

Faculty Senate Meeting
December 8, 2020
3:30 – ZOOM Meeting

ATTENDANCE: Julie Bannerman, Sheila Black, Silas Blackstock, Serena Blount, Seth Bordner, Ibrahim Cemen, Jeremy Crawford, Rona Donahoe, Alexis Davis Hazell, Holly Grout, Heather Gunn, Luvada Harrison, Courtney Helfrecht, Connor Henderson, Jolene Hubbs, Lyndell McDonald, Preethi Nair, Regina Range. Ignacious Rodeno, Rainer Schad, Kelly Shannon-Henderson, Jenny Shaw, Sarah Steinbock-Henderson, Edith Sganto, Bulent Tosun, Vaia Touna, Jonathan Whitaker, John Vincent, John Yoder, Greg Cottrell, Jennifer Dempsey, Todd DeZoort, Chapman Greer, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, Lexi Lowe Edwards, Brian Britt, Leah LeFebvre, Bharat Mehra, Alyx Vesey, Steven Yates, Cecily Collins, Suzanne Henson, Nelle Williams, Andrea Wright, Stephanie Buckner, Joy Burnham, Andre Denham, Kelly Guyotte, Latrice Johnson, John Petrovic, Jaber Abu-Qahouq, Ajay Agrawal, Sushma Kotru, Patrick Kung, Shuhui Li, John Van Zee, Keith Williams, David Taylor, John Latta, Carla Blakey, Wanda Burton, Barbara “Babs” Davis, Michele Tong, Jeri Zemke, Mirit Eyal-Cohen, Courtney Cross, Heather Elliot, Barbara Dahlbach, Russel Peterson, Susan Appel, Rebecca Owings, Teresa Welch, Leah Cheatham, Lynette Campos (PSA), Hank Lazer (TUARA), Donna Meester, Robert Riter, Sundar Krishnan, Amy Traylor, Michael Lawson, Sriram Aaleti.

ABSENT with no alternate: Andrea Glenn, Christopher Glenn, BC Kim.

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Tony Buhr/Spyridoula (Litsa) Cheimarion; Diana Dolliver/Matthew Dolliver; Mary Stone/Tom Lopez; Nirmala Erevelles/Stephanie Shelton; Michael Callihan/Sara Kaylor.

GUESTS: Laura Braddick, Strategic Communications; Dr. James Reeves, Director UMC F/S Behavioral Health Clinic.

Dr. James Reeves, Director of the University Medical Center, began the meeting with information concerning the Faculty and Staff Wellness Clinic. The mental health services and benefits offered by the clinic include psychiatric evaluation and medication, counseling sessions, telehealth visits, social worker and nurse practitioner, psychologist/psychiatrist therapist sessions. Hopefully, face-to-face sessions will be available in the near future. The offices are located in the Northeast Medical Center. Direct referrals are accepted. Questions included whether post docs, grad students and research assistants are qualified to receive these benefits and if culturally appropriate counselors are available.

CAMPUS CULTURAL TASKFORCE - Kelly Guyotte, Heather Gunn, Barb Dahlbach and Alyx Vesey reported the taskforce was assembled in September, 2019 with freedom of expression as the focus with a long-term goal of making concrete recommendations. The taskforce is in the process of gathering quantitative and qualitative information through conducting a survey. The survey includes questions concerning satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the overall UA climate/environment (hostile/friendly; racist/non-racist; supportive/non-supportive, helpful/sense of belonging; welcoming of various social and political views and opinions. The survey has three open-ended questions with the taskforce analyzing the responses. Several interaction activities were conducted by the taskforce including questions on post-it notes. Five of seven questions have been analyzed revealing a huge dichotomy of respondents. Three of the questions were “Who can change the campus culture at UA?” (Everyone with a focus on the Machine and white faculty). “What is a metaphor you could use to describe UA?” “What shapes campus culture at UA?” (Everyone-students, policies, the machine, fraternities.) “Why is

campus culture important to you?” “How would you describe UA campus culture?” (40 responses). And, group discussions were held at the end of the forum asking “What would the ideal campus look like?” Six major concerns were tokenism, service, work burnout, racial harassment, self-censorship, centering blackness, cross campus networking and collaboration. Heat mapping – a campus map with different colored push pins used to denote safe, inclusive, welcoming spaces, on campus unsafe spaces/discontinuity spaces. Some of the takeaways from the survey included a majority of faculty/staff across all demographics experienced campus as racist; African-American blacks, non-whites, binaries, disabled faculty and staff are dissatisfied with campus culture, campus safety issues, open-ended responses revealed dissatisfaction and distrust of UA administration, bias and discrimination. The next step will be a redistribution of the survey to fill in some gaps, work on data and analysis and to share findings and action steps with campus entities. Any suggestions should be forwarded to the taskforce. A planned second open forum planned for the spring was cancelled due to Covid19. What are the plans for this event? The plan is to have some actionable items in place before gathering in person. Online forums and focus groups could be an option with design and constructive details to be decided and implemented. Anonymity is a great consideration in gathering data. Establishing achievable action items would be formed and reported as an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate. Other questions included the ethnicity number of the taskforce, survey participants anonymity, collaboration with administration and groups.

Secretary’s report – (*Barb Dahlbach*) Minutes for October and November meetings were submitted for approval. October minutes were approved with corrections and November minutes were approved as submitted.

President’s Report – (*Rona Donahoe*) The President’s Advisory Committee met September 3, 2020 and provided comprehensive reports from across campus. UA Systems Office released the plan for continued working for 2020-21 which will begin with masking, social distancing and a ban on in-person events at the beginning of the semester. Entrance testing will be for on-campus residents only. Vaccine distribution will change things as it becomes available. Dr. Ricky Friend announced there will be testing every day with the exception of Christmas Day and New Years Day. There was an increase in positive cases this past week. Sentinel testing will be conducted by the University Medical Center. Everyone who is not working remotely or has had or recovered from the virus will be in the pool expected to participate in the sentinel testing program. Ninety percent of cases contracted have been at off-campus sites. Exit testing will continue to be available.

The Faculty Senate endorsed the proposed resolution to continue working remotely as long as job duties are fulfilled.

The Provost released the guiding principles for Spring 2021 expressing to faculty there would be a great deal of flexibility in the manner courses could be offered. Faculty can require attendance and class assignments.

The Faculty Senate, SGA, PSA and OCTSA organizations sponsored a holiday toy drive. Donations are being accepted.

Research & Service – (*Ajay Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson*) The Research and Service Committee met with Susan Carvalho, Dean of the Graduate School, in November. Graduate admissions and enrollment is something the committee keeps an eye on since a lot of the research is driven by Graduate

Students. Admissions were up in the Fall of 2020. The largest increases in applications were in natural sciences, business, education and engineering. Enrolled students enrolled in January are up 170% in business, nursing and CIS which does include some distance-learning students. May campus enrollment is up 126%. Distance-learning students are not as involved as they would be if they were on campus. The UA Graduate School had a number of initiatives which helped increase the numbers such as the quick admit program and a waiver of required scores which has increased the diversity. Other southeastern institute have seen increases with UA doing really well compared to those peer institutions. Most of the new enrollees were Master students and distance learning students. Additional graphs revealed increasing African-American participants. This growth primarily caused by the pandemic will be built on by the Graduate School to make the increases more permanent and continue to attract students. The presentation will be posted on the Faculty Senate website.

Community & Legislative Affairs – *(Steven Yates & Joy Burnham)* The United Way campaign is underway with the goal of \$400,000 with \$370,000 raised up to this point. There have been only 565 commitments out of 3,800 faculty and staff. The United Way is only 23% to their goal for this year. The donation link is still in force.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – The new co-chair for the DEI Committee is Lyndell McDonald replacing Mirit Eyal-Cohen. The committee met with Dr. Christine Taylor, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, on November 24, 2020 to discuss the report and obtain feedback. The committee met next with Dean Messina of the College of Arts & Sciences to discuss the successful post-doctoral fellowships for underrepresented minorities. The committee continues to determine how to best to move forward to create an infinity group and continues to push for more inclusive holiday displays.

Academic Affairs – *(John Vincent & Andre Denham)* Andre Denham has been appointed Associate Dean of the Graduate School as of January 1, 2021. Babs Davis will replace Andre as co-chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.

IT & Strat Communications – *(Matthew Hudnall & Patrick Kung)* Power will be upgraded in Gordon-Palmer with UA HPC moving out of Palmer to Ridgecrest where there is more power to manage the existing and install the new HPC. OIT will supply a description that faculty can use in grant applications. UA directory online directory is moving behind authentication soon. Access for people on campus (VPN) is a possibility.

Student Life – *(Jennifer Dempsey & Ruth Ann Hall)* The Amazon wish list for Alabama Reach is still active at Amazon.com.

Faculty and Senate election for Merger & Discontinuance had two nominations with Kevin Shaughnessy being elected. There is no need for Marshals at this time.

Nominations will be sought for Ombudsperson to be elected at the same time senator elections are conducted.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be conducted via Zoom on January 12, 2021.

Meeting adjourned 5:30 P.M.