



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

Plenary Session

September 15, 2021 – Zoom – 3:00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Faculty and Guests

- Adams, Jamie
- Amare, Nicole
- Bates, Robin, excused
- Bowman, Ashleigh
- Brannan, Lauren
- Broach, Ellen, excused
- Bunch, Jaclyn
- Chadhain, Sinead
- Cleary, John
- Copeland, Donna
- Estis, Julie
- Feldvoss, Joerg
- Fregeau, Laureen
- Gregoricka, Lesley
- Godang Romulus
- Hartin, Charles
- Harmon, Charles
- He, Jia
- Henry, Alison
- Holden, Shelley
- Hossain, Delwar
- Jordan, Kimberly
- Lewis, Drew
- Lin, Mike
- Lynch, Colleen
- Madden, Ellen
- Manders, Jeannette
- Mark, Patricia
- Myers, Charlene
- Raczkowski, Christopher
- Rayner, Jonathan
- Rhinehart, Jason
- Sayner, Sarah
- Shaw, Christy, excused
- Shepard, Beth

- Spencer, Edmund
 - Swanzy, Debra
 - Turnipseed, David
 - Vandewaa, Elizabeth
 - Vrana, Laura
 - Walker, Sean
 - Webb, Brett
 - Weber, David
 - Windham, Mike
 - Woodmansee, Brenda
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- Meeting called to order 3:00 pm
 - Approval of Minutes for 8/18/21 Meeting: Approved
 - Approval of the Minutes for the special session 8/25/21 Meeting: Approved
 - Approval of Agenda for 9/15/21 Meeting: Approved
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- **COVID Updates:**
 - Dr. Julie Estis reported a name change of the committee to better reflect what the Re-opening committee is doing. The name is the COVID-19 Response Team.
 - The committee is looking at a multitude of different factors and high-level expertise to drive the decisions that are made.
 - The committee is doing what it can to provide vaccines available for students and faculty (for walk-ins who want vaccination). Students are taking advantage of the incentives of the parking and \$25 jag cash on their id card for getting vaccinated.
 - Updates to the dashboard were made to reflect the numbers for last week. The numbers are showing a significant positive improvement. Dr. Estis reports that we were down half of what was reported last week of 38 student cases and 4 faculty cases of COVID-19, and a 3.3% positive result from tests completed, which is lower than the community rate.
 - Dr. Estis hosted faculty Q&A:
 - She reported that faculty vaccination rates are 65% from faculty that have submitted self-reported verification of vaccination to HR, which is about 1468 employees. Students who have self-reported and submitted verification is about 2300 this week and those numbers are still coming in.
 - Dr. Estis reports that students that test positive are contacted by the contact tracing team who are calling, texting, and checking in on them. Any testing done outside of the system is not reported on the dashboard.
 - Employee health and wellness nurse follows up with all the employees that test positive.
 - Dr. Estis reported that we are very much a part of the community and trends are compared between the campus and the community. The student virus rate

mirrors the community rate. Employee infection rates are less than the community. Contact tracing team handles each case individually. Close contact exposures are usually with students that room together, eat together, study together.

- Dr. Estis agreed to take all the faculty concerns back to the COVID-19 Response Team for further discussion.

○ **President's Report:**

- BOT Meetings: Beth reports that meetings happen on Thursday and there is a recording on Friday. The meetings are live streamed on the BOT website. Anyone is welcome to watch.
- O & M Budget: The O & M budget is separate from the College of Medicine and the Healthsystem budget. The budget for the year did not include any salary increases for this year. The reason given was that USA took a significant hit in student retention from 76% to 71% this year, which is about 200 students or \$2 million tuition dollars.
 - State appropriations were up this year 6.2% and the dip in enrollment and tuition dollars ate at additional appropriations.
 - Several board members advocated strongly for faculty salary increases even if it meant a budget deficit. Administration was reluctant to go into a budget deficit. The administration is reluctant to go into a budget deficit since we just climbed out of a budget deficit; however, they did agree to a 3% salary this year and an additional supplement next year.
 - Salary supplements do not come out of the operating budget so it would not place the university in a deficit.
 - FS and FS excomm advocated for a salary increase this year. Judge Windom reported that the BOT of trustees did advocate for a salary increase.
- Salary Survey: There is a line item in the budget this year for the salary survey. The salary survey has been completed, but the results are not back yet.
 - Equity adjustments-The University has provided funds for an internal faculty equity adjustment. An internal faculty equity study has been conducted by Office of Academic Affairs; however, it will not include new hires from this August.
 - Inversion and Compression will be examined yearly.
- President Search: The committee met last week to interview candidates and they recommended a slate of candidates to the Board. The Board will meet soon to approve the slate and bring candidates on campus for interviews. There FS executive committee will also spend an hour with each candidate as another faculty connection.
- Strategic Planning: Beth thanked the FS for anyone that participated in the 17 focus groups.
 - Angela Coleman will meet with different University divisions and excomm of the FS to go over the metrics of the findings. There are a lot of innovative ideas that are coming out of the discussions.
 - The strategic plan should be rolled out the feedback for faculty evaluation in October. Revisions could be required with the hiring of a new president.

- Mitchell College of Business: The investigation is completed. Dr. Kent has included all the new initiatives of the Diversity committee is doing. Also, the new interim chief diversity officer will join the FS in October.
- Critical Race Theory and Legislation: The impact of critical race theory is still being discussed on teaching, research, etc. Excomm did ask admin to consider making a statement of the impact of the legislation on higher education.
- Enrollment Totals: Undergraduate 8833, Graduate 4859, Med Students 300, Total enrollment minus med students 13,992.
- Response to FS COVID-19 Resolution: The FS excomm sent the resolution to admin and received a response from interim President Smith to our requests. The response from Dr. Smith will be sent out to Caucus leaders, who will forward it to all the faculty in respective colleges. A plan was made to accomplish this.

- **Completion of Pending Business:**

- **Reports from University Committees:**
 - **Report from University Fringe Benefits Committee Meeting 8.24.21**
 - Despite COVID, USA insurance costs had a good (flat) year. As we enter 2022, we have about a \$1M deficit, and the projection for 2021-22 indicates a \$3M shortfall (estimated increase spending over the current year).
 - FYI, the average cost of the plan per employee per month is \$1070.
 - **Changes to the plan coming as of 1/1/22:**
 - An increase in plan cost across the board (regardless of plan):
 - \$4 per individual policy per month
 - \$14 per family policy per month
 - Elimination of the Base Plan. It was stated that this plan is mostly used by older faculty/staff. A disadvantage of the plan to USA is that it does not allow for the acceptance of cost-sharing coupons for pharmacy; as a result, the pharmacy costs of this plan are becoming prohibitive. Base plan members will be folded into the Standard Plan.

 - Faculty had indicated that they were unable to get into some specialty medical clinics (for instance, Dermatology) at USA because these physicians state they are not accepting new patients, even USA employees. Gerald Gattis (Assistant VP Finance & Admin/HR) said to contact him or Tina Stalmach (Director, HR Benefits) if this happens (contact info below). They will intervene and try work with clinics, services and individual physicians who are not accepting new patients.
 - Gerald Gattis contact information:
ggattis@southalabama.edu; 251-460-6133
 - Tina Stalmach contact information:
tstalmach@southalabama.edu; 251-460-6133

 - Pharmacy coverage will be changing as of 1/1/22. Drugs will be placed into 6 tiers with copays listed below (all are for a 30-day supply, the definitions are mine):
 - Tier 1: Preferred generics \$10 (lowest cost prescription drugs)
 - Tier 2: Non-preferred generics \$10 (generic drugs, but likely not on the current formulary)
 - Tier 3: Preferred brand name \$50 (higher cost brand name drugs; on the current formulary)
 - Tier 4: Non-preferred brand name: \$75 (higher cost brand name; not on the current formulary, but there may be a drug on the formulary that could substitute)
 - Tier 5: Specialty preferred: \$150 (high-cost oral or injectable meds that are on the formulary)
 - Tier 6: Specialty non-preferred: 50% of retail cost (high-cost drugs not on the formulary)

 - Other changes coming in 2022: The health plan is looking at adding a high-deductible healthcare plan in 2022. This would allow users who have low use of health insurance to maximize savings in Healthcare Savings Accounts with a smaller monthly premium. There was no discussion as to cost or deductible cost at this point.

- Our new carrier for disability and life insurance will be SunLife (it was Standard).
 - At this point, a Benefits Expo is being planned for 11/5/21 at the Terrace of the Student Center from 8 am til noon. Virtual sessions are also being planned to help employees navigate the open enrollment period.
 - The Diversity & Inclusion: The committee met, and the committee is asked to look at a program for the University by the interim Chief Diversity Officer. They were also asked to look at the handbook and they talked about a curriculum requirement in gen-ed classes for diversity.
- **Reports from Senate Committees:**
 - None
 - **New Business:**
 - None.

Meeting Adjournment: MMSA 4:38 pm

Minutes transcribed by Donna Copeland