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## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes - January 1992

Faculty Senators

*University of South Alabama*

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## UNCORRECTED MINUTES

## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA FACULTY SENATE

January 15, 1992

Present: Ayling, Bastian, Bhatnagar, Bradley, I. Brown, Bunnell, Bush, Daigle, Downey, Evans, Fisher, Fishman, Forbus, Gartman, Gaubatz, Goodman, Hamid, Holmes, Hood, Isphording, Jenkins, Kulkarni, Lloyd, Longenecker, Mankad, Moore, Newman, Dorothy, Patton, Raburn, Sakornbut, Schehr, Shearer, Sikes, Silver, Springston, VanDevender, Vinocur, Vinson, Wall, Wilhite, Wilson, Wilson, Wright, Zimmerman

Excused: Dempsy, Husain, Kovaleski, Morisani, Winkler

Unexcused: Abee, Agapos, Aldes, Bass, C. Brown, deShazo, Luterman, Strange

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**CALL TO ORDER**

At 3:00 p.m. by Larry Holmes called the meeting to order and welcomed Isabel Brown, who replaces Michael Babcock as a senator from the College of Arts and Sciences.

**ADDRESS BY SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT CONNELL**

Dr. Holmes introduced Senior Vice President Connell with the following remarks:

At one of the Budget Council meetings, Dr. Connell, with a wink and a nod to a fellow historian, referred to Simeon Stylites, an early Christian ascetic who built a 60 foot pillar, climbed to the top, squatted down, and stayed put until he died 30 years later. The precise context of the discussion escapes me now, but I'm sure that out of frustration if not of devotion many members of the university community have often yearned to do the same.

In the short time Dr. Connell has been at the University of South Alabama, he has contributed to making it less likely that any of us will clamber up such a pillar. I have found Dr. Connell open to discussion, frequently disarmingly frank, committed to a decentralization of some decision making within Academic Affairs, and always appreciative of the Senate's interest and point of view even when he might disagree. I believe he has fairly expressed that view in discussions he has had with President Whiddon and other administrators.

I am pleased that he could join us today and hope that his address will become an annual affair.

Dr. Connell began by giving the senate an overview of the context and an appreciation for what he faced coming to the university. He said that he found the "vital signs" of the university (development of PhD program, enrollment growth, institutional reputation, and new academic programs) to be good. Proration has caused some changes that he did not expect, but faculty is engaged in both teaching and research and the university is a dynamic, growing, young, vital institution. The leadership of the institution is stabilizing as evidenced by the hiring of two deans. The SACS self-study will help us understand the strengths and weaknesses of this institution and will put into place a planning mechanism. This will be a dynamic process, with input from faculty and senate, to reexamine the university's mission and vision for its future. Budget difficulties are forcing us to examine our priorities and resources while striving for quality. We need to concentrate on the outcome of an education at this university. What do we want our graduates to exhibit? Are they prepared for the jobs they pursue? Public institutions have an open door policy, but we have a responsibility to affect those who pass through our doors. We need to organize better in order to improve our reputation and respond to the community.

We also need to sharpen the vision of the University of South Alabama by defining priorities and making a financial plan to meet our goals.

Dr. Connell then addressed some specific concerns. Regarding the recent freeze on recruitment and travel, he said that about 50% of the vacancies can be filled by working with the deans to set priorities and look at the amount of dollars available. We may be able to fill vacancies at lower salary levels, thereby, filling more positions. The freeze on travel may need to be continued into next year. Regarding the salary parity program, procuring adequate information from our reference institutions is becoming more and more difficult, but a committee will continue to be involved in the study. Regarding the disbursement of merit pay in the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Connell said that he will work with the Dean to study the issue and to determine what the faculty of that college desires. Regarding the feasibility of an arena on campus, Dr. Connell reported that the deans are on record as saying that building an arena at this time would be detrimental to the development of other priority projects. Even if money could be acquired for the construction, the ongoing upkeep and maintenance is estimated to be between \$300,000 and \$500,000 per year.

Dr. Connell opened the discussion for questions from the floor.

1. When will decisions be made on which positions can be filled? The decisions will be sent to the deans within the next week.
2. Why were the candidates for Dean of Arts and Sciences not asked back for a second visit? After the first interviews, feedback was requested and a phone conversation was held with each candidate. The President and I felt that we had enough information to make a decision. We had three candidates, all with different strengths and weaknesses. We decided that for this time, given our resources and plans for the next several years, Dr. Allen has the strengths we need.
3. What are the plans for fitting a Martin Luther King holiday into future calendars? The Calendar Committee has recommended not changing the calendar for next year. The Board of Trustees passed the resolution that Dr. Whiddon proposed and made no indications for the long term. The Calendar Committee is looking at a semester system.
4. Who sits on the Calendar Committee? Members are a cross-section of the university committee, including representatives from student services such as housing, registrar, etc. Faculty are also represented. Dorothy Newman is a member of the Faculty Senate and sits on the Committee.
5. Is there any plan for reassigned time to be rolled back? No, we expect faculty to conduct research and to be evaluated on the outcome. A balance is required, I don't think reassigned time can be cut back.
6. Are there plans for Occupational Therapy and Environmental Sciences degrees? In an effort to get across the need for a better funding base, changes in the formula that would provide more start-up funds, these two degrees were offered as examples of programs that it would make sense for us to offer. The main issue, changing the funding base, was side-tracked with ACHE asking the University to put together proposals for these programs.

When no other questions were voiced, Dr. Holmes thanked Dr. Connell for addressing the Senate.

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## COMPLETION OF PENDING BUSINESS

The uncorrected minutes of the October 16, 1991, meeting were approved as distributed.

The uncorrected minutes of the November 20, 1991, meeting were approved as distributed.

## REPORTS

## CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. Holmes' report was distributed by campus mail prior to the meeting. The report included summaries of the Chair's meeting with Senior Vice President Connell, November 26; meeting of the Senate's Executive Committee with President Whiddon, December 4; meeting of the Board of Trustees, December 19; appointment of Senate Chair to the full Academic Council of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and its meeting of January 15. A copy of the report is available upon request.

Updating the mailed report, Dr. Holmes announced Dr. Whiddon's appointment of Sam Fisher as the Senate's representative on the Intercollegiate Athletics Council. Dr. Fisher is a Senator from the Department of Political Science whose Senate term expires in 1993.

Dr. Holmes state that it is quite a significant step in the history of this institution that it has now recognized Monday, January 20, 1992, as Martin Luther King Day. Dr. Schehr disagreed and reminded the Senate that President Whiddon is required to take resolutions from the Faculty Senate to the Board of Trustees, even if he does not support the resolution. Dr. Holmes said that he believes that the resolution passed by the Board does recognize that there is a Martin Luther King Day and that recognition is a step forward. Dr. Newman reported that there is absolutely no sentiment for a Martin Luther King Day in the Calendar Committee, in fact the opposition is united. She was the only one present who spoke in favor of a holiday based on the Senate's resolution. Dr. Gartman stated that the Senate needs to press on. Referring back to Dr. Schehr's statement, Dr. Sakornbut observed that the Senate and Faculty have previously voted to amend the Faculty Senate Constitution to state: "Any decision by the chief administrative officer of the University to reject a Senate resolution . . . may be appealed to the Board of Trustees, and presented to the Board by the Chair of the Faculty Senate, upon request by ballot of a three-quarter majority of the Faculty Senate, 60 percent of the Senators responding. Dr. Holmes said that the Senate will continue to fight for the resolution as passed. After this January 20, we can bring up the issue again and work for changes for future years. If the Senate so chooses the resolution has will to the Board of Trustees.

On November 20, 1991, the Faculty Senate called for the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee for the Study of the Celebration of Persons and Events of Great Significance. Dr. Holmes announced the appointment of Bert Longenecker as chair, Bill Gilley (HPE and Leisure Services, and Patsy Covey (Dean, Allied Health Professions).

Dr. Holmes concluded his report by asking if the Senate felt a need to support Dr. Connell's position on the adverse effects of building an arena with a resolution. Sentiment was that it was not necessary at this time.

Noting that he had a class at 4:00 p.m., Dr. Holmes turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Dr. Sakornbut.

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## REPORTS

### SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFITS COMMITTEE

Dr. Schehr offered the following resolution:

Whereas Dr. Whiddon has promised a 3% raise as of March 1, 1992, we anticipate that it will be implemented as so promised. (SR91-6).

Dr. Lloyd seconded Dr. Gartman's move to adopt the resolution. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.

Dr. Schehr asked that the Senate's Executive Committee consider the establishment of an Academic Freedom Committee to monitor the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Sakornbut reported from the Fringe Benefits Committee that the benefit year will be changed to the calendar year from the academic year (to January-December from October-September). The health plan contract will be negotiated soon. If there are changes you would like to see, let her know soon.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICY AND HANDBOOK COMMITTEE**

Dr. Gartman introduced three items to be considered at a special meeting of the Senate to be held February 5, 1992.

1. Amendment to the Constitution regarding eligibility to serve on the Faculty Senate. Administrative faculty would be unable to serve but would retain the right to vote in Senate elections.
2. Standard election process. Proposes a Faculty Senate Election Committee to conduct elections across colleges.
3. Statement on Academic Freedom and Artistic Expression. Formal statement to protect and encourage the academic freedom and expression of artists in a university community.

These three statements are attached. A special meeting was requested because the amendment to the Constitution will need to be voted on by the university faculty and in place before this year's elections.

## **UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE -- No report**

## **FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATION EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Dr. VanDevender reported that the first 11 pages of the last faculty survey will be sent to senators next week. The next survey will be out in April. This committee is working on standard promotion and tenure processes and would like to have your input.

## **REPORTS FROM CAUCUS LEADERS -- No reports**

## **NEW BUSINESS -- None**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Sakornbut adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m. after asking that senators have caucus meetings to discuss the three issues to be discussed at the February 5, 1992, special meeting of the Senate.

Respectfully Submitted,

Geneva L. Bush, Secretary