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## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes - January 1999

Faculty Senators

*University of South Alabama*

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**University of South Alabama****Faculty Senate****Approved Minutes****20 January, 1999****1. and 2. Call to Order and of Roll.**

The regular meeting of the Senate was called to order by Calvin Jones, Chair, at 3:00 p.m. in Library 5. The Secretary called the roll:

Present: Benoit, Brandon, Broadus, Cepeda, Chrysee, Cox, Davidson-Shivers, DeWitt, Dorman, Engebretson, Evans, Foster, Frederick, Hamid, Hamm, Haywick, Honkanen, Jones, Labbe, Langan, LeDoux, Martin, McGinnis, McIntosh, McIver, Moak, Morris, Norman, Parker, Payne, Ryder, Strange, Sweet, Sylvestre, Teplick, Thurston, Tucker, Tuck-Trufant, Van Hanegan, Vetrosky, Vinson, Williams, G. Wilson, Zhang.

Absent (Excused): Allison, Arata, Ballard, Caldwell, Dilsaver, Hitt, Mulekar, Swint.

Absent: Camp, Douglass, Izenberg, McAfee, Sternberg, Weston, C. Wilson.

**3. Completion of Pending Business.**

The Minutes of the Meetings of November 18, 1998 and December 9, 1998 were approved.

**4. Report from the Chair.****1. Reply from the Chairman of the Board.**

Dr. Jones reported that on December 14, 1998 he sent the Senate's Resolution to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees with a cover letter in which the reasons for holding searches was repeated. Jones stressed that the Resolution was aimed at the process, rather than at any individuals. Mr. Brunson's reply, which was distributed to the faculty, refers to certain portions of Jones' letter and makes the following points:

**Future Presidential Searches** - Mr. Brunson's letter stated that in the future, under probably different circumstances, the search for the president would incorporate the process and practices advocated by the Senate. Based on this response, the Senate Executive Committee recommended that President Moulton requested that the Trustees appoint a small committee with representatives from the Trustees and the Faculty Senate to draft a policy for future searches. Mr. Moulton said he would make this recommendation to the Trustees.

**Planning Process** - In accordance with Mr. Brunson's statement that we should institute a planning process to develop a collective long-term vision for the university community, Dr. Jones itemized various very important issues that emerge repeatedly, such as teaching loads, support for research, etc. and that have an implication on the type of university we are and where we are headed. The Executive Committee recommended to Mr. Moulton that he request that the Trustees indicate a commitment to get such a process started, a commitment that would: (a) include adequate funding, (b) allow sufficient time to obtain meaningful results, (c) involve a professional outside consultant and (d) establish university committees.

## 2. Resolution and the Process of Voting.

Dr. Jones stated that he believed that the issues involved in the vote of no confidence make the Senate's position on the search process a valid one. The size of the margin was decisive. The Senate is the duly constituted representative voice of the faculty - even so, some faculty feel that the Senate should not take actions without consulting faculty. Jones has always attempted to seek input from all faculty members and encourages caucus and college meetings; however, to his regret, the manner in which the Trustees acted (a major decision which had not even been placed on the agenda) did not allow any more time for input from the individual faculty. Jones felt that this momentous issue had surely been a topic of conversation among faculty after the Trustees' meeting so that the Senators surely knew how the faculty felt at the time of the vote.

Several faculty members have expressed concern about meetings in which there is administrative involvement in invoking faculty opinion.

Jones felt that it was the Trustees' unfortunate action, not the Senate, that sparked this round of conflict. (See Stan Tiner's editorial of 4 December, 1998). The Senate Executive Committee has been working cooperatively since the resolution with the administration, as they had done before, and have had two productive meetings with the President and the Senior VPAA, as well as appearing with other University representatives at official functions in the community. The University has never confronted the situation of transition in its 34 years. The Senate needs to work cooperatively to help the university proceed but we need to stick by our principles to make sure that the university grows in the right direction.

## 3. Letter to Governor-Elect.

Acting on recommendations during the December meeting, Jones wrote to Governor-Elect Siegelman condemning the Trustees' action disbanding the Search Committee and requesting that Mr. Siegelman insure that proper procedure is followed in the functioning of the state's institutions of higher education, including ours. Jones also said that lack of familiarity with established university procedures may have contributed to the breakdown and recommended that people with experience in institutions of higher learning, such as retired professors, be nominated to the Board when vacancies occur. Mr. Siegelman responded with appreciation to Jones for expressing his opinion and stated that all issues involving higher education will be made with careful forethought and consideration.

## 4. Work loads, Teaching loads, etc.

In the Senate Executive Committee meeting with President Moulton Jones reported that many Faculty feel that changes are being instituted which would have an impact not only on our activities, but also on the overall nature of the institution. In response to the question of whether there had been changes in teaching loads, Interim VP Covey replied that neither the policy concerning teaching loads nor the loads themselves have changed in the current academic year, nor is there a plan to start issuing different types of contracts for new tenure-track professors.

## 5. Salary Issues.

a. Vacation and Sick-leave Resolutions: Mr. Moulton expressed an understanding that Faculty wish to incorporate the retirement benefits such policies would have, especially if faculty at other institutions receive this benefit. However, he had questions concerning the precise manner of implementation, whether or not it could be consistently applied, and exactly what is being done at other institutions. We look forward to clarification from the administration regarding Mr. Moulton's concerns.

b. Compensation Committee: Jones stressed to Mr. Moulton the need to insure that salary equity be addressed across the institution, for faculty and staff as well as for the administration. Moulton proposed the make-up of

such a committee, which would address not only amounts of compensation and the proper groups to be used in comparison, but also would insure that all groups on this campus are being treated fairly. The Executive Committee did not think that the ratio of faculty and staff to administration on the proposed committee was fairly balanced, so this proposal is currently being studied by the Senate Salary and Benefits Committee.

#### 6. Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Because of the importance of this office and Dr. Covey's statement that she does not want to remain in the position permanently, the Executive Committee requested that a search for a full-time Vice President be held. The Senators suggested and Mr. Moulton concurred that a national search should be started by Fall 1999 with the selected candidate to take office by the Fall of 2000 by the latest.

#### 7. Presidential Forum with the Faculty.

At the December meeting with Mr. Moulton the Executive Committee suggested that he hold a forum to talk about his views and plans, and he repeated at this meeting that he would be willing to hold a forum this semester, either with the Faculty Senate or with a group chosen from the Senate and other Faculty.

#### 8. Foundation.

The Senate has long been frustrated with the lack of communication between the Foundation and the University and the difficulty in solving basic funding questions. The Executive Committee discussed the possibility of acting as a mediator by inviting small groups or representatives from the University administration and the Foundation to begin informal discussions. Before receiving our invitation to meet, the Foundation invited the Executive Committee to meet with some of their representatives to answer any questions that the Faculty might have. The Committee feels that neither the Committee nor the Faculty should take sides in this conflict, but should work to achieve an end to what is a senseless conflict among people who should be working toward the same end. In that context, and with the hope that the Foundation and the Administration will respond favorably to our suggestions, we accepted the Foundation invitation and met with them on 13 January. The meeting was cordial, and we heard their presentation of the Foundation's purpose and general financial situation, and we also had the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. The Committee stressed the importance of achieving better communication and agreement on basic issues. It is important that all parties involved be included and know which portions of the assets are restricted or unrestricted so that everyone can be talking about the same things. Some of the items that we originally considered putting in a resolution are included in the November minutes. Please review these and give your opinions and suggestions to your caucus leaders or members of the Executive Committee. This is a crucial issue that has attracted the attention of the Chronicle of Higher Education.

#### 7. Legislature.

It is important to remain informed about issues affecting us, especially the proposed \$1 million equity allocation (USA is funded at only 50% of the Regional Standard, as opposed 60% for the average Alabama institution) and the expected \$3.7 million needed to fund the increase in retirement system costs.

#### 8. Other On-going Issues.

- a. Library search: A committee has been formed and an advertisement has been placed.
- b. Public Relations search: Another candidate will be interviewed.
- c. Honors Program: The Task Force is meeting as a group, with colleges, etc. to get something in place by next fall.

## 5. Reports from Senate Standing Committees.

There were no reports from Standing Committees at this time.

## 6. Reports from Caucus Leaders.

The Caucus Leader from the College of Arts and Sciences has resigned his position from the University and a new Caucus Leader for that college will need to be chosen.

The Caucus Leader from the College of Medicine stated that there were concerns that there may be a misunderstanding that the Resolution might be addressing the president rather than the process. The faculty hoped that the Senate would continue to work with the administration.

The Caucus Leader from the College of Allied Health passed out copies of two resolutions voted on in their college wherein they (a) requested that the Senate should reconsider its vote of no confidence in the Board of Trustees; (b) recommended that appropriate procedures for the presidential succession should be developed; and (c) requested that the Senate establish policies that will allow senators to caucus with the faculty prior to voting on substantive issues.

In response to the report from Allied Health, the Caucus Leader from the College of Business and various Senators from Arts and Science reported that the Senate's Resolution expressed the sentiments of their colleges.

There were no further reports from Caucus Leaders.

## 7. Old Business

Some Senators asked the Chair to clarify the "extraordinary circumstances" referred to by Mr. Brunson in his letter to Dr. Jones.

## 8. New Business

The condition of the Athletics Program at the University of South Alabama was briefly discussed by Doug Haywick, the Senate Representative of the USA Athletic Council. Athletics has been losing money for some time and like all divisions of the University, they have been under pressure to correct the deficit. Significant concern has also been expressed about equality issues. Although USA has been trying to meet Federal guidelines concerning gender equity like virtually all other universities in the country, has not done so. At a December meeting Dale Adams and Joe Gottfried asked for input to these problems and suggested, as a partial remedy, that the Men's Soccer Program should be terminated. In his summary to the Senate, Haywick stressed that the single greatest reason for ending Men's Soccer was the gender equity issue and the risk of losing Federal funding if we violate Federal Regulations. At this point, Haywick admitted confusion over recent newspaper reports stating that some advocates (primarily the Alumni Association) are openly discussing bringing NCAA football to this campus. This seemed in the last meeting of the Athletic Council to be an unattainable goal. Even if money were to be found to support football on an ongoing basis, the University would have an even worse problem with gender equity than they do now. They would either have to terminate other Men's programs, or they would have to add several Women's sports. According to the information provided at the last Council meeting, even without football, USA will have to add at least one Women's program to try to achieve conformity with Federal equality guidelines. Haywick asked the Senators for feedback on Athletics in general and football in particular and the general consensus was that the faculty would not be in favor of football now or

at any time in the future because of the drain on University resources that would inevitably result. Any threat to funding for academic programs or to the University's endowment (as administered through the USA Foundation) would be resisted.

## **9. Communications from the President**

There were no communications from the President other than those conveyed in the Chair's Report.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Sylvestre, Secretary

The next Senate meeting is scheduled on February 17, 1999.