

FACULTY SENATE MEETING
December 12, 2023
1008 Nursing

ATTENDANCE:

Kristi Acker, Paulo Araujo, Craig Armstrong, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Kimberly Boyle, Brian Clark, Caryl Cooper, Ian Crawford, Nathan Culmer, Shubin Dai, Thang Dao, Babs Davis, Dale Dickinson, Rona Donahoe, Nirmala Erevelles, Gayle Faught, Connar Franklin, Renata Fuchs, Marysia Galbraith, Ruth Ann Hall, Thomas Herwig, Xiaoyan Hong, Alison Hooper, Matthew Hudnall, Sushma Kotru, Sundar Krishnan, Leah LeFebvre, Di Luo, Lyndell McDonald, Courtney McGahey, Micah McKay, Kelly McPherson, Aislinn O'Donohoe Riley, Rebecca Owings, Shanlin Pan, Kim Parker, JoAnne Payne, John Petrovic, Matt Reynolds, Soledad Sanchez Valdez, Mallory Scogin, Stephanie Anne Shelton, Brenda Smith, Sara-Maria Sorentino, Greg Starr, Michael Stewart, Shane Stinson, Weihua Su, Gary Sullivan, Nicole Swoszowski, Edith Szanto, Theodore Tomeny, Rebecca Totten, Ruigang Wang, Charlotte Wegrzynowski, Susan Welch, Susan Williams, Steven Yates, Jeri Zemke

ABSENT: Tom Baker, Bruce Barrett, A.J. Bauer, Ibrahim Cemen, Jenni Cox, Natasha Dimova, Heather Elliott, John Giggie, Jessica Goethals, Carl Hancock, Hasan Isomitdinov, Jihoon (Jay) Kim, Tonya Klein, Bharat Mehra, Alessandra Montalbano, Josie Schmitt, Harold Selesky, Carrie Turner, Matthew Valasik, Clay Voorhees, Nelle Williams

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE:

Shreyas Rao/Monica Anderson, Kim Colburn/Amanda Espy-Brown, Anil Mujumdar/Russell Gold, Courtney Helfrecht/Moises Molina, Stacy Hughey Surman/Elizabeth Woodruff, Patrick Kung/Mark Weaver, Jennie Northam/Jennifer Nunnolley, Erin Stoneking/Wenfang Sun, Sara Whitver/Taylor Smith, David Walker/George Mugoya

PRESS: Laura Braddick (Strat. Comm.)

Roll Call and Quorum Check – (Rona Donahoe) –

- Please use the QR code. If it does not work, see me at the end of the meeting and I will make sure your name is recorded. An error was made in attendance for the last meeting that has been corrected. Revised notes were received from Patrick for the IT committee and the changes have been made. No additional changes were noted. Minutes were approved with the changes, none opposed and no abstentions.

President's Report – (Matthew Hudnall) –

- SGA New York Times Resolution – A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering the SGA's request that the Faculty Senate endorse this resolution. The SGA resolution asks the University to purchase digital access to the New York Times for everyone with an @ua.edu email address, including all retirees. Total cost was \$18,000/year with a 5% increase in subsequent years. It would not include cooking, games, athletic, wire cutter and e-reader editions. After discussion, a vote was taken to endorse the resolution with the recommendation that the purchase should be made by the University Libraries. After the vote, normal Senate rules were reinstated.
- SOI Taskforce - Last Thursday, President Hudnall met with several members of the SOI Taskforce which consists of 14 diverse volunteers. President Hudnall thanked those who are a part of the Taskforce. Kim Parker, Clinical Assistant Professor, Capstone College of Nursing, and Aislinn O'Donohoe, Political Science Assistant Professor, Arts and Sciences, were named Co-Chairs. The Taskforce membership list will be posted to the Faculty Senate website. Co-chair Parker gave a summary of how the Taskforce is getting organized into 3 areas and what happened in the first meeting. Research will be conducted on how teaching is evaluated across campus and at other R1 institutions. The Taskforce will hit the road running in January. If anyone has any thoughts or feedback, please send the co-chairs an email.
- Subvention Program - The Provost's new Subvention Program for supporting book authorship was initiated Fall 2023 with a pool of \$75,000. The seven applications received for an appropriate book publication were fully funded. Other applications were received for article page charges and other items that are specifically excluded. Due to the low number of applications the Provost increased the maximum funding level. Two applicants received \$5,000, two received \$3,500 and the others received \$1,500. The Provost plans on doing the Program again next year and is considering doing something in the Spring. All recipients this fall were from Arts & Sciences, which suggests an awareness issue for faculty from other colleges. A question was raised about how the awards were paid, with the answer being as reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.
- Division for DEI Renaming - The potential remaining of the DEI Division has been delayed. The exact timelines of the potential renaming are not known at this point, nor as what the new name might end up being. If the renaming moves forward, there will be a set of FAQ's released and the Provost has volunteered to field questions at the January or February Senate meeting. Dr. Taylor has been involved in these discussions. There will be no change in the University's mission, just a name change only.
- Legislative Matters - Charlie Taylor has taken Clay Ryan's position in the System Office and will continue to work with the Senate. UA Administration and Charlie Taylor have had multiple conversations about changing the name of the DEI Division being helpful when the Legislative session opens since this is an election year. This is something that

has been done by a number of peer institutions. There are legitimate faculty concerns that the change would forbid the use of diversity, equity and inclusion relative to office, title, or course names and potentially threaten academic freedom. We were told that student organizations' names would not be affected. Concerns were raised that the name change would damage the University's ability to function as an institution and encourage the Legislature to control higher education as it already controls K-12. President Hudnall will follow up on these concerns. Opinions were voiced that we need to decide whether we play a political game where we jockey for the best possible result or do a complete pushback where the ramifications could be far worse. The Senate is the right body to have these discussions and debate it accordingly.

- Faculty Recognition Event - Confirmation was received from both Lesley Reid and the Provost that NTRC faculty will be included in the recognition event.
- Changes to Board Rule 503 - Changes were made to Board Rule 503 (which covers the creation, merger and dissolving of academic units as well as centers and research institutes) at the November Board of Trustees meeting. The changes were included in the attachments distributed with the agenda for this meeting. It is worth double checking to see if there are any red flags. Although it has been approved by the Board, the Senate can voice its views and opinions.

Vice Present's Report – (*Steven Yates*) –

- If you were listening for your RC Faculty Titles/Promotion questions to be answered and they weren't, this has been brought up with the Steering Committee.

Secretary's Report – (*Rona Donahoe*) –

- I will be working with Beth to initiate the annual faculty headcount and the Senate election process, which is initiated after the headcount is received and checked by the divisions. We will be asking for your assistance in making sure that your divisions are responsive to the headcount as well as responsive to conducting the Faculty Senate elections in an expeditious manner.

Senate Committee Reports

- **Community & Legislative Affairs** – (*Serena Blount & John Giggie*) –
 - We will be working to schedule a meeting with Charlie Taylor and our new state lobbyist in February.
- **Academic Affairs** – (*Rona Donahoe & Babs Davis*) –
 - General Education - Chapman Greer and Eric Peterson gave the AAC an update on GenEd curriculum at its last meeting. We recommended that a special meeting of the Faculty Senate be called next semester to have the Associate Provosts for GenEd speak to the Senate. President Hudnall has called a special

meeting of the Faculty Senate for Thursday, January 18th for this purpose. The meeting will be held virtually. Senators should review current information about GenEd on the OAA website (<https://provost.ua.edu/general-education-reimagined/>) prior to the special meeting.

- RC Faculty Titles and Promotion Recommendations - Questions from Faculty that were not answered during Dean Stuart Usdan's presentation to the Faculty Senate in November have been sent to Lesley Reid for a response from OAA. Please note that salary recommendations were not included in the charge of the committee. The AAC co-chairs have a meeting with Lesley Reid next week to review the answers and will send them to the Senate. She will be the guest speaker at the January 16th Senate meeting.
- Graduate +/- Grading Survey – The survey will be sent to the Steering Committee for testing before distributing it to the Graduate Faculty. Concern was expressed that sending it to the Senate initially and then to the Graduate Faculty could be incorrectly interpreted as the results not being clear or that we want different answers. The survey results from the Graduate Faculty will be considered final.
- **Student Life** – (*Carrie Turner & Dale Dickinson*) –
 - We have a resolution for donating unused meal swipes. We are not voting on this resolution today. This is an introduction of the resolution and it will be open for discussion. The resolution represents students on campus who are food insecure. We spoke with several areas on campus that serve students and the Office of Student Care and Well Being and there is a mechanism with Bama Dining that students, faculty or staff that have meals tickets to donate can donate them to a food bank to serve students in need. It is difficult to do and is something that is not obvious. Carrie and committee members, along with this office met with Bama Dining and they are willing to make this more obvious to help students and, hopefully, start to donate unused meals or just donate meals to students. The resolution is asking the faculty senate to support the Office of Student Care and Well Being to work with Bama Dining to facilitate this process. Currently, any meals that are not used simply get lost. Unfortunately, there are many food insecure students at UA. We will be presenting this in January for a formal vote on this resolution.
- **Research & Service** – (*Shanlin Pan & Clay Voorhees*) –
 - A quick update on our meeting with Dr. Allen Parrish on research and internal support. We need to support our internal funding mechanisms. One recommendation would be small federal grant of \$2,000+/- in addition to current small grant support of \$6,000 and how to restore the instrumentation and

support mechanisms for institutes and centers supporting opportunity development in the \$100,000 range. We will continue this conversation and if anyone has any ideas, please bring them up.

- The Alabama Material Institute website has been launched. You will see what a centralized facility we have on campus.
- President Hudnall commented that if anyone has been working with Colin Rich, the lawyer with Research and Service, that he is now leaving UA and going to Indiana.

- **Faculty Life-** (*Kim Colburn & Heather Elliot*) – No report

- **IT & Strategic Communications** – (*Patric Kung & Xiaoyan Hong*) –

- At the beginning of the semester, there were questions for IT and Stratcom. Any questions regarding your research can be directed to IT/Stratcom.

- **Financial Affairs** – (*Tom Baker & Shane Stinson*) – No report

- **Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*Jeri Zemke & Ruth Ann Hall*) –

- The name of the Mediation Committee has been changed to Mediation and Grievance Committee, so the Senate Bylaws need to be revised to match the Faculty Handbook. The Committee will bring the revisions to the Senate in January and a vote to revise the Bylaws will be taken at the February meeting.

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – (*Thoms Herwig & Sheila Black*) –

- The leadership of this university is very much aware of situations and responding to academic freedom and support is encouraging. This is a 12% state school and there are many who do not know what is going on, but we feel encouraged. We do not know who is in charge for the name change or has the authority to change the names of committees in the senate. Members of the group are fighting for the authority to choose your name.
- Faculty Use of Preferred Name - During a recent steering committee meeting, Susan Norton spoke at a recent Steering Committee meeting and showed support for faculty to be able to use their preferred names. The only issue with that that DEI and other groups need to take on is that we need to come up with a priority list with email being a high priority. Beyond that would be syllabi and other systems. Some systems legally cannot change names, but for external systems, we need to find out what the priority is for changing those systems and draft a document from the Senate to HR saying that these are the systems we

really need changed and these are priority accordingly. That is the next step in this process.

Reports from Other Committees

- **Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee – (Rona Donahoe) –**
 - The Committee met on November 16th. The main agenda item was the upcoming change in EAP provider. On January 1, 2024, UA will be transitioning from Uprise Health to Guidance Resources by ComPsych as our EAP provider. Ninety-nine percent of local providers and 70,000 total providers who are licensed in the State of Alabama accept ComPsych payment. All providers, have a minimum of a Master's degree. The company has four offices in the US and is the largest EAP provider in the country. There were multiple complaints under the old contract with Uprise Health. They promised 24-hour service and did not and only operated during business hours from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. The new company has assured us that they will provide at least a virtual appointment within three business days unless it is an emergency situation which will be addressed immediately. The emergency visits may not be a local provider, but they have an extensive nationwide network. They will make every attempt to pair employees with the provider of their choice to make matches in terms of sex, race, preferences, etc. They will continue to provide under our contract five free sessions per person per issue. If there are multiple issues during a calendar year, you will have multiple sets of five free sessions. There are unlimited 30-minute sessions that they will provide from legal to financial to counseling, and family experts provide family counseling via video chats. They have extensive research guides that are free of charge for employees on childcare and elder care. They offer relocation information for new employees who are moving to Tuscaloosa or current employees who are going elsewhere. They will also provide comprehensive follow-ups with patients and reporting for the University. A PDF of the slide presentation will be posted on the Senate's website. Please share this information as widely as possible.

Old Business – It was brought up that our grievance procedures allow administrators to hold faculty accountable, but not reserve mediation region system administrator. The administrator needs to determine which committee to refer them to. Any other feedback related to that type of issue, please forward it on to Academic Affairs.

New Business –

Reminders – The next meeting will be January 16th in 1008 Nursing. Leslie Reid will be our guest speaker.

Meeting Adjourned