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Faculty Senate Minutes

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – September 2019

Faculty Senators

University of South Alabama

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Faculty Senate

Plenary Session

September 18 – Faculty Club – 3:00 pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cooper, Henry, O’Connor, Pelekanos, Thompson, Adams, Beebe, Feldvoss, Gibbs, Gossett, Halbrooks, Hossain, Lewis, Lindeman, Mark, McCready, Raczkowski, Rinehart, Koon-Magnin, Young, McKinney, Sittig, Sweeney, Gecewicz, Koestner, Donaldson, Fregeau, Keshock, Woltring, Cleary, Spencer, Lemley, Shepard, Lin, Rayner, Sayner, Weber, Chow, Huang, Turnipseed, Myers, Scott, Swanzy, VandeWaa, Younce

Excused: Powell, Cesarini, Robertson, Broach, Cloutier, Webb, Harmon, Pai, Piazza, Madden, Bertolla, Riley

- Call to Order – 3:03
- Approval of Minutes - MMSA
- Approval of Agenda - MMSA
- President’s Report
 - Enrollment update
 - Final number: 437 down from last year; 293 freshmen. Administration has discussed several means of ending the decline, including decreased tuition for out-of-state students in CON’s graduate programs. The Provost’s Office is forming a new committee to develop institutional strategic options in response to the enrollment decline. At the last ExComm/Admin meeting, ExComm proposed to Administration that the Faculty Senate form a working group to develop ideas to help end the decline. FS would like to request data from Enrollment Services to help guide our collection of ideas. Admin liked the idea of having a working group to package ideas and then send to the Provost’s Office. David Johnson suggested that the committee focus on the long term, with a secondary focus of 1-5 years out. Johnson wants the Faculty Senate represented but with no more than 10 members. The goal will be to develop strategic recommendations and to propose strategies for institutional success. McCready asked for volunteers for the working group, but no one responded, so she suggested the idea of the working group was something the Faculty Senate needs to think about.

- Search updates:
 - Director of Assessment – FS members gave feedback on candidates.
 - University Attorney
- Other updates from 9/9 meeting with the President
 - FS stressed the need for improved communication and for genuine buy-in/participation from faculty.
- Board of Trustees Meeting
 - At the meeting, in the report on the budget, Weldon said that despite an enrollment decline, the budget outlook is slightly better (or maybe just less bad) because of a larger allocation from the state last year and because of major improvements on the USA Health Side. The new structure at USA Health with Alan Whaley as COO, Michael Chang as CMO, and Owen Bailey as CEO. Nothing was reported to the board about the MCI faculty moving to the COM. Also, the BOT decided to change certain street names.
- Bookstore Focus Group: Angela Easterwood
 - There is interest in forming a focus group of faculty to discuss issues with the bookstore. McCready instructed Senators to let her know if they were interested in becoming a member of the focus group, let me know. A good number of people to be on the focus group would be 8-12.
- Enrollment Working Group
- John Steadman Dean Emeritus Application
 - There was a discussion on granting Emeritus status to John Steadman, former Dean of the College of Engineering. The FS needs to vote on the proposal, and to do so, a quorum is needed. There are 3 choices: yes, no and abstention. Several faculty members discussed Steadman's accomplishments. A deadline of the following Monday was set for completing the vote via SurveyMonkey.
- Announcement of Black Tax Event
- Other
 - Vote on Student Perceptions of Teaching Instrument

There was a discussion on whether or not this instrument is better than the previous one. There is room for colleges/units to add specific questions. One Senator mentioned bias against women and people of color. A vote ensued: MMSA: vote – all aye, no opposed.
 - ACUE Course in Effective Teaching (Cleary)

- ACUE is a course in effective teaching practices.
- Good program: it runs from Oct - July; and February - November.
- Consists of online modules where you learn about effective teaching practices.
- A certificate is granted on successful completion.
- Time commitment: 2-3 hours per week.

○ Committee Reports

- University Policies & Handbook (Shepard)

The non-tenure track full-time faculty (“NTTFT”) promotion policy was denied by CAD. Their proposed policy is going into our committee next week. McCready: it is our policy that faculty members be evaluated on their job description. The problem is that we have a lot of NTTFTF with no path for promotion because of the language in the FH, and as a result, they cannot get promoted. We need clarity.

- Faculty Salary & Benefits Committee (Adams)
 - Health insurance premiums are increasing. Viva Health is not affected.
 - Orientation fee: faculty do not have to pay the orientation fee of \$100 or the \$150 registration fee when registering for a course.
 - If a faculty member is charged either of these fees, the faculty member should contact Human Resources to get the charges waived.
- Evaluation Committee (Gossett)
 - Both the 2017 and 2018 Faculty Senate surveys will be out by October. They will be released in their entirety, and in addition there will be an executive summary for administration. Our goal is to make the FS Evaluation more lean and more impactful, a guiding tool.
- Academic Development & Mentoring Committee (O’Connor)
 - There are 40 new faculty members at USA. O’Connor is currently recruiting mentors from across the university for these new faculty members: 21 mentors have signed up for the mentoring program. This is a good response, but about 9 additional mentors are still needed. So far, no mentor has signed up from COE.
 - The Provost’s office approved a request by O’Connor to fund a faculty academic development luncheon for mentors and mentees. The lunch will be free for mentors and mentees. O’Connor and committee members are determining a date for the lunch.
- University Planning and Development Committee (VandeWaa)
 - Our committee is tasked with the annual Faculty Senate award ceremony in November. Awards go to our outstanding teaching, research, and community partners, in addition to the Semoon Chang

Award. If any of you have people you or your student works with, please email me, committee chair. We also choose the.

- Special Guest: Paul Frazier, Chief Diversity Officer

Frazier began with USA in January. He announced two new updates: there will be a Class Climate survey administered this fall to the entire campus community in January. There will be new language in the Faculty Handbook after the CAD has voted on it. The policy first had to go through the General Counsel's for a few changes. There was not a diversity statement in the Faculty Handbook. Diversity can be defined in several different ways. Frazier wants to ensure that faculty searches are diverse in nature and also with an adequate number of females. In addition, there will be general language on the process. He would to see who was in the applicant pool after the search was completed. A discussion ensued on the need for accountability, checks, and balances. Frazier then mentioned the problem of requiring females to be on search committees: since there are fewer females than men on the faculty, females will be overworked. "Here's the problem: when you try to meet certain requirements, you'll have burnout. If you require females on the committee, they'll be overworked. How to alleviate? I'm open to suggestions."

Next, he discussed the means of welcoming people to campus. If you're new to USA, how do you learn about USA? "We Are South" – I don't know what this means. We need to define what we are and what we do well. We've had customer service issues with students and faculty. Some students become offended or afraid. Students are speaking with their footsteps, so as a university, we need to do better.

The retention rate is low both for African-American students and also for international male students. This is alarming. In addition to recruitment, we need to take care of them and make sure they are graduating. Question: how do those numbers compare across the state? Are we doing any better or worse than other state universities? Frazier responded that a lot of regional universities in Alabama are suffering from enrollment, but our 6-year graduation rate can be improved. Question: does this have anything to do with preparation in K-12? Frazier discussed UA's involvement at Murphy High School. Also, many MCPS do not have certified math or science teachers, so there are students who are coming to USA with insufficient foundation in math and science. In response to a question, Frazier said conversations along these lines are being discussed in the President's Council and the Dean's Council, among others.

A discussion then ensued on the reasons students don't graduate. UA and Auburn have larger endowments and can offer more generous scholarship terms. Frazier then instructed faculty to "meet kids where they at." USA needs to build relationships. He mentioned beauty shop/barber shop recruiting - "USA calls my baby all the time." For some professors, tenure is based on publishing and grant funding, so there will be a gap. Maybe we need to change the means of evaluating faculty. Frazier wants to be an advocate. We need to develop the means to retain good talent: students, faculty, staff.

- Adjourn: MMSA: 4:20.

→→→ Committee Reports Submitted in Writing ←←←

Academic Development & Mentoring Committee

Tracy O'Connor, Chair

- Participated in the New Faculty Orientation on Aug 15
- 21 New Faculty have signed up at this time
- Currently recruiting Faculty Mentors through the digest, emailing faculty senate members and verbally asking faculty to help
- Once we have enough mentors our committee will pair the Mentors and Mentees together
- Typed up and sent a proposed budget and agenda for the Fall Faculty Academic Development Luncheon for Mentors and Mentees. Waiting to hear back.
- Plan to create a USA Online project site to provide resources to the Mentors and Mentees.

Technology Utilization Committee

Delwar Hossain, Chair

September 4, 2019 – Room#104, Communication Building - 10:00 am

MINUTES

Attending: Alan Chow, Bettina Riley, Mike Lin

The Scope of the Committee

- The committee chair briefed all attending members about the scope and responsibility of the Technology Utilization Committee of the Faculty Senate

New LMS System

- The committee chair updated the committee members about new LMS. The committee members agreed that new LMS would help to expedite online learning on campus.

New Measurement for Teaching Evaluations

- The committee chair briefed the committee members about a new measurement method for teaching evaluations. Committee members opined that the sub-committee for this initiative should include a statistician.

Other

Some committee members informed the committee that there are other committees regarding technology utilization on campus. They wonder whether there should be a uniformity in this regard.

Salary and Benefits Committee

Jamie Adams, Chair

Meeting held 9/10/19

We discussed a complaint from a colleague about using the faculty and staff education benefit in which the colleague had a hard time trying to avoid paying a \$100 orientation fee. After finally speaking with Christopher Lynch, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services, the orientation fee was waived. I called human resources to follow up on how this will be approached in the future and I was told by Tina Stalmach that from here on out faculty or staff that already have degrees would just need to call to have the orientation fee waived. I also verified that the current education benefit pays for up to 5 credit hours at the Arts and Sciences undergraduate tuition rate and the \$150 registration fee. This is the fee that is usually required to be paid by individuals taking less than a full course load.

The following in no particular order are benefits that we plan to research and possibly propose. (This list isn't fixed so if anyone has ideas please email them to Jamie Adams, adams@southalabama.edu.)

- Having the faculty education benefit pay for 5 credit hours and 50% rate for dependents, regardless of college or program
- Financial advisers available for faculty and staff
- Legal counseling (e.g. wills)
- Sick day pool (sick days can be donated to other faculty and staff)

The committee plans to create a historical record of our work so that each year's Salary and Benefit committee knows what has been pursued, what has succeeded and what has failed so that the committee can have greater continuity from year to year.

In addition to this, the charge of our committee was brought up: "2.2 Faculty Salaries and Benefits Committee: This Committee represents the faculty in matters related to salaries and fringe benefits." Are we happy with this? Should we try to change it in the bylaws?

*Not addressed in the meeting but as you probably have read in President Waldrop's email, the Board of Trustees has approved a 3% merit raise for faculty hired before 6/1/2019. They also approved a health insurance premium increase of \$13 per month for family coverage and \$3 for individuals. People on the USA Viva health plan will see no change in premiums.