

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

Plenary Session

January 19, 2022 –Zoom 3:00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Faculty and Guests

Adams, Jamie

Amare, Nicole

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.

- μ The contact tracing team is following the current the CDC guidelines/recommendations about quarantine and isolation (which on a decision and is based on the individual. Faculty has asked for 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 dashboard at <https://www.southalabama.edu/coronavirus/covid19-dashboard.html>
- μ Testing on campus will be moved from the Civic Center and the theater building. Capacity is good.
- μ Discretion among faculty and department chair will be the procedure for accommodations for teaching Deans have been asked to be flexible and kind in making accommodations as needed.
- μ The link for home COVID tests from the government was shared by one of the senators at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>
- External Salary Survey-
 - μ Ms. Shepard reported the salary survey is complete. We are waiting for the final report to be shared with us. Ms. Shepard and Dr. Kent are going to meet with Dr. Kent to look at how any funds should be distributed to bring lowest paid faculty up to percentage goals.
 - μ The budget appropriations in the budget for the salary adjustment.
 - μ Any adjustments that are made will be retro active from January 1st.
- Provost Search-
 - μ Ms. Shepard reports that the same search firm that was used for the presidential search to head up the search for the provost position. Faculty asked to look out for a survey that will be sent out to all faculty from faculty what they consider as important characteristics for the filling this position.
- Budget Updates-
 - μ The Alabama Legislature convened its 2022 regular session on January 10th. During the regular session, legislators will vote on various pieces of legislation including the FY23 General Fund and Education Trust Fund budgets.
 - μ Regarding the budgets, the General Fund is up 11.5% and the Education Trust Fund (ETF) at 16% in FY21. The 20-year average increase is typically around 3% to 4%. The Governor has recommended a minimum increase of at least 6.5% for universities with USA receiving more than last year.
- Critical Race Theory Legislation-
 - μ Ms. Shepard reports that the FS excomm have been working with Mr. Lawkis and met with him multiple times regarding faculty concerns about academic freedom.
- Strategic Planning
 - μ Efforts have been paused until the new president was on board and a draft was made.

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- μ A motion was made to suspend the rules to conduct an electronic vote. A poll was taken and 39 yeas, 1 nay, and 2 abstentions.
 - μ Title IX 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 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.
- o Chair Review Policy
 - μ Dr. Spencer reported that the committee received a request to update the policy to clarify the process for department chair review where a review report will only be shared with the dean and with the department under review.
 - μ Ms. Shepard reported that the FS needs to make revisions or vote on the policy. Recommendations were made for any faculty suggestions for revisions to be sent via email to the chair of the committee, Edmund Spencer to take back to the committee.
- o University Planning & Development Committee Chair Nomination & Election
 - μ Ms. Shepard reports that we need to fill a position on the FS election committee and the Faculty Development & Planning Chair position as a senator stepped down. The floor was open for nominations.
 - μ Thomas Shaw, Debra Swanzy, and Sinead Chadhain were nominated. Candidates have until Friday 1/21/22 to consider accepting or declining nomination. If elected, this person will serve until the end of the year. Nominations were closed and the majority approved suspending the rules to electronically vote for or elect one of the nominees for office.
- o Critical Race Theory Legislation-
 - μ Ms. Shepard asked the senate if there were any objections to discussing the "Resolution from the Faculty Senate on the Bill Before the Alabama Legislature" since it was not included on the approved agenda. Vandewaa discussed a penalty clause in the bill for any educational institution that uses divisive concepts (race, gender, sex, etc.). The FS drafted this resolution to take a stand on the legislation.
 - μ A motion was made to vote on the resolution. A majority of 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.
- o Letter of No Confidence to the Board of Trustees-
 - μ A letter was recommended by the FS in the November meeting regarding concerns with the process for the presidential search. A poll was conducted to consent whether the senate approves discussion on the letter.
 - μ A majority of 23 yeas, 8 nays, and 6 abstentions of FS members discussed the draft of the letter and voting will take place at the meeting on February 2, 2022, at 3:10pm.

- o Other:
 - o None

Meeting Adjournment: ~~MMSA 5m~~

Minutes transcribed by Donna Copeland