

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

3:30 p.m. – Room 1010 North Lawn Hall

### Approved minutes

The University of Alabama's Human Resources staff including Sandra Abrams, Hiron Stiell and Erica Shumate, presented information concerning benefit coverage for faculty and staff. The emphasis of the presentation was the limited time for open enrollment – November 1-15, 2019. All benefit-eligible employees must act by electing or declining health, dental, or vision coverage and set up FSA or HAS deductions through BenefitFocus. Failure to act during Open Enrollment will result in NO COVERAGE beginning January 1, 2020. UA's insurance is self-contained and ran a deficit from 2014 until 2018 paying more in claims than collected in premiums. This year, 2019, is more stable due to changes made in deductibles and co-pays, however, there continues to be a deficit. The requirement is to have 20% (\$11 million dollars-\$7 million currently) in reserve at all times. Dental premiums are increasing 4 ½% for the first time in three years. Additional health care benefits being offered include a short-term disability plan, a new autism therapy benefit for Applied Behavior Analysis, Teladoc, a 24/7 telemedicine company, and Livongo, a diabetes disease management program. If application is delayed until March of next year a 60-day waiting period will be required. Annual deductibles for medical and prescription drug expenses will be combined and increase by \$50 per person for a total of \$500 per person per calendar year. Every person must meet the \$400 deductible with medical and/or prescription drug claims, regardless of family size, before the plan begins to pay. Once an individual or family hits the out-of-pocket maximum, the plan will pay for 100% of that contract's care for the remainder of the year. There will be a slight increase in PPO premiums in 2019. The Healthcare Flexible Spending Account provides a way to save significant amounts of money on healthcare expenses during the year saving federal income tax, state income tax and Social Security tax on the amount contributed to the account. Employees will continue to have a choice in medical plans between the Preferred Provider Organization (PP) or the High Deductible Health Plan, (HDHP) paired with a health savings account option. The Health Savings Account (HSA) is a tax-favored savings account which can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses. Qualified medical expenses include things like deductibles, coinsurance, prescription medications, contacts, dental braces, travel and lodging expenses, Medicare premiums, etc. HSA offers triple tax savings such as tax free payroll contributions from the employee and The University of Alabama, tax free earnings accumulate if funds are invested and tax free distributions, when and if HSA funds are used to pay for qualified medical expenses. If the employee enrolls in the HDHP, enrollment in the HSA is not automatic, the HSA benefit must be elected to open a HSA. Key take-a-ways from this presentation may be found at the [ua.edu/benefits/openenrollment](http://ua.edu/benefits/openenrollment) web site. Information sessions will be held for employees at various sites on campus and times.

A photo of the Faculty Senate was taken for posting on the web site.

The Faculty Senate meeting agenda was distributed with written committee reports included.

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Barb Dahlbach.

The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of August 20, 2019 were approved.

A motion was made and seconded to set aside the agenda to address the resignation of Dr. James Riley and to discuss the response of the Faculty Senate. There were 9 opposed and 1 abstention to the vote to move into Executive Session.

A motion was made and seconded at 4:30 P.M. to end the Executive Session.

Following edits to the original document and a motion and second, the Faculty Senate adopted the following statement:

September 17, 2019

Dr. Stuart W. Bell,  
President 203 Rose  
Administration The  
University of Alabama  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-  
0100

Dear President Bell:

The Faculty Senate expresses its concern regarding the negative environment created by the recent resignation by mutual agreement of Dr. Jamie R. Riley from the position of Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students at The University of Alabama. Because the circumstances of Dr. Riley's departure have not been disclosed, the silence of the University Administration surrounding this recent incident perpetuates The University of Alabama's reputation as non-inclusive and discriminatory, does not align with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion pillar of the University's Strategic Plan, and further raises questions about the University's commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

We expect The University of Alabama will:

Demonstrate its commitment to Administrative statements and the University's Strategic Plan to "Enrich our learning and work environment by providing an accepting, inclusive community that attracts and supports a diverse faculty, staff, and student body" as well as a safe and welcoming environment for under-represented or marginalized communities.

Publicly and unequivocally affirm its commitment to creating and maintaining a safe climate that supports and encourages students, faculty, and staff to exercise their right to academic freedom and free speech, to denounce inequality and racism, and to promote social justice.

Sincerely Yours,

Members of the 2019-2020 UA Faculty Senate

Cc: Dr. Kevin Whitaker  
Dr. Christine Taylor  
Dr. Kathleen Cramer

The second action item was a proposal to establish a Faculty Senate task force which reads:

**Proposal to Create a Faculty Senate  
Taskforce to Transform Campus Culture at The University of Alabama**

**Purpose:**

By adoption of this proposal, the Faculty Senate hereby establishes this Taskforce to directly confront, and make concrete recommendations to address, all aspects of UA Campus Culture that lead segments of the UA Community to feel marginalized, threatened, unsafe and/or unheard.

The proposal was adopted by a unanimous vote by the Faculty Senate. Organization, priorities, and membership will be formed as soon as possible.

Meeting adjourned 5:30 P.M.

Attachment:

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING AGENDA**

**September 17, 2019**

**3:30 PM – Room 1010 North Lawn Hall**

**2020 Open Enrollment** - Hiron Stiell and Erica Shumate, Benefits Office

**Photograph of the Faculty Senate** - Bryan Hester, Strategic Communications

**Roll Call and Quorum Check** (*Barb Dahlbach*)

**Approval/Corrections to the Minutes for August 20, 2019** (*Barb Dahlbach*)

**President's Report** – (*Rona Donahoe*)

Board of Trustees Meeting - The General Board of Trustees meeting was held in Tuscaloosa on September 6 & 7. Chancellor St. John announced the UA System is launching a statewide “Reading Allies” initiative, designed to help K-3 elementary school students read on grade level by the end of third grade. The initiative was selected as the 2019 recipient of the McMahan-Pleiad prize and will be co-chaired by Chancellor St. John and Chancellor Emeritus Robert Witt. Board member from the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Vanessa Leonard, was reelected to the Board, and Ron ray was re-elected as BOT President pro tempore. Refinancing of previously issued UA long-term bonds netted \$39.4 million savings in debt service.

Co-Chair Meetings – I met with the co-chairs of the 9 standing committees of the Faculty Senate between August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 4<sup>th</sup>. Personally, I found these meetings to be very beneficial and am very proud of the leadership teams selected by the committees’ members. Along with Senate Officers, Executive Secretary and Paliamentarian, these co-chairs constitute the Faculty Senate Steering Committee.

Fall 2019 Data – Fall 2019 student enrollment news included a 10% increase of in-state Freshmen, which includes 256 National Merit Scholars, the largest in State history. UA also raised nearly \$200 million from 62,399 donors, and awarded 9,100 degrees over the past year.

- **Motion**

**Vice President's Report** – (*Chapman Greer*)

The General Education Taskforce returned from two summer institutes and held a pre-school-start retreat. We met August 23<sup>rd</sup> with our liaison members to provide a status update and met as a Taskforce on September 13<sup>th</sup> to finalize our purpose statement, guiding principles and learning concepts (a precursor to learning outcomes). This year, much of our focus will be on student understanding of the role of General Education.

Administratively, Dr. Richard Richards stepped down as the GET co-chair in late August. Dr. Andre Denham has joined Dr. Chapman Greer as a co-chair of the Taskforce. Dr. Erik Peterson has been named

as a new representative from Arts & Sciences, and will be introduced to the Taskforce at the September 27 meeting.

### **Secretary's Report – (Barb Dahlbach)**

The 3 Senate Capital Campaign proposals sent to the Development Office are being reviewed, along with all other ideas and proposals submitted. The review includes identifying and combining similar ideas from different entities to create clear and inviting giving opportunities. The proposals will then be vetted for feasibility of success, which will be a slow process. Currently the vetting timeline is now, through the end of October, but it could take longer. Remember that the public phase of the Capital Campaign is not scheduled to start until 2022.

### **Senate Committee Reports:**

- **Academic Affairs – (John Vincent & Andre Denham)**

September – In response to a request from the Provost, the Committee reviewed proposed syllabi templates for graduate independent study courses, including dissertation and thesis research courses. While didactic classes have required syllabi to be entered into the on-line syllabus system, these courses have not. However, new accreditation requirements will require syllabi for these courses as well. The idea is to have templates that faculty can add information to or modify to make creating the syllabi as easy as possible.

October – Aaron Kuntz representing the Graduate Council will discuss the Council's proposal to grant some type of Graduate Faculty status to DNP and DSW faculty overseeing doctoral student clinical/practicum projects, but not dissertations.

Discussion of Faculty Handbook items: Should tenured associate professors applying for promotion to full professor have the requirements grandfathered and should chairs be allowed to add material to tenure and promotion dossiers.

November – Dean Halbesleben, College of Continuing Studies – presentation on how funds for faculty from other colleges teaching courses in continuing studies are distributed.

John Wingard, Asst. Dean for Student Services, A&S – Policy for double-dipping (or lack thereof) of a course counting for two majors.

- **Community & Legislative Affairs – (Joy Burnham & Steven Yates)**

The 2019 UA United Way Campaign will be hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences. The United Way kick-off was on September 11. Monique Scott from United Way will speak to the Faculty Senate on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – (*Mirit Eyal-Cohen & Latrise Johnson*)

Menorah on campus - The Committee will once again encourage placing a Menorah by the "Holiday Tree". We urge faculty members to inform us of such holiday displays elsewhere (especially on SEC universities) as a point of comparison.

Affinity Groups - Based on previous conversations with Dr. Taylor and Lane McLeland from Crossroads, the committee is aiming at forming a space and cultivating conditions in which affinity groups of faculty and staff can be formed. We received information about issues that we need to address based on the BLSA and Capstone Alliance models. We are planning a meeting with UAB Diversity Office to hear about their experience with the variety of affinity groups they have on campus as well. Our hope is to facilitate the creation of such networks of faculty and staff on campus that will increase our ability to retain and recruit people from minority and diverse groups in society.

Hate speech event - Upon conversations with Dr. Taylor and recent events the committee is working with the UA Office of Diversity to plan a university-wide event around free speech and hate speech on campus in the Spring.

Dean's diversity award - We are aiming to propose the Administration create a diversity award/recognition for administrators that go well and beyond to create such a climate in their individual departments.

Faculty/staff cultural food festival - We are planning an event that will encourage affinity groups and international faculty and staff to come together and present their food and customs in hope of increasing knowledge on different cultures and nationalities.

Diversity fellowship - The committee is planning to suggest to UA Administration to create a number of fellowships in various departments aimed to provide graduate minority students opportunities to become familiar with our campus and faculty.

Faculty and staff workshops on diversity - The Committee is exploring creating faculty and staff workshops on how to incorporate within our teaching and scholarship viewpoints of minorities and under-represented segments of society.

- **Faculty Life** – (*Jenni Cox & Andrea Glenn*)

Our committee members are meeting with Associate Deans of each College to obtain feedback about the parental leave policies passed by the Senate last spring. We are also continuing to develop the content for an informational website for new faculty and staff.

- **Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Ibrahim Çemen & Janie Hubbard*)

We held our first meeting on Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3:30-5:00 PM.

Mediation Committee – We will call for nominations for Mediation Committee member (replacing Adam Langford). It will be a 3+ year term (January 1, 2020-August 15, 2023).

Faculty Participation in the Evaluation of Deans... - We are checking to see if this committee is still active. In the past, members were two department chairs and three faculty members.

Commencement Marshals – We are working on a nomination call. The Commencement Schedule can be found at: <https://www.ua.edu/commencement/>

Faculty Ombudsperson – There are three positions (Arts & Sciences, Business/Engineering, At Large); one rotates off each year. Roxanne Mitchell's (Education) term ends next year. Nominations will be solicited in January and the election held across the colleges at the same time as the Faculty Senate elections.

Robert Riter will check on all dates for elections and create a calendar for the Committee.

- **Financial Affairs** – *(Christopher Lynn & Rainer Schad)*

We have scheduled an appointment with the VP of financial affairs, Matt Fajack, for October 1<sup>st</sup>. We will seek information about the general financial standing and planning of UA. We will also discuss the budget for Transportation and Parking

We have started analyzing salary comparisons in more detail for graduate students, postdocs and faculty. The latter will be broken down by rank and department for a few select departments.

- **IT & Strategic Communications** – *(Matthew Hudnall & Dan Meissner)*

Adobe Creative Cloud is now available to all UA students. Adobe Creative Cloud includes most Adobe products including Acrobat for PDF creation and editing, Photoshop for photo editing, Illustrator for vector art, Premiere for video editing, and many other products that are commonly used by creative professionals across many domains. This suite normally costs \$53 per person per month for all applications, so this represents a significant benefit to the students as the normal cost would be over \$24 million per year for the 38,000 students at UA.

- **Research & Service** – *(Ajay Agrawal & Si Blackstock)*

The Research and Service committee met on Aug 27 to hear the VPRED, Dr. Mumper, summarize the new 5 year Research Strategic Plan. The Plan aims to grow research productivity at the University, with an aim to double sponsored research awards in the next 5 years. The plan is published on the OVPRED webpage (<http://ovpred.ua.edu/files/2019/06/ORED-Strategic-Plan.pdf>) and involves investments in research infrastructure, the 4 UA research institutes, transformative initiatives, translational intellectual property, economic and business engagement, and assessment of progress and impact. There is the expectation that another

research institute may be developed to add to the existing 4 institutes of life, water, cyber, and transportation.

Dr. Mumper has utilized feedback from the Faculty Senate survey on UA research and wishes to continue meeting with the R&S Committee on a regular basis as an important conduit for the OVPRED with the faculty community. For example, professional conferences held on campus can receive OVPRED support. Some organizational changes so far include dissolving the RAC and sunseting MINT, while consolidating MINT facilities and CAF into one new unit.

In coming months, the R&S Committee plans to work with the Graduate School to explore strategies to recruit graduate students to align with anticipated growth in research at UA in the next 5 years. The Committee will also champion for graduate fellowships and research investments as part of the Capital Campaign. The Committee plans to advocate for faculty travel support programs to help faculty attend key conferences. Post-award accounting support is another area of concern and focus for the committee. We would like to see changes to make it easier for faculty PI to easily track research expenditures.

- **Student Life** – (*Kabe Moen & Amy Traylor*)

We had our first Committee meeting on September 3. We discussed diversity numbers in the Greek System. We obtained preliminary numbers for the sororities from Kathleen Kramer and we will be receive the final numbers for both the sororities and fraternities next month.

The REACH luncheons took place this week and REACH still needs some support. The Amazon wishlist and suggested items for the party (attached) are two ways to help the program:

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/291HVG3RP5OYT/ref=nav\\_wishlist\\_lists\\_1?encoding=UTF8&type=wishlist](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/291HVG3RP5OYT/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_1?encoding=UTF8&type=wishlist)

Second, volunteers are still needed for REACH mentors. If you are interested in becoming a reach mentor please contact Shannon Hubbard [shannon.hubbard@ua.edu](mailto:shannon.hubbard@ua.edu).

We are also in the process of contacting the Tuscaloosa SAFE (sexual assault forensic examination) center. Lastly, Harrison Adams the SGA president will be attending our next meeting on Oct. 1.

## **Reports from Other Committees**

### **Old Business**

### **New Business**

## Reminders

- Next meeting: Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>

## Adjourn