

FACULTY SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2021
3:00 PM – ZOOM

ATTENDANCE: Barb Dahlbach, Rona Donahoe, Chapman Greer, Ignacio Rodeno, Lyndell McDonald, John Vincent, Barbara “Babs” Davis, Rainer Schad, John Van Zee, Matthew Hudnall, Patrick Kung, Ajay Agrawal, Kelly Shannon-Henderson, Jennifer Dempsey, Ruth Ann Hall, Joy Burnham, Steven Yates, Christopher Lynn, Ibrahim Cemen, Jeri Zemke, Parliamentarian Robert Riter.

ABSENT: Susan Appel, Past President Donna Meester.

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

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting minutes of November 10, 2020 were approved. The December Steering Committee meeting was cancelled.

The University issued a statement outlining options for remote teaching and options for staff which should address concerns expressed by faculty and staff members.

President’s Report – (Rona Donahoe) The University and the US Department of Education investigated a reference to UA on the Wuhan Institute of Virology web site. No connection was found and the report was sent to the Federal government. The request was made to the institute to take down the reference on the web site with no response.

UA offered opportunities for faculty and staff meeting certain criteria to get the first vaccination for Covid19. Higher education teachers are now included in Group 1B to receive vaccinations.

Provost Dalton issued a statement triggered by Faculty Senate leadership behind the scenes to secure the safety of faculty following the large gathering on the Strip celebrating the Alabama Crimson Tide winning the National Championship. It was of great concern that this would cause a spike in the spread of the virus. Provost Dalton recognized this concern and allowed a flexible approach during the first two weeks of classes (January 13 to January 22) to voluntarily choose remote instruction, if needed. This is a temporary approach as ongoing conditions are monitored. The statement from Provost Dalton was issued during the Steering Committee meeting.

The celebration crowd was cleared after 20 minutes. Very few were wearing masks and there were a few arrests. The main concern of faculty was that the first day of classes was so soon after the massive gathering of students. Part of the discussion included what action should Faculty Senate take, poor communication, student retesting, sentinel testing and data, administration being proactive rather than reactive, law enforcement preparation and where the responsibilities lie. President Donahoe will invite Dr. Ricky Friend to address questions about vaccinations and data concerning the spread of the virus and Ralph Clayton, Associate Vice President for UA Public Safety, to speak to the Faculty Senate

Discussion proceeded about calling for the resignation or recalling US House of Representative from the State of Alabama for participating in a rally inciting insurrection attacking the US Capitol. President

Donahoe will do further checking the legal aspects of this action. The University of Alabama prohibits employee political endorsements or statements which would preclude any action of this type. The Faculty Senate represents all faculty and this statement would not represent every member of faculty.

Vice President's Report – (*Chapman Greer*) The General Education Taskforce has been working with subject matter experts on campus to define the terms of student learning outcomes. The taskforce will meet this week to finalize the definitions given by the various sub-committees. These will be shared with the Faculty Senate within the next couple of weeks.

The availability and how to access the Tableau software was shared. ELearning is included in the usage of the software and about 70% of industrial partners are asking the students to have available to shore up their academic experience. This is a sophisticated and easy to use software package and free to faculty and students.

Research & Service – (*Ajay Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson*) The Research and Service has been meeting with the Director of the Alabama Transportation Institute to engage in the development of an economic plan.

The committee presented a policy on proposed routing, review and approval for externally sponsored grants and contracts. This proposal addresses how the routing process works in development facilitation of the overall grant and contract process while balancing the need for institutional and regulatory compliance. The Internal Processing Form is required for externally sponsored grants and contracts. The Lead Principal Investigator must submit the form at least five days before the sponsor deadline. One issue is faculty forgetting to complete the form and the committee feels this time line should be expanded and/or the form be completed in advance. The committee was concerned with Item #2 which states that all final documents for any type proposal must be provided to OSP at least two business days prior to the sponsor deadline. Some points brought up were - what if there are some problems with the submission and what are some of the consequences. The committee feels there should be some flexibility with this regulation – recommended not mandatory. Please send comments and feedback to the committee.

Faculty & Senate Governance – (*Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemke*) The Ombudsperson will be Janie Hubbard replacing Roxanne Mitchell beginning January 1, 2021. Nominations are needed for a representative from A&S and the deadline is January 25, 2021. Faculty Senate officer elections are due and anyone wishing to run should submit a letter-of-intent by February 10 and nominations can be made from the floor. The election is in March and officers begin to serve at the April meeting. The Mediation Committee has two members with terms ending in August.

Community & Legislative Affairs – (*Joy Burnham & Steven Yates*) The Committee is researching a legislative virtual meeting with the Steering Committee. The committee is meeting with Samory Pruitt and will be reporting back on that discussion.

Academic Affairs – (*John Vincent & Babs Davis*) John Vincent welcomed and introduced Babs Davis as the new co-chair.

Financial Affairs – (*Rainer Schad & John Van Zee*) John Van Zee was welcomed as the new co-chair of the Financial Affairs Committee.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – (*Ignatio Rodeno & Lyndell McDonald*) Lyndell McDonald was introduced as the new co-chair replacing Mirit Eyal-Cohen.

Next Faculty Senate meeting January 19 via zoom.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 P.M.