

Minutes
Senate Meeting: May 26, 2020
3:30 p.m. via Zoom meeting

[Panopto recorded meeting with captioning.](#)

*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 56 out of 87 Senators in attendance.

Nedret Billor, Senate Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. Chair Billor noted that because of a possible lengthy discussion following the Provost and Presidential remarks, they will be moved to the end of the agenda and action/informational items will go first.

Approval of the minutes from the Senate Meeting of April 14, 2020 approved by consent.

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 52 in favor (51 polling votes plus one vote from an eligible Zoom panelist unable to vote via polling) in favor, 0 opposed, and 3 abstaining. Nominees approved.

Action Item 2- Resolution to change the librarian/archivist ranks to professorial ranks

Presenters: Claudine Jenda, Agriculture Librarian and Jaena Alabi, English & Psychology Librarian.

Jenda and Alabi presented the resolution to the proposal to change librarian/archivist ranks to professorial ranks.

The item passed with a vote of 46 in favor (43 polling votes plus 3 from eligible Zoom panelists unable to vote via Zoom polling), 9 opposed, and 7 abstaining.

Information Item – Plan for Auburn University Research Funding

Presenter: James Weyhenmeyer, Vice President for Research

Vice President for Research Weyhenmeyer gave an overview of strategic planning for research funding at Auburn including projections through 2026. With the shift toward problem-solving research, Weyhenmeyer discussed four broad research areas in which Auburn intends to make strategic investments; Health and Well-being, Creating Intelligent Solutions to Complex Problems, Creating a More Secure World, and Building Resilient Communities and Societies.

Question: Tony Moss, Biological Sciences Senator – Can you give your thoughts on Coastal Science as it relates to the research funding strategy?
Answer: The ocean environment is critical to mankind’s well-being. Auburn has been involved in this and will continue to seek opportunities to contribute to solving problems.

Question: Zachary Schulz, College of Liberal Arts – How can the CLA contribute to this science-driven focus? Will you be willing to meet with Departments to discuss how to get engaged?
Answer: Historical knowledge is part of any solution, and research teams should approach solutions holistically. Problem solving is a broad approach, using expertise across disciplines.

Question: Austin Robinson (Read by Chair Billor): Do we have a plan for a return to Clinical Research at the University level?
Answer: We are identifying partners at the clinical level. Partnerships and collaborations at Auburn relating to medical issues are going to involve clinical participation.

Question: Susan Youngblood, English Senator – English research may fall out of current research focus. Can you give assurances that research falling outside of these broad areas you defined will be supported? Will English faculty and other CLA contributors will be placed on research teams? What are the mechanics for putting Humanities researchers on these teams?
Answer: Yes, Auburn will continue to support other research. Regarding establishing groups, the VPR office intends to be proactive in facilitating diversity on the teams.

Question: J. Sefton, Kinesiology – Current researchers who have had research halted due to the COVID closure want to know what the plan is for moving forward with in-person research.
Answer: We are modeling solutions and we are looking at how other institutions are planning for reaching some level of normalcy for human-subject research. We are getting closer to sharing something more broadly.

Remarks and Announcements:

Nedret Billor, Senate Chair remarks (4:25pm)

Chair Billor spoke on the end of Spring semester and the start of Summer and wished faculty a good Summer. The planning underway for fall semester includes widespread testing, contact tracing, and quarantining contingency planning for students and faculty. Many questions remain about operations. We believe that University leadership does not want to put anyone at risk. University leadership is here today to answer your questions.

President Jay Gogue remarks (4:28pm)

President Gogue spoke first on Auburn University operations in the time of COVID-19, reiterating the three basic principles guiding decisions regarding operational plans for the summer and fall semesters.

1. The health and safety of students, faculty, and staff
2. Continuing the mission of the University
3. Shared Governance by engaging student groups, staff groups, and faculty

The president then remarked on what the University leadership is not talking about: furloughs, eliminating positions, pay cuts, or cutting programs, hiring freezes, or financial exigency strategies.

The University is talking about good news including the reaffirmation of our bond ratings, the Alabama legislature appropriating the largest budget allocation ever for Auburn, and the Alabama legislature approving a bond bill that will allow Auburn to look at a new facility on campus for Geosciences, Mathematics & Statistics, and faculty in Funchess Hall.

Provost Bill Hardgrave remarks (4:35pm)
Provost Hardgrave first spoke on Summer second mini-mester operations. The State has opened educational facilities and the SEC is allowing students to return to campus. For the second summer session Auburn has 209 course sections, 149 faculty, 3084 Students registered for on-campus instruction. This experience will inform our fall planning.

Faculty have the choice of four modalities for instruction. Online courses, face-to-face classes, blended modality with some face-to-face and some remote, and a Hy-flex modality with some students face-to-face and some remote in a synchronous setting. Faculty will need to designate a faculty backup, have a “syllabus B” in case we have to return to a shelter-in-place or work-from-home situation, and have a plan for students who during the course of the class are unable, due to the virus, to attend class.

Students will be asked to wear masks, respect social distancing whenever possible, and do daily health checks prior to going to class.

Many classrooms will need to be fitted with proper technology for these modalities.

For fall semester, the operations planning group is considering how it might be possible to end the semester by Thanksgiving.

Commencement is still planned for August 8th and 9th. Auburn is considering options to make this possible.

Question: Robin Jaffe, Senator, Theatre. Where do we stand on merit pay?
Answer (President Gogue): The guidance for the 2021 Budget typically comes from the June BOT meeting, but this has been moved to the July timeframe. We can expect guidance in July. We will continue to honor promotion increases, but the merit pay decision remains to be seen.

Question: Shashank Rao, Senator, Systems and Technology for Bill Hardgrave. Can you clarify that the four modalities are for Summer II, but Fall is still undecided?
Answer (Provost Hardgrave): Based on the guidance we have received, we are planning for these four modalities in the Fall, but this could change. Faculty can be flexible to change modalities during a semester to meet learning modalities.

Questions: Michael Baginski, Immediate past president. What is the plan for dining halls on campus for Summer II? For Summer II and Fall, if faculty members feel uncomfortable with the environment, do they have the option to do online without requesting permission from department chairs or deans? Or Outdoors? How many Auburn faculty students, and staff have tested positive?
Answers: Dr. Fred Kam - 13 faculty/staff, 15 students in the area over the whole testing period.
Ron Burgess – 3 options for dining facilities being considered. We plan to open for Summer II to see what works and doesn’t work
Bill Hardgrave – How a faulty member teaches is up to the faculty and their department. Learning objectives being me are what is important. The Provost will investigate outdoor meeting protocols.

Question: Zachary Shultz, History lecturer. Are we crafting a process for informing students about which sections are which modality?
Answer: We will identify with each faculty which modality they choose. Students will be able to see this when registering. Individual faculty members can work with their departments and colleges to deal with health risks and teaching schedules. We can be flexible and still deliver classes and meet learning objectives.

Questions: Mary Sandage, Senator, Communication Disorders – Are there guidelines for what size class can meet in person? What are we going to do during class turnovers when hallways are crowded and social distancing is difficult? Are we going to help students who switch between classes to different modalities, giving them a place to do online work while on campus?
Answers (Bill Hardgrave): Guidelines will depend on the configuration of the room and the enrollment in the course. Faculty will be able to use hy-flex or other options to accommodate distancing. For between classes, we are asking students to wear facemasks. For moving between modalities, we have facilities across campus (e.g. Libraries, Mell) with areas for students to do their remote work.

Question: Richard Sesek, Senator, Industrial and Systems Engineering. What recourse do faculty have when they are not comfortable with students who refuse to wear a mask in class?
Answer: (Ron Burgess): Right now, the Governor and the State of Alabama does always not require a mask be worn. Our policy strongly encourages mask wearing but we cannot turn away people who refuse to wear a mask. (Bill Hardgrave): Students should be practicing safe social distancing in classes. Ultimately, we cannot require masks. If a faculty member is not comfortable, they can decide whether to carry on with their class or not.

Question: Shobnom Ferdous, Biology Department. I have taught large in person classes, but I am now not comfortable with very large classes of 400. I have chosen to teach classes online, but a class size of 400 is too large for online. What can be done?
Answer (Bill Hardgrave): Class sizes are up to departments to determine class sizes and offerings. We have no restrictions for class sizes.

Question: Tony Moss, Senator, Biological Sciences: Are there plans in place to modify existing classroom presentation stations to add extra protections?
Answer (Bill Hardgrave): At this point I am unaware of plans for using plexiglass protection in the classroom setting. (Ron Burgess): We have identified supply sources for plexiglass, masks and other safety equipment. We are trying to determine the requirements.

Question: Donald Mulvaney (Chair Elect): Are we leaning toward giving departments the responsibility for classroom cleaning?
Answer (Ron Burgess): We are still planning on how to do cleaning and it will likely be a mix. One size will not fit all.

Unfinished Business: None
New Business: None

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

Attendance Record - May 26, 2020

Present:
Senate Officers:
Nedret Billor, Chair
Don Mulvaney, Chair-Elect
Greg Schmidt, Secretary-Elect
Michael Baginski, Immediate Past-Chair
Absent
Adrienne Wilson, Secretary

Present:
Administration:

Joe Aistrup, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Annette, Ranft, Dean, Harbert College of Business
Jim Weyhenmeyer, VP of Research-Martha Taylor, substitute
Vini Nathan, Dean, College of Architecture, Design, and Construction
Gregg Newschwander, Dean of Nursing
Absent:
Chris Roberts, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering
Nick Giordano, Dean, Science and Mathematics
Jane Parker, VP Development
Susan Hubbard, Dean, College of Human Sciences

Ex-Officio Members:
Present
Bill Hardgrave, Provost
Shali Zhang, Dean of Libraries
Kim Brumbeloe, Staff Council Chair
Oluchi Oyekwe, GSC President
Jung Won Hur, Steering Committee
Jared Russell, Steering Committee
Robert Norton, Steering Committee
Absent
Ada Ruth Huntley, SGA President
Mark Bransby, A&P Assembly Chair
Michael Tillson, 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
Mark Tatum, Building Sciences
Bryan Beckingham, Chemical Engineering
Doug Goodwin, Chemistry
J. Brian Anderson, Civil Engineering
Robert Agne, Communication and Journalism
Mary Sandage, Communication Disorders
Melanie Duffey, Consumer & Design Sciences
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
Ellen Reames, Educational Foundations, Leadership & Tech
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
Rich Sesek, Industrial and Systems Engineering
Andreas Kavazis, Kinesiology
George Stachokas, Library
Alan Walker, Management
Jeremy Wolter, Marketing
Yanzhao Cao, Mathematics and Statistics
Virginia Kunzer, Music
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
Kenneth McDonald, Lieutenant, ROTC, Air Force - Mary Doiron, substitute
Arianne Gaetano, Socio/Anthro/Social Work
Robin Jaffe, Theatre
Robert Cole, Veterinary Clinical Sciences
Absent
Molly Gregg, ACES
Rebecca O’Neal-Dagg, Architecture
Yi Wang, Biosystems Engineering
Lloyd Riggs, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Ash Bullard, Fisheries & Allied Aquaculture
Daniel Wells, Horticulture
Carlton Lay, Industrial Design
Daniel Mackowski, Mechanical Engineering

David Crumbley, Nursing
Eric Marcus, Philosophy
Calina Creech, LTC, ROTC
Willie Billingslea, Captain, ROTC, Naval

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