

Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting. 5-12-20

Attending: Barb Dahlbach, Rona Donahoe, Chapman Greer, John Vincent, Andre Denham, Rainer Schad, Mary Stone, Matthew Hudnall, Patrick Kung, Ajay Agrawal, Kelly Shannon-Henderson, Jennifer Dempsey, Suzanne Henson, Joy Burnham, Steven Yates, Mirit Eyal-Cohen, Ignacio Rodeno, Susan Appel, Ibrahim Cemen, Jeri Zemki, Parliamentarian Robert Ritter, Past President Donna Meester.

Absent: Christopher Lynn.

Guests: Vice President for Research and Development Matt Fajack, John Van Zee, Robert Baxter, Angel Narvaez-Lugo.

Vice President Fajack gave a financial presentation of the status of the University during the limited business operation caused by Covid19. The first priority of President Bell is to protect faculty and staff positions and salaries. The University has a \$6.8 million dollar increase in State appropriations, \$8 million in non-recurring money and \$41 million in State Bonds for capital projects. There are many uncertainties to be considered including a long term recession and budget cuts. Projected estimated losses from March through summer terms, August 18, include student meal and parking refunds \$15 million, athletic losses \$3.8 million, summer abroad cancellations \$1.5 million, operational fund investment losses \$10 million, auxiliary losses \$2 million, summer camp cancellations \$2 million, cost relating to transitioning to distance learning \$1.5 million. Total losses from March 23 to August 18, 2020 approximately \$50.8 million.

Savings: Freeze on hiring, eliminating 403b matching, reducing number of student workers, ban on travel and conferences, reduction ordering non-essential supplies and services, energy savings, post season athletic cost reduction, renegotiating contracts, bus service savings, event management, reduction in moving and temporary housing expenses, A Day cancellation, non-use of athletic facilities, no continuing education advertising, deferring or elimination of construction, renovation and repairs. Total estimated savings \$51,295,000.

There is a freeze on vacant positions. The process of interviews and offers already in progress are being honored. The CARE funds available will help in making up losses and are presently being reviewed for legalities. The ten million of those funds would go to aiding qualified students that have been disrupted by the virus. Questions included research grants and athletic team travel. Potential losses would be resident and non-resident students and out-of-state enrollment. Out-of-State enrollment is only down by six or seven percent. Bama Bound is only down one or two percent from last year. Arts and Sciences surveyed 1,200 high school students in March. Thirty percent planned to go to college. At the end of April only seventeen percent planned to go to college. A ten percent reduction in out-of-state enrollment would result in a \$55 million dollar reduction in net tuition. The impact of the Corona virus has been a reduction in tax revenues. Vice President Fajack reviewed worst case scenarios and sensitivities including the reduction of state appropriations, out-of-state enrollment, services, salary reductions, deferred maintenance and reduction and elimination of travel and conferences. Some are essential such as recruiting students and team travel. There could be furloughing of maintenance workers and staff. By the middle of July there should be a point in time to make decisions. There is a \$48 million dollar unrestricted reserve including perpetual liabilities such as pension liabilities. Aspects of reopening campus were discussed including cost and social distancing of students. Testing, protective equipment and barriers will cost millions of dollars. President Donahoe asked to have employee representation on the Presidential Taskforce Committee. The UA system has suspended the 403b match. UAB hospital went from 95% occupancy to 52% occupancy due to the suspension of elective surgeries. Health care and life insurance costs were discussed.

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

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2020 were approved with attendance to be added.

**President's Report-***(Rona Donahoe)* Committee year end reports are due and will be posted on the Faculty Senate web page. There is a link on the agenda to a petition/open letter demanding a long list of items with the majority of the signatures from Humanities and Social Sciences. Concerned students petitioned for UA to reimburse them for expenses.

Provost Kevin Whitaker was awarded the "Outstanding Community Engagement Award" and Chapman Greer won an award for a feasibility study for the establishment of a community health care facility entitled "Sowing Seeds of Hope".

The Provost position search is ongoing. Five candidate names and information have been forwarded to President Bell. There should be a decision by the end of the month.

Externally funded research can be resumed with restrictions on May 18. To be approved there must be a reason the research cannot be put on hold. Priorities seem to be on assistant professors. The approval process is slowing due to the amount of applications being submitted. Graduate students must be re-certified to have swipe cards to enter buildings. A new grant would be a low priority. Terms must be accepted including wearing a mask at all times. A decision about format for the second summer term has been extended to the end of May.

There is a link on the agenda to access changes by the Department of Education pertaining to the sexual assault and harassment policy to be in place by August 15. Faculty Handbook changes may have to be made to comply.

Changes have been made to University Standing Committees including Committee title changes and renaming and reorganization of committees. The Textbook Committee and the Research Advisory Committee no longer exist.

The President's Advisory Committee supports campus diversity goals. Dr. Taylor convened this committee to form recommendations to improve diversity and inclusion on campus. The second President's Advisory Committee addresses the framework for UA's return to normal operations. Four sub-committees have been formed for the development of short term (6-12 months), moderate term (2-5 years) and long term recommendations. Under long term is establishing a safe meeting space.

**Academic Affairs-** *(John Vincent & Andre Denham)* John Vincent, Chapman Greer and Andre Denham are on the Presidential Advisory Committee concerning the re-opening of campus. They are working on a draft plan to send to the whole committee in a couple of days. Part of that plan would be to teach hybrid courses which would have students rotating into classrooms. The group not in the classrooms would receive the same lecture. Transition from class is a problem since social distancing would not be possible. A different amount of feet for social distancing is a possibility. A decision will be partially based on Safety Subcommittee recommendations. Coordination between committees in the decision process is critical. Further discussion included wearing face masks, social distancing, online teaching, hybrid components, number of students in each class and how to prevent transmission of Covid19. The integrity of electronic instruction is questionable. Some grades went up, some even doubled. Blackboard has a student response monitor option. This will be discussed with the Provost at the next meeting.

**Community & Legislative Affairs** – *(Steven Yates & Joy Burnham)* The Committee urged everyone to participate in the Census. This is critical to prevent losing seats in Congress. Canvassing has been delayed due to the Corona virus. Appreciation was expressed to all involved in the Brewer Porch teacher appreciation luncheon which was a great success. Funds are needed for future projects.

**Financial Affairs-** *(Rainer Schad & Mary Stone)* The Committee has been in touch with Vice President Fajack and will be setting up regular meetings with him. The presentation today was helpful and the committee will monitor the financial impact of Covid19 on the University.

**Information & Strategic Communications** – *(Matthew Hudnall & Patrick Kung)* UA is expanding their agreement with Qualtrics which will allow access to data which will greatly benefit surveying areas such as Medicaid recipients. If there was a data breach, it would be on Qualtrics.

**Research & Service** – (*Ajax Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson*) The Faculty Senate passed a Conflict of Interest policy at the last meeting. The committee plans a “Frequently Asked Questions” session. The questions would be compiled and forwarded to administration officials. It is not clear what impact Covid19 will have on research and what UA is doing to protect research enterprises. How will faculty release time be managed is questionable. Graduate students are being paid and retained but cannot do their work. This issue should be reviewed. Regular meetings with Vice President Mumper should be scheduled. Summer research grants was questioned and appears to be Law School specific.

**Student Life** – (*Susan Henson & Jennifer Dempsey*) A Meeting was held with Dr. Myron Pope, Vice President for Student Life, to discuss student safety, financial assistance and Greek system updates.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemki*) Commencement Marshals for May are Dr. Edward Merrill, Dr. Beth Todd and Dr. Jeremy Butler. Dr. Alexander Haines will be the Commencement Marshal for August 1, 2020. Merger and Discontinuance Committee will have a vacancy in December.

**Campus Culture Taskforce** – The Taskforce will be meeting through the summer. Approximately 1,200 students responded to the survey. A report will be compiled and forwarded to President Bell and Dr. Christine Taylor. The second forum scheduled for March was cancelled.

The Steering Committee will meet June 12 via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned 5:20 P.M.