Minutes Auburn University Senate September 17, 2024 3:30 p.m.

Via Zoom: https://aub.ie/senatezoom

Minutes

Meeting was called to order by Senate Chair, Lori Eckhardt, at 3:30 pm.

Establish a Ouorum

The attendance vote was opened and a quorum was established with 69 members present as of 3:33 p.m. When the quorum vote closed at the end of the meeting, 83 Senators or substitutes had responded present. Senate Meeting Minutes from August 27, 2024, were approved by unanimous consent.

Remarks and Announcements

University Senate Chair: Lori Eckhardt

Chair Eckhardt provided two announcements:

- 1) The AU Access upgrade will take effect Wednesday, September 18th. An OIT knowledgebase article about the upgrade is available here: https://aub.ie/newauaccesshelp. Access to content will remain the same, with just a new look. Questions can be directed to bahelp@auburn.edu.
- 2) The Office of the Vice President for University Outreach sponsors the Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grant Program (COSG). This intramural program is made available to promote community-engaged scholarship and the outreach enterprise in the context of mutually beneficial and reciprocal university/community collaboration for the public good. To see all of the information and to register for an information session, please visit: https://aub.ie/COSG

President: Chris Roberts

Strategic plan remarks: On September 6th, the Board of Trustees approved the university's new strategic plan for the next ten years. The plan consists of 5 major goals, 85 action items and a series of sub-goals, and more than 80 KPIs. President Roberts thanked everyone for their deep and enthusiastic engagement during this year-long process. Now that the plan has been approved, the university is ready to get on with the work that moves its mission forward.

FY2025 Budget: The 2025 fiscal year budget was also approved at the Board's September 6th meeting. In addition to budget approval, Board also approved a 3% tuition increase for next year. The Board makes tuition decisions a year in advance.

Enrollment: September 9 was the official census date for enrollment. The official enrollment headcount is 34,145 students. That's up 3.4% from last year. Full-time undergraduate enrollment remained at 25,204. First-time freshman enrollment is 6103. Full-time professional and graduate enrollment is up to 3,652, which is up 5% over the prior year.

Advancement: Fundraising activities have gone quite well this year. So far, the university has received \$190.9 million in commitments. That's 109% of the goal of \$175 million set for this year. New awards and endowments were established from these funds, including 176 new student scholarships (both endowed and annual) at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; 46 different funds for excellence that provide programmatic support across the entire campus; 28 different named facilities spaces, and 7 new endowed professorships and chairs. Overall combined Auburn Foundation and Auburn University endowment value has now reached \$1.2 billion.

Branding: Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) will be launching new brand awareness campaign in the first half of 2025. That works out well with the strategic plan having been approved. Campaign will include information that will be going out to academic leaders at peer institutions across the country to try to build awareness of Auburn's programs. To help enhance digital access to campus resources, OCM launched a

new version of Auburn app, which provides access to a new 3d map and employee benefits; faculty & staff announcements also posted there. All are encouraged to download the app.

Research: While the fiscal year is not quite finished, the university is on track to have another year of growth in extramurally funded research programs. Faculty have submitted proposals for extramural funding valued at \$829 million. President Roberts is proud of faculty for these efforts. This is an increase over last year of \$111 million. Auburn University has a portfolio of active research contracts valued at just under \$1 billion.

President Roberts asked to give the floor to Jaime Hammer, General Counsel, to respond to Senator Roy Hartfield's question from the August 27 Senate meeting. Hammer noted that the question related to discussions that occurred in Spring 2021, tied to a document referenced to as the employee job conduct rules. The Counsel's office has provided clarification to AAUP leadership and wanted to provide same clarification to the Senate. The employee job conduct rules that currently exist in the university's policies database are unchanged from the employee job conduct rules that existed prior to the Senate meetings in February and March of 2021. In January of 2021, that policy had been revised with respect to various items. After discussion among the governance groups and Senate, however, President Gogue instructed that the revised job conduct rules be pulled back. There was a brief period where those revisions were online, but once those were pulled back, the previous policy was put back in place. The policy now online is the same one that was in place prior to the January-March 2021 timeframe. No new policies have been posted.

Provost: Vini Nathan

Mission Enhancement Fund/MEF Program: This year, the program has close to \$13 million in this fund. Half will be set aside to invest in presidential priorities connected to the strategic plan. Another half will be funded through an internal competitive process very similar to what's been followed in previous years. The Provost's Office has received about 33 proposals, worth about \$14.7 million in total. A committee is looking at these proposals and will make advisory recommendations. The committee includes two department chairs – Angela Wiley and Chris Reutzel; and the chair or past chair of the three governance groups – Lisa Kensler (University Senate), Kim McFadden (Staff Council), and Josh Henderson (A&P Assembly). The committee will submit recommendations to Kelli Shomaker and Provost Nathan. Final decisions will be made in early October. By mid-October, funds will be allocated to successful proposals.

Professional improvement Leave/PIL Program: Information will be available in early October. More information will come in the Provost's October newsletter and AU News. Please be aware that proposals will be submitted now, but submissions are meant for AY 2025-2026 academic year. The program will use a similar process to the one used in previous years. It is a competitive process and there will be a review and advisory recommendations from an ad hoc faculty committee. The committee will be formed from folks in the disciplines represented by 5 highest received proposals.

Chair Eckhardt announced that questions would be limited to two for these updates. There were no Questions.

Action Items

Voting on the nominees to Senate Committees

Presenter: Jaena Alabi, Secretary

Nominees for Senate Committees (pdf)

Jaena Alabi presented the slate of nominees that were approved by the Rule Committee, and moved that the Senate accept these nominees to Senate Committees.

Voting Results: 75 yes / 1 no / 1 abstain

Voting was closed just after the results were announced.

Final tally was 76 Yes / 1 No / 1 Abstain.

Nominees were approved.

Committee Report: DEI Committee

Presenter: Soledad Peresin Committee slides (pdf)

Sole Peresin made a motion to change the name and charge of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Peresin reported that the members of the DEI Committee believe the revised name and charge better reflect the committee's work and is more in alignment with the university's new strategic plan. The revised name is Committee of Access, Engagement, and Opportunity. The revised charge reads: This committee shall be responsible for promoting a culture of fairness, access, and representation across the university. It shall communicate feedback on relevant policies and offer recommendations for improvements and new initiatives to the appropriate offices, and to deans. It shall perform continuous monitoring and make regular reports to the Senate on institutional data and assessments, issues related to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity compliance, and the implementation and outcomes of efforts aimed at fostering an environment where everyone is welcomed, valued, respected, and engaged.

Discussion and voting on this motion will take place at the October 15, 2024 Senate meeting.

Committee Report: University Writing

Presenter: Chris Basgier Committee slides (pdf)

Chris Basgier shared that the previous Writing Plan Initiative, which was in place from 2011 to 2021, allowed the committee to gain a more comprehensive picture of what was happening across campus with undergraduate writing. The committee is now interested in focusing on departmental-level integration of writing and is offering a new certification for Writing Enriched (WE) courses. Criteria for receiving the WE designation include: 1) Instructors assign and teach aspects of disciplinary or professional writing (audiences, purposes, genres, processes), 2)GTAs are trained and supported, 3) opportunities for practice, feedback, reflection, and/or revision, and 4) assignments that include writing are at least 30% of the course grade. Courses approved for the WE certification will receive a course registration tag, which will make writing more visible across the curriculum, easily codify high-impact teaching practices for annual reviews, and connect these courses to institutional data. So far there have been 31 total courses certified across 18 departments. Basgier asked Senators to work with their departments to identify at least one course in every major that can be designated as Writing Enriched. More detailed information is available at https://aub.ie/WritingSupport. The University Writing Committee will be reviewing courses for Spring 2025 at their September and October meetings. Faculty wishing to receive the WE designation for their spring courses should submit their materials by October 17th.

Information Items

Childcare Task Force Update

Presenter: Steve Pelham

Pelham, Chair of the Childcare Task Force, provided information on how this committee was established. It was one of the recommendations in the AAUP Executive Committee's Auburn Childcare Infrastructure Report presented to President Roberts in Fall 2023. Issue of childcare is widely look at as issue of economic development and quality of life. The committee's purpose is to evaluate and identify solutions to help increase access to affordable and high quality childcare to reinforce support for parents, children, employers, and the economy. Task Force consists of 19 members from Lee County's largest employers, Auburn University and East Alabama Health, as well as the City of Auburn and Chambers of Commerce from Opelika and Auburn. There have been 4 full task force meetings. First was in December 2023, then February 2024 meeting included a briefing from the Governor's Office on the legislative agenda addressing childcare, also divided task for into subcommittees at this meeting. March – May those subcommittees did work addressing topic areas. One subcommittee was legislative action, and most of that work is done. The legislature and governor put together a package of bills, Working for Alabama. The state has a strong, robust economy in the state with a low unemployment rate (lower than national average) and new investments at a record high. The challenge is that labor force participation rate is low in the state (lower than national average). Four areas are seen to contribute to this: health issues, education issues, transportation, and a lack of quality childcare. The areas impact labor force participation rate.

The subcommittees have produced an interim report, which was shared with President Roberts in July. An

interim recommendation from that report was to engage a market study to further research the need, impact, and market viability of childcare in this community. Pelham was pleased to report to the Senate that Dr. Roberts has agreed to act on that recommendation. In collaboration with the City of Auburn, the university will develop a scope of the study and engage a vendor to conduct the market study. It will be a useful tool for the city and university to attract new investments to provide childcare in Lee County. The Task Force will continue its due diligence, but will reduce subcommittees and combine them to move forward and produce a final report. The final report will be presented to President Roberts and the administration in about sixty days. Chair Eckhardt opened the floor for questions. There were no questions.

Strategic Plan

Presenter: Kerry Inger

Strategic Plan slides pdf)

Kerry Inger presented the 10-year strategic plan. The presentation shared is a capture-in-time document that received approval at the September 6th Board of Trustees meeting. Timeline shows that the university is reaching the end of the planning phase and beginning next chapter of communication and implementation. The plan reflects key themes from President Roberts' installation last year. At that time, Roberts outline three aspirations: 1) exceptional student experience, 2) impactful research and creative scholarship, and 3) a culture of excellence. Strategic planning committee extended these to include two additional goals: catalytic engagement and distinctively Auburn. At the June Senate meeting, Kerry Inger and Hari Narayanan shared the twenty-five drafted sub-goals that support the five goals. Since then, leadership has refined these goals further and developed 85 action items and 86 key performance indicators (KPIs). Several KPIs will track progress. Metrics were carefully chosen to provide important qualitative and quantitative assessments that will be used to document, assess, and report on progress. Certain metrics are reported annually, while others will be reported at recurring intervals based on availability. KPIs are organized into four broad categories: internal metrics (internal data that provide comparative benchmarks through trend analyses); external metrics (university data shared with various external stakeholders yielding peer comparisons when available; note: the university is required to report many of these KPIs); national metrics (data that yields national and international comparisons, includes university data submitted to the National Center for Education Statistics); and new metrics (newly-identified or existing measures that are aimed at tracking progress toward specific goals). These categories are not mutually exclusive; some metrics fall into multiple categories.

Goal 1: Exceptional Student Experience. This goal contains six subgoals, twenty-seven action items, and twenty-five KPIs. Academic programs are at the heart of this goal, and action items reflect efforts to advance programs, include a review of the core curriculum. Faculty are key contributors to the student experience, so action items support the experiences of faculty and staff, especially efforts to strategically recruit, retain, and reward faculty. Student success services will include a focus on advising and career preparation (for undergraduates and graduate students). A focus on high-impact practices includes an expansion of the definition to include leadership and service because they are key contributors to personal and professional success post-graduation. This goal also emphasizes the importance of a holistic experience to student success, with abundant and engaging student life programs to complement academic programs. In addition to an enrollment framework, the last sub-goal for goal one outlines action items to invest in financial support for students, with an intentional focus on graduate students.

KPIs for goal one were briefly discussed: US News and World Report Rankings; two new international rankings - The Times Higher Education and QS; a collective measure of the strengths of individual academic programs measured through rankings and other measures of distinction for programs that may not have comparable rankings (a new KPI); new measure of students who are prestigious national scholars; named faculty awards (new in the sense that these haven't been regularly tracked and recorded); graduate student first destination outcomes added as a new metric; and tracking and reporting of leadership and service learning (connected to broader definition of high-impact practices).

Goal 2: Impactful Research and Creative Scholarship. Includes five sub-goals, eighteen action items and ten KPIs. Overarching goal is to double research efforts, which will elevate the university's standing and reputation. To achieve this goal, new initiatives to increase funding and enhance interdisciplinary activities will be formed. A key part of success will be increasing industry-sponsored contracts and developing new public-private partnerships. Focus will be on increasing research-engaged faculty and recruiting renowned scholars while

enhancing mentoring and support resources for faculty. An area of emphasis will including elevating visibility of faculty work, translating research into practice and growing commercialization opportunities, increasing ability to positively affect lives and capacity for economic growth. The university will focus on quality of research facilities and provide resources for students and faculty, including stronger IP infrastructure that will also advance work with AI and cybersecurity.

KPIs for goal two were briefly discussed. Recognize value of the wide variety of research, scholarship, and creative work endeavors of auburn faculty and research professionals. Several KPIs are related to research funding, also KPIs for scholarship, including articles, citations, books, chapters, conference proceedings, and a new metric for creative works. Also included in this section is COACHE survey support for research. New KPIs recognize that high quality facilities enable high quality research. A new KPI regarding intellectual property reflects progress toward commercialization and proliferation of economic growth. Communication of research, scholarship, and creative work successes is included in goal five with overall communication goals and action items.

Goal three: Commitment to Excellence and Innovation. This goal is about people and better supporting the work they do, thereby maximizing collective impact. It includes five sub-goals, seventeen action items and fourteen KPIs. First sub-goals aims to optimize resources and enhance employee well being through more robust HR framework, with ultimate goal of becoming a top employer in higher education. That requires fostering a campus culture that celebrates employee excellence and invests in employee well being and success, as well as building internal pipelines that prepare future workforce. This has been started with new leadership development programs and efforts to recognize and reward high performing employees. One of the most important sub-goals is to improve and streamline business plans and processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness across operations. This goal also addresses commitment to enhancing and maintaining facilities through renovation and maintenance, which tie into IT infrastructure.

KPIs for goal three were briefly presented. KPIs focus on satisfaction with several internal units and reflect a handful of metrics that will be measured on a broader level. There are many new KPIs for this goal, reflecting commitment to accountability. The COACH faculty survey question, "would you work at Auburn again," is a KPI. There will be a new employe engagement survey on campus climate that is inclusive of faculty, administrative & professional employees, and staff. KPIs from new survey will measure employee satisfaction with business processes, employee benefits, human resources, and information technology. To recognize significant contributions of entire workforce, there is a new KPI for named awards for A&P and staff, which reflects desire to have similar recognition as for named faculty. There is also a new KPI of customer satisfaction rating for facilities services and operations.

Goal 4: Catalytic Engagement. This goal includes five sub-goals, fourteen action items, and ten KPIs. The intention with this goal is to be a premier resource for developing impactful solutions using expertise and extension assets, while becoming a model for university engagement. To achieve this, the university must broaden community engagement to advance economic growth and provide education and resources through new partnerships. These initiatives will be implemented both state-wide and locally, focusing on strengthening partnerships and replicating successful models, developing new programs to attract industries, and creating engagement opportunities for current residents and alumni.

KPIs for goal four: New KPIs that measure partnerships with others highlight the collaborative effort necessary to maximize positive impact on Alabama and beyond. KPIs on economic impact reflect desire for innovation and economic advancement in the region. The collaborative nature of Auburn University and the Auburn community is integral to success and is reflected in the KPI Carnegie-Designated Community Engaged Institution.

Goal 5: Distinctively Auburn. This goal has four sub-goals, thirteen action items and fourteen KPIs. Throughout the process, the strategic planning committee heard about the need for greater visibility and recognition. The university will develop a comprehensive branding plan with targeted strategies to effectively communicate the institution's accomplishments to national and internal audiences, promoting successes of students, faculty, research, and athletics teams. This will strengthen and grow the Auburn family by connecting with alumni and those who resonate with Auburn's values. Efforts will ultimately culminate in a comprehensive campaign framework designed to grow philanthropic investment, inspire donors, attract transformational giving, and enhance lifelong commitment to Auburn.

KPIs for goal five: Student satisfaction survey's question, "would you go to Auburn again" will be used because students who would choose to go to Auburn again represent the next generation of the Auburn family. Also many of the KPIs in goal one will lead to devoted members of the Auburn family. The importance of articulating and

disseminating the university's identity, reputation, and influence is recognized. The Brand Health Index and National Earned Media are new KPIs. Academic success is tracked in goal one, so only athletic success is represented in goal five with new KPIs from athletics. Research success is in goal two. There is a new KPI for audience engagement across university platforms and the last sub-goal highlights the importance of philanthropy from supporters, recognizing that the strategic plan will be the foundation of next campaign.

Next steps: In early October, the plan go live on a website connect to the president's webpage. The plan will be shared broadly with the campus community and there will be additional presentations to various constituents such as advisory boards and alumni groups. KPIs will be reported annually when possible and others at longer intervals when necessary. The intention is for this to be a living document with ongoing assessment, including conducting a review and refresh of the plan every several years. The business modernization plan and branding campaign will continue through the fall. In the fall, units will begin drafting their own strategic plans with the university's strategic plan as a framework while recognizing the unique mission and contributions of each unit. Inger expressed the committee's gratitude for all who were involved in this process.

Chair Eckhardt opened the floor for questions.

Amit Morey, Senator from Poultry Science: How will these goals, sub-goals, and KPIs affect evaluation of faculty and the work they're doing? How will that make changes into the P&T processes? Are we looking at something of that nature in the future?

Chair Eckhardt invited Provost Nathan to respond.

Provost Nathan: We will be looking at the faculty handbook. We have a very de-centralized model in terms of promotion and tenure processes, which is driven by the units in the colleges. Right now there is no formal mechanism in terms of when that will happen, but expectation is that it will happen. Whether this happens with a review of faculty handbook or separately, is yet to be determined. Ongoing improvement of P&T processes is expected to be driven by the departments and the colleges.

Geni Payne, Senator for ACES: It appears that most of goal four has a lot to do with extension. Could you go into more detail into how goal four will work with the current Alabama Cooperative Extension and what kind of ways we can partner on these things?

Chair Eckhardt invited President Roberts to respond.

President Roberts: This is an excellent question. When I was coming into the presidency two years ago, the extension system was going through a strategic planning process. Much if not all of that plan is consistent with what we're trying to do with the university strategic plan. I had a conversation with Mike and asked him to reflect on own strategic plan and alignment when appropriate. Extension can take a look at its plan and possibly revise it, but I think it tethers quite nicely.

Senator Orientation Evaluation Summary

Presenter: Jaena Alabi

Feedback Results-Senator Orientation 2024 (pdf)

Jaena Alabi provided a summary of the results of the senator orientation evaluation survey. Senators were encouraged to complete the survey at the last senate meeting. Feedback on the orientation was generally positive with most respondents saying they would like to attend an orientation for senators next year and the best time of year is generally a day or two before classes start. The sessions on senate purpose, meeting procedures, and taking action as a senator were generally seen as valuable or highly valuable, and most respondents indicated that the orientation was worth their time. In particular, senators expressed appreciated the opportunity to interact and engage in discussion with each other. Survey respondents also shared several recommendations, including limiting the orientation to an hour and a half, scheduling additional opportunities for in-person engagement and discussion throughout the year, focusing on certain topics (including Robert's Rules), and to continue to invite Aubie.

New Business

Roy Hartfield, Senator from Aerospace Engineering asked for the floor. Hartfield wanted to clarify comments by the Honorable Jaime Hammer. Chair Eckhardt reminded everyone that the new business portion of the meeting is for making motions; asking questions or soliciting clarification from Hammer should happen outside of the meeting. Chair Eckhardt asked if Hartfield had a motion, to which he responded that he did not, that there had already been a motion made/asked that directly opposed what Hammer said.

Adjournment

Lori Eckhardt, Senate Chair at 4:35 p.m.

Attendance – September 17, 2024

Senate Officers

Lori EckhardtChairVirginia DavisChair-electJaena AlabiSecretaryRachel PradoSecretary-elect

Lisa Kensler Immediate Past-Chair

Administration

Leigh Ann Ross

Dean, Harrison College of Pharmacy
Susan Hubbard

Dean, College of Human Sciences

David Paradice sub for Jennifer Mueller Phillips Dean, Harbert College of Business

Jason Hicks Dean, College of Liberal Arts Mario Eden Dean, College of Engineering

Ed Thomas Dean, COSAM

Joffrey Gaymon VP Enrollment Mgmt.

Jennifer Kerpelman sub for Steven Taylor VP of Research

Absent without substitute:

Rob Wellbaum VP for Development

Ex-Officio Members

Vini Nathan Provost

Dean of Libraries George Stachokas sub for Shali Zhang Jack Hilton SGA President Kimberly McCadden Staff Council Chair Thomas Sawyer A&P Assembly Chair Andrew Pendola [Rules appt.] Steering Committee Tom Leathem [Pres. appt.] Steering Committee Octavia Tripp [Rules appt.] Steering Committee Steering Committee J Brian Anderson [Pres. appt.]

Absent without substitute:

Esther Akinrinde GSC President

Senators by Departments

Xu (Joyce) Cheng Accountancy

Roy Hartfield Aerospace Engineering

Geni Payne ACES

Wendiam Sawadgo Ag Economics & Rural Sociology

Vinicia Biancardi [2nd] Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology

Paul Dyce Animal Sciences
Kevin Moore [2nd] Architecture

Sarah Odens sub for Lauren Woods Art

Russ Chesser Aviation

Rebecca Riggs Biological Sciences

John Linhoss sub for David Blersch [2nd] Biosystems Engineering

Jeff Kim Building Sciences

Regina Gramling Business Analytics and Information Systems

Elizabeth Lipke Chemical Engineering

Evert Duin Chemistry and Biochemistry

Kevin Smith Communication and Journalism

Sanjeev Baskiyar Computer Science & Software Engineering

Jung Eun Lee Consumer & Design Sciences

David Han [2nd] Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences

Jesus Tirado sub for Christopher Clemons Curriculum & Teaching

Murali Dhanasekaran Drug Discovery and Development

Liliana Stern [2nd] Economics

Sara Wolf Educational Foundations, Leadership & Technology

Michael Baginski [2nd] Electrical & Computer Engineering

Sunny Stalter-Pace English

John Beckmann [2nd] Entomology & Plant Pathology

David Cicero Finance

Robert Gitzen-[rpl Zhaofei] Forestry, Wildlife, and the Environment

Steph Shepherd Geosciences

Jan Kavookjian Health Outcomes Research and Policy

Zachary Schulz [2nd] History
Elina Coneva Horticulture
Clark Danderson-rpl Hospitality Mgmt.

Diana Samek-rpl Human Development & Family Studies

David Smith Industrial Design

Rich Sesek [2nd] Industrial and Systems Engineering

Christopher (Brooks) Mobley Kinesiology Kasia Leousis [2nd] Libraries

Liesl Wesson Management and Entrepreneurship

Jeremy Wolter [2nd] Marketing

Hans Werner van Wyk

Mathematics and Statistics

Nicholsa Tsolas sub for Sabit Adanur [2nd]

Mechanical Engineering

Lee Johnson Music

Linda Gibson Young sub for Chris Martin [2nd] Nursing Kevin Huggins Nutritional Sciences

Anna Margaret Goldman Outreach
Katherine Horzmann Pathobiology

Lena McDowell [2nd] Pharmacy Practice
David Miller Philosophy
Luca Guazzotto [2nd] Physics

Spencer Goidel Political Science
Amit Morey Poultry Science
Alejandro A. Lazarte-Psychology

LTC Michael Quinn ROTC Air Force

Richard Pugh sub for LTC Laura Fryar ROTC Army

Danilea Werner Socio/Anthro/Social Work

Latifat Cabirou Special Ed. Rehab. Counseling/School Psych Gregory Spray Speech Language and Hearing Sciences

David Strickland [2nd] Supply Chain Management (new)

Adrienne Wilson Theatre and Dance

Chance Armstrong Veterinary Clinical Sciences Kerri Munoz World Lang & Literatures

Absent without substitute:

Joel Hayworth [2nd] Civil Engineering

Nathan Whelan [2nd] Fisheries & Allied Aquaculture Captain Michael Witherspoon ROTC Naval