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Faculty Senate Minutes

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## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – September 2008

Faculty Senators

*University of South Alabama*

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September 17, 2008  
Mitchell College of Business, Room 264  
3:00 pm

**Approved Minutes**

Present: Aliabadi, Baggett, Bru, Byrne, Burnham, Campbell, Carr, Connors, Doran, Estis, Falkos, Fantoni, Fressne, Hamilton, Johnsten, A. Kahn, I. Khan, King, Kinniburgh, Lemley, Loomis, McCormick, McCready, Meyer, Moore, Morris, Nowlin, Perez Pineda, Prendergast, Prescott, Quereshi, Romey, Rowell, Sachs, Summerlin, Tate, Turnipseed, Tony Wright, Tootie Vrettos, Woodford, Wright.

Excused: Ambrose, Aucoin, Carter, Engin, Estrada, Haywick, Irion, Keasler, Major, Omar, Perry, Teplick, Toelken.

Unexcused: Allison, McNair, Pacheco, Patterson.

1. Call to order/welcome. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:04 with a quorum present. He proceeded to the third item on the agenda, introducing guest speaker Ronnie Arrow, head coach of the the Men's Basketball team.
2. Approval of minutes from the July meeting. Romey moved to approve the minutes; Hamilton seconded; the minutes were approved by voice vote.
3. Ronnie Arrow and Joey Jones- Athletes and Scholarship.  
Arrow presented Senators with a written document entitled "Men's Basketball Academic Efforts." During his presentation, he stressed the importance of academics and that athletes graduate. He noted the 72% graduation rate he achieved at Texas A&M Corpus Christi under his tenure there. USA has around a 66-67% graduation rate, which is above the national average. Arrow reviewed the points provided in the handout, outlining the procedures and steps taken by his staff to make sure his athletes are attending class and making academic progress. Joey Jones, head coach of the newly established USA football program, briefly addressed the group. He reiterated many of the points made by Coach Arrow. He noted that he recruits players who are good students with good character, and that coaches meet regularly with players individually to review academic progress. He asked Senators to feel free to contact him if there is anything he and his staff can do to promote academic progress among the athletes.
4. Chair's report.  
The Chair provided Senators with a written statement annexed to these minutes. In his presentation, Sachs provided an update on the status of the non-reappointment resolution, noting that the only remaining issue centers on the timing of when to start turning in annual

evaluations called for in the revised policy. Currently, the policy calls for evaluations to begin in the first year, yet the deans think that the process should perhaps begin after the mid-tenure review. Once this issue is resolved with the Deans, the revised policy will return to the Senate for approval.

## 5. Old Business

- COI Policy Statement.

Senators were sent a copy of the proposed revision to the Faculty Handbook. Sachs noted that the executive committee supports this statement, emphasizing that the new policy centers on transparency and does not define conflict of interest. Extensive discussion ensued regarding what is meant by conflict of interest and conflict of commitment. Among others, Alibardi raised the matter of how conflict of commitment is being defined, noting that the issue is really not addressed in the revised policy. A Senator from the College of Medicine pointed out that their faculty had to complete two separate forms: one for conflict of interest, the other for conflict of commitment. She noted that the issue of conflict of commitment raises problems in the COM since so many of the faculty work outside the college. Sachs and Morris reiterated that the current policy revision centers on transparency, but not the specifics of what constitute conflict of interest or conflict of commitment. In response to an inquiry by McCready, Sachs described the history behind the current change of policy. Many Senators questioned what constitutes conflict of commitment, expressing a strong concern about moving from transparency to active restrictions. Tate requested that we ask Russ Lea to strike the reference to conflict of commitment. McCready also raised the question of the use of the information being provided, specifically whether there is anything to guarantee that the information is not used in tenure and promotion decisions. She suggested that we need a policy of transparency going in the other direction: regarding the use of the information. Tate noted that the proposal removed language from the Handbook that lists types of commitment. Turnipseed suggested that a statement be included specifying that the information is used only for compliance with federal law and will not be used for P/T matters. Turnipseed presented a formal motion that Sachs raise this issue with Lea: that conflict of interest and conflict commitment information can only be for the purpose of compliance. The motion, seconded by McCready, was approved by voice vote.

- Non-Reappointment resolution.

See the Chair's report. Sachs noted that if the policy is accepted next month, it would begin in Spring 2009.

- Update on Workload resolution

See Chair's report. Sachs noted that the resolution had not yet been presented to the Deans Council, but is expected to be on their agenda soon.

## 6. New Business

- Town Hall Meetings

Sachs noted that two of the three Town Hall meetings have been set: October 1 in the College of Education, and October 2 at the Terrace. The date for the Town Hall meeting at the Shack will be announced soon.

## 7. Committee Reports

- Academic Development and Mentoring (Susan McCready). Have not met yet, but expect to meet soon.
- Environmental Quality (Smoot Major). The committee met and is involved in planning for the campus cleanup. Sachs asked them to look into the issue of ashtrays outside of buildings: a matter he had already raised with the administration.
- Evaluation (Vicki Tate). Tate reported that the committee has met and is working on streamlining the survey. They have been able to eliminate 22 questions from the last survey and are planning on working with the VP for Research and Office of Sponsored Programs on questions. Tate asked that if anyone had questions they would be interested in seeing added to contact her. Sachs suggested that the committee consult with Moulton about certain questions to be included.
- Planning and Development (Zari Aliabadi). The committee has not yet met this year since there are no items on the agenda except the progress on the university club.
- Policies and Faculty Handbook (Liz Romey). Romey reported the committee had met by email and that they are focusing on the conflict of interest and the reappointment issues. She also noted that if anyone has issues to raise, that they please contact her.
- Salary and Benefits (Jean Irion). Doran, a member of the committee, reported on the recent meeting of the university fringe benefits committee. The meeting included a presentation by BC/BS during which they encouraged the use of generic drugs to reduce expenses. It was noted that premiums would remain the same for now. A subcommittee also reported that it was not a good time to consider reproduction infertility coverage. Prescott raised the issue of the 9 month exclusion of pre-existing conditions and the university's decision to opt out of HIPA, noting that faculty have declined positions because of this policy. Sachs mentioned that this matter was raised with President Moulton recently and that the administration considers it too costly to provide HIPA coverage. Brief discussion about this issue ensued. Many expressed the view that this policy creates a disincentive and makes it difficult to attract faculty. Morris suggested that the matter be explored by the Salary and Fringe Benefits committee and that a resolution from the Senate may be appropriate.
- Technology Utilization (Tom Meyer). The committee has yet to meet.

## 8. Caucus Reports

- Allied Health (Julie Estis). The college is preparing to move to new building next October and that the Dean is in the process of updating policy to bring the college under the new division of health sciences. The Dean is also working on revising Tenure/promotion policies.
- Arts and Sciences (Phil Carr). No report.
- Continuing Education (Stephen Bru). Bru mentioned the dramatic increase in the number of math students.
- Computer and Information Sciences (Michael Doran). Doran informed the assembly about the death of Gene Simmons at the end of the summer session, noted that a number of high school and junior college students were on campus during computing data to learn about computing, and that the School is working with the College of Engineering regarding the new engineering building.

- Education (Leah Kinniburgh). Caucus leader reported on searches.
- Engineering (Peter Byrne). Reported that the number of master's students fell as a result of raising standards. The College is also working on the planning for the new building which is on track for 3 years down the road.
- Library (Amy Prendergast). Prendergast reported that the library is currently celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a depository of government documents sponsoring a number of events.
- Mitchell College of Business (Greg Prescott). The college is conducting two searches, including the chair of entrepreneurship.
- Medicine (Sheryl Falkos). Reported that the new chair in Neurology will arrive in December and that a search is underway for chair of Surgery.
- Nursing (Tootie Wright). Reported that in 2007 national standards were raised, prompting a slight drop in the number of students. The college has returned to its prior level.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35

Minutes submitted by Stephen Morris, Secretary