



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

Plenary Session

January 19, 2022 –Zoom 3:00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Faculty and Guests

- Adams, Jamie
- Amare, Nicole
- Bates, Robin
- Borchert, Glen
- Brannan, Lauren
- Bunch, Jaclyn
- Cleary, John
- Copeland, Donna
- Davidson, Cordell
- Feldvoss, Joerg
- Fregeau, Laureen
- Gregoricka, Lesley
- Godang Romulus
- Halbrooks, John
- Harmon, Charles (Miles)
- He, Jia
- Henry, Alison
- Holden, Shelley
- Hossain, Delwar
- Huang, Ying
- Kahn Zoya
- Kilgo, William
- Jordan, Kimberly
- Lewis, Drew
- Lin, Mike
- Lynch, Colleen
- Manders, Jeannette
- Mark, Patricia
- Migaud, Marie
- Min, Hosik
- Minto, Elizabeth
- Myers, Charlene
- Ní Chadhain, Sinéad
- O'Connor, Tracy
- Pelekanos, Sharon

- Prakash, Aishwarya
 - Rayner, Jonathan
 - Raczkowski, Chris
 - Sayner, Sarah
 - Shaw, Christy, excused
 - Shaw, Thomas
 - Shepard, Beth
 - Spencer, Edmund
 - Strickland, Jason
 - Swanzy, Debra
 - Thompson, Tara
 - Turnipseed, David
 - Vandewaa, Arie
 - Vandewaa, Elizabeth
 - Vrana, Laura
 - Webb, Brett
 - Weber, David
 - Woodmansee, Brenda
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- Meeting called to order 3:01 pm
 - Approval of Minutes for 11/17/21 Meeting: Approved
 - Approval of Agenda for 1/19/22 Meeting: Approved

 - **President's Report:**
 - **Presidential Transition-**
 - Ms. Shepard and John Cleary have met with the new president to share faculty concerns such as shared governance and having a faculty representative (FS president) as a member of the president's council, gender disparity, salary, and difference among administrative and faculty pay at the university.
 - Ms. Shepard also reported that they discussed concerns about the current vacancies and had an opportunity to teach him a little about faculty workload etc. The strategic plan was discussed and what benchmarks will be used to measure changes made. President Bonner asked to have an additional meeting outside of the regularly scheduled FS excomm meetings with the FS president and past president.
 - **Covid Update-**
 - Ms. Shepard reported talking with Julie Estes and John Cleary who is a member of Covid task force to get regular updates. She reports that everyone should have received notification of large number students not being in class.
 - Contact tracing is still going on and more resources have been added to the contact tracing team to address the backlog. There is still a significant backlog in getting notifications out to faculty.

- The contact tracing team is following the current the CDC guidelines/recommendations about quarantine and isolation (which is based on a decision tree) and is based on the individual. Julie Estes has asked for faculty patience on getting notifications. The COVID dashboard is updated every Monday; however, it was delayed on 1/17/22 because of Martin Luther King Jr. day holiday. Faculty can access the COVID dashboard at <https://www.southalabama.edu/coronavirus/covid19-dashboard.html>
- Testing on campus will be moved from the Civic Center and the testing capacity is good.
- Discretion among faculty and department chair will be the process for needing accommodations for teaching remotely. Deans have been asked to be flexible and kind in making accommodations as needed.
- The link for free at-home COVID tests from the government was shared by one of the senators at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>
- **External Salary Survey-**
 - Ms. Shepard reported the salary survey is complete. We are waiting for the final report to be shared with us. Ms. Shepard and Dr. Vandewaa are going to meet with Dr. Kent to look at how any funds should be distributed fairly to bring lowest paid faculty up to a percentage of peer institutions.
 - The budget appropriations in the budget for the salary adjustment is \$250,000.
 - Any adjustments that are made will be retro active from January of 2022.
- **Provost Search-**
 - Ms. Shepard reports that the same search firm that was used for the presidential search to head up the search for the provost position. She also asked faculty to look out for a survey that will be sent out to get feedback from faculty as what they consider as important characteristics for the person filling this position.
- **Budget Updates-**
 - The Alabama Legislature convened its 2022 regular session on Jan. 11. During the regular session, legislators will vote on various pieces of legislation including the FY23 General Fund and Education Trust Fund budgets.
 - Regarding the budgets, the General Fund grew nearly 11.5% and the Education Trust Fund (ETF) at 16% in FY21. The 20-year average growth is typically around 3% to 4%. The Governor has recommended a minimum increase of at least 6.5% for universities with USA receiving nearly a 9% increase over last year.
- **Critical Race Theory Legislation-**
 - Ms. Shepard reports that the FS excomm have been working with Nick Lawkis and met with him multiple times regarding faculty concerns about academic freedom.
- **Strategic Planning-**
 - Efforts have been paused until the new president was on board before a new draft was made.

- **Reports from Senate Committees:**
 - Fringe Benefits Committee: Dr. Vandewaa reported a change in price of prescriptions with the new drug plan. She reports that the Fringe Benefit Committee meeting in February.

- **Reports from Caucus Leaders:**
 - none

- **Reports from University Committees:**
 - Handbook & Policy Committee- The NTT policy revisions were passed. Also, the DEI inclusion policy language was approved and updated in the handbook, both sent to doc route and waiting for CAD to pick it up.
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee-was asked to hold off on a survey about the legislation coming up and was asked to develop a form to educate faculty on the upcoming legislation. After any legislation is passed, the committee will develop a document to help faculty address any of their concerns.
 - Research and Creative Activities Committee - the in-person networking session that was planned for February has been postponed. We are identifying another date in late March and will reserve the Faculty Club for this event in the hope we can resume in-person meetings at that time!
 - Sustainability & Environmental Quality Committee-is preparing a 15-item sustainability survey that will go out to the faculty to gather information on why faculty are happy or unhappy at the university.

- **New Business:**
 - Parliamentarian Bylaws Revision-
 - Ms. Shepard reports that a parliamentarian is being proposed to help the chair and/or president run meetings. She reports that sent out a document to the FS approximately 28-days prior to the FS plenary meeting (as per the FS bylaws) and opened up the floor for discussion on the proposed change.
 - A motion was made to vote on the change to the bylaws. A poll vote was conducted and majority, 38 yeas, 1 nay, and 1 abstention for the bylaw change.
 - Policy and Handbook-
 - Ombudsperson policy-Dr. Lewis reported that basic premise is to increase from one to two ombudsperson and the wording was changed to elect the ombudsperson by consensus of the President and the FS. Dr. Shepard opened up the floor for discussion.

- A motion was made to suspend the rules to conduct an electronic vote. A poll vote taken and 39 yeas, 1 nay, and 2 abstentions.
- Title IX statement- a statement was added a paragraph to the FS handbook to address faculty members and sexual or romantic relationships with students enrolled in their classes or with students whom they otherwise evaluate, grade or supervise. Ms. Shepard opened up the floor for discussion. A motion was made to suspend the rules to conduct an electronic vote. A poll was taken and 36 yeas, 0 nays, and 2 abstentions.
- Chair Review Policy-
 - Dr. Spencer reported that the committee received a request to amend the policy to clarify the process for department chair review where the annual review report will only be shared with the dean and with the department chair under review.
 - Ms. Shepard reported that the FS needs to make revisions or vote. Recommendations were made for any faculty suggestions for revision be sent email to the chair of the committee, Edmund Spencer to take back to the committee.
- University Planning & Development Committee Chair Nomination & Election-
 - Ms. Shepard reports that we need to fill a position on the FS executive committee and the Faculty Development & Planning Chair position because a senator stepped down. The floor was open for nominations.
 - Thomas Shaw, Debra Swanzy, and Sinead Chadhain were nominated. All candidates have until Friday 1/21/22 to consider accepting or not their nomination. If elected, this person will serve until the end of the election year. Nominations were closed and the majority approved suspending the rules to electronically vote for or elect one of the nominees for office.
- Critical Race Theory Legislation Resolution-
 - Ms. Shepard asked the senate if there were any objections to discuss the “Resolution from the Faculty Senate on the Anti-CRT Bills before the Alabama Legislature” since it was not included on the approve agenda. Dr. Vandewaa discussed a penalty clause in the bill for any educators that teach divisive concepts (race, gender, sex, etc.). The FS drafted this resolution to take a stand on the legislation.
 - A motion was made to vote on the resolution as is. A majority 33 yeas, 1 nay, and 3 abstentions voting to approve the resolution as is. Ms. Shepard will send the resolution to the president who has 30-days to respond, according to the bylaws.
- Letter of No Confidence to the Board of Trustees-
 - A letter was recommended by the FS in the November meeting addressing concerns with the process for the presidential search. A poll vote was conducted to consent whether the senate approves discussion on the draft of the letter.
 - A majority of 23 yeas, 8 nays, and 6 abstentions of FS members consent to discuss the draft of the letter and voting will take place at the special session on February 2, 2022, session at 3:00 pm.

- **Other:**
 - None

Meeting Adjournment: MMSA 5:38 pm

Minutes transcribed by Donna Copeland