out. If there are less numbers of participants (contributors) in the current retirement plan, administrative costs would remain the same.

Sustainability of undergraduate enrollment growth along with the need to increase enrollment of graduate students remains to be concerns. There seems to be an administrative acknowledgement of these issues but proposed solutions have not been forthcoming.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS – *(Clark Midkiff & Darrin Griffin)* The committee would like to have someone in place to coordinate with Webmaster Ed Stephenson

changes and additions to the Faculty Senate webpage. Darrin Griffin will pursue plans to have another person in place to be knowledgeable and have access to the webpage.

The committee will begin to plan meetings with Linda Bonnin, Vice President for Strategic Communications.

RESEARCH & SERVICE – (*Ajay Agrawal & Osiris Molina*) The Research and Service Committee plans to arrange meetings with Dr. Carl Pinkert, Vice President for Research, to discuss research issues coming up in the fall.

STUDENT AFFAIRS – (*Charlye Adams & Amy Traylor*) The Student Affairs Committee will be meeting with Dr. David Grady, Vice President for Student Affairs, as soon as possible to discuss the status and timelines of the Diversity Task Force recommendations. The primary focus will be the implementation, immediate response and identifying an action date for campus election changes. President Meester requested each committee working on the Diversity Task Force reports review and determine what has been accomplished, needs to be accomplished and what issues should be pushed forward. There was further discussion concerning methods to see the recommendations come to fulfillment.

The Strategic Plan will address the involvement of freshmen students in more campus activities and other situations to have a good experience, be comfortable, and feel welcomed to UA campus.

Other Committee Reports –

New Business – A complaint has been filed concerning parking on campus. Faculty members who are required to have a handicapped tag on campus are required to pay to park on game day. The faculty member met with the Parking and Transportation Committee and was told that all faculty members have to pay to park on game day unless they are working on game day. There is no mechanism in place to verify these categories. ADA parking is specified in only three areas on campus. According to the complaint this causes the disabled serious difficulties. President Meester will follow up on this issue and report back to the Steering Committee.

There are issues with commencement ceremonies. In each graduation ceremony an embarrassing number of seats were vacated as soon as the graduate walked across the platform. There were a number of suggestions including ways to shorten the ceremony, having a well-known speaker, a different venue, one ceremony in Bryant-Denny Stadium, dividing up divisions and adding/changing times of graduation. Ken Foshee will chair an ad hoc committee to address this issue.

Two different graduation programs were passed around the Steering Committee to review the format of each one. There were several suggestions including increasing the font size, listing faculty/staff names with 25 or more years of service, show the department of the graduate, photo arrangement, list UA administration in proper order, adding the Faculty Senate President's name, portrait not landscape format, involving UA Press and a faculty representative involved in formation and printing of the program. Each Steering Committee should review the programs and make notes with times and dates to forward to President Meester. Reuben Cook will be on this committee.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 P.M.

