

FACULTY SENATE MEETING UNAPPROVED MINUTES

August 22nd, 2023 – 1008 Nursing – 3:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Craig Armstrong, Tom Baker, AJ Bauer, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Kimberly Boyle, Ibrahim Cemen, Brian Clark, Kin Colburn, Caryl Cooper, Jenni Cox, Ian Crawford, Nathan Culmer, Shibin Dai, Babs Davis, Dale Dickinson, Natasha Dimova, Rona Donahoe, Heather Elliott, Nirmala Erevelles, John Estes, Gayle Faught, Connar Franklin, Renata Fuchs, Marysia Galbraith, John Giggie, Ruth Ann Hall, Carl Hancock, Courtney Helfrecht, ThomasHerwig, Alison Hooper, Matthew Hudnall, Stacy Hughey Surman, Hasan Isomitdinov, Jihoon (Jay) Kim, Sushma Kotru, Patrick Kung, Leah LeFebvre, Di Luo, Lyndell McDonald, Courtney McGahey, Micah McKay, Kelly McPherson, Bharat Mehra, Anil Mujumdar, Jinnie Northam, Aislinn O'Donohoe Riley, Rebecca Owings, Shanlin Pan, Kim Parker, JoAnne Payne, John Petrovic, Shreyas Rao, Matt Reynolds, Soledad Sanchez, Mallory Scogin, Harold Selesky, Stephanie Anne Shelton, Brenda Smith, Sara-Maria Sorentino, Greg Starr, Michael Stewart, Shane Stinson, Weihua Su, Gary Sullivan, Edith Szanto, Theodore Tomeny, Carrie Turner, David Walker, Ruigang Want, Charlotte Wegrzynowski, Susan Welch, Sara Whitver, Nelle Williams, Susan Williams, Steven Yates, Jeri Zemki

ABSENT: Paula Araujo, Bruce Barrett, Nikhill Bilwakesh, Tonya Klein, Sara McDaniel, Xiaoyan Hong, Rebecca Totten

ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE: Kristi Acker/Susan Appel, Jessica Goethals/Xabier Granja, Thang Dao/Sameer Mulani, Erin Stoneking/Tom Wegrzynowski

GUEST: Caryl Cooper (TUARA), Dimitrios Latis, Jessica Patterson (PSA), Dr. James T. Dalton, Provost

PRESS: Laura Braddick (Strat Comm.)

Roll call and Quorum Check – (Rona Donahoe) – Attendance was taken via a Qualtrics poll QR code. A quorum was confirmed by a head count.

Provost Report – (Dr. James t. Dalton, Provost)

- Provost Dalton welcomed back everyone for the start of a new semester and 192 new faculty members to the campus. We are currently looking good on enrollment numbers. We are up from 8,037 students last year and are currently at around 8,300 students this year. In the next few days, we will have a final number and it looks to be a record registration; around 3,000 look to be from the State of Alabama.
- Changes were made to the admissions program. Very few out of state students were admitted this Fall that had a high school GPA of less than 3.0 – approximately 160 fewer out of state students. Approximately 300 more students were admitted with higher GPA's. We are currently shifting the academic quality of our undergraduate student body upward. The average GPA for first time

freshman should be around 3.8 or slightly higher. We have a very talented academic class consisting of national merit scholars and a good diversity associated with it.

- There has also been an increase in graduate students enrolled. At this time, we have 39,251 students registered compared to last year's 38,645. Compared to other flagship institutions we should be happy with the interest that the students have in coming to Alabama.
- There are new things to come with faculty development. There is a new website for the UA Faculty Teaching Academy that just became public. Dr. Claire Major, College of Education, has agreed to lead the group. It is hoped that this will grow, become more active and provide more resources for faculty in the classroom.
- General education continues to move forward. Dr. Dalton, Chapman Greer and Eric Peterson have met frequently over the summer and have reviewed feedback from faculty and staff sub-committees. We are attempting to determine how to take the recommendations within the confines of what was approved in November. Hopefully, sometime in early September there will be an announcement and an update on the website. Although there have been many ideas, it is the plan to stick with what was approved in November 2022. Dr. Hudnall and Dr. Dalton and Faculty Leadership have met frequently over the summer dealing with several things, such as the faculty handbook, but particularly the first ever Subvention Grant Program. Submissions open October 1st and close October 31st. There has been \$75,000 for the grant. Information should be submitted in PDF form on the provost's website.
- The initial plan for Subvention request is \$1,500 per subvention request. This should be enough to support approximately 50 faculty with books in process this year and will do the same next year. Opening it up just for the month October provides a view of how many requests are received and dollar amounts that could potentially be given out if the maximum of 50 is not reached is exceeded. It is understood that the costs for books, etc. have increased and this support will be appreciated. We will move forward from this year to next year in continuing to adapt it and make it better.

Roll Call/Quorum Check – Faculty Senate Secretary – (*Rona Donahue*) – We will be using the QR code that accesses the Qualtrics survey. University Libraries are now listed as a division.

Approval and Correction of Minutes – Please note that there was a QR issue back in April. Revisions sent are not reflected in the attendees for the previous set of minutes. Those are considered friendly amendments and can be approved with those in mind. An additional amendment concerned IT/Strat Com. There were no errors/corrections of the minutes. Rona will look for any attendance corrections. All were in favor of approving the minutes as amended.

President's Report – (*Matthew Hudnall*)

- Introduction of Beth Widner, Administrative Assistant to the Faculty Senate. The move has been completed for the relocation of the new Faculty Senate Office from Martha Parham West to East Annex behind Rose Administration. This will be the new home for the Faculty Regalia Program.
- There is a new graduation ceremony format. A faculty processional has been brought back as part of the summer graduation session. There are, however, still some things to work out. It is good to have the procession back in place to honor the faculty in attendance.

- There is a new Subvention program. The details of that will be posted on the provost site soon. This was proposed by some members of the faculty senate to the provost and twenty-two subventions were provided to the provost that existed in other institutions. The provost has reviewed them and has done background research and drafted the proposal. The provost and steering committee have worked together to refine the program. All feedback provided was incorporated into the program. Thank you to the provost for helping with this. We hope to see more of this in the future.
- The Faculty Senate has had a huge focus on IRB refinements and improvements that were carried over from Spring semester. Committees have been tasked to come up with their committee priorities for this next year.
- We have made good progress on childcare. The childcare proposal, however, not fully approved, is hopefully going before the Board of Trustees on the 31st. This proposal involves a facility funding proposal and is a significant thing that has taken place over the Summer. It has altered the pathway and priorities of the faculty senate since childcare has been a major focus. Hopefully, it will get board approval. If approved, it will benefit faculty, staff, and students. There are, however, details that need to be ironed out as far as what ages are covered and costs involved.
- A few things were discussed with the provost. One being the impact of lack of impact on the Supreme Court's ruling on race and its impact to UA and a compensation study that did not include faculty. The results of the study should be coming out soon and will be faculty focused. The Financial Affairs committee has been on pause, and we are waiting for the results of the study. We will need to go back to the administration since faculty were not included in the study. This will be a priority for the Financial Affairs committee for next year due to the lack of inclusion of faculty.
- The costs of refreshments for Faculty Senate meetings in the past, were extremely high but were significantly decreased for this meeting. The hope is to better leverage funds saved on our refreshments towards other priorities of the Faculty Senate to be better spent for the improvement of faculty and programs we look to support as a faculty senate. We will continue to work on this for the next year.

Vice President's Report – (*Steven Yates*) – No report.

Secretary's Report – (*Rona Donahoe*)

- There are several resignations for Fall Semester. We have filled some vacancies and are still waiting for appointments from Arts & Sciences and the College of Education.

Senate Committee Reports:

Faculty and Student Governments – (*Jeri Zemke & Ruth Ann Hall*)

- A considerable amount of time last Spring semester through Summer was spent trying to get positions filled. Three candidates are willing and able to serve in some capacity, and each comes from a college where we can accept them. A vote was taken for all candidates for the mediation committee. All in attendance were in favor of all three candidates.
- Two graduation marshals are needed for December's graduation.

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

- No formal report. A committee meeting will be called shortly. Changes to the handbook are expected, along with other priorities.
- One priority for the Spring is to re-examine the plus & minus grading system for the graduate students.

Community and Legislative Affairs – (Serena Blount & John Giggie)

- The committee will attempt to meet more regularly should faculty issues arise.
- Partnership with Community Affairs will continue. A meeting with the State Legislature will be held in the Spring to help recruit more faculty and staff to attend. We will host an appreciation day for faculty and staff at Brewer Porch.
- Working with Charlie Taylor and Clay Ryan is important and a value to us on advocating for issues in Montgomery that impact faculty, staff, and students at UA. Very positive results have been received and continuing along that pathway and leveraging it as much as possible is what is needed.

Research and Service – (Shanlin Pan & Clay Voorhees)

- The search for the new Vice President of Research & Economic Development (ORED) still on going. Interviewing will be in September & October.
- IRB – campus-wide survey was in the Spring. We would like to improve the IRB policy procedure. This is ongoing.
- The Director of ORC has resigned. There will be a search for a new director.
- The committee will be discussing small grants for faculty research, grant submission, and supporting faculty.
- We would like to commend Ed Shirley, who is currently over IRB, for everything that he has been doing over the Summer. We have had the most success with him and getting timely results.

President Hudnall indicated that the Director has been in that position for many years, and that position is a key role for all research and compliance at UA and is a significant opportunity for faculty to choose a different direction and to advocate for change. The committee has submitted several suggested changes to tweak the IRB process. We are cautiously optimistic that this will result in significant improvements in IRB and the overall research and compliance at UA.

Faculty Life – (Kim Colburn & Heather Elliot) – No report.

IT & Strategic Communications – (Patrick Kung & Xiaoyan Hong)

- Preferred last name for email has not yet been integrated into Banner. HR must initiate the request for OIT to begin looking at the implementation. It remains a low priority for HR. If necessary, the Faculty Senate can make a request that reaches HR. As a senate, engagement with HR is needed. We will attempt to try other channels first, but if necessary, a resolution could be drafted to fully show the senate's support on this issue.
- Software Licensing – Grammarly - The provost has a proposal on this, but there has been no decision to date. Calendly – OIT is currently in talks with the vendor for volume-based pricing; interested departments will be asked to fund this, and a survey will go out for that purpose.

- Soundcloud – The sales team has not responded, and it seems there is no enterprise license or educational discount. The chance that we will move forward on this is yet to be determined.
- The TikTok ban applies to devices used when working on contracts, not grants. OIT is not blocking this on the network but remains at the policy level.
- There is a new password manager. Keeper will be replacing Last Pass. Migration plans are posted on the OIT website.
- The implementation of Xfinity for Residential Halls and most Greek houses has been completed. Entertainment support issues will go to Xfinity instead of IT Services.

President Hudnall mentioned that the supercomputing facility is a significant investment for UA in high-performance computing. There are still questions here as far as support staff and what resources will be available to faculty to work with the supercomputers.

Regarding emails, we as a senate need to engage HR, and if necessary, a resolution could be drafted to fully show our support.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – *(Thomas Herwig & Sheila Black)*

- Feedback that was collected from a summit last year has been outlined. Several interesting suggestions were made. They are motivated to incorporate those suggestions for this year. A meeting was scheduled for August 29th to go over these ideas and suggestions.

Financial Affairs – *(Tom Baker & Shane Stinson)*

- Faculty Salaries/Compensation Study
- Requested to hold off in getting information due to the study. They will put that in the forefront.
- A balance is needed for new faculty vs. current faculty.
- The raise pool or existence of raises this year has not been shared with the steering committee. It is pending trustee approval.
- *Rona Donahoe* - A faculty retreat was held in our department and discussed faculty salaries. It was surprising to find out the base starting rate for new faculty. This will undoubtedly lead to salary compression throughout the entire campus. In addition to the salary study, we need to encourage the administration to address the compression issue.

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

- An email will be sent out to coordinate a date/time for a meeting to refine committee focal areas.

Compliance – *(Babs Davis)*

- New faculty last year received extensive compliance training. In the future, there will be a shortened version of the training.
- The starting date is September 1st and ends on October 31st. Training must be completed during this time. If training is not completed by October 31st. You will need to complete the same training as new faculty.

Faculty & Staff Benefits – (*Rona Donahue*)

- We have not yet met this Fall. At the end of last semester, the longtime Director of Benefits, David Bertanzetti, retired. A search for his replacement was completed. Erica Shumate was selected as the new Director of Benefits.

Old Business – None

New Business -

- Recognition of service for faculty was mentioned, and it was noted that staff still get their service award keychain every five years. This is worth asking about.
- President Hudnall, while meeting with the Director of Parking Services, learned that it has been 15 years since UA has raised ticket pricing on campus. A parking ticket at UA is less than that of the city. There is a significant amount of revenue there that is left on the table. It could be worth advocating to Parking Services to look at the price of parking tickets and adjust accordingly to offset the potential costs of rising costs for faculty parking in the future.
- During this meeting, the concept that as you reach different tiers of years of service at UA, could the cost of parking based on years of service at UA be reduced was discussed. When you retire, you get free parking, but there is no recognition for years of service for faculty. The costs associated with this and working with HR to determine the number of service years for each faculty member will be needed to determine feasibility. Funding will be needed to accommodate this. Mechanisms need to be at play at UA to acknowledge the long-term tenure via years of service. Any ideas in that regard would be welcomed.
- The Grad School is now making us pay student fees off grants. The justification for this is that other institutions are doing it. At these aspiring institutions, if a student receives a GFRP, they are getting a tuition waiver, letting them keep the money for tuition to use for their research. The Grad School was not in favor of this. As researchers, more burden is placed on us, and we use these aspiring institutions as justification, leaving the burden on us and not picking up any on their own. There are possibly two students a year, maybe three, that get GFRPs across all units. This may be something that we might want to pursue.
- In relation to faculty research release dollars, money going back to the college or department, there is no standardized way for getting research dollars back to support our research, or as some institutions do, a percentage of those dollars go back into the pockets of the faculty members. We need to discuss the impact of research fees on faculty, especially with research overhead doubling. Doubling research dollars to support faculty is something to look at.
- Subvention – Will that apply to making your book or article open-access? There is a cost associated with that, and it could be very costly. This was voiced appropriately and is not part of this program. There is, however, a need to investigate this. If you publish something with Cambridge Press, UA does have an agreement with the libraries where you automatically get open access if you are publishing through a Cambridge Press journal. We are still looking at other possibilities for looking at either article submission charges or open access fees. If there was a program to support this, it would need to be quite large and possibly varied between disciplines or between colleges and other factors at play. More discussion is needed on this topic. This was voiced as part of the subvention request, and it is not part of the subvention proposal or program.

Reminders:

- Our next meeting is scheduled for September 19th, 2023, in Room 1008 Nursing.

Meeting adjourned.