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## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes - April 1992

Faculty Senators

*University of South Alabama*

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**Uncorrected Minutes****University of South Alabama****April 15, 1992**

Present: Abee, Agapos, Bastian, Bhatnagar, Brown, Brown, Bunnell, Bush, Daigle, Dempsey, deShazo, Evans, Fisher, Fishman, Forbus, Gartman, Goodman, Holmes, Hood, Isphording, Jenkins, Kulkarni, Longenecker, Moore, Morisani, Newman, Patten, Raburn, Sakornbut, Schehr, Sikes, Springston, Strange, Vinocur, Vinson, Wilhite, Wilson, Wilson, Winkler

Excused: Aldes, Bradley, Kovaleski, Luterman, Mankad, Shearer, Wall, Wright, Zimmerman

Unexcused: Ayling, Downey, Gaubatz, Hamid, Husain, Lloyd, Silver, VanDevender

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Larry Holmes, Chair. The Chair's report was distributed (Attachment 1) and amended to add that the Election Committee will act as a Nominating Committee to collect nominations for Senate offices. All nominations collected will be on a ballot for vote by the Senate at the May 20, 1992, meeting. The minutes of the February 26 meeting were approved as distributed after Dr. Holmes answered Dr. Schehr's question regarding the voting eligibility of some Senators present at the February meeting (see later discussion).

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO DR. DAVIS**

(minutes of this section prepared by Dr. Sikes)

Dr. Sikes began by updating the status of two resolutions that he had introduced for discussion at the last meeting of the Senate. The first resolution had to do with proposed changes in policies of the Graduate School. Dr. Sikes indicated that he was withdrawing that resolution in favor of processing it first through the Graduate Council.

The second had to do with the Senate resolution of January 16, 1992, which in part dealt with a proposed reorganization of research administration at the University. One aspect involved separation of the office of the Dean of the Graduate School and Director of Research into two positions. As this was tied into the status of Dr. Brad Davis, who had resigned as Dean and Director as of April 1, Dr. Sikes preferred to discuss the resolutions on these matters toward the end of the meeting as part of the report of the Planning and Development Committee.

Instead, over the previous day or two, Dr. Sikes had organized a small tribute to Dr. Davis, who was in attendance by invitation, and entered the following resolution for discussion.

On the occasion of his leaving the administration to rejoin the full-time faculty, the Senate expresses appreciation to Dr. W.B. Davis for his many efforts in support of excellence in graduate education, research, and scholarship during his tenure as Dean of the Graduate School and Director of Research. (SR 91-10)

After reading the resolution, the floor was open for discussion. The following faculty and staff members made brief oral presentations about their experiences with Dr. Davis, expressing appreciation for the many forms of support that he had provided for their creative and scholarly work.

Scott Carter on behalf of Suzanne McGill and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Jim Damico, Director, University Libraries

Jagdish Dhawan, Chemical Engineering

Chris Dyer, Sociology and Anthropology

John Foster, Microbiology

Ken Heck, in absentia, Marine Sciences (letter on file)

Joaquin Holloway, University Library

Larry Holmes, History

Steve Hood, Speech Pathology and Audiology

Skipper Ludvigsen, Medical Technology

Marc Matre, Sociology and Anthropology

Gloria Palileo, Sociology and Anthropology

Carolyn Parham, by note, University Registrar (letter on file)

Steve Picou, Sociology and Anthropology

Sylvia Rohmer, Counseling and Testing

Arvind Shah, Mathematics and Statistics

Steve Sikes, Biological Sciences

John Strange, Behavioral Studies and Ed. Tec.

Steve Thomas, College of Arts & Sciences

Aaron Williams, Geology and Geography, Coastal Weather Center

In addition, approximately 30 other faculty and staff, representing every college in the institution, sent their regrets at not being able to attend due to scheduling conflicts and the short notice.

At this point, Dr. Davis was offered the opportunity to address the Senate and the visitors. He spoke quietly and briefly, mainly expressing in turn his gratitude to the faculty for making so many positive experiences possible. He also indicated the essential and substantial contributions of several of his colleagues and staff in administration, in particular pointing out the tireless efforts of Tim Lally, who also was in attendance. Finally, he said that it was his belief that now more than ever the faculty needs to join with the administration in leading the University. Dr. Davis, visibly moved, then strode out of the meeting room to a standing ovation.

Dr. Holmes called the question and the resolution was passed unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION ON SENATORS WITH MORE TWO OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Dr. Holmes, responding to the earlier comment by Dr. Schehr, announced that the Senate Secretary had contacted him regarding unexcused absences. He, Dr. Holmes, had decided to contact the Senators in question asking if they wanted to continue to serve on the Senate or not. Dr. Holmes has excused the absences of the Senators who wish to continue. One Senator requested that another person be elected to finish out his term and that request is being honored in the upcoming election.

## **AGENDA ITEM II: RESOLUTIONS FROM THE SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS COMMITTEE**

(A copy of the agenda, with proposed resolutions, is attached to these minutes (Attachment 2).)

STATE OF BENEFITS. Several years ago, at the request of the Faculty Senate, the Personnel Office provided each faculty member with an annual summary of his or her benefits (retirement, TIAA-CREF, etc.) along with the information necessary for on-going planning. This was a useful document, and we feel that it should be continued.

Be it therefore resolved that the Senate request that the Personnel Office provide each faculty member with an annual statement and summary indicating benefits, projections, and the like. (SR 91-11).

The resolution passes with no opposition.

### **STATE OF BENEFITS AT RETIREMENT**

Following along the lines of the previous resolution, it was strongly felt that a special endeavor should be made on or about an individual's 57th birthday to provide a detailed package on benefits expected at retirement, along with a discussion of the options available to each individual. If the individual is retiring at a date later than his or her 62nd birthday, this package and discussion could be repeated or could occur at a later date.

Be it therefore resolved that the Senate request that the Personnel Office provide each faculty member, at age 57, with a detailed package relating to options and benefits at retirement. In addition, the Office would provide information relative to social security, TIAA-CREF, PEEHIP, State retirement, as well as the available services and perquisites that the University will continue to provide after the individual's retirement. (SR-91-12).

The resolution passed with no opposition and one abstention.

### **HEALTH PLAN**

As the University goes into the phase of renegotiating the Health Plan, certain matters have arisen. It does not seem to be generally known that Mr. Gerald Gaddis serves as the link, spokesperson, and ombudsman for problems with the health plan. Secondly, certain requests have been made concerning a change in benefits. After discussion of the merits of these changes, the committee is requesting that the University Fringe Benefits Committee consider the effect of the implementation of such changes. If such changes are feasible, we would hope that they are implemented by the next academic year. If not, it would be helpful to future senates to have a justification for why these changes are not feasible.

Be it therefore resolved that the Fringe Benefits Committee be asked to weigh the merits and costs of a dental plan. (SR 91-13).

The resolution passed with no opposition and no abstentions.

As a point of information, the current fee structure (which is a co-payment for every session) can oft-times become punitive for chronic therapy. Such chronic therapy includes (but is not limited to) nervous and mental disorders, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. In the case of physical therapy, for

example, three weeks of traction, repeated five days a week, would cost the individual \$225.00 in co-payments, a sum that most members of the University community can hardly afford.

Be it therefore resolved that the Fringe Benefits Committee be asked to develop an alternative fee structure similar to the model of prenatal care in situations regarding speech therapy, occupation therapy, and physical therapy. (SR 91-14)

After some discussion on the terminology of the proposed resolution the following amended resolution was passes with one vote against and no abstentions.

Dr. Evans mentioned the health care insurance needs that can arise when surviving beneficiaries of deceased university personnel are unable to get insurance from another source. Dr. Strange worded the following resolution which passed with no opposition and no abstentions.

Be it resolved that the Fringe Benefits Committee of the University review and offer alternatives to health care benefits for surviving beneficiaries of deceased University personnel.(SR 91-14)

## REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

### UNIVERSITY POLICY AND HANDBOOK COMMITTEE

Dr. Gartman announced that the ballots for voting on the proposed change to the constitution will be mailed within the next couple of weeks. A double envelope system will be used to ensure confidentiality of the voting. The Committee and Dr. Lamb will count the votes after the May 13 deadline. If the change is approved, it will take effect with the 1993 elections.

Dr. Gartman reported on the work of the University Library Journal Review Committee. He said that a list of journals has been sent out to faculty requesting that a review and rating of the titles take place. The Committee does not want to cut journals and has in fact asked faculty to suggest titles that need to be in the collection.

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Moore reviewed the proposal of the President on planning and moved adoption of the following Statement of Support. Dr. Evans seconded the motion and it passed with one negative vote.

The Planning and Development Committee of the Faculty Senate wish to support the Proposal for the Creation of a Joint Planning Council and 2 Planning Committees. The charges of these committees and their roles in submitting recommendations to the President and ultimately to the Board of Trustees are appropriate. The composition of the two planning committees is well represented by the university faculty, staff and students. In addition, the Joint Planning Council is well conceived being comprised of the Vice Presidents, the Treasurer and Controller, the Dean of Student Services, the Director of Institutional Research and Planning, two faculty members (one being the Chair of the Senate) and one staff member. At this time the appointments to these committees and the Joint Planning Council have been made. We anxiously await the progress of these committees and the reports which will be made available to the Faculty Senate. (SR 91-15)

Someone asked Dr. Holmes to send a memo to Dr. Connell about the Joint Policy Committee having a role to play in the planning process.

Dr. Moore reported that his committee is looking into the effect of increased enrollment on the campus environment. It appears that statistical reports do not reflect the real problems of limited faculty, class size, and space limitations. His committee will be asking for feedback from faculty members and students.

(the following section of the Minutes provided by Dr. Sikes)

Following the remarks of Dr. Moore, Dr. Sikes requested the opportunity to add several items that had been discussed at the Planning and Development Committee meeting of April 10. As the hour was late and some senators had departed, he wanted to enter some serious concerns he had about the current status of Academic Affairs and at least begin discussion about this.

Dr. Sikes said that he was worried that Academic Affairs was weaker now than ever before in his experience, which is exactly the opposite of what the Senate had worked so hard to achieve through the process that had led to the Enarson Report. He cited the above-referenced case of the Senate Resolution on reorganization of research administration as one example that had led to this conclusion. Dr. Sikes, at the request of the Senate leadership, had been monitoring the progress of this resolution which included such issues as separating the position of Dean of the Graduate School and Director of Research into two positions and the incorporation of the Office of Sponsored Programs into Academic Affairs.

During several meetings with the Sr. V.P. for Academic Affairs on this subject, the Sr. V.P. had indicated to Dr. Sikes various problems with the proposed reorganization, the inability of the budget to accommodate two positions being prominent. However, with the recent hiring of Dr. Stout (who previously was not on the USA payroll) to the position of Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Director of Research, which required the University to come up with a sizable new salary, this objection was rendered moot. The Sr. V.P. expressed other questions, like do we really need to do this, what about who would sign the contracts? In the end, in more candid moments, the Sr. V.P. has stated to Dr. Sikes and others that he was fearful to take the matter on directly because the V.P. for Services and Planning did not want to reorganize and that the Sr. V.P. thought therefore that the President probably would not either.

Dr. Sikes met recently again with the V.P. for Services and Planning who reiterated his position which is in agreement in theory with the Senate on these matters. His position had been stated publicly last year that until we knew who was the Sr. V.P. for Academic Affairs and his/her ability to lead, it was impossible to tell if the Senate proposal would work in practice.

Dr. Sikes stated that he now had to agree with this and that in fact at this point he would not be able to support the Senate Resolution that he had a part in originating because we were probably better off leaving things the way they are because of the weakness of Academic Affairs. One possibility to strengthen the resolution, he said, would be to amend it to designate a V.P. for Research, reporting directly to the President.

Animated discussion ensued. Dr. Schehr suggested that other solutions came to mind. He indicated that these were indeed serious issues and that an ad hoc committee should be formed to study them. Dr. Isphording said that he wasn't clear as to exactly what the problem was since it seemed like the Sr. V.P. ought to be able to handle the situation. Dr. Abee suggested that the Sr. V.P. be invited to address the Senate on these matters, particularly the status of implementation of the Enarson Report in general. Dr. Holmes took the matter under consideration. Dr. Sikes said that he had several more examples to relate. Due to the sensitive nature of his concerns and the other information relative to the perceived weakness in Academic Affairs, he requested the opportunity to discuss them first with the Executive Committee to get feedback before deciding whether to proceed with public debate. Dr. Holmes took this under consideration as well, and stated that first he intended to discuss the problems, to the extent that he was aware of them, with the Sr. V.P.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Schehr reported that he has heard from several sources that some members of university administration have said that the Board of Trustees' "acceptance" of the Enarson Report was just a physical acceptance of the report and, therefore, the Board's "acceptance" did not mean that the Report would be implemented as received.

A question was raised on the action of one of the Board of Trustee members in putting a line item into the State's higher education budget for the restoration of the University Commons. Even though this amendment may not be in the final draft of the budget that is adopted by the legislature, this act is seen as an abuse of power and a conflict of interest. If it does pass, it will reduce the authority of the Board of Trustees, who should have the good of the University as a whole in mind, and strip the role of the Budget Council.

Dr. Longenecker was asked to replace Dr. Jones on the SACS Steering Committee.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. The next meeting will be on May 20, 1992.