

FACULTY SENATE MEETING AGENDA

September 15, 2020

3:30 PM – ZOOM Meeting:

<https://uasystem.zoom.us/j/92127753497?pwd=dTBJam94Y3pEYys2dm9NQWk2ZnAzQT09>

Speakers: Benefits Office Presentation – Changes to UA Health Care Plans for 2021

Roll Call and Quorum Check - (Barb Dahlbach)

Approval/Corrections to the Minutes for August 18th – (Barb Dahlbach)

President's Report – (Rona Donahoe)

- 9/10/20 Townhall Meeting – 168 people participated in the Townhall Meeting last Thursday. The video of the meeting has been posted to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/University-of-Alabama-Faculty-Senate-230416621741810>
- The UA Administration's answers to 'overflow' faculty questions submitted during the August Faculty Senate meeting have been posted to the Faculty Senate Website (<https://facultysenate.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2020/09/Answers-to-8.18.20-Faculty-Senate-Meeting-Compiled-Questions.pdf>), with the link to the document also provided on the Senate's Facebook page.
- BOT Meeting – Will be held September 17th-18th in Tuscaloosa.
- Sentinel Testing – Began September 8th. GuideSafe is testing 3-4% of UA's faculty, staff and students each week for COVID-19 to monitor asymptomatic transmission rates in the campus community. Faculty must register with GuideSafe and fill out a form. An email message was sent to employees on 9-11-20 with a registration link.

Vice President's Report – (Chapman Greer) – No Report

Secretary's Report – (Barb Dahlbach) – No Report

Senate Committee Reports:

- **Student Life – (Jennifer Dempsey & Ruth Ann Hall)**
 - **VOTE:** Resolutions commending the service of Dr. Kathleen Cramer and Dr. Tim Hebson
- **Faculty & Senate Governance – (Ibrahim Çemen & Jeri Zemke)**
 - **Mediation Committee Nominations are needed immediately.**
 - Call for Commencement Marshal Nominations – Will be sent out soon.
 - Faculty Ombudsperson Nominations – Can be from any college except: A&S, Engineering, Business. Must be Tenured with a minimum of 7 years of experience at UA; cannot be a member of the Mediation Committee or Faculty Senate.
- **Community & Legislative Affairs – (Joy Burnham & Steven Yates)**
 - **BE COUNTED! - Please complete the US Census by September 30th**

- **Academic Affairs** – (*John Vincent & Andre Denham*)
 - Faculty Handbook Changes Approved and Implemented for Fall 2020:
 - Chapter 2, Section IV – Change allows faculty applying for promotion to Full Professor to be ‘grandfathered’ under previous promotion guidelines for a 3 year period after guidelines are revised.
 - Appendix J – Change allows Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty meeting all listed qualifications to chair committees for final projects of professional practice doctorates.

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – (*Mirit Eyal-Cohen & Ignacio Rodeno*)
 - Update on Commission on Race, Slavery, and Civil Rights
The Taskforce was active during the summer; later in the fall semester there will be an announcement to launch the Commission in the spring. They are looking to bring speakers as well as an appropriate digital platform to host the event (apparently Zoom cannot hold the volume of participants)
 - Contact with Division of DEI
The Committee is disappointed in the fact that there were practically no meetings with Dr. Taylor last AY. The Committee wants to renew efforts to establish periodic meetings with Dr. Taylor and/or an appointed person in her office. The goal of the Committee is to serve as liaison between the Faculty Senate and the Division of DEI
 - Affinity Groups - The Committee would like to renew efforts to foster the creation, implementation and growth of Affinity Groups. The collaborative breakfast that were hosted by Crossroads have been taken over by the Division of DEI. They are held digitally, but participants need to reserve a spot through Qualtrics.
 - Advocacy for Diversity on Campus - The Committee looks to advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion at UA, especially with regards to hiring and retaining faculty and staff, as well as to foster diversity in the curriculum. Advocacy for underrepresented population at UA was also discussed.

- **Faculty Life** – (*Susan Appel & Christopher Lynn*)
 - Faculty Life met twice with Carolyn McVicar, who runs the Well Bama programs. This year’s Well Bama program began in August, and UA community are encouraged to enroll. After the health screening, enrollees receive a \$50 gift card. After completing two challenges (such as a certain number of steps or health-oriented webinar—there are several choices), those enrolled receive a 2nd \$50 gift card. This is the 6th year of the program, and there have been changes over the years to improve flexibility of the program to suit individual work-life integration. Last year, 72% of UA employees participated, which included 84% of staff but only 16% of faculty. They would like to see more faculty get involved.
 - MoveSpring is the app people can download to participate in challenges such as step counting.
 - There was a soft opening of psychological counseling services for faculty through UMC in August. This is headed by John Higginbotham and Martha Crowther.
 - The annual Work-Life and Wellness Expo is planned for this fall but is being modified for obvious (COVID) reasons; dates and format will be announced soon.

- Work-Life/Well Bama have a monthly email newsletter folks can subscribe to on their website to stay up to date on these programs.
- **Financial Affairs** – (*Rainer Schad & Mary Stone*)
 - A detailed analysis and comparison with peer institutions of graduate student stipends reveals that UA stipends generally are awfully behind. The data are based on 9-month stipends. There are however a few unknowns in the equation:
 - The numbers do not include information about summer support.
 - While most universities cover health insurance, the extent of its coverage is entirely unknown.
 - While tuition is typically covered, universities also levy fees at college or department level, the costs and coverage of these is typically unknown.
 - The costs of living are also not considered.
 - The combined value of these unaccounted costs or benefits can unfortunately exceed 50% of the stipend value.
 - Given that UA had been falling even more behind in recent years, the Graduate School will work with the Administration on correcting our graduate student support.
- **IT & Strategic Communications** – (*Matthew Hudnall & Patrick Kung*)
 - The Committee is working with the Faculty Life Committee to investigate concerns about the security of personal and medical data collected during Verily registration for GuideSafe Sentinel testing.
- **Research & Service** – (*Ajay Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson*)
 - Committee discussed OVPRED’s Annual Report: <http://ovpred.ua.edu/files/2020/08/Annual-Report-ORED-Year-One-08.24.20.pdf> Based on Committee feedback, co-chairs met with VPR and requested additional metrics for the next such report that would take account of research excellence in fields where external funding is not the norm (e.g., external awards and honors, books published).
 - Committee discussed a policy suggestion circulated by the VPR to eliminate the policy of calculating percentage of “credit” for each faculty member on each grant. Committee co-chairs met with VPR and reported committee’s feedback that faculty surveyed opposed this proposed change and wanted “credit” to continue being calculated as previously.
 - Committee is investigating reports of Return on Overhead (both departmental & PI’s personal accounts) being “taxed” to offset budget shortfalls in colleges/departments. This will be discussed in our next committee meeting and we hope to draft a resolution on the issue for consideration by the Senate.

Reminders

- UA HealthCheck Login: <https://www.ua.edu/healthcheck/>
- Next meeting: October 20th (ZOOM). Speakers:
 - Dr. Christine Taylor, VP for DEI – Updates on DEI Taskforce activities.
 - Andre Denham, Chapman Greer, Erik Peterson – General Education Taskforce Update