# Faculty Senate Information Technology and Strategic Communication Committee

# 2017-2018 Final Report

Co-chairs Clark Midkiff (COE) and Barbara Dahlbach (UA Libraries)

Elliot Blair (A&S), Richard Doherty (C&BA), Paige Johnson (Nursing), Patrick Kung (COE), Sarah Miesse (C&BA)

* The committee met with VP Bonnin for an update on Strategic Communications. The discussion was primarily about updates on the conversion of the web pages to a new content management system and the elimination of orphan web pages; and comments, positive and negative, about the UANEWS emails
* A tour of the Libraries Annex (storage facility) was arranged by co-chair Dahlbach. In an attempt to clarify information about the Libraries Annex, a tour was arrange for interested Steering committee member of the Annex.
* Co-chair Midkiff met twice with the University Information Technology committee.
* Preliminary work, in conjunction with Family Life Committee, to create and design an information web page for new employees. This site would contain information that would help all newly hired employees, with information on and about, Alabama, Tuscaloosa and the University.  It might include information on housing, banking, schools, UA policies, help for international hires, etc.  Much of this information is available but is scattered amongst many different sites and maintained by different entities. The intent is to bring the information all together.  The co-chairs of the two committees met with Monica Watts and Andy Rainey.
* The Steering Committee met with John McGowan and Ashley Ewing on March 8, 2018. Below is a synopsis of this meeting that was sent in an email to a fellow senator in response to a question about the security breach that resulted in 2700 faculty and staff having personal information compromised.

Additional Information: In an email announcement of March 19, 2018, employees of UA were notified that as part of our BCBS insurance, members have free access to an identity protection service called ProtectMyID from Experian.

“As a matter of fact, several people on our Faculty Senate Steering Committee received this letter and we were upset about it as well.  We heard about this last Tuesday afternoon at our Steering meeting, and President Donna Meester asked Provost Whitaker to have Dr. John McGowan attend our meeting with the Provost Thursday afternoon (just before Spring Break).  Dr. McGowan came to the meeting along with his chief security officer, Ashley Ewing.

Apparently, the breach occurred about November 29th, and the UA investigation of the breach was mostly finished on December 10.  There were about 2700 UA faculty and staff affected, and it turns out that they were all people enrolled in BamaFlex.  Ashley said that they have tried to prevent having sensitive information sent by email.  But there was old Banner code that automatically sent out an email once a year to certain staff in Financial Affairs with lots of sensitive info on faculty/staff enrolled in BamaFlex.  There had been phishing attempts from Nigeria on Nov. 29 that certain people in Financial Affairs fell victim to, and the Nigerians had control of their UA email.  One of the email messages they saw was the auto-generated BamaFlex email.  The UA investigators have found little evidence of misuse of the sensitive information, but that is little comfort for what has happened.

This was all figured out by Dec. 10, but apparently it was decided at an investigation team meeting on that date that included people from OIT and Strategic Communications that the team should make sure they had all of the information before contacting affected faculty and staff.  Finally, in late February they decided to send out the letters.  Our committee was understandably outraged by this delay and we dragged Dr. McGowan over the coals at our meeting.  Dr. McGowan said the problem arose because there are still about five different system/email domains at UA, and Financial Affairs has their own domain.  Furthermore, even though Financial Affairs routinely handles very sensitive information, they had not implemented DUO for their employees.  Most or all of the financial people in the main UA domain have had to put in some sort of secondary code for years along with username and password whenever they log in to Banner, and they now have to use DUO.  But apparently this was not the case in Financial Affairs.  If the FA person whose email was compromised had been using DUO, this breach would not have occurred.

Provost Whitaker asked Dr. McGowan to get together with the Strategic Communications people and report back on how and why sending out letter to affected faculty and staff had been delayed, so maybe we will learn more at a later date.  We on the Senate Steering Committee are still very upset about the fact that months passed before we were informed of the breach, and upset that communication to faculty and staff has been so sparse.

I am copying current Senate President Donna Meester and next year's President Rona Donahoe so that they are aware of your concern.

## Goals for 2018-2019:

1. In collaboration with the Family Life Committee, pursue the development of a webpage containing information for newly hired employees to the University of Alabama.  Work with the different departments on campus to ensure that this page can be properly developed and maintained.

1. Continue to work with the Vice Presidents for Strategic Communication and for Information Technology to assure that faculty are informed of administration efforts in these areas, and to respond to these efforts if necessary.  We will suggest inviting one or both of these vice presidents to visit the Steering Committee or Senate if it seems appropriate.