

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate Plenary Meeting
May 15, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
MCOB 265
MINUTES

Present (In-house): Adams, Baughn, Black, Brower, Davidson, S. Davis, Dzwonkowski, Ellzie, Godang, Hauff, Henning, Hudson, Khan, McDonald, Miguad, Ní Chadhain, Pavelescu, Pfleeger, Rabideau, Richardson, Robertson, Shea, Streeter, Tate, Ter Horst, Thompson, Turnipseed, VandeWaa, Walker, Webb.

Present (Zoom): Cutchen, C. Holliday, N. Holliday, Marass, McMullan, Merritt, Miller, Wassenaar.

Excused: Abeynanda, Bates, Bessette, Brock, Bunch, T. Davis, Donaldson, Ferguson, Fleck, Getch, J. Huang, Kilgo, Lin, Meola, Vrana.

Unexcused: Borchert, Coronado, Gavrilita, Y. Huang, Raczkowski, Sehgal, Shaw, Singh, Stenson, Swoffard, Thomas, Williams.

Guests: Jim Berscheidt, Nick Lawkis, Tracy Cole.

I. Preliminary Business

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm with VP Bret Webb presiding. Quorum was met.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for the April 17th meeting was approved.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda for the May 15th meeting was approved

Guest Speakers:

- *Jim Berscheidt (VP, Marketing & Communications)*—talked about the USA brand refresh
 - When he started the job in Sept. 2022, he did an audit of the job to find out what was working and what needed to be remodeled and what needed to be jettisoned, and what needed to be started.

- The current brand “We Are South” had been around since 2016. The work of the job is divided up into paid (the work of marketing), owned (the product of marketing) and earned (the stories about the university) media.
 - Hired Simpson Scarborough (national marketing service in higher education) to do a brand survey throughout the southern US and in the Midwest.
 - Last summer started to turn off the old brand, to get ready for the new brand which USA is currently working on to finalize in the near future.
 - Some people consider USA as a regional university, but it is time to start thinking of us as a national university, as U.S. News does.
 - Telling the faculty story better, from teaching to research, will be incorporated into the plan for the new refresh.
 - When the plan is ready to go, it will be presented to the university community through townhall meetings, probably during the fall semester.
 - The plan will be utilized in our recruitment plan for new students.
 - Things that will not be changed are: the USA mark, the primary colors (red, white & blue), though there will be some utilization of changes with the secondary and tertiary colors.
 - Auxiliary products, such a power point templates and graphics for social media accounts will be available; Academic Computing will assist in helping departments update their web pages.
- *Nick Lawkis (VP, Governmental Relations)*
 - Works as a lobbyist for the University by 1) developing and maintaining relationships with Federal, State and Local levels; 2) advocating for the passage of legislation positively impacting the University, USA Health and the University community, while also opposing legislation the negatively impact the same groups.
 - During the 2024 Alabama Regular Legislative Session, 843 bill were introduced (265 bills were tracked by USA Governmental Relations, with 20-30 of them were actively engaged by GR) and 324 bills enacted (but not necessarily signed by the governor).
 - Use of Advocacy: Either the Grass Roots vs Grass Tops approach. Grass Roots tackles issues from the bottom up (will of the people) while Grass Tops approach goes to the people at the top of the issue to solve the problem.
 - Went through a long list of legislative bills that were of interest to the university or its community, most of which did not survive the term.
 - Question about the support for Higher Education Day? It seemed to have receive less support since COVID. Should/can the faculty be more involved in traveling to Montgomery?
 - Leadership South was mentioned as a program allowing faculty to learn about other departments within and outside of the university. It is a 9-month program with a limited number of participants (approx. 10 people, who are not

- The proposed revision of policy to the USA Faculty Handbook (passed by the Faculty Senate in February) regarding adding a second ombudsperson is currently before the Council of Academic Deans (CAD). The proposed procedures under discussion in this meeting would put in place the procedures for the Faculty Senate to follow once the changes to the Faculty Handbook are accepted by CAD.
- The procedures would broaden the pool of potential ombudsperson by involving the entire faculty in the nominating of candidates for the position.
- This procedures state that the Faculty Senate will select three finalists from the nominees submitted, which will be given to the University President from which he will choose the new ombudsperson.
- The motion to approve the new procedures for the Faculty Senate Bylaws was approved by a vote of: 35 approved, 0 not approved, and 1 abstention.
- The current ombudsperson is Dr. Jeanne Maes (MCOB). For more information about the responsibilities of the University Ombudsperson is available by a link on the Faculty Senate web page under “Faculty Resources.” Or see:
https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicaffairs/resources/facom_buds424.pdf

III. Committee Reports

- Academic Development & Mentoring Committee: No report.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee: No report.
- Environmental Quality & Sustainability Committee: No report.
- Evaluation Committee: No report.
- Faculty Salary & Benefits Committee: No report.
- Research & Creative Activities Committee: No report.
- Teaching, Learning, & Technology Committee: No report.
- University Planning Committee: No report.
- University Policies & Handbook Committee:
 - There have been some problems, especially in the Arts & Sciences, with faculty that have been awarded with external fellowships. From the

- To get an idea of how widespread this problem is, Dr. Ni Chadhain will be sharing with the caucus leaders a short four-question survey to be sent out to entire college faculty in their respective colleges.
- Anyone who is on an University Committee, or chair of a FS Committee or Caucus Leader that wishes to file a report to be share with the Faculty Senate should go to the FS web site <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/fsenate/> and on the right-hand column, under the heading “Committee Reporting Forms” and submit your report using the assigned link.

IV. Caucus Leaders Reports:

- No reports

V. University Committees Reports:

- No reports

VI. New Business

- Faculty networking platforms for research: “Finding Funding with Pivot”
 - You can connect with opportunities and other people on campus that are doing research by using Pivot. See: <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/research/rdl/funding-opportunities/finding-funding.html>
 - There is another one called scholars@usa See: <https://scholars.proquest.com/gallery/USA>
 - Most faculty should already have a profile on here, if you have ever had any kind of reported scholarly activity. Otherwise, contact Matthew Reichert.
- Replacement of the Chair of the Academic Development & Mentoring Committee
 - We need to find a replacement for Seema Singh who was recently elected the Chair of the Mentoring Committee since she will be leaving the university, effective in July.
 -