

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**  
**Faculty Senate**

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**Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Sept. 4, 2024, 3:00-5:00 p.m.**  
**MCOB 101**  
**MINUTES**

Present: Christina Wassenaar (presiding), Bret Webb (Z), Vicki Tate, Donna Streeter (Z), Michael Black, Clay Davidson, Yvette Getch, Marie Migaud, Sinéad Ní Chadhain, Andrei Pavelescu, David Turnipseed (Z), Laura Vrana, and Sean Walker

**OLD BUSINESS –Section 3.2.9. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.**

Since the Faculty Senate is being compelled by law to remove the committee, we do not want to associate any new committee with the old committee by renaming it. There should be no association which would appear to violate the law. The suggestion that was brought up in the Plenary meeting to dissolve the committee would meet the requirement of the law AL Act 2024-34 (aka SB 129). Christina would like to work on new wording for the proposal that we are being compelled to dissolve the committee by removing it from our Bylaws. As noted, there is nothing in the Bylaws about how to dissolve a standing committee. There may be no need to have an actual vote on the issue, since it is beyond the Faculty Senate's control. What must be considered is that the issues can still be address in other appropriate places within the framework of the other committees.

**OLD BUSINESS – Proposed Changes in the Senate Standing Committee Charges, Sections 3.2.1-3.2.8**

A lengthy review of the proposed Standing Committees names and charges was conducted. Changes were made as appropriate until consensus was reached. Final decisions for wording changes of the last two committees (#7-8) were tabled for further discussion at a later time. [See attached for the final version of the proposed changes in committee names and charges.]

Christina announced that there were changes made to the University Sustainability Committee. Victor Cohen is no longer in charge of the committee. It is now being chaired by Stephen Scyphers for the University side and Ashleigh Bowman for the

Healthcare side. An email went out asking for any volunteers interested in working with the committee. About 35 people showed up for the initial meeting of the academic year.

### **OLD BUSINESS – Creating an *Ad Hoc* Committee to address the problem of Faculty Retention.**

The Committee discussed the proposal to create a new *ad hoc* committee:

Well-being and Retention *Ad Hoc* Committee: The Committee addresses the well-being of the university community by advocating for policies, initiatives, and changes that facilitate the success and retention of all faculty. Through dialogue, collaboration, and information-gathering, the committee strives to amplify faculty voices and address concerns to promote a supportive, thriving academic community for all.

NOTE: The Bylaws description of the FS Executive Committee does not include chairs of *ad hoc* committees as a voting member. [3.4.1]

---Nor does it say that a chair of any *ad hoc* committee cannot attend as a guest of the Executive Committee.

NOTE: “**Motions to establish** [*ad hoc*] committees shall include the name of the committee, its charge, and its size and composition. The President shall appoint members and establish with the committee a schedule by which the committee is expected to present progress and/or final reports. An *Ad Hoc* committee will be considered dissolved after a final report.” [3.5.1]

---The Bylaws do not say where the motion is to be made. For the sake of transparency and shared governance, it should be made during a Plenary meeting.

NOTE: “An *ad hoc* committee in place for one year is eligible to become a standing committee.” [3.6.1]

Since the new committee would be an *ad hoc* committee, there should be an issue that the committee is formed to address. For example, this issue could be the problem the University is having with faculty retention. One possible reason could be the effect of salary on the turnover problem. The committee could explore other possible reasons contributing to the retention problem.

### **OLD BUSINESS – Faculty Senate Caucus Leaders**

While there is a desire on the part of the Executive Committee to include the caucus leaders in a working meeting of the committee, there needs to be more discussion on the logistics on how and when to do this. Christina was able to get the caucus leaders included in the reception at Pres. Bonner’s house on October 30th. (Halloween costumes, optional.) Christina believes the Senate should be seen as a more serious

body, one where the faculty would come to their caucus leaders with issues that are happening around the colleges. Caucus leaders need to be working more closely with the senior leadership within the colleges on issues of importance.

### **NEW BUSINESS – Consideration of Term Limits of Departmental Chairs**

Sinéad started the discussion with the observation that this issue would be a “non-starter” with the Deans. The attempt to get evaluations of chairs as a policy back in 2016/2017 that would have some kind of mechanism for reappointment was roundly killed. Even a more limited policy of having bi-yearly reviews of chairs is currently stalled in CAD. We might have more success in trying to have a more structured training for chairs. Christina, in her meetings with Academic Affairs, believes there is some agreement for some kind of training for evaluation process to be developed by ILC. Faculty senate would not have any oversight of the policy, but we may have some evaluative input. ILC would not be doing the training, but they would be responsible for housing the materials regarding training programs.

David mentioned that the biggest resistance to the rotation of chairs is the cost involved with getting new chairs. A lot of change has happened in the last decade so it might be plausible to try again. Sinéad still believes that there would be resistance to include such a policy in the University Faculty Handbook. There is no policy that restricts rotating chairs and some departments do that. By being a chair of the department, it entitles the faculty member to have a big salary boost, which would be hard for a chair to give it up.

Donna brought up the point that we should really be pushing for improving the chairs’ professional development and mentoring skills so they can be better in their responsibilities.

Marie brought up the point that there are no benchmarks for the evaluating chairs so we do not know what is expected of them. There are clear expectations of the faculty, but nothing for chairs or deans.

Christina asked Michael (Academic Development & Mentoring) to look into whether or not there are some mentoring programs for chairs and deans.

### **NEW BUSINESS – Creation of Faculty Senate Google Drive for Historical Record Depository**

Sinéad stressed the need for a repository for all of the work that the Executive Committee does. Last year there was a shared Google drive that everyone on the Executive committee had access to, but it seems to have disappeared. Christina has

found on the FS President's Google drive some shared drives. She will work with Sinéad to verify if these are the missing files.

**NEW BUSINESS – Use of old class test materials by campus Greek organizations (Honor Code Violation]**

Laura brought up the problem that it is an open secret that all of the Greek organizations on campus have files of old tests, especially for Nursing courses. The College of Nursing is aware of this, but doesn't know if there is anything that can be done about.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Minutes compiled by Vicki Tate, Faculty Senate Secretary.