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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – February 2019

Faculty Senators

University of South Alabama

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Plenary Session

February 20, 2019 – Faculty Club

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cooper, O'Connor, Pelekanos, Powell, Swiger, Thompson, Beebe, Cesarini, Gibbs, Gossett, Hossain, Koon-Magnin, Kozelsky, Lewis, Lindeman, McCready, Pavelescu, Reichert, Robertson, St. Clair, Williams, Zlomke, McDonald, Gecewicz, Koestner, Donaldson, Reeves, Woltring, Cleary, Cloutier, Spencer, Lemley, Shepard, Alexeyev, Ponnambalam, Rayner, Rich, Sayner, Weber, Huang, Turnipseed, Platt, Swanzy, VandeWaa, Younce, Myers,

Excused: Harrington, Mark, Young, Campbell, Keshock, Harmon, Chow, Madden, Davis, Riley, Varner, Prakash, Piazza

Call to Order by the President: 3:06

Approval of Minutes: MMSA

Approval of Agenda: MMSA

President's Report (Reichert)

- Summer Salary Guidelines

We've received new guidelines from *Uniform Guidance* about summer salaries. If you have summer grants, there are new guidelines for reporting: they do not restrict how much summer salary you can get. The guidelines are intended to encourage you either to take a 2.5-month summer salary or not take those 2 weeks at the end of summer (2.5 month + 2 weeks = 3 months, ed.). Problem: several universities were sued by federal funding agencies because faculty were saying they were in the lab when they were on vacation, so the universities had to pay back money to the funding agencies. Moving forward, if you want to collect 3 months' summer salary, you'll need the approval of your chair, the Dean, the Vice President for Research, the Provost, and then confirm you're here. You have to be present on campus unless the grant specifies you can be elsewhere. This restricts faculty from working on anything other than the grant for those 3 months. You can't work on preparing proposals, course preparation, or work on papers or anything not related to the grant.

In the alternative, you can charge 0.5-month time during the academic year. Your dean can collect 0.5-month salary for you to do work during the academic year, and the dean can pay you during summer. This policy hasn't been to the deans yet. Reichert wants this to be standard operating procedure: he's adding language that if not approved by the dean,

they have to put in writing why not. The policy has been through the finance office and will be presented to the CAD in March. Another example to reclaim 2 weeks: reclaim someone's F&A – this will allow you to work on other things.

Once a policy is finalized, Reichert will share it with the Senate. Question: when we work on grant-related research in summer, does that mean we cannot be asked to do any advising? Reichert: yes, that's correct: you won't do any university-related activity. You cannot work on any other university activities if you're fully funded. The guidelines have a list of things you cannot do. At first it was going to be a hard policy, but Reichert said it went against the Faculty Handbook, so they rearranged language.

Nothing will really change: the only thing that will change is that you'll need to get two more approvals from the Provost and the Vice President for Research. The Faculty Senate doesn't vote on it.

- Effort Reporting

(From:

<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/research/resources/basic%20budget%20terminology.pdf>, ed.)

Effort Reporting: Accounting procedures, by which effort commitments and salary charges made to sponsored projects are documented, reported on and signed by the individual working on the award, or by an individual possessing firsthand knowledge about personnel working on the award.

For summer, if you are externally funded, you sign a personal activity report (PAR forms). You might start to see them during the academic year, if you claim academic months on a grant. USA is missing out on F&A (facilities & administrative costs) claims because we don't claim our research effort on grants for the academic year, and this is money USA can use to leverage cost sharing on grants. If you're supervising students and working on grants, the current policy they're working on is to report that number.

F&A is money USA claims off of grants to help pay for operating costs and administrative fees. Currently, it is 41%. (VandeWaa said it used to be called overhead.) Reichert: it is split between Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, and your college. Then a percentage is returned to the department. Approximately a sixth comes back from total F&A collected.

Reichert: for your academic time, you do not have to claim a lot of time, and then Cayuse calculates that salary and tacks it onto your F&A. This academic time and F&A can be used as cost matching for the grant or using in the grant budget. I don't know what the final form will look like – as soon as I see stuff, I'll give feedback. This is a compliance issue.

This could be a big problem if we're supervising students on external funding, and there's no tracking of your time commitment for the grant. There might be an alternative to

external funding that does not impact the grant. Currently, it's just about supervising students. Further down the road, there might be more things tacked onto it. It is not retroactive because these budgets are locked in.

Old Business

- Policies Update

Kozelsky gave updates about four policies: Chair Review, External Review, University Instructor, and promotion for Non-Tenure Track Full Time Faculty (“NTTFTF”). She thought the Chair Review and External Review policies would be voted on at the CAD meeting; however, all four policies were tabled until March. Hopefully, in March several deans will be ready to vote on the University Instructor policy. There is a question about its financial impact, but hopefully by March we'll have those numbers. There is the concern that everyone who are eligible to apply for University Instructor will do so, and all these people will be promoted. Reichert: we said there are standards for promotion: there are checkmarks to go from Senior Instructor to University Instructor. Not everybody will be promoted because they've served their time. Kozelsky asked Provost how promotions to University Instructor would be funded. He said clearly there will be a budget reallocation, and it will not come from the dean's budget.

Kozelsky said the CAD did not ask about the NTTFTF policy, but the Provost is in favor of sending this policy forward as long as there is language about the excellence of the individual and that it is not an automatic promotion. Kozelsky said they were not changing qualifications but were bringing them more in line with what people do. The question is excellence. Reichert said you demonstrate on your FAR (i.e., “faculty activity report,” ed.) whether you are excellent at teaching and research. Excellence is what your department defines it to be: when you go up for tenure, whatever the metric is in your department, these are the same metrics you'll follow for NTTFTF promotion. Your department gets to judge what is excellence in your field. It is not for me to judge excellence in your field and vice versa. McCready said to put these definitions in your department bylaws. Reichert said to define and put in writing in your department bylaws. Spencer said the College of Engineering has bylaws, but not each department.

Kozelsky said hopefully these 4 policies will be voted on by the CAD in March.

- COM Town Hall

Reichert: the College of Medicine has not had their town hall meeting yet. Administration was told, so hopefully they're trying to reschedule the meeting that was cancelled last November. Sayner has not heard anything as of yet.

St. Clair said he had had two hour-long meetings with Chris Cleveland, (Assistant VP for Auxiliary Services who oversees the Bookstore, ed). They are aware of problems with the Bookstore. If you have specific problems and no one responds, contact Chris directly. 15% of faculty in A&S reported having problems with the Bookstore. Reichert said Cleveland is aware of the problem because Deans discussed it with her, as well.

New Business

- New ID Cards

Reichert: USA Human Resources has developed a Smart ID card. If you have a secured system, RFID cards – new cards will incorporate them. Old ID cards will be phased out by September. Stop by HR to get a new ID card. Or you can order by the link. You can use the same picture.

In addition, Human Resources has developed a separation checklist for supervisors and faculty to complete when an employee is leaving the university. For instance, some employees when they leave the university took their keys with them.

- Faculty and Chair Hire Search Committee Policy

Reichert: the composition of tenure-track faculty searches varies between colleges, so we want to provide guidelines for composition. The only guidelines in the Faculty Handbook are that 25% of the committee must be female. Some non-tenure-track faculty are on tenure-track faculty searches. Dean searches are run by Academic Affairs. Chair searches are run by Deans at the departmental level, so we do have input. Williams: if you are hiring an Associate/Full professor, then only Associate/Full professors can be on the committee? Kozelsky: shall “include” faculty. It has to be senior faculty.

Kozelsky said one problem some units will have is that they don't have a diverse faculty, so that faculty who self-identify as diverse would wind up on millions of search committees. The 25% rule results in women in science departments serving on many search committees. So these faculty members wind up with disproportional levels of service and no time for research. McCready asked if “should” would work instead of “must.” A discussion ensued that this would be a good question for Dr. Frazier, to get his perspective. Reichert suggested that if so, maybe the policy can include a diversity statement. It's a good idea, but we don't want to overburden our diverse faculty. Cloutier said he'd heard that women professors complain they can't get their jobs done. It was decided to communicate with Dr. Frazier and then integrate any recommendations in what we vote on in March.

- Scholarship Cap

Cleary said the current USA scholarship cap is \$2500 below what the actual cost of attendance is. Administration will look at the situation and then have discussions on how to increase the amount of financial assistance so that high-achieving students can get a free ride. Because even now our most accomplished students might have to pay more than \$10,000 by the time they graduate. Gossett said that the educational benefit plan for children of faculty is considered to be a scholarship, so it's part of the calculation. Reichert said if the benefit plan was changed to give children of faculty a free ride, that problem would be fixed. Williams asked Reichert if he could advocate that the 50% tuition credit not be a scholarship. Reichert said he would so advocate.

- BOT Meeting in March

Reichert: our March meeting will be at the Board of Trustees meeting on March 15th, Friday afternoon. Faculty Senate officers are trying to work on a presentation profiling how much effort USA student athletes and band members contribute compared to their faculty that teach them. In addition, salaries of coaches will be included in the presentation. Spencer asked if anything happened as result of the Faculty Senate meeting with the Board of Trustees last year. McCready said the Board made a tuition increase with the goal of giving faculty a raise, but due to declining student enrollment, there was not enough money for the raise, so that's why we didn't get a raise. McCready said her point was that something did come out of the meeting, and the Board was listening. Reichert said the tuition increase would have been a lot less if the Board had not intended to give faculty a raise: the Board's intent was to raise tuition to give faculty a raise this past fall. They were upset when fall came, student enrollment was down, and as a result, we did not get a raise. Some BOT members contacted us and apologized for us not getting raises. Reichert said Board members were shocked when they saw the disparities in salaries. VandeWaa noted that because the cost of health insurance will rise, without a raise, we'll get a pay cut. McCready thought it be a good idea to have faculty talk about "what their day looks like." For instance, how many students did I talk to today? How many student emails did I answer today? Williams noted the only pushback we received from the Board last year was on a question about the cost of living. We need to address this. The cost of living is lower in Pensacola, but professors at the University of West Florida make more money and don't pay state income tax. VandeWaa mentioned that the USA College of Nursing has lost faculty to Bishop State Community College because BSCC could offer a higher salary.

- Elections/Party in April

The party will be for new faculty senators and outgoing senators.

- Faculty Survey: Results and Bylaw Changes

Results were posted briefly. Hopefully, they will be posted again soon. Nick Gossett has agreed to help – he has background in assessment. The current report format needs to be in landscape which will be done soon. Comments will go to administration. The A&S caucus said a timeline needs to be added to the survey, and St. Clair wants a bylaw change to make the survey conducted by February with results available by the April meeting. St. Clair said the single most common comment he has heard from faculty is that they want to see results from the 2018 survey. There was not a survey in 2017, and to date no results from 2018 have been developed so far. Administer it in February to give pressure for it to occur. The faculty think the survey is of value. Reichert said this year's delay was due to turnover on the Evaluation Committee.

- Succession Plan

Reichert announced that he is now the Assistant Vice President for Research, so he will be stepping down as President because he does not want for there to be a conflict of interest. ExComm discussed a succession plan at the February meeting: ExComm nominated VandeWaa to step into the President's role and will serve as President until Faculty Senate officer elections are held in April. Reichert then announced that the Faculty Senate in plenary session needed to vote on the acceptability of her nomination by ExComm. Reichert called for nominations from the floor for VandeWaa to be Faculty Senate President for the last 2 months of the 2018-2019 year. MMSA (all "ayes," no "nays.")

Guests

- Nick Lawkis: Interim Director for Governmental Relations, introduced by VandeWaa.

Lawkis: Happy Fulford served USA for 40 years. I've been with this office for 5 years, USA for 10 years. We cover federal, state, and local governmental relations. 80% of what we do is on the state level, 20% federal. This year, USA received \$111,023,800 from the State of Alabama, less \$3,000,000 for MCI =108,023,800. Also, we monitor a lot of legislation in the Alabama Legislature – we monitor bills that can be bad for USA. When the Legislature is in session, I'm there when they're there. They can meet 30 days in a 105-day window. When we go in on March 5th, they have until June 18th to meet 30 actual days. Wednesdays are usually committee days. Thursday they go back in chambers. I'm in Montgomery Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. That's the biggest thing we do. The Alabama Legislature introduces 1200 pieces of legislation every year, and I track 300 of those bills. About 30 of them I'll get very involved with.

Also, we monitor the budget. Alabama is unique in that we have two separate budgets: the state general fund (1) and education trust funds (2). Over the years, you've heard Alabama is cash strapped. All growth revenue is funneled into the education budget. Over the years, you'll find things that have found a way into the education budget: corrections, department of examiners, for instance. Everyone tries to find a way to get their line into the education budget, because that's where the money is. In 2008, the budget had \$140 million, but now we're down to \$111 million. In 2009, we were down to \$98 million.

AL is #3 in state funding cuts and #5 in tuition increases. 2019 was the last year of big increases. Many economists are predicting a big downturn. We have a "proration prevention account" which hopefully should protect USA for 1 or 2 years if there is a downturn. There could be as much as \$450 million in the education trust fund. Altogether, fourteen public universities get almost \$1 billion. We also work in Mississippi – they give us money for trauma and burn funds because USA treats all trauma and burn cases on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

McCready asked about the stadium. Lawkis responded that at present USA pays the City of Mobile for the use of Ladd Stadium, and we also have to pay for striping of the field for every game and for the Jumbotron in the northeast corner. Lawkis: "You add all that in and we can save money by having it here." Lawkis then summarized USA's negotiations with the City of Mobile over funding for the proposed stadium.

VandeWaa said public school teachers will get a raise. They get \$45,000, which is higher than USA instructors. What about us? Lawkis responded that it is a “double edge sword.” In the K-12 world, their salaries are mandated: for instance, a school nurse makes \$30,000 PA. There’s no wiggle room. If they want a raise, they have to go to the Legislature and get a bill passed. Whereas here at USA, if there’s money or if someone’s about to leave or if we decide this position can make \$50K, then this decision can be made and therefore shall be. So, which way do you want to do it? Next year might be the last time they get a raise for 4 years. A 1% pay raise is a \$50 million commitment, which doesn’t go away.

Question: do you monitor efforts to reform pensions? Lawkis said he does, but it’s so complicated that he forwards them to Gerald Gattis and Jean Tucker. The majority of bills related to Teachers Retirement Systems of Alabama focus on means of reducing benefits or offering other options. To illustrate: one proposal this year: the “lump sum option” which allows you two-years’ worth of your benefit the day you retire, but it reduces your benefit going forward. Three or four bills have been introduced pertaining to DROP. DROP costs a lot of money, and bills are introduced every year. If you talk to Bronner, he says we’re solid and good. My counterpart with RSA – says we’re good. McCready mentioned higher education day on April 4th.

- Angela Jordan: ORED, introduced by Reichert

Jordan introduced herself as the Research Development Coordinator in the Office of Research Innovation. Her office focuses on research communication, development, and learning. They perform pre-award research and service mainly for external grants. “One of the activities we do is to distribute fund opportunities for faculties. We subscribe to grant notification newsletters and then send you relevant things for your work. However, there’s only two of us. We don’t know what you’re interested in, and we don’t have that many staff. Therefore, I want to bring to your attention our subscription to *Pivot* which is used to search for external funding. To access *Pivot*: go to the Research Communications, Development and Learning website.

(See: <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/research/rdl/>.) Look for the tab that says *Pivot*. Here, faculty can create a login and “claim” a profile which allows faculty to customize their profile which then allows the system to send customized funding opportunity notices to the faculty member. You can choose to get them in email or you can share them all in this portal. Please contact me if you have questions.”

Adjournment: MMSA: 4:36 pm.

Caucus and Committee Reports Submitted in Writing