

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE
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MINUTES OF MEETING #561, 22 OCTOBER 2015
APPROVED 19 NOVEMBER 2015

Present: *Ivey MacKenzie, Eric Fong, Anna Devlin, Diana Bell, Joseph Taylor, Irena Buksa, Anne Marie Choup, Eric Seemann, Kyle Knight, Michael Banish, Ramon Cerro, Richard Fork, Kader Frendi, Ken Zuo, Ann Bianchi, Azita Amiri, Marlena Primeau, Cheryl Emich, Lenora Smith, Luciano Matzkin, John Shriver, Peter Slater, Tim Newman, Ming Sun*

Absent with proxy: *Babak Shotorban, Mark Lin, Casey Norris, Debra Moriarity, Jeff Weimer, Grant Zhang*

Absent without proxy: *Wai Mok, Xuejing Xing, John Schnell, David Stewart, Joe Conway, Christine Sears, Carolyn Sanders, Nick Jones, Ying-Cheng Lin, B. Earl Wells, James Swain, Monica Beck, Larry Carey, Udaysankar Nair, Vladimir Florinski, Monica Dillihunt*

Guests: *Provost Curtis*

- Faculty Senate President Kader Frendi called the meeting to order at 12:34 pm.
- Approval of Faculty Senate Meeting #560 Minutes from September 24, 2015
Diana Bell **motions to approve** Minutes 560. Michael Banish seconds the motion.
Ayes carry the motion. No oppositions.
Motion to approve Faculty Senate Minutes 560 passes.
- FSEC Report from October 15, 2015
Tim Newman **moves to accept**. Eric Seemann seconds the motion.
Ayes across the room. No oppositions.
Motion to accept Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report October 15, 2015 passes.
- Administration Reports
- ❖ Provost Curtis
Recruiting
President Altenkirch is recruiting in Knoxville today. He has already been to Kentucky and Tennessee. I went to Atlanta, Chattanooga, and Nashville. Next week I will be going to the Carolinas. The week before Thanksgiving I will be going to Mobile, Jackson, Mississippi, and Tuscaloosa.

Admissions

Our Admissions is working hard to recruit and bring students to campus. November 7 and November 21 are discovery days (another name for open house). We are asking the colleges to open their doors and provide students with the opportunity to see faculty at work. The deans should contact

members to participate. I encourage you to participate. Students with very high ACT scores are interested in UAH. We need to remember their ages as we work with them and aid in their maturity; help them grow up as we help them learn.

Merit increase letters

The timing is late this year so it will show up on October 23rd paycheck, but it actually started on September 30th. We had to wait until census day to see our enrollment so that we knew if the funds were there for the merit increase. Tuition and fees make a very big difference in what we can do here. 7,866 students were reported on census day. We knew that that number supported the merit increase. That is only for the Fall semester. We need to retain our students from semester to semester. Registration is now open—encourage your students to register and come back.

Unofficial Data (2015 Comparison Data)

This data has not been reported to anyone so it is unofficial. These are announcements that institutions have made from “This is Insider” articles. Ranked the top 105 smartest public colleges in America by taking the ACT scores and converting them to SAT scores so all scores are in SAT format. Then, they ranked the institutions from 1 to 99. There are 105 because some rankings contained multiple institutions. Number 37 is the University of Colorado-Boulder, Auburn, and UAH.

From 2012 to 2014 we had the same percentage graduation rate as Auburn. UAH graduation rate: 48% in 2013, 46% in 2014. This year we are up to 49%. When you look at the Pell Grant (PG) data you will see that our freshmen had a smaller proportion than our total population. The PG data is at 25% and is higher than Auburn’s.

Our total enrollment is 7,866. 6,000 of those students are undergraduates. At the University of Alabama, the total enrollment is up this year at 37,100. Their freshmen enrollment is up to over 7,000. We have increased our freshmen enrollment at UAH to 45%. UAB’s total enrollment is 18,333, which includes everyone (medical students, too). They have a 1,621 freshmen enrollment, which went down. The football issue affected them. At Auburn, a few years ago the Board decided for enrollment to remain at 25,000, so they raised it there and then held it there. The problem with that is alumni’s children were not being accepted. So now they are over 27,000, with 4,920 freshmen. UAH went up in graduate enrollment at the same level as undergraduates.

Average freshmen ACT score is up from 26.7 to 27.1. Average high school GPA is the same as last year. Honors enrollment is 230. Freshmen enrollment from out of state rose from 15% to 26%, which is probably one of the reasons our PG rate is lower. Auburn’s and Alabama’s ACT scores went up; Alabama’s increased from 26 to 26.6. Auburn’s increased from 27 to 27.3. We are bringing in students with higher academic credentials. The average high school GPA is similar among Alabama, Auburn, and UAB. Freshmen from out of state impact revenue because of the out of state tuition. Auburn out of state freshmen comprise over 40% of their freshmen enrollment. When we recruit out of state students, we are recruiting students who can afford the out of state tuition. Logically, the higher the out of state students, the lower the PG recipients. 64% of freshmen students are out of state at Alabama. Their PG recipient number is lower, too. This is unofficial data. UAB’s data is from their website. The other numbers are from articles.

There is an **Appreciate Advising conference** this afternoon at 2:00 pm.

SGA Resolution

The president received a Resolution regarding grading from the SGA. It is asking us to think through our process in terms of plus/minus. It says either to have everyone do plus/minus with a rubric or we should all go to neither. They are asking us to be consistent with all of our classes. Please give that your thoughtful consideration. They put in a lot of work on this. The pre-med students prompted this because they get quality points for plus/minus upon review of transcript for entry into medical schools.

Class Schedules

The current afternoon class timeframe is very popular on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We looked at scheduling and found that it affects parking. Some slots of the day allow no parking whereas other slots of the day provide lots of parking. The president is looking at this to figure out a broader range of times for classes. We also know that it is difficult to get to Tech Hall from the other end of campus in 15 minutes safely. So we are looking at safety as well. Brent Wren will come up with a proposal. How can we utilize our resources, parking lots, and classrooms, effectively while ensuring that students are safe crossing campus?

Graduation Rate

- ❖ We want to get to 56% graduation rate, so set some targets for yourselves. We have a 6-year graduation rate. So we are talking to parents about the fiscal model and block tuition, which goes into full effect in Fall 2016, to help that.

Retention

We lose so many students between the transition from freshman to sophomore. Other institutions do not. This is a big issue with retention. We need to be thinking about that and figure out why.

- Ramon Cerro: There is a correlation between students that leave and their SAT scores. Has anyone done that type of study or looked at the statistics?
- Provost: There is some literature on it. We have not done a direct study, though. When you look at the Honors College cohort, it has a higher graduation rate. It was 70% in 2014, which needs to be around 90%. I have already talked to Dr. Wilkerson about that.

Tim Newman suggests that the administration do a deep dive into data and find correlations between prolonged graduation and other properties. Maybe the PG is a place to start. He recommends that UAH does not publish this, but do the study to give a story to tell to concerned parents/students. He thinks UAH would look very competitive against other institutions.

- Provost Curtis asked Tim Newman to help her with that and send her an email with possible starting points/studies. She said that cohorts give insight. Athletes do very good while Greek-life does not. She asked the faculty to think about what correlations they would do based on their personal relationship with students.

➤ Officer Reports

- ❖ President Kader Frendi:

IIDR Cancellation

One month ago, I mentioned the IIDR cancellation. I went back to Ray after our Senate meeting and asked if we could fix it. He said it is a one-time thing, only being done this year. He stressed the need to write more inter-college and inter-campus proposals. That is where he wants the money right now. He left the door open on IIDR if finances look better.

4-Day Summer Workweek

Last year, President Altenkirch presented a 4-day workweek over summer. At the Executive Committee meeting last week he announced to all of us that we are going to go back to a 5-day workweek this summer. However, since 80% of the staff are in support of the 4-day workweek, he is opening the door to use that workweek if they want. The choice is up to the individual units to decide if they want to take Mondays or Fridays off. He was also taking into account faculty concerns on this. I emailed him and had a one on one meeting on this. There is a concern among junior faculty and graduate students that to have this type of block for them is disadvantageous. I do not think the savings were substantial enough to justify closing. We are in a resource park and all surrounding businesses are open on Friday but we are closed—that does not send a good message. It comes back to the use of classrooms that the provost just mentioned. On Friday, the parking lots are empty, but the students are missing, not the faculty and staff. The impression that the parking lot is empty is inaccurate. I am glad that the president went back to 5-day workweek.

SGA Resolution

We do have the Grading Policy Resolution sent by the SGA. It is not up for discussion here right now, but we had the idea to go ahead and send it to Undergraduate Scholastic Affairs Committee and Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. It was sent only to the administration, not to us. However, we need to look at this because it concerns us. These two committees can come up with a bill in response to this.

Policies

A month ago there was still confusion about the policies in front of us. Both the Tenure and Modified Duties policies are in response to our Family Leave Bill that was sent to administration. Their response came back to us as policies.

- Provost Curtis: It is not really a policy, but an outline of parameters to facilitate discussion. I want recommendations from Committees on all of the policies back soon so we can discuss them.

Faculty Handbook

We are moving forward with the Faculty Handbook. We are beginning to realize that it is a big job, but we are giving it our best shot to get it done this year. However, we also need to be flexible with some changes. We want any changes from us to be submitted by the February Board of Trustees meeting.

- Diana Bell thinks it would be helpful to have the Faculty Handbook searchable online.

❖ President-Elect Michael Banish:

Response to Policies

We had a meeting last Thursday and decided that the best response to policies from the administration is in Memo form. The memo lists who reviewed the policy and their concerns along with possible recommendations. For the Substantive Change Policy: as submitted, the policy was to report changes to SACSCOC and not as a policy to determine how changes are planned and approved. We asked to delete a redundant sentence. There is an amended version of the policy attached to the Memo. We would like to ask for your agreement on our response and on the way we are going to do these responses.

- Tim Newman: I think if we have minor changes then this is fine. I think if it is something more substantive then it needs a formal bill to go through our Senate procedure. On this one, we are not necessarily opposed to the change—I think it is just asking to separate the policy.

- Provost Curtis made a suggestion: since this policy is required by SACSCOC and UAH could not submit the report without this policy, she asked if she could go back and find out the actual requirements of the policy (what it states UAH has to do) before the Senate strikes it.
- Michael Banish: The Senate had four bills on this.
- Provost Curtis: SACS does not recognize that.

Everyone is in agreement with this Memo procedure.

Michael Banish asks for a vote on this Memo.

Diana Bell **calls for a vote** on the Memo format as a response to the policies sent by the administration. Azita Amiri seconds this.

The Senate was in agreement. No oppositions.

Ramon Cerro: Policies like this one, which are personnel, are in a different space than the others. We should probably have a different way of treating each type of policy. If we have a policy and a Faculty Handbook issue, which one prevails?

- Michael Banish: I think the Faculty Handbook prevails since it is approved by the Board of Trustees and policies are not. I need the committees to think about a memo in a structure like this one for easy review in Senate. It is a daunting task otherwise for me to capture everyone's opinion on this accurately.

Michael Banish thanks the Provost for opening up the discussion on graduation rates. Background: There are published reports out there that say if a student comes to a university and their family makes more than 150% of the average income in the state, they will graduate with at least an 80% rate. If a student is in a family that has less than 150% of the average income of the state, they have less than a 10% graduation. This severely affects retention and graduation rates. A lot of students assume they are below the average state income. There needs to be a discussion about how to improve each class of students who comes it. We need to move forward without neglecting anyone. We cannot expect PG students to graduate in the next 4 years according to this data. We are here for the students.

- Ramon Cerro: Students should not be classified according to their family income. We need to take a cohort from each year. From a political point of view it will be better not to classify students by income.
- Michael Banish: This is just according to the literature that I have seen. But we need to be thinking about this. If you come across a report on something like this, share it.

Luciano Matzkin: I think there are a lot of bright people here. It would be great if we could all have access to the data so we can analyze it and bring it forward for discussion. We need to have data on income, geography, etc.

- Michael Banish does not know that the faculty has all of that data.
- Luciano Matzkin would like to have the university's data.
- Provost Curtis: There are various security issues with that. We are just trying to even get to letting one or two more people get to the data. We are currently going through a number of security ways to do that. I do not think we can just open up the books with this security. If we can get the parameters that you want/need with the data, I can go to IR and get that for you. But we cannot open the data for everyone to use. I do not even have access to all of the data; very few people do. That is to secure students and their private info

➤ Committee Reports

❖ Handbook Revision Committee Chair, Tim Newman:

This is a process that has been going on for a really long time. It started with our prior provost when he got here. There was a Handbook Committee in the Senate then guided by the provost for two years, but it ran out of gas. We took what they had and ran it through the Senate. We spent about a year discussing the comments. Then, we sent it to the administration a couple years ago. Some of it (chapters 1 through 6 and Appendices A and B) has come back from administration and the committee is now looking at it. There is a key section in chapter 7 that has not come back yet. That deals with tenure and promotion so I imagine we will have a discussion on that. So, we are only discussing what we have. In chapters 1-6, there are two fundamental areas where we have concerns. Our concerns include feedback from faculty members as well. We have also talked about our by-laws, which are inserted in our Handbook as Appendix L. The provost has read through our by-laws. I had some questions that we talked about. Questions about the structure and operation of the Senate.

Issues:

- Chair: In Appendix B of our handbook, there is a statement near the end that talks about the removal of a chair. If a chair is to be removed, it will be done with concurrence of a majority of the faculty. What we sent forward had that statement. What we got back does not. There is a sentence that says a chair serves at the pleasure of their dean. This creates some disparity between the chair and faculty. Some faculty believe this creates a different paradigm for the chair (boss model versus leader model). There is a concern by the faculty that we are moving more towards this headship position. We are also looking at how other schools appoint and maintain chairs. That has been informative for us.
Under our current Senate by-laws, the only administration who can serve on the Senate is chairs. Anyone above the chair position cannot serve on the Senate (i.e., deans, associate deans, center directors, etc.). They are not eligible for Senate service. If this change to chair is made, we need to think about how this affects our Senate. We also need to all understand how Handbook changes work. This body must approve every change to the Handbook or it will not be made.
 - Ramon Cerro: This is an issue that is so important and crucial; perhaps we should get an opinion from the other faculty.
 - Tim Newman: We welcome any and all feedback.
- Unit dissolution: A few years ago, there was a discussion regarding closing some units and merging some units. Faculty became concerned about this so we created a realignment and restructuring report. We wanted a policy establishing merging and dissolution of a unit. All other institutions in our system have a policy on that. We sent those bills forward, but they were not accepted by the previous provost. For the Handbook revision, we put forward a statement (see attached). The text in black is what we sent forward. The green text was pulled out and the red text was inserted. We need to think about re-training, salary, etc. for faculty who are moved into a merging unit. We have a problem with the removal of a statement and the insertion of another. Every 5 years, there is a review of the unit. Then the administration makes the decision if the unit continues or not. The concern of this committee is that this takes tenure and almost makes it a term appointment (i.e., your tenure is good until the next review of your unit). Our tenure becomes a concern due to this statement. These changes to the Faculty Handbook change the nature of faculty rights and responsibilities. This is a gross mistake for administration to put this in our Handbook. It has potential repercussions for future hiring, as well.
 - Ramon Cerro: AAUP guidelines say a comprehensive review must be done, plus the faculty in a dissolving unit should be given the opportunity to join another unit. The university should do everything possible to keep a faculty member when a unit is dissolved. These policies are good or bad depending on who is in administration and who is going to enforce

these policies. What will protect us if we have another administration from several years ago?

- ❖ Personnel Committee Chair, Ramon Cerro:
We were given four policies to look at. There were a lot of overlapping, contradictions, and things in these policies that were not according to what the Faculty Handbook says. We ask the Senate to reject these policies that were sent to us and try to take those four policies and make them compatible to what is in the Handbook or what should be in the Handbook. We were suggested to take two of the policies and put them into one to make them compatible. We are meeting next week to look at these two policies in order to make them compatible.
 - Kader Frendi: This is a place where we can make immediate changes to the Handbook if needed.
- ❖ Undergraduate Scholastic Affairs Committee Chair, Eric Seemann: We have reviewed one application for bankruptcy and discussed the feedback on policies from committee members.
- ❖ Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Co-Chair, Azita Amiri: We are receiving new program approvals. We are waiting for the Dean of Continuing and Professional Education to explain them.
- ❖ Finance and Resources Committee Chair, Joseph Taylor: We have extended the deadline for faculty proposals to October 30. We have a healthy number of proposals now. Let your faculty know that the deadline is now next Friday.
- ❖ Faculty and Student Development Committee Chair, Lenora Smith: We have looked at the Communicable Disease Policy. I sent an email back to the committee members to look at other policies. We will get comments together for Mike.
- Lenora Smith **motions to adjourn**. Marlena Primeau seconds the motion.

Faculty Senate Meeting #561 adjourned
October 22, 2015, 1:53 P.M.