

## **Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee 2022-2023 Annual Report**

Co-Chairs: Babs Davis and Rona Donahoe  
Members: Seth Bordner, Shibin Dai, Tonya Klein, Micah McKay, Rebecca Owings, Cynthia Peacock, John Petrovic, Stephanie Shelton, Weihua Su, Nelle Williams  
Meetings: 9/6/22, 10/4/22, 11/1/22, 11/29/22, 2/7/23, 4/4/23

### **Faculty Handbook**

The following changes to the Faculty Handbook have been approved by the AAC and Faculty Senate for implementation on August 16, 2023:

1. Statement on Contribution to Publications – Information on the candidate’s contributions to multi-authored works will be required [Chapter 2, Section IV, pgs. 28, 30 and 35]
  - Faculty Success will be populated with a taxonomy for faculty to use when documenting their contributions to publications.
2. Conversion from Administrative to Faculty Status – This proposed change would resolve broad inconsistencies across colleges in the FTE assignment for faculty administrators, 9 versus 12 month appointment standards, and leaves given to chairs and associate dean when they return to full-time faculty [Chapter 2, Section XVI, pg. 47-48]
  - Category C states that for those with more than one or less than five years of continuous administrative service may be granted leave at the discretion of the Dean.
3. Faculty Participation – Committees and Task Forces [Chapter 1, Section IV.A, pg. 11]
  - Allows for the Committee on University Committees to have faculty and staff co-chairs
4. Statement on Contribution to Service [Chapter 2, Section IV, pgs. 28, 31, 35]
  - Language added to explicitly consider service performed by faculty in the interest of advancing diversity in promotion and tenure
  - This change has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the Provost; Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and the Council of Deans
5. Policy and Guidelines on Faculty Evaluations [Chapter 2, Section XII, pgs. 43-44] and Code of Conduct/Standards of Behavior [Chapter 3, Sections II and III, pgs. 50-55]
  - Clarify that annual evaluations must be provided in writing to faculty
  - Stipulate when performance improvement plans will be used and how they will be created
  - Repeatedly fails to meet expectations/repeatedly falls below expectations (pg. 44) is defined by ‘the standards and expectations in the field of study’, rather than by a specific time period.
  - Differentiate between performance improvement plans and progressive discipline
  - Better align the Faculty Handbook and the Employee Handbook on the application of

- progressive discipline steps in cases of substandard performance
  - Moral turpitude is defined [Alabama HB 282(2017) Definition of Moral Turpitude Act], both here and in Appendix B, and differentiated from acts of academic dishonesty
6. Visiting Faculty Appointments [Chapter 3, Section XIV, pgs. 62-63]
    - The section on Faculty Exchanges has been expanded to include full-time Visiting Faculty Appointments. The processes are largely the same.
  7. Academic Calendar and Compensation Periods [Chapter 3, Section XX, pg. 66]
    - To comply with IRS guidelines, current nine-month faculty will be sent an election form this spring which they must elect whether they want their annual salary to be paid over nine months or over 12 months; election will be similar to open enrollment
    - If a faculty member does not submit an election form, they will default to a nine over 12 payroll schedule (what most faculty currently have). Once you have made an election, it cannot be changed until the next year
  8. Office Hours Requirement [Chapter 5, Section II, pg. 76]
    - Stipulates that faculty must have minimum two regularly scheduled office hours per week (virtual or in-person) and office hours may not be restricted to appointment only, though faculty are expected to schedule individual appointments as needed. Faculty may request permission from their chair to hold these office hours virtually.
    - The schedule of office hours must be included on all course syllabi
  9. Selection and Evaluation of Deans [Appendix A, page 82]
    - Proposes that, to avoid delays in Dean searches, search committees for Deans provide a list of 3 alternates in case a committee member needs to step down for any reason
  10. Mediation and Grievance Process [Appendix B]
    - Although many changes have been made to Appendix B, most are not substantive, but serve to reorganize and simplify the document
    - Clarifies that the policy applies to all full-time tenured, tenure-track, and renewable contract faculty
    - Removes contradictory information about imposition of severe sanctions. Document was inconsistent on whether administrators were required to seek committee review before imposing a severe sanction. That has not been how the process works, so clarified that faculty be provided with a tribunal review of a severe sanction upon request
    - Adds language to clarify that the action being grieved must have impacted the grievant (a faculty member cannot file a grievance on behalf of someone else)
    - States that the Mediation Committee and Tribunal do not conduct business over the summer or University breaks/holidays
    - Removed the sections on compliance tribunals. The Mediation and Grievance Policy does not cover actions that are determined to fall under the University's Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Policy; Equal Opportunity, Non-discrimination and Affirmative Action Policy; or Harassment Policy.
    - Flowcharts outlining the four stages of the Mediation and Grievance process will be added.

### **Statement of Support for SGA Textbook Alternative Initiative**

The Committee collaborated with the SGA's Academic Affairs Vice Presidents and presented the following statement of support of this initiative to the full Senate. The following statement was passed during the April 18, 2023 meeting of the Faculty Senate:

*The cost of a college education has risen drastically over the past few decades, with the cost of textbooks outpacing many other costs. The adoption of Open Educational Resources is one way that UA faculty can mitigate the high cost of textbooks. The University of Alabama Faculty Senate supports the efforts of the Student Government Association in their initiative to seek reliable, low-cost alternatives to expensive textbooks*

### **General Education Reform**

The committee met with Provost Dalton and Dean Messina to review and give feedback on the new General Education curriculum proposal.

### **Committee Focus Areas for 2023-2024**

**Faculty Handbook Changes**

**General Education Reform**

**Recommendation for Implementing +/- Grading for Graduate Courses**