

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate Executive Committee/President's Council Meeting
May 8, 2024, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
MCOB 101
MINUTES

Present for FS Executive Committee: Webb (presiding), Wassenaar (Z), Tate, Streeter, Davidson, Turnipseed, Pavelescu, Vrana, Walker, and Getch.

Present for President's Council: Bonner (Z), Kent (Z), Sullivan, Lawkis, Berscheidt, Chronister, Mitchell, Susman, Dukes, Erdmann, and Billingsley.

Old Business:

- **Update on the search for VP for Research & Economic Development**

Pres. Bonner gave some background on changes in USA Administrative offices. There were two title adjustments this past year to better reflect the type of work current administrators were doing. Nick Lawkis was formerly Exec. Director of Government Relations was elevated to Vice President of Government Relations. Michael Chambers was formerly the Associate Vice President for Research and Economic Development was recently named Chief Economic Development Officer and has become a member of the President's Council. Because there is currently a search committee for finding a new Vice President for Research & Economic Development position (replacing retiring Dr. Lynn Chronister), the administration wants to be sure there was someone dedicated to economic development already in place before the new VP comes aboard. Dr. Chambers' position is still within the Research & Economic Development Office and will report directly to the VP.

Dr. Webb, who is on the search committee for the new VP, gave an update on the progress. The top four candidates will be brought on campus for formal interviews the last two weeks of May. The members of the FS Executive Committee will be included in the meetings with the candidates.

- **Timing for Instructor Faculty Salary Survey**

We are in the third year of the three-year review of salary adjustments. Previous work on this did not include compensation for Instructor positions. Dr. Webb asked if there is anything the faculty senate could do to help with the process, and if it would be possible to have a member of the faculty senate to be part of the process as a way of exchanging information. Dr. Kent emphasized the administration's commitment to address the issue. They will be starting the salary survey at the beginning of the spring semester 2025 so they can use the new data from the start of the academic year. They still need to figure out the matrix for the instructor level, since it is not included in the CUPA data. Historically the chair of the Faculty Salaries & Benefits Committee has been involved with the group looking at salary adjustment surveys. Dr. Wassenaar asked for clarification if the new review of salary surveys will be only for instructors, or will it be for all faculty ranks, which includes instructors? Dr. Kent confirmed that it will be for all faculty ranks.

- **Feasibility Study for Fundraising Campaign**

Dr. Webb asked about how faculty can play a role in promoting the new fundraising endeavor. Dr. Sullivan gave an update on where the university is on the campaign. A noted national fundraising company (UCF Fundraising) has been hired for this project. They have already started working with the university on a feasibility study, asking donors, stakeholders, etc. what they want to see as improvements for the university. Stage 1 results are due to be presented at the June Board of Trustees meeting. Some of the capital building projects have been defined (College of Medicine building or Marching Band facility), while some of the projects are fairly broad (such as research and faculty development).

Pres. Bonner welcomes faculty involvement in the fundraising activities, but cautioned that using any money from the one-time money for bolstering faculty raised would not be the best use of it since that would require a continuous inflow of new monies. If we should exceed our goal of \$500m, we would certainly look for input from faculty on the best use of the additional funds. Both he and Dr. Kent have been working hard on increasing enrollment as the best way to increase the overall budget. Dr. Kent emphasized that when soliciting funds from donors, we would be obligated to use those funds as designated by the donors. Pres. Bonner mentioned that the university is currently working on a request from a donor to support an endowed deanship in the Business College. Dr. Wassenaar wanted to look at what is happening now with regards to what the people of the community are asking that could match the research that is occurring on campus. This might provide an opportunity for endowing a faculty

position whose research would focus on the needs of the community. It could also fund scholarships or internships that would benefit the students as well as the community.

Mr. Berscheidt went over refreshing the USA brand, which would be all about telling our story that would resonate with potential students. During this summer the university will start the implementation stage with putting out new banners on campus and new billboards and commercials. The feedback of the survey that Marketing did in the initial phase of the project was very positive regarding the university. There is a 50-slide powerpoint presentation that summarizes the survey's result which Marketing is willing to share.

New Business:

- **Potential calendar disruptions due to football schedule**

Dr. Kent will be working with Mr. Erdmann regarding the football schedule in the fall. She will get something out by this summer via messages posted on the university email. Dr. Wassenaar requested that we get the information by the plenary meeting next week so it can be shared with the caucus leaders, who can then share it with their deans and other faculty members, since this would be helpful to know in case they need to adjust their syllabi for conflicts with games.

- **Faculty turnover tracking and Exit Interviews for departing faculty**

Dr. Webb asked if the administration is currently tracking why faculty members are leaving USA. Dr. Kent responded that we had been doing this historically but since COVID, it has not been as consistent. There have been 3 surveys in the last 5 years, but will need to revisit the methodology with the different colleges to make sure we are all on the same page so we will have valuable data.

- **Workload study**

The Executive Committee was interested in any feedback on the Workload Study that was recently done. Last fall, Dr. Chronister asked Dr. Webb to work with Matthew Reichert on the College Research Council (CRC) and come up with some type of representation of actual faculty workload levels. Dr. Chronister explained that the HERD (Higher Education Research & Development) study was trying to study how to relate faculty workload with research. They determined that there wasn't a really good way to extrapolate it. One of the reasons the group was interested in solving this problem was that workload is a factor in determining faculty year-end scores. The CRC is currently looking at methods of tracking work load in the various colleges. Turnipseed worked with

faculty senate caucus leaders in getting useable information for this tracking. What they discovered is that each college is so different in how they measure workload that the tracking would have to be on a college-by-college method, rather than on a university level. Dr. Wassenaar pointed out the inequity in work load can contribute to faculty dissatisfaction and problems with retention. Consideration should also be given to developing a means for systematic auditing of work load. Dr. Pavelescu wondered if work load should also be a consideration when looking at the different requirements for R1 vs R2 status. Dr. Chronister did indicate that the draft document about R1 status does have a section of work load consideration.

- **Update on the tentative enrollment for this fall semester**

Dr. Kent gave a brief update on this subject. Looking at the numbers for registration for campus orientation for the upcoming year shows that registration is up over the same date from last year. Housing registration number is also higher than in previous the year. FAFSA problems have made it difficult to gauge how many students will eventually enroll since students are waiting on their aid information.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Minutes compiled by V. Tate, Faculty Senate Secretary