

## FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 14, 2020 – 3:00 PM - #213 AIME

### APPROVED MINUTES

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

**ABSENT:** Christopher Lynn, Janie Hubbard, Past-president Donna Meester.

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

Tim Salazar, Student Life Director of Assessment and Planning, gave a presentation of Greek Student Demographic Report Analysis. Some of the data is broken down by racial demographics, year-by-year and by the four Greek councils on UA's campus. The four Greek governing councils are the Alabama Panhellenic Association, Alabama Interfraternity Council, Alabama National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the Alabama United Greek Council. The year of 2017 was the peak year with 12,000 plus in the Greek community and was the high-water mark year for UA's enrollment. The displayed chart showed the University of Alabama's Greek population by race/ethnicity and academic year. The underrepresented minority student Greek population percentage grew compared to the white majority student Greek population. The population in the Interfraternity Council was 95% in 2011 and decreased 6% in 2019 to 90.5% partially showing a slight decrease in enrollment. This reduction reflects a small decrease in interest in joining the IFC and a lack of participation interest from the African American male freshmen. African American male and female freshmen are not allowed to join NPHC until they have 15-30 credit hours which are the national standard of the organization. This group as sophomores has a 100% bid rate. Sorority recruitment is based for the most part on the student's GPA (3.30 average) which indicates the ultimate success of that student. The fraternity requirement is approximately a 2.5 GPA. The IFC's are requiring that each chapter have a diversity officer in place and a diversity, equity and inclusion plan. A follow up of the enforcement of this requirement will be done. Those officers are required to go through specific training in diversity progress and process. Approximately 72% of white female freshmen fulltime students show interest in participating in rush. Approximately 40% of white male fulltime freshmen students show interest in participating in rush. The University of Alabama is the only institution publishing Greek population race/ethnicity/diversity data. Further discussion included block seating, collaborative organization efforts, institution financial agreements with sorority/fraternity houses, staffing of the Greek office and leadership elements of the Greek community.

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

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of December 3, 2019 were approved.

**President's Report** – (*Rona Donahoe*) President Donahoe met with Joanne Oliver, Chair of the University Committee on Committees, to go through and review all University Standing Committees to determine if the committees are meeting, the committee description is current and the correct current committee membership. A meeting with Joel Brower, Associate Provost in charge of University Standing Committees, will be arranged. Any suggestions on CUC issues should be sent to President Donahoe.

Faculty/staff/student small group meetings for interviewing candidates for the position of Vice President for Student Life are being held. Everyone was encouraged to attend the 11:00 AM presentations and videos of the candidates are available. Forms are available for input.

The Alumni Student Award meeting will be held Friday, January 24, 2020 with Amy Traylor and Barb Dahlbach representing the Faculty Senate.

Ryan Bradley will be the interim director for UA's Strategic Communication office due to the resignation of Linda Bonin.

Speaker for the Faculty Senate meeting in January will be Pamela Jones, SAFE. The speaker for the February Steering Committee meeting will be Michael Walker-Jones, ACHE. Pending speakers for the February Senate meeting are Chancellor St. John and Tonjanita Johnson, UA system. It was suggested to request Russell Mumper, VP for Research, speak this spring.

There will be an ACHE conference titled "The 2020 Alabama Affordable Learning Conference" focused on books and class materials. The location is Troy University in Montgomery on Friday, March 20, 2020 which is the end of Spring Break week.

**Vice President's Report** – (*Chapman Greer*) The General Education Taskforce met last Friday, January 10, 2020 with the consultants from AAC&U. The taskforce is at the point of building models and finalizing the mission statement, principles and learning goals and will bring these to the Steering Committee for input and suggestions. Course inventories are ongoing to determine student's learning experiences, impact and what is being taught. These will be brought to the Faculty Senate following the taskforce meeting to finalize these statements. The goal is to finalize these models and possible implementation prior to the filling of the Provost position.

**Secretary's Report** – (*Barb Dahlbach*) The final head count for senator elections will be sent out to each college notifying them to begin receiving nominations. There have been issues in the past with delayed election results which in turn delayed committee assignments. Committee preference letters will be emailed to each senator. Hopefully this new process will speed up senator elections.

**Research & Service** – (*Ajay Agrawal & Si Blackstock*) A Southeastern Undergraduate Research Conference hosted by the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry will be held on UA campus on January 24 & 25, 2020. This conference is open to all undergraduate researchers in chemistry in the southeastern region. Approximately 130 people from here, 30 faculty members from 25 different colleges will be attending.

The committee has prepared a list of issues regarding research grant management and accounting process. Among the issues are research reporting, budget, investigators and account numbers. The committee met with Tammy Hudson, director of Contract and Grant Accounting for Research. There are three categories undergoing review. The first category is account codes used when writing a proposal, the second category is the availability of account balances in real time, and the third category is a requirement for overhead funds to be returned to department accounts automatically. Methods to activate the third category of disbursement of funds were discussed and will be followed up with Russell Mumper, Vice President for Research and Development.

**Financial Affairs** – *(Rainer Schad & Christopher Lynn)* The health plan options offered by The University of Alabama currently are a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) medical plan and a qualified High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). The HDHP has proven to be a popular choice with 18.5% of employees selecting the plan last year. This plan calls for higher monthly premiums for coverage but less out-of-pocket co-pay costs and the deductible must be met before the plan begins to pay. The Health Savings Account (HSA) is available with the HDHP plan and offers triple tax savings: tax free payroll contributions from employees and The University of Alabama; tax free earnings accumulated, if invested; and tax free distributions, if used for qualified medical expenses. It also offers a Retirement Savings Tool offering investments like annuities, CDs, stocks, bonds, mutual funds after the \$2,000 minimum balance is met. The Employee Ownership states the money in the HSA account belongs to the policy owner even if leaving UA or switching to the PPO plan. Increasing, decreasing or stopping contributions may be made at any time. The policy owner controls how and when their money is spent. The University of Alabama will contribute money to the HSA policy for employee only - \$400 per year / family without a spouse \$800 per year / and family with a spouse \$800 per year. The HSA contribution limit established by the IRS pre-tax contributions are for employee only \$3,550 and for family \$7,100. Educating HSA policy holders about the tax-free benefits and options available would be a suggestion to make to the Faculty/Staff Benefits Office.

**Community & Legislative Affairs** – *(Steven Yates & Joy Burnham)* The Faculty Senate Steering Committee will host a Legislative Reception on Monday, March 9, 2020 at the Gorgas House from 4:00 until 6:00 PM. The League of Women Voters is hosting a meet and greet the Legislators on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at the Bryant Conference Center.

The committee will be reviewing ways to assist in the 2020 Census. There is an “Alabama Counts! 2020 Census Committee” advisory group composed of public and private statewide organizations committed to working together to ensure each Alabamian is counted in the 2020 Census. The committee will be getting in contact with the local groups to inquire how they can be of assistance.

**Faculty Life** – *(Andrea Glenn & Jenni Cox)* There was discussion concerning family/parental/maternal phrasing in the Faculty Handbook.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – *(Ibrahim Cemen & Janie Hubbard)* There will be Faculty Ombudsperson nominations and election, May (3 needed) and August (1 needed) 2020 Commencement Marshal Nominations and Election to be conducted by the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee. Faculty Senate officer nominations, bios and letter of intents (February 10), and election will be held with this committee’s oversight. The Mediation Committee has two members rotating off in August with nominations needed for these upcoming vacancies.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – *(Mirit Eyal-Cohen & Ignacio Rodeno)* Affinity groups are being organized and collaboration is growing. There will be a “2020 Vision Building Capacity to See and Sustain Committee” conference with many sessions on Thursday, April 9, 2020. Efforts to expand affinity groups will continue at the Crossroad breakfast on February 5, 2020. New groups possibly include Asian Faculty & Staff Association, Veterans Affinity Group, and others are being organized. President Donahoe can forward meeting information to the entire faculty. A question being addressed is whether graduate students could be part of the call for participation and should the name “faculty and staff” be changed.

**Academic Affairs** – *(John Vincent & Andre Denham)* The Academic Affairs Committee is addressing the issues of course credit hours allowed under out-of-state scholarships and excused absences. Discussion included reviewing the qualifications for religious holiday excused absences and current policies in place.

**Information Technology & Strategic Communications** – *(Matthew Hudnall & Dan Meissner)* This committee met with OIT on Friday. There will be a national search for an Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications in view of Linda Bonin's resignation. New branding, web site management system, monitoring faculty and staff social media communications were among the discussed topics.

Meeting adjourned 5:30 PM.