

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

9-21-21 VIA ZOOM

**ATTENDANCE:** Julia Bannerman, Serena Blount, Seth Bordner, Ibrahim Cemen, Spyridoula (Litsa) Cheimariou, Kim Colburn, Jeremy Crawford, Alexis Davis Hazell, Susan Dewey, Rona Donahoe, Amanda Epsy-Brown, Courtney Helfrecht, Kim Lackey, Matthew Lockwood, Nathan Loewen, Christopher Lynn, Lyndell McDonald, Moises Molina, Alessandra Montalbano, Luke Niiler, Shanlin Pan, Regina Range, Edith Szanto, Alexandre Tokovinine, Bulent Tosun, Laura Erin Watley, Bo Zhang, Yong Zhang, Tom Baker, Doug Bish, Jennifer Dempsey, Todd DeZoort, Chapman Greer, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, BC Kim, Mary Stone, Brian Britt, Cynthia Peacock, Bharat Mehra, Alyx Vesey, Steven Yates, Cecily Collins, Suzanne Henson, Nelle Williams, Andrea Wright, Tracy Hinton, Joy Burnham, Nirmala Erevelles, Michael Lawson, Sara McDaniel, John Petrovic, Stephanie, Shelton, Nicole Swoszowski, Sriram Aaleti, Jaber Abu-Qahouq, Xiaoyan Hong, Sushma Kotru, Sundar Krishnan, Patrick Kung, Weihua Su, John Van Zee, Jialai Wang, David Taylor, John Latta, Carla Blakey, Barbara “Babs” Davis, Amy Ellis, Yeon Ho Shin, Jeri Zemke, Heather Elliott, Barbara Dahlbach, Russel Peterson, Michael Callihan, Susan Appel, Rebecca Owings, Kim Parker, Leah Cheatham, Amy Traylor, Robert Riter-Parliamentarian, Hank Lazer-TUARA

**ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE:** Sheila Black/John Vincent, Tyler Sasser/Matthew Davis

**ABSENT:** Paulo Araujo, Brittany Gilmer, Rainer Schad, Paul Horwitz, Dan Joyner

**PRESS:** Laura Braddick-Strategic Communications

**GUESTS:** Allison Leitner-Development, Erica Shumate-Benefits, Lurethia James-Benefits, Andre Denham-GET, Erik Peterson-GET, Dale Dickerson, Tessa Worley, Mark Weaver, Sara Kaylor

The Faculty Senate meeting began with a presentation from the Advancement Office giving an update on the Capital Campaign. The campaign has moved into the public phase of the “Rising Tide,” which is a ten-year fundraiser. The campaign began in October 2016 and will end in September 2026. The funds raised in this effort will be used to elevate the University to a higher level of education and research.

Due to technical problems, the agenda was moved forward to the Benefits Office presentation and will rejoin the Capital Campaign presentation following the technical problem resolution.

The Benefits Office presented the following: Open enrollment for 2022 will be October 15 until October 30, 2021. There is no action required for continued participation. Effective January 1, 2022 Payflex will be the new vendor for 2022 healthcare. MyBama login and link information is available to complete open enrollment. Beginning January 2022, administrative changes include the timing of premium deductions, which will be deducted in the current month (vs. the previous month, as has been the practice). Also beginning in January, in the event of termination of employment, all medical, dental or vision coverage(s) will end the last day of the termination month.

Bi-weekly, non-exempt employees will have standardized benefit premiums deducted over 24 pay periods. There are no increases in medical premiums for next year. The high deductible health plan has lower premiums up front and higher deductibles when the plan is utilized. The PPO plan has high premiums up front and a lower per-person deductible as the plan is utilized. Depending on the type service provided, this PPO plan is a flat copayment and can fluctuate from \$35 for an office visit. Maximums are lower if you are enrolled in the high-deductible health plan and higher in the PPO. When

out-of-pocket expenses reach the maximum, the University will pay 100% of the expenses. BC/BS remains the administrative provider. There are extensive preventive services offered under both plans, including Lifelock and Teledoc.

Pharmacy changes begin January, 2022. Anyone participating in home-delivery mail-order drugs will start receiving prescriptions from MedsYourWay, which is a division of Amazon Pharmacy. The specialty pharmacy will be Accredo, owned by Express Scripts. Additional information will be sent to those impacted by these changes.

UA currently has the Health Savings Account (HSA), which is managed by the employee. The end-of-year balance can be rolled over to the next year or can be taken by any employee leaving the University. The Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a use-it-or-lose-it account. The maximum, annual pre-tax amount allowed for this plan is \$2,750. If employee and spouse work at UA, each can contribute up to \$2,750 for a total of \$5,500. There are two types of Flexible Spending Accounts. The first has an annual contribution of \$2,750 and a minimum of \$125. The second is Dependent Care FSA, with an annual contribution of \$5,000 and a minimum of \$125. This can only be used for a child under 13 years of age.

Transitioning from TASC effective January 1, 2022, the new vendor will be Payflex. All plan participants will receive a new debit card from Payflex in December. TASC will continue to manage the run-out period for requesting FSA reimbursements for 2021 claims ending March 31, 2022. The IRS requires Payflex to verify that all FSA debit card transactions are for eligible medical or child-care expenses, which is known as substantiation. If Payflex cannot verify the funds are used correctly, a "Request for Documentation" notice will be sent. It is highly recommended to retain all receipts and invoices through this transition period. FSA correction procedures could include suspension of card until documentation is sent or exact amount is paid back to your account.

There are no dental or vision premium increases for next year.

Virtual information sessions will be held on Wednesday, September 29 from 10:00 until 11:00 AM; Monday, October 4 from 10:00 until 11:00 AM; and Tuesday, October 12 from 2:00 until 3:00 PM.

The meeting returned to the Capital Campaign presentation.

The four pillars of the Capital Campaign are:

Promise: Scholarships, fellowships, and programming for undergraduate and graduate students.

Prominence: Endowed faculty positions and research.

Pride: Facilities and campus enhancements.

Passion: The Crimson Standard for Athletics facilities and programs.

The goal is \$1.5 billion dollars and 63% of that goal has been reached. The Rising Tide will add 75 new faculty endowments, impact more than 500,000 square feet on campus, and support athletic facilities, programs, and scholarships.

The campaign website is [risingtide.ua.edu](http://risingtide.ua.edu).

The General Education Reform Taskforce was charged with determining the UA Community's expectations of General Education (GE) and the current GE experiences at UA; comparing those

expectations with 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.

Reforming general education is needed because the student population has changed. Enrollment has grown from 20,000 to 38,000, with 60% out-of-state and 40% in-state. US demographics have shifted and are forecasted to decline by at least 15% by 2025. The four-year graduation rates show we are not serving our students at the margins very well, with 55% of white students graduating in four years, as compared to 49% of underrepresented minorities, and 35% of African American students. Two student surveys in 2019 (with 1,500 total respondents) and four focus groups reveal a desire for general education changes. Employers want and are not seeing future employees with critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills, effective communication skills, the ability to work in teams, and / or ethical judgment and decision-making abilities, all of which are critical in preparing students for jobs and technologies that do not currently exist. In terms of assessment, the current core curriculum does not have shared student learning outcomes, making it difficult to assess what knowledge, skills and abilities, undergraduates gain upon completion of a general education curriculum at UA. Assessment of general education is required by SACSCOC as part of the accreditation process. For recruitment and future enrollment, the core curriculum must be fashioned to continue attracting high-quality students to UA. Attrition at UA happens during the first two years of undergraduate study, which is the timeframe in which the majority of gen ed courses are taken. A core curriculum that meets the need of all populations will result in better and increased retention, raising graduation rates. The main complaint registered by students concerning the core curriculum is its lack of clarity and coherence. The current core has no required coursework related to intercultural knowledge and competency. A sense of belonging and connectedness is an additional gap that requires attention. College learning should empower and prepare students to deal with the complexity, diversity, change and knowledge of the wider world. Science, culture, and society as well as in-depth achievement in at least one specific field of study, would help students develop a sense of social responsibility, stronger cross-disciplinary, intellectual, and practical skills (such as communication, and analytical and problem-solving skills) and a demonstrated ability to apply this knowledge and these skills in a real-world setting.

The current core curriculum is six semester hours of written composition, six semester hours of foreign language or computer science; twelve semester hours of humanities/literature/fine arts; twelve semester hours of social science/behavioral science, eleven semester hours of natural science/ mathematics plus six semester hours of writing intensive courses, giving a current core of 53 semester hours. According to the mission statement, the taskforce recommends a UA General Education program that empowers undergraduate students to be socially conscious, ethical, and well-rounded leaders with the knowledge and skills to live productive, responsible, and rewarding lives in a diverse and rapidly changing world. The program challenges students to develop their logical and creative capacities by providing transformational and integrative learning experiences that complement the undergraduate major.

The guiding principles are: to be learner centered, accessible, inclusive, and equitable; to span the four years of the undergraduate experience; to focus on shared student learning outcomes; to include curricular and co-curricular experiences to meet accreditation requirements; to encourage involvement and participation throughout faculty and staff; to employ best practices in teaching and learning; to

encourage exploration and student ownership of general education; and to accommodate nontraditional transfer and high credit entry students.

Learning objectives, which are now called capacities, are interculturally competent and knowledgeable individuals, individually and socially responsible citizens, ethical reasoners, problem solvers, critical and creative thinkers, and effective communicators.

In general education, there are eleven high impact practices that have been widely tested and have shown to be of benefit. High-impact practices are educational experiences that engage students in active integrative learning through key, intentional curricular practices such as high expectations, frequent feedback, and interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters. Research has demonstrated that incorporating these practices and specific educational experiences, such as first-year experiences, community engagement, and Capstone projects, have positive impacts on students' academic success, especially historically underserved students. High-impact practices help achieve, measure, and assess learning goals, adapt to changes, and better address underserved student needs. There is a direct correlation between the number of quality high-impact practices in which students participate and increases in student retention, engagement, and deep learning. UA employs all eleven of the high-impact practices, but GET recommends the inclusion of four high-impact practices within the GE curriculum: first-year experience; community engagement; and Capstone courses and projects with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging woven throughout.

From this work, GET created two models for consideration: Model 1: a combination of essential learnings and T.I.D.E. courses, consisting of two hours of Bama Beginnings, eighteen hours of Foundational Courses, twenty hours of Essential Learnings, plus TIDE courses and the four high-impact experiences. Bama Beginnings would seek broadly to introduce the tenets and outcomes of the General Education program, using the Capstone Creed as the spine for individual exploration at key skill building in a student's first year. Additionally, the two-semester course model would also provide an early introduction to community engagement, so that future high-impact practices can build on a common foundation. The first semester of Bama Beginnings would focus on the policies that inform the Capstone Creed and serve as a primer for the learning goals and outcomes of the General Education program. The second semester would focus on the application of the Capstone Creed via an introduction to Community Engagement. Students would be required to take foundational courses, including: six semester hours of written composition, three semester hours in quantitative literacy, six semester hours in foreign language, and three semester hours in digital literacy.

Students would then engage in Essential Learnings plus T.I.D.E. courses. Essential Learning categories are: knowledge of human cultures which would be six to nine hours accomplished through studying social sciences, humanities, and history with a focus on engagement with big questions. Next would be the physical and natural world, through studying natural sciences and math, with a focus on engagement. To allow students to learn about the scientific inquiry and process, the natural science courses must be accompanied by a lab. Creative arts would be three-to-six semester hours through creative and fine arts. The recommendation includes a set of T.I.D.E. courses: – teamwork and problem solving, inquiry and analysis, digital information literacy, and ethical reasoning. Students would be required to take one course from each of the four categories and one additional course from any of the four categories. These courses must be taken at UA and some double-dipping would apply.

As to High-Impact Practices, in addition to the First-Year Experience (Bama Beginnings) is a requirement for Community Engagement. There are a variety of ways a student could meet the community engagement requirement. The taskforce recommends a 300-400 level diversity, equity and inclusion requirement, as well as advanced communications. Finally, and in the major, students would be required to take a Capstone course. For majors that do not have a Capstone, GET recommends creation of an interdisciplinary, university-wide capstone experience.

The current curriculum represents 53 hours, while the proposed core curriculum represents 43.

The taskforce looked at 120+ institutions of higher learning to determine what core curriculums are being followed and/or pursued. Most institutions struggle to bring in first-generation students or students from ethnic minorities and teach them at the same rate.

Model 2: The Pathways Model represents multiple versions of a distribution model (UA's current model is a distribution model). Model 2 creates coherence to that distribution through the thematic tie between general education courses. The Pathways Model also has Bama Beginnings. Additionally, there are fifteen hours of Foundations: written composition, quantitative literacy, foreign language, computer science, and digital literacy. Foreign language and digital literacy would be stand-alone categories that all students would need to have coming through UA. Each pathway has the same set of student learning outcomes (but not the same courses) to deliver thematic coherence: a knowledge of human cultures – 6 hours; physical and natural world – 8 hours; intellectual and practical skills; and personal and social responsibility. Each pathway would have a three-hour course specifically dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Each pathway would contain the same kinds of courses, at the same hour requirements. The faculty will be surveyed to determine the themes and courses that cohere to a particular theme. Advanced communications would be in the major and a Capstone Course would tie together the pathway.

A summer 2021 feasibility study informed the hours and structure of the two proposed models. The taskforce recommends hiring a General Education Director. Working with the Director would be the transition team that would include: the General Education Taskforce co-chairs, an Assessment Coordinator, the Registrar's Office, the Admissions Office, Strategic Communications, and representatives from First-Year Experience, Community Engagement, the Undergraduate Council and/or the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee.

The General Education proposal will be presented to the Faculty Senate for approval of hiring an executive director, assessment coordinator, establishment of a transition team, and the model for implementation. The next two years would be spent in assessment and professional development, course approval, and catalog updates, with a goal of a 2024 implementation. The Faculty Senate will vote on Model #1 or Model #2 – both have the same number of hours, but with curricular and design differences. The Faculty Senate will also vote on expedited course implementation, with the understanding that details still need to be worked out. The process is at the beginning of the fourth year of a five-year timeline, with rollout to begin in Fall of 2024. Questions included number of credit hours, impacts on departments, the possibility of a faculty-wide vote, and expedited implementation.

**President's Report** – (*Chapman Greer*) A Covid Town Hall was held with Provost Dalton and Dr. Ricky Friend. A transcript of questions and answers (in the order they were received) will be posted.

A recording of the Board of Trustees meeting on September 16 and 17 is available on their website.

The Senate subcommittee agenda for 2021-22 has been posted as a document for the entire Senate.

**Secretary's Report** – (*Barb Dahlbach*) The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of August 17, 2021 were approved with corrections.

All Senate positions are filled, with a few alternate vacancies, which are being addressed.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – (*Lyndell McDonald & Luke Niiler*) This committee shared a link to all the different initiatives in diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemke*) Jeff Weddle is the candidate for Ombudsperson. Nominations will be needed for December Commencement Marshals, the Mediation Committee, and the Merger and Discontinuance of Academic Units Committee vacancies.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Rona Donahoe & Babs Davis*) The Committee is working with the Provost's Office on final revisions to the Academic Misconduct Policy. The Policy will be brought to the Faculty Senate in October for a vote in November. With approval, the revised policy will be put in the *Faculty Handbook* next Fall. The Committee also reviewed a proposal for an Academic Program Review Council and has given its feedback to the Provost's Office. There are five general areas of concern with the APRC proposal.

The co-chairs met with Dana Patton and Andre Denham about some Graduate Council concerns. The co-chairs are meeting with the new Associate Provost Lesley Reid on Friday.

**Community & Legislative Affairs** – (*Joy Burnham & Steven Yates*) The United Way Campaign is underway and everyone is encouraged to donate, since last year's goal was not reached.

There was a Neighborhood Partnership Meeting on August 25, with four representatives from the Faculty Senate attending.

This committee is working on having a luncheon for Brewer Porch.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Mary Stone & Byung-Cheol Kim*) The Financial Affairs Committee met with Vice President Fajack. Fajack offered to come speak to the Faculty Senate. In his comments to the committee, the financial status of UA's benefit pension program, reserves, and overall financial condition is excellent. The only negative is the projected national decrease in college-age students.

**Research & Service** – (*Shanlin Pan & Douglas Bish*) The Research and Service Committee met with Vice President Russell Mumper. He shared the second-year report of the five-year strategic plan. The committee asked questions concerning research expenditures, returns on investments, and new centers and institutes. The committee is also looking at UA's software purchasing procedures.

**Strategic Communications & Information Technology** – (*Patrick Kung & Nathan Loewen*) Ryan Bradley is the new Director of Strategic Communications. Strat Com is working on UA websites; administration must approve all communications, produces all UA media related to Covid, and has an on-campus professional network of developers for assistance across campus.

**Student Life – (Jennifer Dempsey & Amy Traylor)** The committee had their monthly meeting with Dr. Myron Pope and met with Miss Jillian Fields, SGA President. UA had the third largest sorority rush coming into the fall semester. Dr. Pope’s office is working with fraternity groups on anti-hazing. Camp 1831 is gaining popularity, with over 600 participants. We continue to work with the Provost on student retention percentages, specifically the Pell Grant, first-generation, and minority students. The committee is partnering with the Capital Campaign team to carve out resources specifically for student tuition. Developing and opening lines of communication with SGA is in progress.

**Faculty Life – (Heather Elliott & Ruth Ann Hall)** The committee met with Dean Usdan in September to discuss the expansion of child daycare on campus. The CDRC has only 10 classrooms, with a 500-student wait list. Options are being explored, including building a facility and / or the use of an existing building. A proposal is being developed as expanded daycare facilities would serve as a recruiting tool.

Next meeting will be October 19<sup>th</sup> via zoom.

Meeting adjourned 5:20 P.M.