Faculty Senate Meeting.
August 18, 2020 via Zoom

Attending: Julie Bannerman, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Seth Bordner/Ellery Draper, Tony Buhr/Spyidoula (Lisa) Cheimariou, Ibrahim Cemen, Jeremy Crawford, Diana Dollivar/Matthew Doliver, Rona Donahoe, Alexis Davis Hazel, Andrea Glenn, Holly Grout, Heather Gunn, Luvada Harrison, Courtney Helfrecht, Conor Henderson, Jolene Hubbs, Christopher Lynn, Lyndell McDonald, Preethi Nair, Regina Range, Ignacio Rodeno, Rainer Schad, Kelly Shannon-Henderson, Jenny Shaw, Sarah Steinbeck-Pratt, Edith Stanton, Bulent Tosun, Vaia Touna, Jonathan Whitaker, John Vincent, John Yoder, Greg Cottrell, Todd DeZoort, Chapman Greer, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, BC Kim, Mary Stone/Tom Lopez, Brian Britt, Leah LeFebvre, Bharat Mehta, Alex Vesey, Steven Yates, Cecile Collins, Suzanne Henson, Nelle Williams, Andrea Wright, Stephanie Buckner/Tracy Hinton, Joy Burnham, Andre Denham, Kelly Guyotte, Michael Lawson, John Petrovic, Margaret Rice/Nirmala Erevelles, Sriram Aaleti, Javier Abu-Qahouq, Ajay Agrawal, Sushma Kotru, Sundar Krishnan, Patrick Kung, Shuhui Lee, John Van Zee, Keith Williams, David Taylor, John Latta, Wanda Burton, Barbara "Babs" Davis, Michelle Tong, Jeri Zemke, Miriam Eyal-Cohen, Courtney Cross, Heather Elliott, Barb Dahlbach, Russel Peterson, Susan Appel, Michael Callihan Rebecca Owings, Teresa Welch, Leah Cheatham, Amy Traylor, Past President Donna Meester, Parliamentarian Robert Riter.

Absent: Silas Blackstock, Jennifer Dempsey, Lexi Lowe Edwards, Latrice Johnson.

Guests: President Stuart Bell, Provost Jim Dalton, PSA Representative Lynette Campos, TUARA Hank Lazer, Cresandra Smothers, Strategic Communications,

President Bell opened the meeting expressing appreciation to all faculty members for their hard work in preparing for the arrival of students on campus and arrangements to teach classes amid Covid19 circumstances. Extensive cleaning, social distancing on campus, classroom partitions and provision of personal protective equipment are some of the accommodations made for student and faculty safety. The results of testing 500 faculty and staff was 1.3% positives for the virus. Out-of-State students were sent Covid19 test kits to be returned to UA to be validated before their return to campus. In-state students were to go to the nearest testing site to be tested and have the results sent to UA for validation and to be entered into the system. Of 25,000 returning students only just below one percent tested positive. Sentinel testing will be conducted every one to two weeks. Any student testing positive would be quarantined with food and services provided. Quarantine space has been set aside on Bryce, Partlow and leased apartment complexes. UA will be monitoring testing trends, hospital data and other information to make any needed adjustments. The goal is to stay on top and ahead of every circumstance to remain an open campus. There is a strong operating plan in place and excellent preparations have been made. The summer school second semester pilot program was instrumental in organizing for the return to campus.

Provost Dalton discussed the virus testing process and the hard work done to create a safe environment including Covid19 testing, requesting faculty's assistance in building a safe and compliant culture, requiring face coverings, completion of test training and allowances for time to get to class. If a student refuses to wear a mask, the faculty member should ask them to leave, remind them to wear a mask and that class components are available online. Questions and further discussion included the accuracy of reported positive virus cases, contact tracing, sentinel testing and health checks. Students testing positive may go home, air and temperatures in campus buildings are being monitored. Plexiglass barriers have been installed in classrooms, six foot distancing and multiple layers

of protection are in place. Any maintenance worker not wearing a mask should be reported to the Dean of that college. Students testing positive before reaching campus will be recorded in their home state. Students testing positive after arriving on campus will be recorded in Tuscaloosa County. Students have access to class and lectures online whether in class or not. Classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned throughout the day. Further questions will be compiled and forwarded to President Bell and Provost Dalton.

The General Education Taskforce postponed their presentation until the September meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Barb Dahlbach.
The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of the April meeting were approved.

Academic Affairs- (John Vincent & Andre Denham) The Committee presented changes to the Faculty Handbook in Appendix J – "Appendix J – Qualifications for the Graduate Faculty of The University of Alabama". The primary change in the policy is to allow full or associate members or affiliate qualified members of the Graduate faculty to chair final project committees. The qualifications to serve are holding an appropriate doctoral degree; having appropriate professional qualifications; and holding the rank of at least assistant professor in a UA full-time position. The newly worded policy was voted on and approved for the Faculty Handbook.

Faculty & Senate Governance- (Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemke) The Committee plans to conduct all elections including Ombudsperson and Commencement Marshal elections.

Research & Service & Faculty Life – (Ajay Agrawal & Kelly Shannon-Henderson; Susan Appel & Christopher Lynn). These joint committees proposed the following resolution; "Resolution for Publicization of Covid19 Statistics for The University of Alabama". The resolution requests the release of current and accurate Covid19 data to the campus community. Discussion included the topics of random testing, training, waivers and what criteria will be used to close the University. The resolution was presented to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee yesterday in a special meeting and minor revisions were made. The resolution was approved with four "no" votes and one abstention.

Questions from the floor of the Senate:
1. The data on the positivity rate given to us today is contradictory to what we had previously been given two weeks ago. Today's data of .92% of 25,000 indicate there are approximately 230 people who tested positive, but data from two weeks ago indicated a positivity rate of 5% of 5,600 which is about 280 people. Can you explain the discrepancy?
ANSWER - The initial data was composite test results from as much as 3 months ago. The early numbers of 5% positivity rate contained early test results, whereas the 0.93% positivity rate reported today is only for the last two weeks of testing. These are snapshots in time. The lower number of people who tested positive does not include the initial 280 positive results. In addition, early data was gathered from multiple different sources. Going forward we will be getting data from one source, GuideSafe, so the numbers should be more consistent

2. Can UA create a central site where employees and students can find the number of tests given and the positivity rate can be reported and frequently checked?

ANSWER - GuideSafe is the group collecting testing data and we are dependent on them for the release of the data. Working with GuideSafe enable regular release of the data. This will be finalized in the next couple of weeks.

3. Any information on contract-tracing? The app is still under development, so how are we going to do contact-tracing?
   ANSWER - UA is building a contact tracing system to supplement that of the Alabama Department of Public Health. UA will have ~20 contact tracing staff so it can be completed in a timely manner. Use of the GuideSafe contact notification app will be recommended (https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/guidesafe-app.html), but not required.

4. Will outbreaks of cases be treated differently? i.e. an event or a specific Greek House
   ANSWER-Yes. We have the ability through the sentinel testing to identify outbreaks. There may be an instance that we have to treat one outbreak differently than others. Each university is unique. UA is one of three SEC institutions that tested all students, faculty and staff. This gives us a baseline that indicates who at that time tested negative. We have a good operational plan. We are doing the right things to manage what lies ahead.

5. There is a rumor that the University has locked thermostats in classrooms so the temperatures cannot be changed. True?
   ANSWER – Not a part of the University plan. Has had conversations as of 8:30 AM (Tuesday) talked with facilities to see if the temperatures can be made dropped down and made more comfortable.

6. Not everyone has received COVID-19 test results from 3 weeks ago. Is it safe to say that no news is good news? The hotline does not respond to voice mail messages?
   ANSWER – Send specific examples to Dr. Dalton for him to investigate if you have not received your tests results.

7. Will students who have been placed in quarantine on campus be required to have a negative COVID-19 test before they are allowed to go home?
   ANSWER – We cannot prevent students from going home immediately if they test positive. Students who have vulnerable family members should remain on campus. As of today, UA has six people in quarantine on campus.

8. Can you comment on the situation at UNC-Chapel Hill? How will things be similar or different at UA?
   ANSWER – Every campus is different and has different approaches. UA has a very strong approach in its planning with pre-tests, sentinel testing, HealthCheck, & training. Many universities that are less successful did not have as strong as approach as UA. None of these four things was included in UNC's plan.

9. Are face shields acceptable as facemasks for faculty in face-to-face classes? If the faculty stands behind the Plexiglas barrier and is 6 feet away from students, do they need to wear a facemask?
   ANSWER – Guidelines from the Systems Office indicate it is acceptable not to wear a mask, if they are behind the Plexiglas shield. In addition, there is tape on the floor in the front of each classroom where students should cross into to protect the faculty. Nevertheless, the more safety features we follow, (social distancing, wearing face covers and staying behind the

Plexiglas) the better off we all are. UA has ordered 2,000 clear masks, to help with disabilities and lip reading.

10. To whom do we report maintenance staff for not wearing masks?
ANSWER - Contact the Dean of the college, so the information can be fed back to Matt Fajack. VP Fajack is aware that this is an issue and wants to cultivate a culture of compliance.

11. Where is the test data being reported? AL.com reported that the student test data would not be reported in Tuscaloosa.
ANSWER – Test results are reported to the county & state in which the student was tested. Once students arrive back to Tuscaloosa, if they are tested, these results will be reported in the Tuscaloosa County data. However, UA has captured all testing data regardless of the location where the test was performed, in order for UA to have a clear picture of the testing situation.

12. A question about pedagogy. We are being required to record all lectures during face-to-face classes so that all students can get access to lectures if they are not in class. But between masks and social distancing, how can the clarity and quality of lectures and discussions be maintained?
ANSWER – Be aware of people who are having difficulty in classes. We may be able provide additional equipment (whiteboards, AV equipment, etc.) Make people in the chain of command aware of any issues that exist and we will do our best to fix the problems.

13. How are students in quarantine being supervised after testing positive, especially those living off campus? How do we monitor them to ensure that they are obeying and observing their quarantine period?
ANSWER – Emphasize the importance of staying quarantined. Make sure they keep their roommates safe as well as the community. They need to let someone one know if they are in need of assistance. The biggest challenge is the mental health issues during quarantine. We need to make sure their needs are being met in all areas, mental health, food, etc.

14. Who is responsible for cleaning classrooms? How do we get adequate supplies?
ANSWER – Matt Fajack's area is responsible for cleaning rooms. Follow the chain of command to get sufficient and replacement supplies.

Additional questions posed by faculty via ZOOM chat and Facebook posts were compiled and forwarded to President Bell and Provost Dalton for their written responses. These will be posted to the Faculty Senate website.

President's Report – (Rona Donahoe) The Board of Trustees met August 5th in a special meeting to discuss the following topics: UA athletics coaches employment agreements, UA lease agreement with The Lofts apartment complex, and a resolution from the Board's Building Renaming Working Group. The resolution recommended renaming Nott Hall to Honors Hall.

A Qualtrics survey was distributed to UA faculty, staff and students to collect suggestions for renaming six buildings on campus named for individuals with problematic history. The results of the survey are being analyzed and a joint resolution is being written. These will be shared with the UA Board of Trustee's Building Renaming Working Group.

Dr.Christine Taylor has convened a working group with broad campus representation to discuss and develop a proactive strategy to promote inclusion and safety. President Donahoe was asked to be a member of the group. The first meeting was conducted on August 6th.

Faculty Senate Standing Committees meet every month, typically on the first or last Tuesday of the month at 3:30 PM. Additional meetings should be scheduled by the co-chairs with their committee's administrative counterpart (typically a Vice President). Meetings will be scheduled by President Donahoe with committee co-chairs to develop priority issues for social the 2020-21 academic year.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Next meeting will be on September 15, 2020 via Zoom and Facebook livestream.

Attachment:

Resolution for Publicization of COVID-19 Statistics for The University of Alabama

WHEREAS having clear daily information about COVID-related health risks based on explicit population-level data (i.e., how many faculty/staff/students have positive tests, hospitalizations, and/or deaths) is essential for members of the campus and Tuscaloosa communities to protect themselves;

WHEREAS The University of Alabama System has provided no means for disseminating those statistics to faculty, staff, students, or members of the Tuscaloosa community who interact with them on a daily basis;

WHEREAS the University's and UA System's Return Plans provide no information on the threshold of COVID-19 spread (campus-wide positivity rate) that would necessitate a return to Remote Business Operations and/or remote learning, leaving members of the campus community uncertain, fearful, and unable to plan flexibly for possible outcomes in the Fall 2020 semester;

WHEREAS the University's and UA System's Return Plans do not provide specific details of how and when faculty, staff, and students will be notified if they have come into contact with an infected person (e.g., if a student in a class has tested positive) so that we can make appropriate decisions regarding cancelling in-person class meetings, self-quarantining, etc.;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate requests for the University administration and COVID-19 response team, and the UA System Office, to take the following actions:
  ● Create an online platform for each campus in the UA System similar to the Alabama Department of Public Health's COVID-19 Dashboard or the COVID information page provided by Troy University, accessible to both the UA community and the general public, for the dissemination of statistics related to the spread of COVID-19 among the campus community;

- Update this platform at least weekly as the results of each batch of sentinel tests and tests of symptomatic individuals becomes available;
- Provide specific information about contact tracing operations at the University and within the UA System, including but not limited to the number of contact tracers hired; what specifically will be deemed to constitute "exposure" to the virus and how that information will be systematically collected; and the methods that will be used to notify members of the campus community of possible COVID exposure;
- Establish and disseminate to all members of the campus community a clear designation of the multiple factors that will be used to determine actions to be taken as different thresholds of COVID-19 community spread are reached on our campus, both across the University generally and within specific classes, dormitories, student groups, or other sub-communities of the University. These should be publicized in multiple hard-to-miss venues, including press releases, social media platforms, and email.

Passed by the University of Alabama Faculty Senate on August 18, 2020.