

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting
September 19, 2008
9:00 a.m., 307 Goodwyn Hall

Present: Gehling, Newman, Powell, Knigge, Finley, C. Ligeon, Buskist, Gilchrist, Dyal (for Morton), Krawczyzynski, Borton, Hamilton, Bilotta (for Rhodes), Jones, Ioimo, Tidwell, Bailey (for Gantt), Veres

Absent: Foxx, Lewis, Warren

Guests: Steven Arnold, Jan Bulman, Keivan Deravi, Jennifer Dyess, Lee Farrow, Tuval Foguel, Blake Gerard, Steven Gish, Sheila Mehta, Bradley Moody, Evan Moore, Larry Mullins, Kevin Osborne, Rhodes Peele, Jeff Periatt, Matthew Ragland, Glen Ray, Michael Fitzsimmons, Susan Salter, Sue Thomson, Tom Vocino, Wyatt Wells, Barbara Weidemann, Doris Willis, Pete Zachar

I. Senate Business

- A. Minutes from the June meeting were unanimously approved.
- B. The next Senate meeting is October 3, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in 204 Goodwyn Hall, with the Faculty Council Meeting following at 10:30 a.m. in Moore Hall (Auditorium).

II. Administrative Reports

A. Dr. John Veres, Chancellor

- 1. Dr. Veres reviewed some of the points from the Convocation. The cut of \$28.8 million from the state budget for education, the largest such cut in state history, poses a challenge for the university's budget. This represents a cut of some 9.62% (approximately \$3 million) from the AUM budget. Proration is anticipated in the range of 3% - 5%. We currently have a \$1.7 million proration reserve and a \$381,000 tuition reserve. However, we also have not yet received August and September checks from the state, so we don't know if we will receive the full 2007/08 budgeted amount. So we are transferring part of next fiscal year's budget to this year's budget, helping us this year, but hurting next year if the money doesn't come through from the state.
- 2. Renovations on West Housing are anticipated to cost \$2 million. They will begin this year but may have to be phased in as there is a limited amount of bond money available for use.
- 3. Ways to address the cuts: Administrative Services has been dissolved. Outreach and Athletics will each be cut some 10%. As a separate budget item, the Seamless Admissions estimated net for Fall 2008 is \$222,000. Students in the program appear to be struggling in mathematics so we may have an added expense of about \$15,000 for additional services. The income from the international Chinese students is split 2/3 to support Chinese international student programs and 1/3 goes into the general fund. Currently we have one person, termed an advocate, who is splitting duties between international students and seamless admission students. Scholarships for these Chinese students right now are from private donations; but, some future scholarships will come from the 2/3. Other than for these Chinese students, all international student revenue goes into the general fund. Overall we have an approximately \$404,000 to the good over projected revenue from increased credit hour production through increased enrollment in the two areas of Chinese students and Seamless Admission
- 4. If second half-term enrollment is similar to last year's, enrollment will be up approximately 2.5%. The enrollment figures will not be frozen until October 24.
- 5. Dr. Veres asks the Senate to solicit and submit nominations for a representative to the Higher Education Partnership Board of Directors.

6. Drs. Warren and Veres report that the School of Education has revised its policy and transient student form to decrease the likelihood that the policy on mathematics courses being taken at other universities will not be violated beyond their two documented cases over the last several years.
7. We have now hired a Vice Chancellor for Diversity. Dr. Timothy Spraggins brings a great deal of experience from his current position at DePaul University including work with international students.
8. Dr. Veres stated that Dr. Warren is taking responsibility for the violation of handbook regulations in the appointing/hiring of Informatics Institutes Director. Dr. Veres as chief administrator officially apologizes. Dr. Veres does believe that this was an honest mistake. Dr. Sahinoglu told Dr. Veres that he was surprised that he was appointed to mathematics rather than informatics. Dr. Veres has worked with Dr. Sahinoglu to come to a solution. He proposes a termed administrative appointment (which usually does not exceed five years) only to be changed to a full faculty position if Dr. Sahinoglu receives tenure in an academic unit at AUM.
9. Dr. Veres reports being distraught by receiving alerts that untenured faculty should send tenured colleagues to this meeting to avoid any retaliation for any actions taken, which might affect tenure. He insists that it is a faculty's right, as well as a first amendment right, to "burn him in effigy" if so desired.
10. Dr. Veres sends congratulations to the School of Liberal Arts for a marvelous night with AUM's new Weil Fellow. Tonight is also the Blue Jean Ball for which the School of Nursing deserves recognition as a leader in Advancement. Dr. Veres is pleased with the money coming in by private donations.
11. Wyatt Wells asked if the costs for the international Chinese students program included the set-up costs. This is not the case according to Dr. Veres. The expenditures neither included these one time set-up costs nor the "ice breaking" trips for faculty.
12. The question was raised whether the Informatics Institute Director constitutes a staff appointment; and if so, if the program was not successful in 2-3 years would we be able to terminate the position? Response: It depends on the terms of the contract. In five days we should hear from the committee. If it doesn't go through, Dr. Veres stated he will be caught between a contract lawsuit and a handbook violation. He will choose the handbook violation and force the appointment in the mathematics department. Discussion continued about the legal implication of a contract change with Dr. Sahinoglu.
13. Dr. Foguel asked if Dr. Sahinoglu never understood the appointment to be in mathematics, why he attended the mathematics department meeting where he was introduced as a new department member. Dr. Veres stated that Dr. Warren's intent was to appoint him to the mathematics department. The appointment letter could be interpreted differently. Dr. Sahinoglu reported that he attended the mathematics meeting as Director of the Institute, and met with Dr. Goodson in the same capacity. Dr. Veres continued commenting on the language of the Faculty Handbook, for example in the area of department head vs. chair. Other discussion was pursuant. Dr. Veres notes the handbook as a legal document is woefully lacking. The bottom line is that Dr. Warren takes responsibility for violating the handbook. Dr. Veres just indicates that a rewrite would help limit problems in the future.

B. Dr. D'Linell Finley, Advisor to the Auburn Board of Trustees

1. The Board approved the strategic plan and authorized the chancellor to move ahead with landscape improvement in anticipation of future building programs. Dr. Veres expounded on these plans both immediate landscape plans and anticipated building projects. For example, as part of the master plan, AUM Drive may include an in-out close to the water tower to streamline community traffic. Jackie Roberts has the master plans.
2. Our tennis students were recognized in a Board resolution for winning the national championships.

C. Dr. Bob Gehling, President of the Faculty Senate

1. The president of the Auburn Faculty Senate has asked Dr. Gehling to attend faculty senate meetings at Auburn. Fortunately they do not conflict with his teaching schedule and he recently attended his first meeting there.

III. Committee Reports and Presentations

None

IV. Old Business

A. Dr. Jeff Periatt brought a report, "for information only," that in going back to the website, they have found errors in both Fall and Spring semesters. The document he distributed is trying to fix those errors. When asked for a mass e-mail, Dr. Periatt indicated that he does not have that authority; however, Dr. Joan Powell offered to send it as a function of Faculty Senate. After some disgruntled comments, Dr. Finley commended Dr. Periatt's work since April of last year in straightening out most of these types of problem. Dr. Mullins asked if he had any assurance from the administration that the calendar would not change at whim. Dr. Periatt responded by describing his process and effort in trying to correct problems.

B. Dr. Gehling distributed the updated list of Senate committees. There are still some openings which will need to be filled soon. Please check details on the list within your schools, particularly phone numbers which are harder to check than e-mail addresses.

V. New Business

A. Dr. Gehling introduced the upcoming resolution by describing how the process began. Dr. Veres handed Dr. Gehling a letter from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) concerning the position in informatics. Since Dr. Gehling helped form the informatics institute, he passed the letter to Dr. Joe Newman to investigate. He also preferred to have a committee investigate the facts and then bring them to the Senate.

1. Dr. Newman thanked all of the people on the handbook committee for their work and meeting: Ms. Cam Hamilton, Dr. Donna Wolfinger, Dr. Brad Moody, Dr. Judy Solomon, (Dr. William Foxx, absent due to family death), and Dr. Jeff Barksdale, ex-officio member. Dr. Newman went to many people on campus and talked to them about the issue ahead of time. Reading from the currently unapproved minutes of the committee: "Joe Newman gave a brief history of how the meeting came about along with the background of the two proposals (untentured faculty on the senate and the mathematics faculty appointment). Tuval Foguel asked that the faculty appointment issue be discussed first due to his time constraint. Joe Newman asked if the committee thought a senate resolution was necessary. The committee voted unanimously that a resolution was necessary. Joe Newman then presented each part of the faculty appointment resolution for comment and vote. Several changes were made, and two parts of the draft resolution were eliminated. At each step, committee members voted unanimously for each change."

The resolution (distributed at the senate meeting; see attached file) was made strong to emphasize the level of faculty concern over this issue.

2. Dr. Newman points out that this was only one flashpoint of faculty concerns. Faculty are very disturbed over this. He also commented that everything we say and do here is public information so he requested that all act rationally and objectively; do what needs to be done and move forward. Dr. Newman believes there are issues not fully resolved in the past; for example, should untentured faculty members even serve in the faculty senate? There was general agreement that untentured faculty should not serve as officers in the Senate. Dr. Veres agreed.

3. Dr. Newman acknowledged and welcomed AAUP members in attendance at the meeting. He commented further that there are misunderstandings on the appointment/hiring issue as well as others and there is mistrust between faculty and administration.

4. Dr. Mike Gilchrist asked if the Senate would vote on the proposal today. Response: Yes unless it is postponed according to senate rules. Concern: Dr. Gilchrist spoke that he was not aware of this issue until yesterday about 4:00 and did not have time to get a feel for opinions from his constituents.

5. Dr. Carel Ligeon agreed about the timing of the vote and also asked, what are these other issues? Response: There are too many to talk about. Dr. Ligeon expressed that it is unfair then to go after this issue. Dr. Newman

responded that the concern is that we need to make clear the statement that "faculty hire faculty," so that academic integrity is maintained.

6. Drs. Knigge and Krawczynski and Mr. Tim Bailey proposed that we hear direct testimony so that the senate has the background to draw upon for the resolution.

7. Dr. Mike Fitzsimmons stated that on August 6, the AAUP had a meeting with the chancellor and was informed about the informatics position. The committee asked that procedure be followed in the appointment. The chancellor passed it off as a given. Several days later it was clear that procedures had not been followed. The letter was then written to the chancellor, and the chancellor referred it to the senate. The AAUP did not mean to make it public. While Dr. Fitzsimmons appreciates the Chancellor's apology greatly, he is disturbed with any implication that previous violations of procedure might make this violation less important.

8. Dr. Tuval Foguel reported that he was asked to meet with the informatics committee and asked to lunch with the candidate under consideration, but that he was not asked for his opinion. At the July 11th meeting of the mathematics department with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor, Dr. Foguel expressed concern about the lack of graduate hours in mathematics for one of the informatics candidates and asked Dr. Veres about meeting SACS requirements. Dr. Veres responded that he was not a fool. Dr. Barksdale came to Dr. Foguel's office four days after the appointment and congratulated him on the new Distinguished Professor in Mathematics. Dr. Warren e-mailed Dr. Foguel and asked if procedures were followed with Dr. Lawal's appointment. He responded yes, that Dr. Ritvo even sent a copy of page 41 of the handbook with the request. Dr. Foguel told Dr. Warren that some mathematics faculty were very disturbed that procedure had not been followed. Later in a meeting, Dr. Warren said this was an obscure paragraph in the handbook. Dr. Foguel found it unusual that she wasn't involved in a hire in her 35 years at AUM. He asserts that the Senate needs to make a statement about choosing faculty and that any change in the position does not change what happened previously.

9. Dr. Wyatt Wells pointed out that the dean was not informed until three days after the department head. This could have created a terrible precedent, even if it is just a big foul up. He believes it is important to put something in writing so that such a precedent not be set.

10. Dr. Tom Vocino agrees with Dr. Wells and personally commends the handbook committee for what they have done.

11. Dr. Tom Borton exerts that an apology hardly excuses this. He would be more impressed if the Vice Chancellor had made the apology. A better step would be for the Vice Chancellor to step down as unable to accurately look out for faculty. How do we know that it won't happen again?

12. Dr. Ralph Ioimo agrees with Dr. Borton and sees this as a repeated issue.

13. Dr. Tuval Foguel made an additional point about the apology. While the current apology is appreciated, in Dr. Warren's meeting in early September she did not apologize. Instead she said it had been his responsibility to inform her of the correct procedure, after which she commented on the obscurity of the paragraph.

14. Dr. Bradley Moody stated that he is unwilling for Dr. Warren to take all of the blame. The Chancellor should also take responsibility. "The buck stops here."

B. A motion and a second were made to postpone the vote until the next Senate meeting.

1. Dr. Carel Ligeon asked to see a copy of the original AAUP letter. After discussion it was determined that turning the letter over to the Senate changed it from private communication to public and it could be made accessible to senators.

2. A motion and second for an amendment to the original motion was made for ballots to be distributed at the end of this meeting to be returned to Dr. Joan Powell at her office not later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2008.

The amendment was voted on and passed and the original amendment was voted on and also passed, postponing the vote as specified in the amendment.

C. In further new business Dr. Borton asked about requesting that administrators leave after reports so that senate discussion can be free. Dr. Gehling reported that he had already discussed this with Dr. Veres and that it met with his approval.

VI. Announcements

A. Joan Powell asked that all guests be certain to sign the guest roll and that senator substitutes please give her their name before leaving.

VII. Adjournment

A. Adjourned at 11:10 a.m.