

## FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

NOVEMBER 12, 2019 - 3:00 p.m. - #213 AIME

### APPROVED MINUTES

**ATTENDING:** Barb Dahlbach, Rona Donahoe, John Vincent, Andre Denham, Steven Yates, Jenni Cox, Ibrahim Cemen, Rainer Schad, Mirit Eyal-Cohen, Matthew Hudnall, Dan Meissner, Ajay Agrawal, Si Blackstock, Kabe Moen, Amy Traylor, Parliamentarian Rob Riter.

**ABSENT:** Chapman Greer, Andrea Glenn, Janie Hubbard, Christopher Lynn, Joy Burnham, Past President Donna Meester.

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

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting opened with Charlie Taylor, UA System Director of Governmental Affairs and Economic/Workforce Development, giving an update of Legislative activities. Last year The University of Alabama received an 8.64% budget increase.

There is a free speech bill that has passed but will not be put into effect until June of 2020 giving some time to tweak/amend the bill. A possible outcome of the bill when effective would be creating an unsafe campus environment. The bill would severely limit control of securing the safety of students, faculty and employees. Free speech and protection of free speech already exists on UA's campus. The bill requires the Board of Trustees of each college in the state system report to a commission on free speech any violations of the statute placing an undue burden on employees and staff. At the present time only faculty and student organizations may invite a speaker to campus. The statute would eliminate this parameter restricting the monitoring of events on campus opening the possibility of disruptive and disturbing classes and other situations. If the statute is implemented as it stands, there is a possibility it would be reviewed by the courts, particularly the provision of the Board of Trustees creating policies for that particular institution.

The Literacy bill passed into law but not implemented proposes holding back every third grader not reading up to a proficient level. If enacted last year, this would be 49% of the State's third grade students. The percentage would be 87% of third grade students would be held back in one particular district. Many programs are already in place to improve reading proficiency and have been effective.

The proposed Alabama Appointed Education Board Amendment for March 2020 would rename the State Board of Education the Alabama Commission on Elementary and Secondary Education and change the name of the State Superintendent of Education to the Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education. The amendment would require members of the commission to be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate rather than being elected. The amendment would also direct the governor to ensure that members of the commission "reflect the geographical, gender, and racial diversity of the students enrolled in public K-12 education in the state". Discussion included the various interests entering into passing this amendment.

A possible emergency Legislative session on Alabama's prisons to address over-crowding, grossly understaffed and inefficiencies of the system might be called. A possible bond issue might be considered to build four new prisons and a new women's prison. The point was made that expert opinions are not being sought to find solutions to the prison conditions. Mr. Taylor emphasized that if a task force or a group was being formed and representation by faculty or experts in that area was desired to contact his office.

In Washington the appropriations bill contains good things for The University of Alabama in research, defense, labor, transportation and science funding if passed. Senator Richard Shelby is the Chair of the Appropriations Committee.

A March date for the Legislative reception was discussed.

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

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of October 8, 2019 were approved.

**President's Report** - (*Rona Donahoe*) The Board of Trustees meeting was held November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> at the Bryant Conference Center in Tuscaloosa. The HR Transformation Team is meeting every other week. President Donahoe will continue to give updates.

The Presidential Advisory Committee has met and will meet again in December. Vice President for Diversity, Christine Taylor, asked the question of "what is needed for success in this area?"

The search for the position of Provost continues and a draft of an advertisement to identify viable candidates was presented by the consulting firm.

The Steering Committee's meeting with the Provost will be held December 12, 2019.

The proposal to give students the full Thanksgiving week as a holiday and eliminate fall break was discussed and will be an item for discussion when meeting with the Provost. Issues affecting this change would be the date of the beginning of classes, lab assignments, coordinating holidays with the K-12 system, child care, student move-in dates, faculty advising, employee/staff working, and other issues. The sense of the steering committee would be to eliminate fall break and have the full week of Thanksgiving off. This will be discussed further with the Provost.

The Capstone Creed is being reexamined at the request of President Bell. Input is being sought concerning what attributes/values a student should possess. The Creed was revised in 2016 and the words *integrity, equity and inclusion* were added. The word *diversity* is not in the Capstone Creed.

Charles Nash retired from the UA Systems Office and was honored and recognized by a resolution at the Board of Trustees meeting.

Information was passed out about a roller skating fund raiser for Alabama Reach and Brewer Porch.

**Secretary's Report** - (*Barb Dahlbach*) The Taskforce to Transform Campus Culture group is meeting regularly. The group is gathering information about policies of academic integrity and self-expression which encompasses free speech and social media. Topics being discussed are organizing town hall meetings and surveys to gather information which will probably take place in the spring. Also under consideration is the development of a web site off the Faculty Senate page since the group reports to the Senate.

**Student Life** - (*Kabe Moen & Amy Taylor*) The Student Life Committee co-chairs toured the SAFE Center (Sexual Assault Forensic Exam). The University of Alabama is currently working with Druid City Hospital to provide services. The entire Student Life Committee will tour SAFE Center in December. Men and women volunteers to be advocates for victims are needed with training being provided in January. Ways to attain greater exposure about the SAFE Center is being researched.

The committee met with Dr. Kathleen Cramer, Interim Dean of Students and Dr. Tim Hebson, Associate Vice President for Student Life, to discuss issues regarding the District Four City Council special election. After an investigation it was determined to be an isolated incident.

There is a move to implement a \$25.00 per student per semester Greek fee with the funds to be applied to assisting staff of Greek life office and to provide scholarships for students of color wishing to pledge. Sorority membership cost exceeds \$7,000 dollars per semester. Each sorority house has a diversity office and fraternities are making progress in that area. The houses are in need of academic advisors to address the academic needs of students and to assist in connecting them with the proper resources.

The committee meets with Dr. Hebson next week and should have 2011-19 fraternity membership data made available.

The chair for the Vice President of Student Life search committee is Chad Tyndle.

Moen and Trayler attended a diversity meeting where eight action plan committees have been formed to address campus culture.

**Research & Service** - (*Ajay Agrawal & Si Blackstock*) The Research and Service Committee has been discussing methods to retain and motivate graduate students. The methods fall into two categories - fellowships and graduate student recruitment. In their meeting with Dean of the Graduate School, Susan Carvalho, the committee brought up the issue of an outcome assessment of the graduate students receiving a fellowship. The financial contributions and the support of graduate students are being reviewed by the committee. It is the committee's opinion that the Graduate School and the Vice President's Office of Research could work more closely on some of these issues. The committee will keep the Capital Campaign as a top priority. The committee will meet with Vice President for Research and Development, Russell Mum pert, in January.

**Faculty Life** - (*Jenni Cox & Andre Glenn*) The Faculty Life Committee is in the process of meeting with various deans, Human Resources, the Benefits Office and the Associate Provost to discuss the viability of a family-leave parental-leave policy. The main concern came from the College of Nursing regarding a nine-month instructor leave time and Libraries medical condition leave time. The committee will pursue this issue to determine how to move forward.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** - (*Ibrahim Cemen & Janie Hubbard*) The committee met last week and organized an election calendar. The election for the Mediation Committee is ready and will be sent out electronically before the November 19<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate meeting. There are two candidates.

The by-law change proposal to expand the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee was distributed last month and will be voted on at the November 19 Faculty Senate meeting.

**Financial Affairs** - (*Rainer Schad & Christopher Lynn*) The Financial Affairs Committee is reviewing the loss of tuition benefits for dependents, student/staff/and faculty ratios, funding appropriations and faculty salary comparisons.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** - (*Mirit Eyal-Cohen & Latrise Johnson*) The organization of the affinity groups proposed by this committee is on track. The Jewish Faculty Senate group met and elected officers. Hopefully the Latino and Asian group will be meeting in December.

The committee continues to work on an inclusive holiday display on campus.

There was a speaker hosted by the Alabama Lectures on Life Evolution group, Dr. Winegard from Marietta College. Dr. Winegard supports the white supremacy policy. A&S sent a letter expressing non-support for the non-scientific views of this speaker and apologized to those who felt unwelcome by the subject. The committee does not have a process to vet speakers and are working to establish a proper method.

The remaining committee reports will be given at the Faculty Senate meeting next week.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting adjourned to attend the reception for Vice Presidents and Deans to be held at the Gorgas House from 5:00 until 6:30 PM.