

Minutes

Senate Meeting: June 16, 2020

3:30 p.m. via Zoom meeting

A full transcript of this meeting will be available.

Please refer to transcript for details not included in the minutes.

Presentations are available from the agenda for the meeting.

Attendance Record at the end of the minutes.

A quorum was established, with 67 out of 87 Senators in attendance.

Nedret Billor, Senate Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:33pm. Chair Billor gave attendees an overview of the basic procedures for the Zoom meeting format, and then began the meeting.

Approval of the minutes from the Senate Meeting of May 26, 2020: No changes. Approved by unanimous consent.

Remarks and Announcements:

Nedret Billor, Senate Chair Remarks (3:35pm)

Chair Billor noted that this meeting is the final meeting of her term as senate chair. She thanked the executive committee and discussed how the senate agenda over the year was shaped by unforeseen event such as the resignation of AU President Steven Leath, the global COVID-19 Pandemic, and the heightened awareness of racial injustice following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Chair Billor thanked Auburn President Jay Gogue for helping manage unprecedented change and thanked AU leadership for their support. She closed by wishing incoming chair Don Mulvaney the best and encouraging faculty to participate and speak out on shared governance. She then invited Senate Secretary, Adrienne Wilson to speak.

Adrienne Wilson, Senate Secretary Remarks (3:38pm)

Secretary Wilson described her health experiences of the past year and expressed regret for needing to step back from her duties while recovering. She thanked the Senate and Administrative leaders and expressed a desire to continue participating in university governance. Chair Billor then invited President Jay Gogue to make remarks.

Jay Gogue, Auburn University President Remarks (3:40pm)

President Gogue first announced that AU Foundation funding disbursement for the coming year will be the same as it was for last year. Given the markets, this is good news for Auburn.

The second item concerned the death of George Floyd in Minnesota and the national mood for addressing racial inequities. The President stated that Auburn needs to do more to confront racial inequities that still exist. There will be 2 groups formed this week. The Board of Trustees will examine Building names on campus. The second group, internal to Auburn, will look for real, specific things Auburn can do to make a difference. The President then expressed interest in the Provost's plans for Fall Semester. Auburn's proposals seem to be similar to other SEC schools. President Gogue closed by thanking Nedret Billor for the principled service as chair.

Bill Hardgrave, Auburn University Provost (3:45pm)

The Provost began by thanking Nedret Billor and the executive team for their service. He then presented the highlights of the Fall re-entry plan. He emphasized the goal of the plan to achieve safety, flexibility, and student retention.

The Calendar for Fall Semester will eliminate Fall Break, shorten the Thanksgiving break to Wed-Fri, and finish all coursework on the Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. Total instruction days are reduced from 72 to 71. Finals will be after Thanksgiving and will be administered remotely.

For COVID safety, in conjunction with University of Alabama Birmingham and other Universities in Alabama, students will be asked to participate in a daily health app. Students will self-screen daily to determine if they are eligible to come to campus for classes. Faculty and Staff will be asked to participate, too. No personal data will be collected with this app. The app includes contact tracing.

For academic program delivery, the four modalities developed for summer will continue for the fall. Faculty members will determine which modality, in conjunction with their department, is best for learning objectives. All classes will be recorded. Faculty who cannot teach in the Fall due to health or other concerns can work with their department to defer teaching to Spring or Summer semesters. This trimester approach should give the flexibility needed to schedule classes.

Safety measures across campus are being developed by a group led by Gen. Burgess. A campus-wide face covering policy is forthcoming. Classrooms will be organized to achieve safe social distancing. Markings in public areas such as hallways and elevators will help reinforce social distancing. Sanitizing wipes will be available in classrooms. Thorough cleanings will happen overnight. Faculty will identify backups in case of quarantining. Faculty will be required to have a "Syllabus B" in case of a return to remote-only instruction.

Provost asked for input in the next 4 or 5 days to help finalize plans.

Question: Michael Stern, Economics (for President Gogue).

With the city of Auburn changing the name of Mike Hubbard Boulevard, will the building on campus named after Mike Hubbard (Mike Hubbard Center) be changed or has it been changed?

Answer: About 3 or 4 weeks ago, the building was renamed and the sign removed.

Question: Jennifer Brooks, History - question and statement.

Brooks wants more information on face covering plan and more proof that the campus safety plan will be effective. Faculty are not yet comfortable until students are required to wear masks on campus and in buildings

Gen. Burgess: A plan is being reviewed by governance groups. It should be published within the week. State guidelines, University building rules, and class syllabi developed by faculty will determine if masks are "strongly recommended" or "required." Everyone on campus must have a mask.

Employees, faculty, and students who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons must work with their supervisors, departments, or the Office of Accessibility for an exemption.

Chair Billor: Teaching Effectiveness Committee, as well as the Steering Committee have given significant feedback.

Question: Zachary Schulz (for Dr. Hardgrave)

For the Trimester approach, how are NTTF and adjunct faculty expected to shift their much more intensive teaching loads? It is problematic. Answer: This approach is not going to help everybody, especially for 4/4 loads. With Summer included, you could teach a full yearly load in Spring and Summer. Flexibility will depend on departments.

Question: Tracy Witte, Senator Psychological Sciences

Who is responsible for recordings in classrooms? Faculty, IT, or some other group?

Answer: We are working with IT to get recording capability for all classrooms. Recording quality may not be professional in all cases, but useful

recordings are the goal. We will provide training, and possibly graduate/undergraduate assistants for some classes. HyFlex classes may need student assistants to manage class time.

Question: Mike Baginski, Immediate Past President

How will we manage social distancing in classrooms? Smaller class sizes

Answer: Safe social distancing policy will depend on face-covering policy. Classroom layout is important. 50% capacity is under consideration, as is a 6 foot radius. Some classes may need to move to larger spaces. Seating charts are under consideration.

Question: Hari Narayanan, Computer Science.

Does the University have any plans to teach students to be more responsible about good COVID safety behavior? Will the University publish daily COVID infection rate data?

Answer: (Provost Hardgrave): All students coming back to Auburn will have to take a learning module on COVID safety and their civic responsibility to others.

Answer (Gen. Ron Burgess): Regarding publishing infection rates, 9 of 13 infected students were asymptomatic. It is difficult to be precise with data. We will publish information, but we have to be careful about privacy of students and conclusions about where infections have originated.

Question: Herb Rotfeld for Gen. Ron Burgess

What about policy for masks in hallways and elevators.

Answer: We will provide guidance for tight spaces, too.

Question: Richard Sesek, Senator, Industrial and Systems Engineering?

When will we do testing on a larger scale? Is there a plan for mass testing?

Answer: (Gen. Ron Burgess): Mass testing of 38000 Auburn students/faculty/staff cannot be done due to availability of testing kits. We are working on pre-return testing requirements for returning students. The cost for mass testing is not insignificant. We are considering issues around random testing for students, faculty, and staff. Contractors and their staff will participate in screening and testing.

Question: Yanzhao Cao, Senator, Mathematics and Statistics (read by chair Billor)

Is it possible to shrink the semester by one week and still give the finals in a classroom setting?

Answer (Provost Hardgrave): If we end the semester in November, military and VA-benefit students would lose December pay. Student loan and other situations may also be negatively impacted by ending in November. Professors have the right to design their courses to fit their needs.

Question: Michael Stern, Economics

How will Auburn efficiently use classroom capacity to achieve social distancing? What are thoughts on expanding to weekends and evenings for classes? Or adding sections?

Answer (Provost Hardgrave): We have discussed these options, but have not changed class times due to pre-registration already having happened. These non-traditional times and dates are contingency options. Professors can change modalities during the semester to be flexible.

Classroom capacity limitations may require additional sections to be offered.

Question Sabit Adanur, Senator, Mechanical Engineering

Echoing Dr. Stern, are you planning to increase class sections to help faculty achieve social distancing?

Answer (Provost Hardgrave): Yes, that is a possibility.

Question: Tony Moss, Senator, Biological Sciences

Alabama COVID cases are increasing, as are cases across the Southeast US. Is it wise to consider any face-to-face classes given the explosive potential for transmission?

Answer: (Provost Hardgrave) - We are looking at indicators and taking guidance from State and Federal authorities. Testing has increased. We take guidance from Dr. Fred Kam, too.

Additional questions and comments posed through group chat included requests for clarifications on night class availability, computer lab cleaning procedures, and maintaining proper work/life balances with extended class times and increased sections. Please see transcript for details.

Action Item 1– Vote on Committee Members for Senate Committees

Presenter: Greg Schmidt, Secretary-elect

Secretary-elect Schmidt presented additional nominees for new terms beginning July 1 on Senate Committees. The slate of candidates was considered by the senate for a vote.

The item passed with a vote of 60 in favor (58 Senators plus two panelist senators), 0 against, and three abstentions. Nominees approved.

Action Item 2- Faculty Handbook Review Committee – Revision to Dismissal Policy and Necessary Handbook Changes for Reclassifying Librarian and Archivist Positions and Evaluation Letters

Presenter: Kamden Strunk, chair FHRC.

Dr. Strunk presented suggested textual changes clarify language regarding rights of faculty in dismissal hearings. He then presented committee recommendations for changes in language in the Faculty Handbook necessary to accommodate the Senate approval of reclassifying Librarian and Archivist titles to professorial ranks.

Question: Michael Stern, Economics

Regarding the phrase “other applicable rights”, can you give an example of a right that isn’t applicable?

Answer: “Other applicable rights” was a phrase suggested by university counsel. The idea was to not limit rights to Constitutional rights, but to not list individual rights.

Question: Michael Stern, Economics

Past Chair Dan Svantek once formed an ad hoc committee to address poor dismissal procedures in the handbook. Does this committee exist and was it consulted about these changes?

Answer: Kamden Strunk - I am not aware of such a group.

Answer: Robin Jaffe – Committee was formed and it met, but was put on hold due to personnel changes. Committee has not met recently was not consulted about these recommended changes.

Question, David Crumbley, Senator, Nursing.

Regarding the use of the phrase “other applicable rights” would that not open the University up to recognizing rights from other cultures and countries inconsistent with US rights?

Answer: Kamden Strunk – According to University Counsel, the phrase applies to State and statutory rights surrounding dismissal. The handbook is not a legal document, so that level of specificity is not needed.

Robin Jaffe, Senator, Theater:

Jaffe made a proposal to amend the language of the Handbook Committee Review recommendation from “dismissal shall” to “dismissal or threats of dismissal shall”

Motion was seconded.

Vote on the Jaffe motion to amend text in opening statement from “dismissal” to “dismissal or threats of dismissal” was 45 in favor; 44 in favor polling plus one eligible panelist, 5 opposed, and 11 abstaining. Chair Billor announced that motion passed.

Vote for passage of changes to the Faculty Handbook
45 in favor (42 in favor via vote, plus 3 eligible panelists), 4 against, and 10 abstentions.
Chair Billor announced that the revisions moved forward.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Adjourned: 5:05pm, Chair Billor
Respectfully Submitted,
Greg Schmidt
Secretary-Elect, University Senate

Attendance Record – June 16, 2020

Senate Officers

Present:

Nedret Billor, Chair
Don Mulvaney, Chair-Elect
Greg Schmidt, Secretary-Elect
Michael Baginski, Immediate Past-Chair
Adrienne Wilson, Secretary

Administration

Present:

Chris Roberts, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering
Annette, Ranft, Dean, Harbert College of Business
Jim Weyhenmeyer, VP of Research-Martha Taylor, substitute
Vini Nathan, Dean, College of Architecture, Design, and Construction

Absent:

Joe Aistrup, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Nick Giordano, Dean, Science and Mathematics
Jane Parker, VP Development
Susan Hubbard, Dean, College of Human Sciences
Gregg Newschwander, Dean of Nursing

Ex-Officio Members:

Present

Bill Hardgrave, Provost
Shali Zhang, Dean of Libraries
Mark Bransby, A&P Assembly Chair
Oluchi Oyekwe, GSC President
Jung Won Hur, Steering Committee
Michael Tillson, Steering Committee
Robert Norton, Steering Committee

Absent

Ada Ruth Huntley, SGA President
Kim Brumbeloe, Staff Council Chair
Jared Russell, Steering Committee

Senators:

Present

Lisa Miller, Accountancy
Anwar Ahmed, Aerospace Engineering
Valentina Hatarska, Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
Jacek Wower, Animal Sciences
Chad Foradori, Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology
Kathryn Floyd, Art
Anthony Moss, Biological Sciences
Rebecca O’Neal-Dagg, Architecture
Yi Wang, Biosystems Engineering
Mark Tatum, Building Sciences
Bryan Beckingham, Chemical Engineering
Doug Goodwin, Chemistry
J. Brian Anderson, Civil Engineering
Mary Sandage, Communication Disorders
Kai Chang, Computer Science and Software Engineering
David Han, Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences
Jamie Harrison, Curriculum & Teaching, Sara Demoing, substitute
Feng Li, Drug Discovery and Development
Gilad Sorek, Economics
Susan Youngblood, English
David Held, Entomology & Plant Pathology
Lee Colquitt, Finance
Zachary Zuwiyya, Foreign Language & Literatures
Wayde Morse, Forestry & Wildlife Science
Haibo Zou, Geology & Geography
Kimberly Garza, Health Outcomes Research and Policy
Monique Laney, History, David Lucsko, substitute
Scott Ketring, Human Development & Family Studies
Carlton Lay, Industrial Design
Rich Seseck, Industrial and Systems Engineering
Andreas Kavazis, Kinesiology

George Stachokas, Library
Alan Walker, Management
Yanzhao Cao, Mathematics and Statistics
Virginia Kunzer, Music
David Crumbley, Nursing
Baker Ayoun, Nutrition, Dietetics, & Hospitality Mgmt
David Mixson, Outreach
Peter Christopherson, Pathobiology
Spencer Durham, Pharmacy Practice
Michael Fogle, Physics
Stacey Hunt, Political Science – Paul Harris, substitute
Ken Macklin, Poultry Science
Tracy Witte, Psychology
Malti Tuttle, Special Ed. Rehab. Counseling/School Psychology
Shashank Rao, Systems and Technology- Tyler Morgan, substitute
Arienne Gaetano, Socio/Anthro/Social Work
Robin Jaffe, Theatre
Robert Cole, Veterinary Clinical Sciences
Absent
Molly Gregg, ACES
Robert Agne, Communication and Journalism
Melanie Duffey, Consumer & Design Sciences
Ellen Reames, Educational Foundations, Leadership & Tech
Lloyd Riggs, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Ash Bullard, Fisheries & Allied Aquaculture
Daniel Wells, Horticulture
Jeremy Wolter, Marketing
Daniel Mackowski, Mechanical Engineering
Eric Marcus, Philosophy
Kenneth McDonald, Lieutenant, ROTC, Air Force
Calina Creech, LTC, ROTC
Willie Billingslea, Captain, ROTC, Naval