
FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE MEETING

October 15, 2020

12:50 P.M. OKT N142

Present: Jeff Weimer, Mike Banish, Tim Newman, Carmen Scholz, Kader Frendi, Kwaku Gyasi, Laird Burns, Carolyn Sanders, Azita Amiri

Zoom Remote Participants: Ex-Officio: Provost Christine Curtis; Guest: President Darren Dawson, Emil Jovanov

- **Faculty Senate President Tim Newman called the meeting to order at 12:59 pm.**
- **Meeting Review:**
 - **Electronic Signatures Policy passed to be placed on FS agenda.**
 - **Summer School Operations passed to send back to committee.**
 - **Communicable Disease Policy passed to be placed on FS agenda.**
 - **Chapter 6 passed to be placed on FS agenda.**
- **Administrative Reports**
 - **President Darren Dawson**
 - Spragins is still scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. We have had some funds freed up and are going to see if we can replace the scoreboard and advertising signs. Beville Center Cooling Tower is ahead of schedule. Shelby Center Phase I renovation is hoped to start by March. We are still proceeding with the IT Data Center.
 - I sent a campus email out in regards to the latest UAH Police Incident. We spoke on the phone with the mother. Myself, Laterrica, Todd, and the Chief are meeting with the mother and son to offer an apology and what is going to happen.
 - Open Enrollment is open today. We will send out a couple of emails. No response will result in the same coverage into 2021. The premiums for the PPO will increase by 2%. The other changes are minimal.
 - We have a couple of counties in Tennessee that we do in state tuition. They are close to a border. We are discussing this with the Board of Trustees to see if we can do in state tuition for the whole state of Tennessee as a pilot program. I don't really know where that will go. It will ultimately have to have a
 - Laird – Beville Center, it appears there have been a trailer sitting there for months. I was going to have eye correction surgery and due to COVID, what will happen with the money in HSA?
 - President – I think you have to be careful with limited FSA money. I believe HAS money will roll each year.
 - Laird – It may be FSA because it appears it will disappear. About a year ago, we met with the police chief about working better with the faculty. In our budget situation, we don't have enough money, maybe we need to do something to help pay for training for young officers.

- Mike – I applaud that you are working with this lady and trying to resolve this. How many students do we get from Memphis/Knoxville?
- Provost – We mainly get them from the counties that offer in state tuition.
- Mike – My students are telling me they do the health check at 9 in the morning or walking into class. I have a few students aren't filling it out. I think it would be useful for all of us if we could be aware of when students are on their email. We may want to send them reminders 12 hours beforehand. If they are on their email at night, they get a reminder to complete their health check.
- Provost – UAB sends reminders automatically. I don't know if we can have any influence. We can ask. Best I can tell, they send reminders three days at the same time. Unless we ran the report every hour, we won't always catch them.
- Carmen – I want to comment on the unfortunate police incident. We have talked about this attitude many times. This isn't the only time people with authority take advantage. I have asked for a culture change in the past and am asking again.
- Kader – I heard in my college meeting that there would be a hiring freeze this coming year. This would be a second year. Some units are carrying a big burden. Financially, I don't see the number backing up the freeze.
- President – You don't understand why the freeze? The system is still mandating we regulate new hiring. We talked to them about relaxing some of the restrictions. We did have additional expenses due to COVID. Until we get new revenue in the form of tuition increases, it will be hard to expand our faculty and staff. Our IT is understaffed. That is our biggest need. We have been good about replacing retirees and staff positions. Replacement we are trying to proceed.
- Laird – A while ago, I was looking at salary surveys. We don't pay professional wage comparable to industries. I am really worried that we will lose them if they get better job offers. Part of the capacity isn't just hiring, but paying them better wages. I would encourage that we re-evaluate this structure. They are vital to our classes.
- President - I agree we don't have enough bodies and adequate pay structure.
- Tim - I know for a while we had a challenge for students taking the Cares money. How is that going?
- President – Yes, much better. We are doing a second round.
- Provost Christine Curtis
 - We have the Dean of Science search restarted. The top candidates will have second interview later this week.
 - Dean of Professional Studies are in final stages.
 - Commencement Committee is meeting again tomorrow. We will talk about the details of the commencement then. We are holding the VBC for two days now, December 14 and 15. We plan to have two ceremonies each day. We will know later this month when students commit to whether they will come or not. 300 graduates can sit on the floor. Each graduate will receive four tickets for guest. They have seats in four seat sections and three seat sections. We can't really group

faculty, but you can attend. It will be a simple ceremony. We will not have room for orchestra or wind ensemble. We are going to discuss the ceremony in more detail with the committee. We won't have a reception following the ceremony. Hopefully the VBC will help make sure they are socially distanced in the line coming in. Alabama had the families leave when the student walks across the stage.

- Our spring schedule has changed. We will start January 13th. We won't have a spring break. Several students are upset about that, but I don't see having any other options. The risk of exposure is too great. We hope to have vaccines by spring semester.
- I have put into the administrative brief the one page ACT Test Optional Admissions Pilot that was sent to the system. I have presented all recommendations to the President. We are wanting to gain some experience on how it will impact enrollment, diversity, the success of the student. The President decided it would be a good study if we have a high school GPA of 2.7. That will be our high school grade point. The scholarships start at 3.0 for ACT Optional. Basically, we will be sending out a news release, then on the website that we are optional.
 - Mike – I understand we change from percentage to dollar, you said the ranges change?
 - Provost – It did for out of state.
 - Mike – Did that go through financial aid or scholarship committee? Can you check that?
 - Jeff - I am interested in this change from the ACT and GPA. How this change will affect the success of the students? I am keen to hear how this change will be tracked in the means of retention and success.
 - Provost – I have asked the ACT Test Optional Task Force that did the preliminary study to reconvene over time. George Nelson is the FS representative. If you have particular things in mind you want answered, get that to him. We can track performance with historical data. When we looked at admissions this past fall, we know we have students brought in below the 2.7. We have tracked some. Some are successful, some not. How do we help those that are not successful? President Dawson has asked that we have cohort advocates. We were able to capture some funds to pay for positions that will track these students and work directly to assist them. We are building that program as we speak.
 - Jeff - I am glad to hear we have a representative.
 - Laird – President Dawson, we have been talking about the budget committee. Do you know if they have had their meeting in early October to make these decisions? How is the committee charged?
 - President - I know the committee has met. The only thing we changed is converting the percentages to dollar amounts. If tuition doesn't increase, there isn't much change. We did reduce the percentage before on the upper end.
 - Provost – It is mainly the out of state. We just changed the in state from percentage to number.
 - President – The student who are in the four year scholarship will have to pay some small differential over the scholarship. This year, we believe, this might be the first year the bleeding has actually stopped.

- Pass/Withdrawal: A number of other universities are using pass/fail this semester. Dr. Dawson expressed concerned about enrollment next spring if we have too many students overwhelmed about their grades. I talked with the Deans/Associate Deans. We sent a survey out to faculty and students. Most results are in. I sent you what I had on Wednesday to Tim. I sent the synopsis as well. It was from the survey of students that we needed to do something. There are students that feel overwhelmed. There are faculty that feel we need to give them a release. The pass/withdrawal will be going out very shortly. We are working on the FAQ's right now. There is a lot of concern out there. They feel isolated and disengaged. Other entities are working on ways to help with this. The library has had a number of Saturday events this fall. I would encourage you to talk with your colleges about having activities that are educational but help interaction with faculty. It is trying to address the need both faculty and students have.
 - Tim – There is a wealth of information in this. It is a good read. From my standpoint, we want to monitor this a bit. There may be warnings that faculty need therapy dogs.
 - Carolyn – I want to follow up to see if there has been any information on self-reporting?
 - Provost – We notify the class and instructor. Alabama doesn't even do that. The Dean of Students had a possible way

➤ **Officer/Committee Reports**

- Tim Newman, President
 - Director of Housing is retiring. We also found out that some committees are rearranging. The President was on top of the police incident when we spoke. I passed along to the Provost the concern over the admission of lower GPA than normal. We need some help on the faculty side. We also heard that there was a petition going around among the students in regards to pass/withdraw. It had over 1500 signatures. I passed along to the Provost we passed the Online Course Policy. Some faculty felt their freedom was limited or restricted, I have passed that along to the Provost. I am a member of the returning to work campus group. The pass/withdraw option was discussed if we need to reassess our hybrid class. Some students have commented that their hybrid have stopped meeting person and are all online for the remainder of the semester. In one case, the teacher was relocated to another city. That went through the proper channels. Another is a similar situation, is the faculty member is unable to come to campus. Is there any other situations? The group wants to see if we need to give stronger guidance to faculty. I have been encouraged by those on the group. They are taking faculty and student concerns to heart.
- Carmen Scholz, President-Elect
 - No report.
- Laird Burns, Past President
 - If we have a class too small, we get up to a 50% pay cut. The workload to online classes is significantly higher. Why are we getting these cuts for teaching over the summer?
 - Provost – This policy was put into place four days after I got here in 2014. I am not sure where the numbers came from. Go back to salaries in 2014 that may have not been that unreasonable. The way that it works is the expenses are paid. The university gets a portion of the money. Then the money is split between the

Provost office and the colleges. As we make changes, we have to consider the changes and the impacts on the colleges and the Provost Office. It is complicated but it needs to be reconsidered. Salaries have changed. Deans are in agreement that there needs to be changes. There is a minimum on the number of students for class, because it isn't profitable for anyone. We wanted to give the few students who need a class to graduate and offer a small salary for those to teach. We need to consider a different scale.

- Laird – This 10% matters.
- Mike Banish, Parliamentarian
 - No report.
- Kader Frendi, Governance and Operations Committee Chair
 - We finalized the committee. We are trying to finalize a couple more committees. There are committees where people are leaving. We need to replace those. We started looking at the bylaws and committee manual. We want to make sure we don't get into the same thing we did this fall, lack of communication.
- Azita Amiri, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Chair
 - We have been very busy approving forms.
- Jeff Weimer, Finance and Resource Committee Chair
 - The committee met and put forward a contingency plan for the RCEU Program. I just sent that to Provost Curtis this morning.
- Emil Jovanov, Undergraduate Scholastic Affairs Committee Chair
 - We met last week. I believe you read our findings. They weren't as concrete as presented in the description from the Provost. We were informed that other universities adopted the optional policy. We would like additional information on what their policy is. We would like to know that for the future. There was strong support to run as a pilot.
- Kwaku Gyasi, Faculty and Student Development Committee Chair
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- Mike Banish, Personnel Committee Chair
 - We did get a meeting the VP of Diversity and Inclusion to go over reporting and policy of sexual harassment. Laterrica gave us a very nice write up. The policies and guidance comes from the Dept of Education that leaves a lot of open questions. There are incidents politically that people wanted to take out of the policy. While a lot of it is mandated and we have to have a interim policy, I think it is our recommendation that we say this policy is only effective until March and see what guidance comes down. Other campuses are working to fill in the gaps. This is not a final policy, they are constantly working. This should be temporary approval on our part.
 - Tim – We deferred acting on Title IX. Is it time to bring to the senate this meeting or wait one more?
 - Mike – I think we can, but we need to state that it exists for five months and see what other guidance comes.
 - We went through Electronic Signatures Policy. The problem with this policy is not a whole lot is defined. Our thought is if the university says this is how we are going to do electronic signature, they need to ensure each person has the program to do so. We are going to suggest a rewrite on that.
 - We did discuss cheating. It is a reoccurring problem. The burden comes to faculty or graders. There needs to be some thought about how to handle this.

- We would like Chapter 6 on the agenda.
- Electronic Signatures Policy
 - Tim – We can refer this back to another committee or place on agenda for senate meeting?
 - Mike – We are happy to relook at it. I would like clarity from you. Would you go back to the administration?
 - Tim – Do you want to send this senate and see if you have senate approval behind your recommendation?
 - Jeff – If it is sent to FS could an amendment be added?
 - Tim – It has come back to senate with a recommendation from the committee.
 - Carolyn – Another program is DocuSign aside from Adobe Pro.
 - Mike – Our thought is the university needs to provide the program.
 - Jeff – QEPO ask that your PDF file be fully compliant with assisted reading. The only software is Adobe Pro.
 - Tim – I would like a motion.
 - Jeff – I would motion that it be brought to the floor with the stipulation from the committee. Carolyn seconded.
 - Tim – All in favor. Ayes carry.
- Summer School Operations:
 - Tim – Motion to send to committee or senate floor.
 - Carmen – I would like for this to go to committee, Faculty and Student Development. Member seconds.
 - Mike – I motion that we send to two committees. Finance and Resource. Member seconds.
 - Tim – All in favor. Ayes carry.
 - Mike – The faculty handbook has specifications for this. It isn't in agreement with the handbook.
 - Tim – The NCSARA will be on the agenda. We have Authorship policy. That will also be on the agenda. I want to ask about Communicable Disease Policy. It is supposed to come back to senate this time. Is there anything we need to be conscious about? Has any senate looked at it? I am thinking Personnel. I am going to put it back on agenda. Title IX was sent to committee and reported. What are we wanting to do?
 - Carmen – Motion to send to senate.
 - Tim – All in favor. Ayes carry. I would like a motion from FSEC that we will suspend business at 2:10 and take up Title IX. Kader moves. Mike seconds. All in favor. Ayes carry.
- Chapter 6:
 - Mike – I motion that Chapter 6 is on the agenda. Carolyn seconds.
 - Tim – All in favor. Ayes carry.
- Motion to extend Mike Banish. Ayes carry.
 - Mike – We need to get the faculty handbook moving.
 - Tim – We debated bylaws and we adjourned during it, so it will supersede administrative reports.
- Meeting adjourned at 2:32 PM.