

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

AUGUST 17, 2021

ATTENDANCE: Julie Bannerman, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Seth Bordner, Ibrahim Cemen, Spyridoula (Litsa) Cheimariou, Kim Colburn, Jeremy Crawford, Alexis Davis Hazell, Susan Dewey, Rona Donahoe, Amanda Espy-Brown, Brittany Gilmer, Courtney Helfrecht, Kim Lackey, Matthew Lockwood, Nathan Loewen, Christopher Lynn, Alessandra Montalbano, Luke Niiler, Shanlin Pan, Regina Range, Tyler Sasser, Rainer Schad, Edith Szanto, Alexandre Tokovinine, Bulent Tosun, Laura Erin Watley, Bo Zhang, Yong Zhang, Tom Baker, Jennifer Dempsey, Todd DeZoort, Chapman Greer, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, BC Kim, Mary Stone, Brian Britt, Cynthia Peacock, Alyx Vesey, Steven Yates, Cecily Collins, Suzanne Henson, Nelle Williams, Andrea Wright, Tracy Hinton, Joy Burnham, Nirmala Erevelles, Michael Lawson, Sara McDaniel, John Petrovic, Stephanie Shelton, Nicole Swoszowski, Sriram Aaleti, Jaber Abu-Qahouq, Xiaoyan Hong, Sushma Kotru, Sundar Krishnan, Patrick Kung, Weihua Su, Jialai Wang, David Taylor, John Latta, Carla Blakey, Barbara "Babs" Davis, Amy Ellis, Yeon Ho Shin, Jeri Zemke, Heather Elliott, Paul Horwitz, Dan Joyner, Barbara Dahlbach, Russell Peterson, Michael Callihan, Rebecca Owings, Kim Parker, Leah Cheatham, Amy Traylor, Hank Lazer.

ABSENT: Paulo Araujo, Lyndell McDonald, Doug Bish, Brad Porter

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Moises Molina/Christy Adams, Bharat Mehra/Laurie Bonnici, John Van Zee/Keith Williams, Susan Appel/Sara Kaylor,

GUESTS: Shan Zao, Jeffrey Martin, Subhadra Gupta, Mark Weaver, Michelle Hale.

Dr. Stuart Bell, President of The University of Alabama, began the meeting with a welcome back statement. President Bell spoke yesterday with 150 new faculty joining the University this fall in all colleges across campus and all from strong academic backgrounds. Strong numbers and strong quality for undergraduate and graduate classes are expected at the freshman level. A record number of new students and National Merit students is expected. Graduate student numbers are trending up and greater retention and graduation numbers are improving. Scholarship and research area recognition and programs are among the most fastest growing in our region and nationally. Dr. Bell ended his comments with a thank you to each faculty member for their work and best wishes for a great semester.

Provost Jim Dalton addressed the Faculty Senate, stating that, due to the educational opportunities available at UA, there are almost 300 National Merit Scholars. Face-to-face teaching in the classroom is now underway, in consultation with University Medical Center Director, Dr. Ricky Friend, UAB medical team, and the UA Systems Office. Any student testing positive should notify their instructors. Face-to-face instruction works very well. It is when attempting to blend other modes of instruction that difficulties arise. Professors are permitted to ask students for copies of their emails if the students say they have been instructed to isolate or quarantine. Provost Dalton encouraged the recording of lectures via zoom or some other mechanism for those students that have to be out. There may be some faculty that test positive. However, if vaccinated, chances are low, with less than one-tenth of one percent developing a serious illness. Everyone is encouraged to go to their offices if they can do so. The Provost remains flexible in working with difficult situations and will work to make special accommodations as needed.

Dr. Ricky Friend, Director of the University Medical Center, feels that UA is in a good place, given the pandemic circumstances. UA faculty and staff have high vaccination rates. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are available. The UMC is open Thursday afternoons and open for the next few Saturdays. DCH is opening a clinic for child vaccinations for the next few weekends. Getting the 12-17 population vaccinated, if they are eligible, is very important. Over 15,000 vaccines have been given, with no safety issues. The CDC shows over 165 million people have been vaccinated, with fewer than 1,000 ending up in the hospital or dying (less than .00001%). Additional doses have been given to those with immunocompromised situations, such as organ transplant recipients, those on immunosuppressant medication, or those with congenital immune disorders. The White House and the CDC are likely to recommend the additional shot for those over 65, which will roll out in October, and should be gotten eight months after the initial vaccination. There is a near-zero chance of virus circulation when face-to-face with a colleague or with a student when both are wearing masks. Great lab testing facilities are available, with a capacity to conduct 1,500 tests per day. Rapid tests are conducted by Student Health, UMC, and MC when there are more than three positive tests in one geographic location. UA campus positive percent is less than half of what it is in the community. Questions included: Will UA supply booster shots for faculty and staff/ How many will be available/What preventative measures are being coordinated/What is the contingency plan for virus increase/How do we get proof of a student's positive test/What are the requirements for mask wearing/How do we get ODS accommodations/What is the length of quarantine time/Wat is the protocols for infection rate rise? Additional questions may be forwarded by email to Faculty Senate President Greer.

The Faculty Senate resolution commending Dr. Ricky Friend, the University Medical Center, and the Student Health Center on outstanding service performed during the onslaught of the pandemic was presented to Dr. Friend.

Chapman Greer, Andre Denham, and Erik Peterson, General Education Taskforce co-chairs, presented an update on the general education taskforce. This will be brought to the Faculty Senate for review at the September meeting and for a vote at the October meeting. The taskforce is charged with leading a campus-wide review of UA's general education experiences and developing a comprehensive plan to connect the learning goals of the major and a curriculum that further supports the development of curious learners, critical and creative thinkers, and informed and engaged citizens. The taskforce will determine campus expectations regarding general education and compare those with peer institutions and research data. The taskforce has completed the purpose statement, developed general education student capacities, and developed guiding principles. There are four high impact practices: first-year experiences, community engagement, Capstone courses and projects, and diversity/global learning. First-year experience (FYE) would be common to all incoming students, including having an FYE program specific to transfer students. Community engagement will be used as a bridge between the first year period and the capstone since general education will take place across all four years. Diversity and Inclusion and global learning have to be woven throughout the curriculum all four years. The taskforce created 3 concepts which were rank ordered so that they could provide models on which the Faculty Senate will vote.

Andre Denham reviewed the General Education Taskforce charge: To determine the UA community's expectations of General Education - (GE) and the current GE experience at UA; to compare those expectations with research-based practices that support student learning and success; and to identify the processes needed to develop, approve, implement, assess, and periodically review a responsive, dynamic program of general education. The first two points have been accomplished and the taskforce is working on the third bullet point.

GET'S GE Purpose Statement: The University of Alabama's General Education program empowers undergraduate students to be socially conscious, ethical, and well-rounded leaders with the knowledge and skills to live productive, responsible, and rewarding lives in a diverse and rapidly-changing world. The program challenges students to develop their logical and creative capacities by providing transformational and integrative learning experiences that complement the undergraduate major.

The Guiding Principles are: *Be learner-centered, accessible, inclusive, and equitable *Span the undergraduate experience *Focus on shared student learning outcomes *Include curricular and co-curricular experiences *Meet accreditation requirements *Encourage involvement and participation throughout the faculty and staff *Employ best practices in teaching and learning *Encourage exploration and student ownership of general education *Accommodate non-traditional, transfer, and high-credit entry students.

Andre Denham reviewed concept number two. Concept #2 maintains similar General Education structure being used currently +Intellectual and Practical Skills (IPS): Teamwork, Intellectual and Practical Skills, Digital and Problem-Solving Skills, Ethical Reasoning (TIDE). In addition to the core curriculum, students would have to take courses that have a flag or a designation. Students will take a minimum of 1 of each of the TIDE courses + 1 additional TIDE course in a category of their choosing.

Concept #3 – This is the model that many institutions are moving toward since it best represents a diverse student body. The first-year experience, community engagement, capstone, and DEI requirements are the same, regardless of model. The number of pathways varies and the content can vary as well. Some institutions are not using questions, but come up with a theme. For example, a popular theme is sustainability and all courses in that pathway would be tied to that theme. When students come to UA, they would choose a major and, based on their interests, a theme. Some of the same classes could be taught in multiple themes. The Registrar's Office will be involved in managing student pathways.

There are four high impact practices – First-Year Experience, Community Engagement, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and a Capstone. The first-year experience would be common to all incoming students including a program specific to transfer students. First-year experience and community engagement already exist on this campus. Community Engagement exists in all colleges. Diversity and Global learning courses will be woven throughout.

The taskforce is recommending a transition team, directed by a full-time person working on general education and in coordination with an assessment person. The Registrar's Office, Strategic Communications, the Undergraduate Council, the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee, and Admissions should all be involved in the process.

A summer 2021 feasibility study was conducted by five consultants – two from AAC&U and three internal consultants from UA. The study will be completed on September 10th, then brought to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, Faculty Senate, and models will be proposed for a vote by the Faculty Senate in the October meeting. The timeline is to finalize the plan, initiate transition in 2021-22, and launch in 2024-25.

President Chapman Greer presented an engraved gavel to outgoing Past President Rona Donahoe.

President's Report – (*Chapman Greer*) Those people who are immunocompromised or someone testing positive should report this to their department chair to go to the Dean and/or to Human Resources. There is an online form to fill out and President Greer will post that information.

The proposed paid parental leave policy has been forwarded to administration and is under review.

Each committee ranked their issues by priority and this will be shared at the September meeting.

The crossover bridge on second avenue has been repaired to narrow the water drainage grates, which presented a danger to bicycle riders. Bike and pedestrian lanes are on one side of the bridge only.

Secretary's Report – (*Barb Dahlbach*) Attendance has been posted for those who are online. There are slips of paper with a QR code attendance for in-person.

The minutes of the April Faculty Senate meeting were approved with corrections.

Some senator slots and committee assignments were vacated. There is a full Senate at this time, with no vacancies. There are vacancies for alternates from the College of Arts & Sciences and Nursing and that is being worked on.

Academic Affairs – (*Rona Donahoe & Babs Davis*) The Academic Affairs Committee will be reviewing the revised Academic Misconduct Policy in the Faculty Handbook, which was reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee last spring. This will be sent to the committee for further review and presented to the Faculty Senate with the agenda in September in anticipation of a Faculty Senate vote in October. This committee is also addressing the Academic Program Review Council, which is being worked on by Provost Dalton. This is a new concept proposing that the eight-year review for academic programs period be reduced to five years. The proposal includes a council be established with 33 members whose responsibility is to serve on individual program reviews. There are about eleven reviews every single cycle and the review period would be a single academic year. This is a dramatic streamlining of the process that we have formerly used on campus and should seriously be considered.

The committee will have some other items coming from the Provost's office including Faculty Handbook revisions, and intellectual property and copyright issues.

The committee will be meeting on Tuesday, September 7th at 3:30 P.M.

Faculty Life – *(Ruth Ann Hall & Heather Elliott)* The Parental Leave Policy has been submitted to administration and the committee is waiting on a response. There is the question of the effect of the Parental Leave Policy on promotion and tenure expectations. The other top priority for this committee is childcare. Some faculty members are forced to use church childcare providers, which are unregulated by the State of Alabama. There are safety concerns, religious issues and the lack of gender and race diversity at various places. The committee will push the University to expand the CDRC or to add another day care center. Given that this process would involve several years, an interim subsidy for daycare would be in order. Ultimately, it would be awesome to have child care for every member of the community. Staff, grad students, and undergraduates who have children would all have access. This should be a priority because as UA continues to expand, the need will only increase.

Academic freedom is a question posed by this committee. Is there an Academic Freedom Committee of the Faculty Senate or one under the University committee list? There are issues that have come up such as: what are the obligations when one is acting as a faculty member of a State university and what protection is provided?

President Greer will share an edict from the Board of Trustees concerning academic freedom.

Information Technology & Strategic Communications – *(Patrick Kung & Nathan Loewen)* This committee has been actively meeting with division leaderships of various groups including Strategic Communications to make sure faculty member voices are heard. More details will be forthcoming at our next meeting.

Student Life – *(Amy Traylor & Jennifer Dempsey)* This committee has spent time over the summer with the Student Life Office and attended some of their meetings. Updates given about BamaBound, sorority recruitment and 1831 revealed these programs went well. Meetings with Dr. Myron Pope will begin next Wednesday. The committee is working to establish contact with the SGA. Efforts are underway to support REACH initiatives, focusing on serving students who are aging out of foster care or have been orphaned, are emancipated or homeless. Only about 5% of students from the foster care system go to college and only about 3% of those students graduate. REACH has assisted students and there is a graduation rate of 85% of REACH students graduating. However, there are an estimated 600 REACH-eligible students on campus, with only 35 of those currently identified.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – *(Lyndell McDonald & Luke Niiler)* – *No Report*

Faculty & Senate Governance – *(Ibrahim Çemen & Jeri Zemke)* – *No Report*

Financial Affairs – *(Mary Stone & Byung-Cheol Kim)* – *No Report*

Community & Legislative Affairs – *(Joy Burnham & Steven Yates)* – *No Report*

Research & Service – *(Shanlin Pan & Douglas Bish)* – *No Report*

Compliance Committee Report – (Babs Davis) Complaints were registered about Compliance Training courses including length of time to complete, inefficiencies, and having to take multiple courses. Babs Davis is the Faculty Senate representative to the University Compliance Training Committee. Through attending the meetings, more insight was gained concerning the methods used to design and administer the courses. Compiling information, following up, and participating in planning and development according to State and Federal directives, complete with pilot testing, are some of the responsibilities of the Compliance Training Committee. One of the main complaints from faculty is the timing of the training. The timeline for training for 2022 has been moved to the fall 2022 semester, with October 31 as the deadline for training course completion. There will be an app available for training module completion. Progress can be saved mid-module, but cannot be saved mid-video. The next meeting of the committee will be August 18th at 1:00 P.M. with Matthew Hudnall attending.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be September 21.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 P.M.