

## Approved Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting

February 27, 2018

Meeting called to order at 2:03 PM by President Margaret Gnoinska.

**Members Present:** Jennings Byrd, George Crowley, Doug Davis, Dianne Eppler, Patrick Faircloth, Trey Fitch, Margaret Gnoinska, Bill Heisler, Kelly Johnson, John Jinright, Rob Kruckeberg, Jon Lewis, Dabney McKenzie, Charles Mitchell, Paige Paquette, John Roufagalas, Carolyn Russell, Michael Slobodchikoff, Joe Teng, Danush Wijekularathna

**Members Absent:** Brittney Armstrong (notice), Alberto Arteta (notice), Sherrionda Crawford (no notice), Gary Manfready (no notice), Gina Mariano (notice), Jeff Simpson (notice),

**Others Present:** Dr. Earl Ingram (Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs), and Donald L. Yancey, Deputy Director, Retirement Systems of Alabama

Opening Comments by Dr. Margaret Gnoinska.

- a. Introduction of Mr. Yancey

Guest Speaker Mr. Donald Yancey Deputy Director, Retirement Systems of Alabama

- a. Mr. Yancey noted that he has been at RSA for nearly 40 years and is in charge of administration, not investment. The RSA was formed by the legislature in 1941 initially for K-12, but it has seen been expanded to community colleges, universities and support workers. The board of directors make policy and direction of RSA, but it is the legislature which controls all service credit and legal matters.
- b. He noted that there are many people who have an agenda of destroying public pensions. This includes foundations funded by the Koch brothers, who have given money to Troy University's business school as well as the Arnold Foundation. These groups tend to portray public pensions as costing tax payers a lot of money. He noted that he thought public pensions were very good for both the employee and the taxpayer. The total budget expense of RSA is only 3% of the state budget. And the majority of people covered are teachers and local and county employees. State employees are the smallest group covered under RSA. The Arnold Foundation has made claims that the RSA is one of the least transparent pension funds, but all of their information is available.
- c. There is a two tier system. The second tier was created for people hired after 2012 and has about a 30% smaller benefit than tier 1. He also noted that unfunded liabilities are much like a mortgage and simply part of public pensions as future contributions will go toward future benefits. The RSA is currently 68% funded. The RSA needs an average investment return of 8% to make its liabilities. The last 5 years they have averaged 10.4%.
- d. Overall, the RSA is in very good shape and there is no reason to be concerned. He also noted that the relationship with the legislature has improved recently and that he is guardedly optimistic that the political climate is generally favorable to RSA. There is also no pending legislation that would adversely affect RSA.

- e. As for benefits, tier 1 people receive roughly 2% of their base salary for every year of service and the highest 3 years' salary of your last 10 years of service are averaged for that calculation. He also noted that you can get insurance through PETA Plans in retirement that are very similar to your current insurance. You then transfer to Medicare at 65. There are also various forms of death benefits as well as disability benefits depending on service.
- f. Dr. Gnoinska asked about vesting in RSA.
  - a. Answer: It takes 10 years to be vested.
- g. Dr. Roufagalas asked if there was a succession plan to replace the top RSA leaders.
  - a. Answer: That is a decision Board of Control of RSA.
- h. Dr. Faircloth asked if there was any provision for veterans to buy into the plan based upon years of military service.
  - a. There is within the first year, but after that, you must wait 10 years.

### Committee Reports

#### V. Executive Committee (Dr. Gnoinska)

- a. Dr. Gnoinska **ATTENDED CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFINGS held from Feb 5 to Feb 15** on an array of issues, including admissions, student services, military affairs, Troy Online, all Alabama campuses, Academics, Advancement and development, Athletics, Finance and business affairs (human resources, financial services, dining services and many more).
  - 1. Having being included in all of the briefings (but one) was extremely informative and helped her get a sense of the big picture of our university, including:
    - a. *its ongoing internationalization efforts* of which the Faculty Senate has been very supportive through its involvement in the International Education Week (workshops, roundtables); strengthening and cultivating relations with the International Programs, so faculty can better serve our international students; and encouraging not just study abroad trips but one-semester study abroad programs.
    - b. *positive developments taking place* (for example in the area of increasing the university's endowment carried out by the Office of Development), and
    - c. *challenges* ahead such as decrease in scholarships for students, accommodating conditional and developmental students, enrollments, and recruitment.
    - d. Overall, Dr. Gnoinska got a positive outlook of how things are going, but having sat in the meetings also made her think a great deal about the faculty needs and concerns. Having everything fresh in her mind, she met with Chancellor Hawkins to thank him once again for including the Faculty Senate President in the briefings and to discuss issues related to faculty.
- b. **ISSUE BROUGHT UP BY DR. GNOINSKA IN HER FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR HAWKINS FEB 20**
  - 1. **the role of communication** – needs to be both top down and bottom up. This strengthens shared governance. Helps with mentoring and tenure, as well as

faculty morale. Dr. Ingram – great to work with and instrumental in moving things along.

2. **the role of faculty in lowering the cost of textbooks** – faculty clearly want to lower the cost of textbooks for students, but without being mandated to proceed with policies like OER for all general studies; we need to recognize the decision whether to use OER is a choice that each faculty member needs to make.
  3. **the role of faculty in recruitment:**
    - a. faculty should focus on **RETAINING** students and providing them with best teaching, mentoring, advising, etc. possible.
    - b. The Faculty Senate is now working with other administrative organs on an advising module to best and most efficiently serve our students.
  - b. **the role of the FDC in supporting research and internationalization**
    - a. increase funding for research, including international travel
    - b. engagement in active research makes us better teachers, exposure for University, friend-raising, international recruiting
- C. Following their meeting, Dr. Gnoinska met with Dr. Fulmer and relayed Dr. Hawkins' support for an increase in the budget of the Faculty Development Committee for 2018-2019. They are in the process of working out the details.

#### VI. Committee on Committees (Dr. Paquette)

- a. The IRB Committee met on February 15<sup>th</sup>. The committee members covered the items on the agenda and will provide minutes from the meeting on the website.
- b. The UGAC met on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The committee approved a number of curricular additions and changes in various academic departments in the Colleges of Business, Arts and Sciences, Health and Human Services, and Education. The UGAC is requesting that any departmental changes to the Spring 2019 catalogue be presented at the next meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>. After that meeting, any changes will have to be made to the Fall 2019 course catalog.
- c. The Faculty Development Committee met February 21<sup>st</sup> to award grants to Troy Faculty requesting financial support for Spring and Summer 2018. This academic year, the committee has seen an influx of submissions for grants. During the meeting, the committee determined the awarding of paper presentation grants. Because of the increase in requests, the FDC is having to determine the best possible way to fulfill the research grant requests. A special committee has been formed to explore possible ways in which to allocate the funding of these requests. The committee is comprised of members from each college at the university. The funding of the research grants is moving forward and Dr. Fulmer is working to partner with Deans and Chairs to support those requests.

#### VII. Elections Committee (Dr. Kruckeberg)

- a. Nomination announcements for Faculty Senate Elections should go out before our next Faculty Senate meeting.

#### VIII. Academic Affairs Committee (Dr. Heisler)

- a. On February 20, the Academic Steering Committee approved three options for the syllabus in Canvas: (1) use the syllabus template installed in Canvas, (2) use the traditional syllabus, or (3) use the Canvas syllabus template and attach a copy of the traditional syllabus. However, if you deploy the traditional syllabus, be sure to include the appropriate language and sections from the Faculty Handbook.
- b. Dr. Heisler also inquired with Dr. Ingram about the role of faculty in recruitment and retention. Part of the discussion was the 850 first-year students who are in developmental classes. The administration is looking at a pilot program (tentatively called Ready on Day One) that would bring these students to campus during the summer session.
- c. Dr. Ingram, who was present at the meeting, noted that by recruitment, they were specifically referencing faculty recruiting within the university for their specific major.

#### IX. Faculty Welfare Committee (Dr. Jinright)

- a. Provided the demographics of the survey respondents for the faculty survey. See attachment to the Faculty Senate Minutes for that information.

#### X. Educational Technology Committee (Dr. Arteta)

- a. Stressed the importance of doing the IT security training and being extremely careful with opening links from unknown Web sites.

#### XI. Ad Hoc Student Appreciation Day Committee (Dr. Faircloth)

- a. Student Appreciation Day is on April 4. The Chancellor will be making a new recording for this year. There will be 7-10 volunteers for every hour of the event, so there should be plenty. The Alumni Association has agreed to fund \$1,000 for the essay competition and they are currently discussion doing only two awards of \$500.

#### XII. Dothan Campus (Dr. Manfready)

- a. Student Apprication Day will be April 4.
- b. March of Dimes Week is April 14.
- c. Health Fair is April 17.
- d. Honors Convocation is April 20.

#### XIII. Global Campus. (Dr. Fitch)

- a. No report.

#### XIV. Montgomery Campus (Dr. Roufagalas)

- a. February 22 was Higher Education Day. There were, unfortunately, not many students in attendance.
- b. The Psychology Club just completed a children's book drive.

XV. Phenix City Campus (Dr. Crawford)

- a. The Registrar's Office and Disability Services have relocated to the riverfront address and the new addresses have changed to the specific buildings.

XVI. Troy Campus (Dr. Crowley)

- a. Student Appreciation Day will be April 4.

XVII. Old Business

- a. See committee reports.

XVIII. New Business

- a. University Research Council
  - i. Dr. Gnoinska met with Dr. Mary Anne Templeton about the URC and its future. Dr. Templeton noted that the URC was going to be folded into the IRB. Dr. Gnoinska noted that the IRB is primarily concerned with protecting subjects, so this merging may be inappropriate. She also noted that this may be an opportunity to make the URC a strong faculty advocate for research. Dr. Gnoinska voiced her support for trying to reinvigorating the URC in that mold. She then opened it up for questions and comments.
  - ii. Dr. Slobodchikoff asked if the URC had a budget and suggested that this may be a good place for research funds.
  - iii. Dr. Gnoinska answered that the URC has no budget.
  - iv. Dr. Crowley noted that we should make sure that this is not redundant and that it has a distinctive voice.
  - v. Dr. Paquette noted that having a separate research funds committee might be more effective and perhaps we should look into transferring the research funds from the FDC to the URC.
  - vi. Dr. Davis noted that if we were to do that, then we should consider giving it a new name because people will associate it with the old URC which had a very specific SACS driven mission that no longer exists. He also suggested that we should explore these possibilities and discuss it more in the future.
  - vii. Dr. Gnoinska noted that the consensus was that we should resist shutting down the URC for now and pursue further information on the different possibilities for future Senate discussion.
- b. Dr. Gnoinska noted that people have asked about what to do in case of a mass shooting and would like to revive training sessions for this.
- c. There will be an open educational resource workshop at AUM on March 2. It's free but registration is required.

- d. Dr. Gnoinska brought up for future consideration the problem of faculty senators not attending because of class conflicts. She also brought up the idea of pushing for the faculty senate president to receive a course release.

Adjourned at 4:45 pm.