

**Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**10-13-20**  
**ZOOM**

**ATTENDING:** Barb Dahlbach, Rona Donahoe, Chapman Greer, Ignacio Rodeno, John Vincent, Andre Denham, Rainer Schad, Mary Stone, Matthew Hudnall, Patrick Kung, Kelly Shannon-Henderson, Jennifer Dempsey, Ruth Ann Hall, Joy Burnham, Steven Yates, Susan Appel, Ibrahim Çemen, Jeri Zemke, Past President Donna Meester, Parliamentarian Robert Riter

**ABSENT:** Mirit Eyal-Cohen, Ajay Agrawal, Christopher Lynn

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

The minutes of the September 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting were approved.

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

President Donahoe presented information concerning awards.

- Morris Mayer Award (Senior; Teaching Faculty) -New website: <https://mayeraward.sa.ua.edu/>
- Judy Bonner Presidential Medallion (Member of UA community)
- Ramsey Award (Junior)
- Bloom Award (Junior)
- Catherine Randall Award (Senior)
- Algernon Sydney Sullivan (2 Seniors; 1 non-student)

Coleman Coliseum is a testing site for those exposed or having symptoms of Covid19 and there are low values daily. The goal is to test 1300/1500 faculty, staff and students weekly. A large segment of faculty and staff members have not registered with the Verily system. Sentinel testing monitors transmission and exposure. There are concerns about registration information confidentiality.

Spring re-entry testing will not be mass testing. Economic concerns are possible considerations in this decision since there appears to be no additional funding from State or Federal sources forthcoming. On campus residential students will be tested. There will be a late start in January to the spring semester giving additional time for students to have a quarantine period before returning to campus. Any faculty member with underlying health conditions or faculty family members with underlying health conditions will be exempt from face-to-face teaching. Screening will be conducted to make certain those accommodations are valid. The goal of UA is to give students the very best college experience possible.

Faculty Handbook changes will need to be made pertaining to the new Title IX Federal guidelines. UA has made revisions accordingly. The Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee will be part of that discussion.

A grievance has been brought before the Mediation Committee concerning a dean search. Sections "B" and "E" in Appendix "A" of the Faculty Handbook have been determined to be out-of-date. Those sections state that faculty should have the opportunity to review the qualifications of each candidate. This has narrowed to a few higher administrators in the past few years and only opened to faculty members when the number of candidates is very limited. The Faculty Participation in the Selection of Deans and Department Chairpersons and in the Evaluation of Academic Programs Committee is listed in the Faculty Senate committee preference survey but has been inactive and not listed on the UA

committee survey for a couple of years. It is not listed in the Faculty Handbook but is on the University Standing Committee list. Administration discontinued the committee several years ago. The Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee can work with the Office of Academic Affairs concerning dean searches.

The Faculty Senate Officers met and determined to send holiday cards again this year. A group photo is not possible this year due to Covid19 so the request has been made for each Steering Committee member to send a head shot photo to Barb Dahlbach to be used on the card. The deadline is October 30<sup>th</sup> to submit the photo.

President Donahoe has received a proposal from Vice President for Financial Affairs to restructure telephone campus operations. There are 1,278 cell phone licenses issued to largely higher administrative personnel with 40 of those being faculty members and 427 in the Athletics Department. Building and ground personnel are allotted 14 cell phones. UA is considering renegotiating the current contract. Stipends are assigned to cover the usage cost with some of those cell phones being used as a primary phone with the addition of a family plan. Scenario two would supply a new phone to the individual and be upgraded every two years as an incentive. The proposal, if implemented, would save the University \$3.3 million dollars over a five year period. The provided stipends are perceived as additional salary. Vice President Fajack asked for Faculty Senate input although faculty impact would be minimal. The points made were that if cell phones were covered by external grant money, there would not be a savings for the University and that it is not a good time for a change.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** – (*Miri Eyal-Cohen & Ignacio Rodeno*) This committee is reaching out to all UA diversity, equity and inclusion organizations. Some have committees and some have a diversity officer. The committee is looking at a diversity, equity and inclusion campus-wide display and ways to recruit and retain minority employees. Dr. Taylor sent an update to the committee concerning the Jane Elliott event sponsored by the SGA. Several sororities made this a one of three required events to attend for their members to obtain a diversity certificate badge. The event platform was open comments and some of those became problematic. An assessment was conducted through Qualtrics with 1,600 completions by faculty and students which revealed the complaints came from a small number of people. Points made were everyone is entitled to their opinion, absence of thought cannot be allowed, concern about administration response, the impact and influence of a very small number of people dictating policy, and all people should be allowed to be heard.

**Academic Affairs Committee**- (*John Vincent & Andre Denham*) Provost Dalton has requested an opinion survey concerning the extension of withdrawals (October 28) to the last day of classes and move to a pass/fail grading system. There is a petition signed by 3,700 students requesting those changes. The committee is not in favor of pass/fail but might be open to discussing the withdrawal extension. The Steering Committee voted to keep everything as is. This issue will be brought before the full Senate for discussion and vote.

**Research & Service** – (*Ajay Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson*) Vice President Mumper has presented a draft policy on research centers and institutes. This was requested by the Board of Trustees and includes all four institutes – water, cyber, transportation and life. A policy on how to establish a center or review a center has not been established. The proposed policy would have evaluations and annual reviews and one review every five years. The Board of Trustees will give the final approval to the policy and the request will be made to have faculty representation in the review process.

The committee is addressing issues related to overhead funds. One issue is that funds were taken out of department and PI department accounts. The committee did not find anywhere else this was occurring other than Arts and Sciences and varies from department to department. The budget cuts do not align with the Faculty Handbook or with the guidelines established by the Provost. The cuts were to come out of recurring budget items. One solution would be for the funds not to go through the specific college but be distributed centrally. The committee is pursuing information about how other peer institutions handle this issue and will bring the report back to the Steering Committee.

**Information Technology and Strategic Communications** – (*Matthew Hudnall & Patrick Kung*) The Information Technology and Strategic Communications Committee addressed the information privacy concerns in answering personal questions when registering for Sentinel testing. UA does not receive the answers but the data goes to ADPH. Answering a particular question may be declined. Registration is voluntary.

OIT will be migrating student email Google accounts to Microsoft.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemke*) Janie Hubbard is the Ombudsperson beginning January 1, 2021. The committee is attempting to determine if commencement Marshals are needed for December. There was no Marshal in August and there will not be one needed for December commencement.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Rainer Schad & Mary Stone*) The Health Savings Plan has an option to move part of the balance into an investment account. There have been changes in the subcontractors handling the accounts causing concern.

**Community & Legislative Affairs** – (*Joy Burnham & Steven Yates*) The United Way campaign is underway with a goal of \$400,000. Online donations can be made.

The Census was extended to October 31, 2020. Alabama can lose a congressional seat and Federal funding for education.

Framework Tuscaloosa – Plans and zonings for city development have not been updated in generations. A zoom meeting will be conducted October 28 with links available.

A coat drive is underway for Brewer Porch Children's Center.

**Student Life** – (*Jennifer Dempsey & Ruth Ann Hall*) There will be testing for residential students returning to class on January 13, 2021. Masks and social distancing will continue to be required.

Meeting with Provost on Thursday at 3:30 P.M.

Meeting adjourned 5:25 P.M.