# FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

## MAY 9, 2017 – 3:00 PM - #213 AIME

## APPROVED MINUTES

**ATTENDING: Donna Meester, Rona Donahoe, Chapman Greer, John Vincent, Brad Tuggle, Amy Dayton, Seth Bordner, Robert Findlay, Peter Johnson, Charlotte, Herrin, Angela Benson, Bill Martin, James Gilbreath, Clark Midkiff, Barbara Dalbach, Ajay Agrawal, Mike Kreger.**

**ABSENT: Charlye Adams, Amy Traylor.**

**GUESTS: Cresandra Smothers, Dialog.**

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

**The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes were approved with attendance to be added.**

**President’s Report – *(Donna Meester)* President Meester opened the first meeting of the new Faculty Senate Steering Committee members with introductions. Attending Steering Committee meetings is important with guest speakers addressing current issues and answering pertinent questions. It is also important for information to be passed along to each individual’s college.**

**Faculty attendance was exceptional at commencement ceremonies. The Saturday morning student attendance was not good. There is a problem with students and families leaving before the end of ceremonies. Additional regalia will be purchased and financial cutbacks include discontinuing medallions, color guard and live music.**

**The May 18th, 2017Steering Committee meeting with Provost Whitaker has been cancelled.**

**President Bell wrote a note expressing appreciation for the opportunity to speak to the Faculty Senate.**

**The UA Standing Environmental Stewardship Committee has been frozen for a while due to the lack of pertinent issues. The committee was formed during expanded construction and intrusion into green space. Energy efficiency cost savings would be a top priority of this committee. A primary sustainable committee with members from varied departments and expertise to oversee management of environmental impact was suggested. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee voted to reconstitute this committee.**

**Vice President’s Report *– (Rona Donahoe)* The final report from the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee recommendations includes a section for a parental leave policy. There will be a two week paid leave policy for everyone except temporary employees and nine-month faculty members who already have a leave policy in place. This is a great benefit for UA’s twelve month, exempt and non-exempt employees. Parental leave is not just maternity leave. This will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Faculty Life Committee to review and hopefully recommend. Support of other groups such as Professional Staff Assembly and Graduate Student Association (if applicable) will be sought.**

**The second recommendation from the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee is the establishment of a child care facility on campus owned and operated by the University. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Faculty Life Committee.**

**The Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee reviews annually the University’s self-supporting health care plan. The news has not been good for six years with the committee recommending small adjustments in premiums due to catastrophic illness coverage. The reserve fund is kept in place in the event of catastrophic claims and this fund has been dwindling. Outlays have exceeded income and in 2017 a loss of four million dollars is projected. There has been a loss of over nine million dollars since 2014. The University contributed two million dollars last year to shore up the reserve fund. Life- saving drugs are extremely expensive and catastrophic claims and hospitalizations have increased. An increase in premiums was effective January 1, 2017 and there will be additional increases in the coming year including various co-pays. Deductibles will increase and all maintenance prescriptions will be written and filled on a ninety day basis rather than a thirty-day basis saving costs in that area. Premium adjustments average a seventeen percent increase with no other options available. These are recommendations from the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee which will continue to monitor claims and income through August which will then go to the full committee for a vote. UA is self- insured with premiums going into the fund that pays claims. All employees need to work together to save medical care costs. New employees are given a benefits orientation and the Benefits Office works to keep current information distributed to all employees.**

**There were a small number of employees found ineligible for UA benefits and were removed from receiving those benefits. This resulted from one employee improperly claiming benefits for an ineligible family member. A consulting firm was hired to conduct a survey which revealed only a small number of ineligible dependents. Thirty percent of UA’s employees utilize the Flexible Spending Account saving twenty-five percent of health care cost out-of-pocket expenses.**

**The Health and Wellness program was established to encourage employees to supervise and improve their health care plan usage. The program has been successful including identifying employees with pre-diabetic conditions. The Recreation Center will continue to charge fees which are needed for solvency and maintenance.**

**Secretary’s Report – *(Chapman Greer)* No report.**

**Academic Affairs *– (John Vincent & Brad Tuggle)* The “Non-Academic Misconduct Transcript Notations” document was attached to the Steering Committee meeting agenda. This proposed policy would record information on a student’s education record and academic transcript concerning expulsion or suspension for non-academic misconduct. An appeal could be made to the Dean of Students after three years to have the disciplinary transcript notation removed from the permanent record. This decision would be at the discretion of the Dean of Students or designee. This decision would include such factors as current demeanor of the student, conduct subsequent to the violation and nature of such violation including damage, injury or harm. If the removal decision is approved, the notation would be replaced by “Withdrew”. The definition of misconduct is not clear and would have different meanings over time. The reasoning for the Office of Student Life bringing up this issue is also not clear. The Academic Affairs Committee was ninety-nine percent against this policy which will be relayed to the Provost. The discussion included legalities, degrees of non-academic misconduct, liabilities, internal/external discipline and decisions, allegations and shared knowledge.**

**The Core Curriculum is overdue for revision since the document is forty years old. The Provost has requested a task force with members from all across the colleges be formed. It was suggested to have the Deans nominate faculty members with the number on the committee be limited to a workable number.**

**Community & Legislative Affairs *– (Amy Dayton & Seth Bordner)* The Community Affairs Committee will meet next month.**

**Financial Affairs *– (Robert Findlay & Peter Johnson)* No report.**

**Faculty & Senate Governance *– (Charlotte Herrin & Angela Benson)* The Faculty and Senate Governance Committee will review the Faculty Senate Bylaws and give a report at the next Steering Committee meeting. A Faculty Senate election calendar will be compiled. The election date for a commencement Marshal will be included.**

**Faculty Life *– (Bill Martin & James Gilbreath)* The Faculty Life Committee will coordinate the next meeting of the UA, UAH and UAB Steering Committees plus initiating the Steering Committee’s visits to each campus proposed by Chancellor Hayes. The committee will also be considering the faculty and staff benefits report.**

**Information Technology & Strategic Communications Committee *– (Clark Midkiff & Barbara Dalbach)* The IT office is working on a new policy concerning University email to be hosted purely on campus. Another proposed policy is the installation of an app on cell phones.**

**Research & Service *– (Ajay Agrawal & Mike Kreger)* The Research and Service Committee will be meeting this month. The committee requested any issues of concern be forwarded to the committee. There is apprehension regarding teaching and office space for the proposed hiring of three to four hundred new faculty members.**

**Student Affairs *– (Charlye Adams & Amy Traylor)* The Student Affairs Committee continues to work on the SANE program. More information concerning the SGA elections was requested since the current SGA president was guilty of several election violations. There is an ongoing investigation into student misconduct. Students can vote from any location by computer without privacy. A task force was appointed and there are additional rules in place prohibiting illegal activity. Every SGA officer position was unopposed except for the position of president.**

**The ad hoc committee appointed to address the recent executive order on immigration and refugees submitted “*A Resolution in support of The University of Alabama’s commitment to protecting all members of the University Community regardless of their immigration status”* document to the Steering Committee. The document from Vanderbilt’s Faculty Senate, *“A Vanderbilt Faculty Senate Resolution Affirming Our Guiding Principles”*, was distributed to the Steering Committee. The question was asked if a resolution is needed at this point since there are ongoing changes and developing issues regarding immigration. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee voted – one for, two abstentions and the remainder of the committee voted against moving the resolution forward to the full Faculty Senate and to revisit the issue when the full Faculty Senate convenes in August. Charter Morris, Director of International Services, will be speaking to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee in September.**

**The proposed Graduate Student Association forwarded a 30-page document requesting the Faculty Senate’s support, endorsement and to advocate for the association to become the governing body for all graduate students and graduate student organizations on campus. The Steering Committee had concerns regarding the proposed budget and requested further details. In the past the Graduate Student Association was a separate organization but administration placed them under the Student Government Association. The GSA has to request any funds from the SGA even though they pay their own fees. The GSA request is for 13% of the SGA budget corresponding with the percentage of graduate students paying fees. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee voted to support the GSA formation in general without financial specifics – all in favor, one abstention. It was suggested to invite the SGA have a representative attend the Faculty Senate meetings.**

**The NTRC policy proposal has been presented to the Council of Deans. Town Hall meetings were held for feedback and the Steering Committee was charged by the Provost to develop a proposal. Following approval the policy was to be placed in the Faculty Handbook. The provision for promotion/pay increases for instructors can be adopted or adapted at the discretion of the Deans according to the Provost. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting with the Provost.**

**A faculty member requested funding for history of slavery on UA campus and the support of the Steering Committee. Following a walking tour of campus the discussion progressed to how to publicize the historical findings. A committee could form some recommendations concerning markers, advertising, using the information in public tours, coordinating with the city of Tuscaloosa in forming a Civil Rights trail, coordination with Alabama Tourism, and undergraduate assistance with research. It was suggested to have the committee established as a standing committee of the University. An official historian would be an advantageous position for the University to move this forward. This issue will be brought forward when the full Faculty Senate convenes in August.**

**There was discussion about the interview of the Chief Diversity Officer.**

**Meeting adjourned 5:10 P.M.**