# FACULTY SENATE MEETING

**March 18, 2025**

**1008 Nursing**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Sharla Biefeld, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Ibrahim Cemen, Rona Donahoe, Ellary Draper, Gayle Faught, Renata Fuchs, Marysia Galbraith, John Giggie, Jessica Goethals, Carl Hancock, Matthew LaFevor, Jeffrey Lozier, Aislinn O’Donohoe Riley, JoAnne Payne, Laura Rubio, Soledad Sanches Valdez, Harold Selesky, Edith Szanto, Diane Tober, Theodore Tomeny, Matthew Valasik, Laura Erin Watley, Susan Williams, Karen Epermanis, Katie Grayson, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, Jennie Northam, Shane Stinson, Amy Smith, Anneliese Bolland, Dimitrios Latsis, Bharat Mehra, Cynthia Peacock, Meenakshi Arora, Mallory Scogin, R. Miller Wright, Nirmala Erevelles, James Hardin, Cailin Kerch, John Petrovic, Stacy Surman, Thang Dao, Xiaoyan Hong, Qiang Huang, Patrick Kung, Dawen Li, Sree Patiballa, Shreyas Rao, Mark Weaver, Darren Surman, Babs Davis, Maria Hernandez-Reif, Jeri Zemke, Anil Mujumdar, Brian Clark, Lindsey Lowry, Kristi Acker, Kim Parker, Sarah Robinson, Abby Horton, Connar Franklin, Brenda Smith, Carrie Turner, Robert Riter

**Absent with an Alternate:** Christy Adams/Moises Molina, Margaret Peacock/Matt Lockwood, Bryan Hochstein/Jim Karrh, Jacob Humphries/Sophia Kennedy, Jihoon Kim/George Daniels, Dale Dickinson/Andrea Wright, Allison Hooper/Laura McNeill, Nicole Swoszowski/Kimberly Tomeny, Benjamin McMichael/Luke Herrine, Gary Sullivan/Russell Gold, Shameka Cody/Rebecca Owings

**Absent:** Stacy Alley, Paulo Araujo, Tom Baker, Kim Boyle, Rachel Cajigas, Kim Colburn, Jenni Cox, Natasha Dimova, Xabier Granja, Weihua Su, Rebecca Totten, Courtney McGahey,

**Guest:** Charlie Taylor, Vice Chancellor of External Affairs, talked about the current legislative environment. The topics discussed were challenges in Higher Education, Federal actions and investigations, funding and budget concerns, State-level legislative developments, addressing the First Amendment and academic freedom, reliable sources of information for faculty, and the impact of Federal and State policies on employment and funding.

### Agenda Amendments – A proposal to add a new item to the agenda under New Business was passed unanimously.

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

### Approval / Correction of the Minutes for February 18, 2025

### Minutes from February 18, 2025, were reviewed and approved with minor corrections. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with corrections: Approved unanimously.

### Senate Executive Committee Elections – Nominations were opened for Senate positions with a QR code provided for voting. No additional nominations were made from the floor.

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

* Development of FAQs for Senate Procedures:
* Plans to create a FAQ section on the Senate website to clarify procedures, such as voting majorities and procedural impacts, were discussed.
* A suggestion was also made to create a cheat sheet for basic procedural rules to be distributed at the beginning of the Senate year.
* Senate Package and Agenda Distribution:
* It was agreed to print out the necessary documents and include them in the package for easy access and distribution.
* Capstone Creed: The new Capstone Creed was introduced at the last Faculty Senate meeting and has already been adopted by students but not by faculty and staff. The adoption is largely symbolic, representing the ethos of the University, including dignity for all, civic responsibility, and striving for excellence.
* A motion was made to endorse the students’ adoption of the new Capstone Creed. The motion passed with two abstentions.
* Principles of Community: The concept of Principles of Community was introduced as a more explicit representation of the University’s values. The principles include treating every individual with dignity, acknowledging inherent worth, and ensuring an environment free from hatred, prejudice, or discrimination. The document will be distributed with the agenda, and feedback will be solicited from other groups. The principles will be discussed in at least one more meeting before any potential vote.
* Senate Elections: Serena Blount will remain as Vice President with 42 yeses, 19 noes, and 5 abstains, Kim Parker will continue as Secretary with 64 yeses and 3 abstains, and Matthew Hudnall will continue as President with 64 yeses and 3 abstains.
* More candidates are encouraged to run in next year’s elections.
* The Administration has approved a course release and a stipend of $12,500 for the Senate President positions (the current President is not taking the stipend this year).

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

* + Vice President Blount attended the A&S Faculty Forum: The agenda was largely ignored by the dean, who presented his own material. Discussion focused on restructuring to remove gender bias in dean appointments. The dean criticized the college bylaws as bureaucratic and outdated.
  + Faculty Empowerment: The dean suggested that the Faculty Advisory Committee should make decisions on behalf of the faculty. Concerns were raised about FAC members not being duly elected.
  + Research Requirements: Current contracts will not change to include new research standards; however, new contracts and renewals will include the new research requirement. The Faculty Senate was blamed for the research requirement, which was disputed by multiple members of the Senate.
  + Contract and Promotion Guidelines: No formal approved college guidelines; drafts vary widely. There is inconsistent application of criteria for promotions and evaluations. Handbook violations are noted, with discrepancies in promotion denials and approvals.
* Guideline Development: Colleges are producing guidelines with varying research FTE expectations. There are concerns about potential exploitative practices and gender equality.
* Renewable Contract Faculty: Anxiety over job security and academic freedom as well as lack of structured service expectations and reductions to accommodate new research requirements. The provost is working on a program for financial support for renewal contract research. A draft letter to Lesley Reid is being prepared to address these issues, and the Renewable Contract Task Force will provide feedback before submission.

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

* Three more colleges need to submit their new senate names. Once all senate names have been received, a Qualtrics survey will be distributed to gather committee preferences.

**Senate Committee Reports:**

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

* No report.

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

* Handbook Changes: A large number of changes were introduced in the last meeting, and today the floor was opened for discussion. Faculty must seek approval for professional work done external to the University only if the total compensation (including honoraria) is equal to, or greater than, $1,000. The approval form is on the OAA website. Most scenarios only require approval by the department chair and dean; for external academic work, the Provost’s approval is necessary. The two different forms required previously by OAA and ORED have been combined into a single form and approval process.
* Institutional Neutrality Statement: The UA Board of Trustees requires a statement on Institutional Neutrality similar to those adopted by other universities. The statement will be inserted into the Faculty Handbook regardless of Senate approval, but modifications were requested by the AAC and accepted by the System’s Office for Legal Counsel.
* A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed Handbook changes. The vote resulted in a majority in favor, with two votes in opposition and four abstentions.

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

* No report.

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

* + No report.

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

* No report.

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

* None

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

* + No report.

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

* Still in search of graduation marshals for Arts & Sciences and Business. Please nominate someone if one of those is your home college. We are also looking for an ombudsperson. Their term would be effective immediately and end on 12-31-27. They cannot be a current Faculty Senate member, a current Grievance and Mediation Committee member, or a current administrator. They must be tenured, with seven years of service from Business or Engineering.

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

* No report

**Reports from Other Committees:**

* **Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee** (*Rona Donahoe*)
  + Met on February 27th. Employees no longer need to apply to a program before starting their degree. A person can get a degree, and once it is received, their supervisor can advocate for them to receive funds. It is preferable that the degree relates to their job responsibilities and enhances their ability to do their job.
  + University Medical Center intends to put a pharmacy in place at the Faculty/Staff Clinic.
  + The reserve fund decreased from $3,784,000 in 2024 to $1,740,000 in January 2025. The minimum recommendation is $10M. Monthly income from premiums is over $1,400,000. Recurring annual increases in premiums are expected. There is a risk of the reserve fund going into the red if claims exceed income.
  + Parental Leave Policy guarantees four weeks of paid parental leave. There have been 512 cases since December 2021, with an estimated cost of $2.5M (although this is probably not “real” money, as we have not had to hire people to fill in while these employees are away on parental leave.
  + Tuition parity with UAB: UA does not cover sponsored adults or dependents, unlike UAB. UA employees are limited to one course per term, while UAB covers 100% tuition for employees.
  + Parental Leave Legislation: The current bill, SB 199, proposed eight weeks for females and two weeks for males. There is uncertainty if the bill will extend to higher education. The bill has been passed by the Alabama legislature and signed by Governor Ivey.
* Compliance Committee (Babs Davis)
  + No report.

**Old Business**

* None

**New Business**

* + A new resolution was introduced. A motion and second to suspend the rules were on the table. There were 7 in favor of suspending the rules, but a majority voted against suspending the rules. The decision was that the resolution will be discussed in the next meeting.

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for April 15th.

Meeting Adjourned