

**Faculty Senate Minutes**  
**October 20, 2020**  
**3:30 PM—ZOOM**

Attendance: Sheila Black, Silas Blackstock, Serena Blount, Seth Bordner, Ibrahim Cemen, Jeremy Crawford, Rona Donahoe, Alexis Davis Hazel, Holly Grout, Heather Gunn, Luvada Harrison, Courtney Helfrecht, Conor Henderson, Jolene Hubbs, Christopher Lynn, Lyndell McDonald, Preethi Nair, Regina Range, Ignacio Rodeno, Rainer Schad, Kelly Shannon-Henderson, Jenny Shaw, Sarah Steinbock-Pratt, Edith Szanto, Bulent Tosun, Vaia Touna, Jonathan Whitaker, John Vincent, John Yoder, Greg Cottrell, Jennifer Dempsey, Todd DeZoort, Chapman Greer, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, BC Kim, Mary Stone, Brian Britt, Bharat Mehra, Alyssa Vesey, Steven Yates, Cecily Collins, Suzanne Henson, Nelle Williams, Andrea Wright, Stephanie Buckner, Joy Burnham, Andre Denham, Nirmala Erevelles, Kelly Guyote, Latrise Johnson, Michael Lawson, John Petrovic, Sriram Aaleti, Jaber Abu-Qahouq, Ajay Agrawal, Sushma Kotru, Sundar Krishna, Patrick Kung, Shuhui Li, John Van Zee, Keith Williams, David Taylor, John Latta, Carla Blakey, Wanda Burton, Barbara “Babs” Davis, Michelle Tong, Jeri Zemke, Courtney Cross, Heather Elliott, Barbara Dahlbach, Leah Cheatham, Amy Traylor, Past President Donna Meester, Parliamentarian Robert Riter.

**Absent with alternate:** Andrea Glen/ Ted Tomeny.

**Absent Without Alternate:** Lexi Lowe Edwards, Leah LeFebvre, Mirit Eyal- Cohen, Teresa Welch.

**Guests:** TURA Representative Hank Lazer, PSA Representative Lynette Campos, Laura Braddock, Strategic Communications.

Dr. Christine Taylor, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, began the meeting with an activity update on the DEI Taskforce. The Taskforce is focused on slavery, race and civil rights. The establishment of a commission was included in a report submitted in July. The three main goals of the Taskforce is to develop a web presence, lay groundwork for institutional history of slavery and pathways to equity, and to hold three events including a virtual forum and inviting pertinent guest speakers. The Taskforce timeline includes accomplished goals this past summer. The committee will be engaging community partners including Stillman College, students and other community members. The committee anticipates hosting a symposium, developing a manuscript and determining the direction of the committee. A number of learning opportunities and workshops have been available for faculty members and staff members including cultural and responsive teaching. U A hosted a multicultural targeted event for prospective students and a multicultural visitation program. Cards are being distributed with multicultural resources listed. A ribbon cutting was conducted for the opening of the Intercultural Diversity Center. The center is located in Ferguson and has an open seating area available for gatherings and discussion of intercultural teaching, sharing and learning. A video of the opening was shared.

Dr. Andre Denham and Faculty Senate Vice President Chapman Greer gave a General Education Taskforce presentation. In the fall of 2018 the Taskforce was charged with determining UA expectations of general education experiences and comparing those with current research-based practices that support student learning and success, and identifying the processes needed to develop, approve, implement, assess, and periodically review a responsive, dynamic program of general education. The Taskforce timeline includes identifying operations, benchmarking 82 schools, administering a poll of faculty and staff, two town halls and conducted walking tours. The Taskforce attended three conferences in San Francisco, Vermont and Villanova and held a fall retreat upon their return. The mission statement, guiding principles and learning objectives were developed and

established. Student opinions were gathered through student focus groups. Three working models were developed. Student Learning Outcomes will be defined through sub-committees to be used to refine the three models in different groups- core plus hybrid, pathways model and standard distribution model. Examples were given of each model. The question “What is the process for revision, ratification, implementation, ongoing review, administration, and assessment of a comprehensive plan for general education?” was the focus of the Taskforce during the summer. The recommendations of the Taskforce included bringing in experts, defining student outcomes, refining the models and oversight for general education management. Additional recommendations were the creation of an administrative structure for management of general education by The University of Alabama and the provision of specified training for faculty and staff.

The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of September 15, 2020 were approved. Attendance was taken by Qualtrics.

**President’s Report** – (Rona Donahoe) Nominations have been requested for UA Premier Awards –

- Morris Mayer Award (Senior, Teaching Faculty)
- Judy Bonner Presidential Medallion (Member UA Community)
- Ramsey Award (Junior)
- Bloom Award (Junior)
- Catherine Randall Award (Senior)
- Algernon Sydney Sullivan (2 Seniors, one non-student)

The Sentinel Test Results began September 14, 2020 and has progressed weekly since that time. President Donahoe displayed a graph tracking Covid19 positive results and the daily number of tests divided by the total. There were zero positive test results last week out of 498 tests administered. Sentinel testing will continue going forward as there are significant lower numbers. Everyone was encouraged to register with the Verily system to increase the number of participants. The University Medical team will assume the administration of testing in the spring.

The SGA has joined the effort to increase testing participation by offering incentives to the students. They also endorse establishing testing sites at various locations across campus making it more convenient for students. There is a plan to do exit testing prior to the Thanksgiving holidays for graduate students and others remaining on campus. UA will not be doing large scale testing but will focus on residential students.

The spring calendar shows there will be a delay of a week to starting classes with the elimination of spring break. Two free days were reduced to one due to lab classes. The holiday break is a full week longer than normal to delay beginning classes giving sufficient quarantine time and reducing the need for large scale testing. Childcare will possibly be a problem for some. President Donahoe will send out a detailed email to the entire faculty explaining the rationale for the spring calendar.

The winter commencement will have the same format as August. A student survey is being conducted to determine the number of students planning to participate. Commencement will be conducted with social distancing, masks, limited number of guests and a streamlined platform party.

Faculty members have expressed concern about conflicting and confusing communication from department chairs, deans and upper administration. Faculty members feel underappreciated in part due to mixed messages and being asked to do a lot more under trying circumstances. Another concern is that upper administration may be isolated from understanding the impact of Covid19 on

teaching. The thought is to seek input on work-life balance issues faced by faculty since March in areas such as home and research. The fourth area of concern is hybrid or online instruction problems. The Office of the Provost has encouraged face-to-face teaching where possible or in a large class to adopt a hybrid mode of instruction. Input is needed regarding student participation when they have an opportunity for hybrid instruction and technology issues. President Donahoe requested the Faculty Life Committee launch a survey requesting faculty input in these four areas of concern to be considered by the Faculty Senate and results to be shared with upper administration.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – (Mirit Eyal-Cohen & Ignacio Rodeno) The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is attempting to determine how DEI is being implemented on campus. Some colleges have officers, and some have committees. The committee is also looking into establishing a post-doctoral group by researching how other institutions have organized infinity groups, met with the Research and Service Committee and are pursuing an inclusive holiday display on campus.

**Academic Affairs Committee** – (John Vincent & Andre Denham) There are a number of minor change recommendations for the Faculty Handbook. Those changes are attached to the October 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda. Those changes which are minor have been forwarded to the Faculty Senate to review and vote on in the November meeting.

The Provost has been receiving requests from students to revise grading and move the withdraw date to the end of the semester. The Steering Committee and the Academic Affairs Committee voted against this proposal. The Provost sent a comparison of mid-term grades for the fall compared to the previous fall revealing they are almost the same. There seems to be poor participation by students and academic misconduct. Following discussion, the Faculty Senate voted against the SGA proposal. No other SEC school have considered such a change. President Donahoe polled four options- no change/adopt P/F option/no credit Covid19/P/F & no credit Covid19. There was forty percent in favor of some form of extension, sixty percent voted for no change to the WD drop date, ninety-one percent voted P/F no change.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemke) Janie Hubbard has been elected Ombudsperson beginning January 1, 2021. There will be no election for Commencement Marshal due to Covid19.

**Research & Service** – (Ajay Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson) The committee has been working on the draft policy on Centers and Institutes sent to them by Vice President Mumper. There is no policy regarding how institutes and centers are to be created and maintained. The Board of Trustees requested such a policy be established and feedback has been forwarded by the committee. The other issue the committee is addressing is the return on overhead and how those accounts are handled. The committee is researching other institutions for information on how this is handled at their school.

**IT & Strategic Committee-** (Patrick Kung & Matthew Hubbard). The student emails hosted by Google are migrating to Microsoft. Verily asked for a lot of information when someone registered for testing and there was great concern about revealing such private information and where and who would have access to that personal information. The information does not come back to UA but is held by Verily which is pretty much owned by Google. Their privacy statement states they can use that sensitive information to develop new products or services. You also have to sign a HIPAA statement which is in force for ten years. To revoke that a letter must be written to a certain address. This will be discontinued in the spring.

**Financial Affairs Committee** – (Rainer Schad & Mary Stone) The committee is reviewing the HSA account investment plan which allows the movement of money into another account. Instructions on the process to accomplish this should be sent by UA Human Resources. The committee is also reviewing the overhead account system. Open enrollment is October 15-30, 2020.

**Community & Legislative Affairs** – (Joy Burnham & Steven Yates) The United Way Campaign is underway with a link to make a donation with a goal of \$400,000. The Census deadline has been designated October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Framework Tuscaloosa plans the cityscape and there will be a meeting next week. Guidelines will be established for a zoning policy for city parcels for the entire city.

There is a coat, hats, and gloves drive underway for the Brewer-Porch Children's Center headed by PSA.

**Student Life** – (Jennifer Dempsey & Ruth Ann Hall) Volunteer testing is available for students.

Restrictions have been relaxed somewhat for student gatherings and will be monitored.

There was discussion and review of University Standing Committees whether meeting or not and if the committee has a chair in place.

The Faculty Senate will meet November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned 5:30 PM.