

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
MARCH 29, 2022 – 3:30 PM – VIA ZOOM  
APPROVED MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:** Paulo Araujo, Julia Bannerman, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Seth Bordner, Ibrahim Cemen, Spyridoula (Litsa) Cheimariou, Kim Colburn, Matthew Dolliver, Susan Dewey, Rona Donahoe, Amanda Espy-Brown, Brittany Gilmer, Kim Lackey, Nathan Loewen, Christopher Lynn, Moises Molina, Luke Niiler, Shanlin Pan, Tyler Sasser, Rainer Schad, Edith Szanto, Alexandre Tokovinine, Laura Erin Watley, Yong Zhang, Tom Baker, Doug Bish, Jennifer Dempsey, Todd DeZoort, Chapman Greer, Ruth Ann Hall, Matthew Hudnall, Mary Stone, Brian Britt, Cynthia Peacock, Bharat Mehra, Alyx Vesey, Steven Yates, Cecily Collins, Suzanne Henson, Nelle Williams, Andrea Wright, Tracy Hinton, Joy Burnham, Nirmala Erelles, Michael Lawson, John Petrovic, Stephanie Shelton, Nicole Swoszowski, Jaber Abu-Qahouq, Xiaoyan Hong, Sushma Kotru, Sundar Krishnan, Patrick Kung, John Van Zee, Jialai Wang, John Latta, Carla Blakey, Barbara “Babs” Davis, Amy Ellis, Yeon Ho Shin, Jeri Zemke, Paul Horwitz, Barb Dahlbach, Russell Peterson, Michael Callihan, Rebecca Owings, Kim Parker, Leah Cheatham, Robert Riter (Parliamentarian), Brad Porter (PSA), Hank Lazer (TUARA).

**ABSENT:** Alexis Davis Hazell, Matthew Lockwood, Lyndell McDonald, Regina Range, Bulent Tosun, Bo Traylor.

**ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE:** Courtney Helfrecht/John Vincent, Alessandra Montalbano/Touna, Sara McDaniel/Mugoya.

**GUESTS:** Laura Braddick, Strat Com, Greg Bell, Harold Selesky.

Roll call and quorum check by Faculty Senate Secretary Barbara Dahlbach.

The Faculty Senate meeting minutes from February 8, 2022 were approved.

**Secretary’s Report – (Barb Dahlbach)** - The Senate elections were reported within one day of the deadline. The committee preference form has been distributed.

Secretary Dahlbach continues to pursue the publication of the 2021-22 budget.

Legislative update: There is a push to create a tier three, which would decrease retiree benefits. RSA posts different rewrites of these bills and where they are in the legislative process. It is in the best interests of those contemplating retirement to monitor these proceedings to determine if they are beneficial to retirement benefits.

The vote to be taken on the Campus Culture report is to forward the document to the Provost for review and/or implementation. The Taskforce to Transform Campus Culture was established in October of 2019. The committee’s activities included a forum and two different surveys. Those activities were evaluated and resulted in ten recommendations. Five recommendations were grouped into five-year action plans and the remaining five grouped into ten-year action plans. The report was distributed to the Senate a month ago, along with an extensive overview. There were some suggestions made during the discussion; however, the committee feels these suggestions fall outside of the collected data, so the report was submitted with no changes. The comments will be addressed by the Senate or perhaps by a permanent culture taskforce. A motion was made and seconded for the Senate to vote to forward the document on to the Academic Affairs Office and Provost Dalton. A Qualtrics poll was sent to the senators for their vote.

**Faculty & Senate Governance – Ibrahim Cemen & Jeri Zemke)** Dr. Stacey Robinson from the Business School has been nominated (and has accepted the nomination) for Ombudsperson. The nomination letter was read. A message was sent to the Deans of each school/college for an affirmation vote.

Nominations are needed for the Mediation Committee.

A Qualtrics survey is being forwarded to the senators to vote for Faculty Senate officers which are: President Chapman Greer, Vice President Matthew Hudnall and Faculty Senate Secretary Barb Dahlbach.

**Academic Affairs – (Rona Donahoe & Babs Davis)** The revised Faculty Handbook changes were forwarded to the Senate on February 11, 2022. A few comments were received relating to promotion and tenure clarification, which will be put on the agenda for the next round of handbook revisions. The vote will be to approve/disapprove the revised Faculty Handbook. Discussion points included distribution of power and oversight. Graduate faculty definition concerns were overruled. The Item 8 section addresses the distribution of patent royalties, copyright, and intellectual properties, which have been removed from the handbook. This is of great concern, since changes can now be made by the Office of Research. A clause could be added, stipulating that the Faculty Senate be consulted before any changes are made. It was suggested to approve all revisions, with the exception of this particular policy.

The handbook does not contain those policies which will come up for a separate vote under Research and Service. The changes will take effect in August. The removal of the patent policy from the handbook causes conflict with Board Rule #509. The rule states that the president of the university shall be responsible for / have approval of the policies related to intellectual property. In the process of removing it from the Faculty Handbook under the guise of Rule #509, UA's president has bestowed that responsibility to the Vice President of Research and Development. Note that this is not just for patents going forward, but is retroactive as well. All the Faculty Senate can do at this point is not affirm the policy. There is a need to comply with current Federal regulations regarding copyright, patents, and intellectual properties. That compliance could have been changed within the handbook to bring UA into compliance with those regulations. A representative from the Faculty Senate will be included on the new IPC committee. A Qualtrics poll was sent to the senators to vote to approve the handbook changes.

**Faculty Life – (Heather Elliott & Ruth Ann Hall)** Approval is needed to post the Ukrainian Resolution to the Faculty Senate web site. President Greer will check with Parliamentarian Robert Riter to see if a vote is needed for posting the document.

**Research & Service – (Shanlin Pan & Douglas Bish)** An email was sent with information about intellectual property and copyright policy issues. OIT is currently reviewing these and will provide feedback to this committee. The Faculty Senate will vote today whether to approve or disapprove these policies. These policies will be separate from the handbook and will be available on the UA web site. There was a suggestion to change "significant" to "substantial" in the document. "Substantial" is defined in the document and "significant" is not. There was a suggestion to move one paragraph (item 5) to the copyright document, which applies more to that subject. Following further discussion and amendments, a vote was taken. Motions were made, seconded, and voted on to accept the changes to the Copyright Policy and the Intellectual Property policy. Following further discussion and amendments, a vote was taken.

**Financial Affairs** – *(Mary Stone & Byung-Cheol Kim)* This committee met with Vice President Matt Fajack concerning Concur issues. He indicated Concur is here to stay and would review any problems reported to him. Better training for the staff, and assistance for faculty struggling to file reimbursement forms for travel expenses, were recommended improvements. Before there is any major change in the scope of Concur, faculty will be consulted for input. Please forward any issue to this committee, which will be compiling those to forward to VP Fajack.

**Community & Legislative Affairs** – *(Steven Yates & Joy Burnham)* The committee is in discussion with Senate leadership and others to determine methods to support hourly staff in a possible employee-match for retirement as well as flexible work schedules at all levels.

The State Legislative session will be ending next week. Send any questions concerning legislation to this committee.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – *(Lyndell McDonald & Luke Niiler)* After a long debate, the Alabama House passed Bill 312, with a vote of 65-32. The bill will come before the full Senate after being approved in committee. This bill will prohibit Alabama from promoting certain concepts regarding race, sex, or religion in certain teaching or training.

However, recent information from Charlie Taylor, UA System Liaison for Legislative Affairs, reported there is a strong possibility Bill 312 will not be voted on in this session. With a very positive outlook for its passage, the Education Trust Fund budget will be in committee tomorrow. A lottery or gambling bill is not expected pass.

Dr. Christine Taylor, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has given this committee a charge to work on the Path Forward Diversity Report. The committee is working with the Provost to review the tenure and promotion policy to revalue the service performed by faculty in the interest of advancing racial equality. This will include mentoring underserved students, performing service to underserved committees, and ensuring that faculty advance in a timely manner.

**IT & Strat Com** – *(Patrick Kung & Nathan Loewen)* OIT is reviewing feedback received on the survey to the UA community in order to develop their 2022-25 strategic plan.

**Student Life** – *(Amy Traylor & Jennifer Dempsey)* No report.

**President's Report** – *(Chapman Greer)* The Chime-In survey has been released.

A student debt cancellation proposal was attached to the agenda. This came from someone working on this issue for higher education reform. Due to lack of interest, this will not be pursued by the Senate. The SAFE Center will have a fundraising event on April 10<sup>th</sup> in the Student Center Ballroom. Rona Donahoe and Steven Yates will collect donations for the event.

The length of the Faculty Senate meetings has been discussed. There are a number of different proposals, including having speakers at the ends of the meetings, the timing and number of speakers, sharing email presentations prior to meeting, limiting senator speaking time, and holding more than one FS meeting a month.

Co-chair reports will be due the beginning of May.

**Voting results:**

Campus Culture Report: voting to forward to Provost: 55 Yes – 4 No

Executive Officer voting: President: 43 Yes – 3 No – 7 Abstentions

Vice President: 46 Yes – 4 Abstentions

Secretary: 46 Yes – 4 Abstentions

Handbook revisions: 28 Yes – 23 no – 10 Abstentions

Copyright revisions: 41 Yes – 7 No – 2 Abstentions

IP Policy: 27 Yes – 18 No – 5 Abstentions

**Faculty & Staff Benefits Committee meeting**

There is a remote pilot study continuing through this semester involving 80 Information and Technology, 40 Strat Com, and 30 Procurement Office staff. This is to allow employees in those offices, at their own discretion, and with approval from their supervisors, to work off campus. Supervisors and directors were asked to identify areas where remote work was possible. OIT is in favor of remote work, due to difficulties finding employees. Seven-out-of-eight supervisors and directors were in favor of remote work arrangements. Flex time will be experimented with next year.

Flexible spending and health care spending accounts have been transferred to PayFlex, with a very rocky transition. Proof of charges and verification of charges have been extremely difficult.

Thirty-four employees have used paid parental leave.

The health care plan review revealed a loss of \$1.4M, largely due to a change in premium payments. No December premiums were collected. PPO claims were about 3% over expectation. The high pay plan was about 6% below expectations. In general, the health care plan is healthy in accrued funds and expenditures. Comments supported the difficulties dealing with PayFlex. All complaints should be sent to Rona Donahoe, who will compile those to be sent to Human Resources.

Appreciation was expressed to those senators rolling off for a job well done.

Meeting adjourned 5:45 PM.