# FACULTY SENATE MEETING

**FEBRUARY 18, 2025**

**1008 Nursing**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Christy Adams, Stacy Alley, Paulo Araujo, Sharla Biefeld, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Rachel Cajigas, Ibrahim Cemen, Kim Colburn, Rona Donahoe, Ellary Draper, Gayle Faught, Renata Fuchs, Marysia Galbraith, John Giggie, Jessica Goethals, Matthew LaFevor, Jeffrey Lozier, Aislinn O’Donohoe Riley, JoAnne Payne, Laura Rubio, Harold Selesky, Edith Szanto, Diane Tober, Theodore Tomeny, Rebecca Totten, Matthew Valasik, Laura Erin Watley, Susan Williams, Tom Baker, Karen Epermanis, Ruth Ann Hall, Bryan Hochstein, Matthew Hudnall, Jennie Northam, Anneliese Bolland, Jihoon Kim, Dimitrios Latsis, Bharat Mehra, Meenakshi Arora, Mallory Scogin, R. Miller Wright, Nirmala Erevelles, Allison Hooper, James Hardin, Cailin Kerch, John Petrovic, Stacy Surman, Thang Dao, Xiaoyan Hong, Qiang Huang, Patrick Kung, Dawen Li, Sree Patiballa, Shreyas Rao, Weihua Su, Darren Surman, Kim Boyle, Babs Davis, Jeri Zemke, Benjamin McMichael, Anil Mujumdar, Lindsey Lowry, Kristi Acker, Kim Parker, Sarah Robinson, Abby Horton, Connar Franklin, Brenda Smith, Carrie Turner, Robert Riter

**Absent with an Alternate:** Margaret Peacock/Matt Lockwood, Jacob Humphries/Sophia Kennedy, Cynthia Peacock/George Daniels, Dale Dickinson/Andrea Wright, Nicole Swoszowski/Kimberly Tomeny, Gary Sullivan/Luke Herrine, Brian Clark/Taylor Smith, Shameka Cody/Rebecca Owings

**Absent:** Jenni Cox, Natasha Dimova, Xabier Granja, Carl Hancock, Soledad Sanches Valdez, Katie Grayson, Shane Stinson, Mark Weaver, Maria Hernandez-Reif, Courtney McGahey, Amy Smith

Guest: Alyson Holliday

**Guest:** Dr. Richard Fording discussed SB129 and its implications and the lawsuit against it. He emphasized the impact on academic freedom and the need for faculty support. The Faculty Senate discussed the implications of SB129, legislative updates, and the need for collective faculty action.

### Roll Call/Quorum Check – Quorum confirmed.

### Approval / Correction of the Minutes for January 21, 2025

### Minutes from January 21, 2025, were reviewed and approved, with one correction and one attendance error. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with corrections: Approved unanimously.

### President’s Report (*Matthew Hudnall*)

* Legislative Update: Discussion of potential for new legislation impacting academic activities. There is a need for faculty to be informed and proactive. The hope is to have Charlie Taylor, either via Zoom or in person, come to speak to us about what is going on in the legislature now.
* NIH indirect funding impact: NIH is now limiting indirect costs to 15%, no matter what the federally negotiated overhead indirect rate was. Alabama was somehow able to join some 15 odd states that were in a lawsuit, and an injunction was issued. So, there is a pause on that for now. While this is a big impact on schools such as UAB, it could eventually extend out beyond NIH to NSF and federally funded grant programs. If this happens, it will completely change research as we know it at UA.
* For NSF and most other programs, a million dollar grant contains the indirect funds inside of it. Assuming they do not come out with other things to pull back some of those funds, then a reallocation of funding within the existing grant programs is a possibility for non-NIH-related funding sources. If we face this situation, I do have a proposal to the administration for a way to both benefit faculty as well as provide at least a proportional amount of funds back to the colleges/departments. At any rate, these cuts have the potential to have a major impact on our research.

### VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT – (*Serena Blount*)

* + New Scholarship System: A new system is being rolled out. This was supposed to be a transitional year and everyone could continue according to their old methodologies. What happened is that changes got implemented earlier than expected, and there has been a lack of communication. The A&S Dean’s office is now aware of the problems as is the Provost’s office. There are people across campus actively working now to make sure the new system is going to work for people and not against people. If you know of problems that are occurring right now, please let Serena know.
  + Serena and a group of volunteer group of renewable contract faculty met with Lesley Reid at the end of January to discuss service loads, service equity and service inequity, and also paths to have more opportunities for recognition of faculty across tracks rather than awards that are really reserved basically for tenure track faculty. I feel like Lesley really listened to everyone as far as renewable contract promotion. Lesley did mention that all Renewable Contract Faculty up for promotion will be evaluated on six years of research productivity. This may delay some people from being able to go up for promotion as soon as they might have anticipated.
* February 19th, A&S is holding a faculty forum. Dean Messina will be there and he will be responding to concerns about the restructuring of A&S. You are encouraged to come if you are A&S faculty. There is a Qualtrics survey to submit questions.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT** – (*Kim Parker*)

* We have received updated faculty information from the Deans so we were able to let each College know how many faculty senators and alternates they are allotted and which senators and alternates are rolling off this cycle. Elections should be happening now, and we have requested all election results be reported no later than March 19, 2025 to Sherri. The Faculty Senate roster will be updated at that time. Once we have the new roster, we will send out the Qualtrics survey that deals with committees.
* We do have some absence reports we are working to clear up.

**Senate Committee Reports:**

**Community and Legislative Affairs** (*Katie Grayson & John Giggie)*

* After talking with UA counsel, it appears very slim that ICE would detain any faculty, staff, students. Because all faculty, staff, and students must fill out an I-9, UA is covered and there should be no issues with ICE.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Rona Donahoe & Babs Davis*

* The AAC co-chairs presented the results of the Graduate Faculty +/- Grading Survey to members of the Policy Committee of the Graduate Council on January 24th and to the full Graduate Council on February 5th. They were encouraged by the questions that were asked afterward and support that was openly expressed by some Council members. The Graduate Student Association is collecting input from their members. The GSA will report graduate student input on +/- grading to the Graduate Council. The Council will discuss and then vote on the Senate’s recommendation at their next meeting, which is April 2, 2025.
* Faculty Handbook changes: Handbook language was changed throughout for SB129. Other changes are as follows:
* Chapter 1, Mission of the University: *Section IV, Faulty Participation*
* Appendix D: University-Wide Academic Grievance Procedures
* Chapter 2, Faculty Personnel Policies: *Section VI, Composition of Faculty Committees for Appointments and Reviews*
* Chapter 3, Faculty Conduct and Compensation: *Section III, Progressive Discipline*; *Section IV, Institutional Neutrality*; *Section IX, External Activities and Supplemental Compensation Policy*

**Student Life –** (*Carrie Turner & Dale Dickinson*)

* No report.

**Research and Service** (*Natasha Dimova & Shreyas Rao*)

* + No report.

**Faculty Life** – (*Kim Colburn & Stacy Hughey Surman*)

* Met with Lesley Reid and Allison Currington to discuss making the website more user friendly so people do not have to go through several screens (clicks) to find the information for which they are looking.

**IT and Strategic Communications** – (*Patrick Kung and Connar Franklin*)

* None

**Financial Affairs** – (*Shane Stinson & Aislinn O’Donohoe Riley*)

* + Compensation for degrees earned is still available; however, there is no longer a form to fill out. Instead, the person’s supervisor must make a personal “plea” for the compensation.

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

* Sent out an email asking for nominations for graduate marshals this morning, February 18th. I have already received nominations. Tomorrow an email will go out asking for nominations to serve on the Grievance and Mediation Committee.

**Opportunities, Intercultural Connections, and Success** – (*Anil Mujumdar & Sheila Black*)

* Had a great meeting with George Daniels and learned a lot. We are looking forward to collaborating with George.

**Reports from Other Committees:**

* **Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee** (*Rona Donahoe*)
  + Next meeting is February 27th.
* Compliance Committee (Babs Davis)
  + No report.

**Old Business**

* A motion was made and seconded to open discussion of a resolution on academic freedom in response to SB129 that was introduced from the floor at the January meeting. A vote was taken with over 50% voting in favor of discussing the resolution.
* After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to table the resolution so that the Senate could have a chance to hear from Charlie Taylor to get a sense of what is going on in the State Legislature. After much discussion and noting that tabling the resolution in no way means the Senate favors SB129, a vote was taken. There were 40 ‘yes votes, 17 ‘no’ votes, and 3 ‘abstentions’. Because a two-thirds majority voted to table the resolution, the resolution was killed by Robert’s Rules of Order. The resolution can be reintroduced after revisions at a future meeting.

**New Business**

* **None**

Meeting Adjourned