

## **FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**

February 13, 2020

### **Call to order:**

A meeting of the University of North Alabama's Faculty Senate convened in Room 330 within the Gunn University Commons building at 3:30pm. with President Renfroe presiding.

### **I. Proxies:**

Chanho Kang for Eric O'Neal (Department of Kinesiology), Ron Davis for Jason Watson (Department of Computer Science and Information Systems), Erin Vaughn for Trudy Abel (Department of Elementary Education), and John Cicala for Tim Butler (Department of Management and Marketing).

### **Members in attendance:**

Lori Alford, Stephanie Barger, Aaron Benson, Lisa Ann Blankenship, Tabitha Blasingame, Cory Cagle, Lisa Clayton, Wes Davenport, Frank Diaz, Sarah Franklin, Ravi Gollapalli, Leah Graham, John Hodges, Scott Infanger, Christopher Klein, Ian Loepky, Thomas Lukowicz, Janna Malone, John McGee, Janet McMullen, Prema Monteiro, Katie Owens-Murphy, Gary Padgett, Cheryl Price, Jason Price, Ansley Quiros, Lee Renfroe, Terry Richardson, Craig Robertson, Sunhui Sim, Leigh Stanfield, Kevin Stoltz, Jessica Stovall, Jill Stupiansky, Mark Terwilliger, Brain Thompson, Laura Williams, and Pete Williams.

### **Members not in attendance (without proxy):**

Rae Atencio (Department of Military Science) and Alexander Takeuchi (Department of Sociology and Family Studies).

### **II. Approval of agenda:**

President Renfroe requested approval of the Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.

Senator Malone motioned to approve the agenda for the Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Senator Owens-Murphy seconded the motion.

The agenda was approved.

### **III. Approval of the Minutes**

Senator McMullen motioned to approve the minutes from the January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting of the Faculty Senate with a second by Senator Owens-Murphy.

The minutes were approved.

#### **IV. Remarks from President Kitts**

President Kitts' schedule did not allow him the opportunity to attend the Faculty Senate meeting. Dr. Alexander conveyed President Kitts' comments.

#### **V. Remarks from Dr. Ross Alexander (VPAA/Provost)**

Dr. Alexander began his remarks by referencing the issue of student diversity and inclusion at UNA. He recently received a report addressing such issues and their alignment with UNA's Strategic Plan. He thanked the committee for their work on the student diversity and inclusion plan to be presented to the UNA Board of Trustees at the March 6, 2020 meeting. Dr. Alexander acknowledged that resource allocations directed toward this issue remains a priority.

Speaking about academic program development at UNA, Dr. Alexander briefly discussed the Ph.D. program in Exercise Science and Health Promotion and the Executive DBA in Business Administration. Both programs expand graduate degree offerings at UNA but also are part of a diversified growth plan.

Dr. Alexander spoke briefly about Project 208 and ongoing discussions in Montgomery that will affect UNA's 2020-2021 fiscal year budget. Governor Ivy has presented a budget proposal to the state legislature. In that proposal, most Alabama higher education institutions saw a 5-6% increase in allocations but UNA saw a 15% increase (approximately 5 million in new recurring funds). Appreciated as this is, it only begins to close the historical gap in funding that has separated UNA from our peer institutions. The increased allocation can help UNA provide cost of living increases for employees (perhaps at or near 3% for fiscal year 2021 which begins October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020), additional raises/promotions, and unfreezing positions.

Dr. Alexander concluded his remarks by addressing the proposed bond bill that will be part of the current budgetary deliberations at the state level for the 2020-2021 fiscal year and beyond. UNA could potentially receive 8 million from this bond if approved. Such funds could be applied to the nearly 166 million needed for capital projects and deferred maintenance on the UNA campus. UNA is exploring additional sources of funds for such projects from federal, regional, and local sources. (Regarding this bond issue, please see notes below from the presentation by Mr. Jason Cochran)

#### **VI. Remarks from Faculty Senate President Lee Renfroe**

President Renfroe asked the UNA community to extend their thoughts toward the Eubank's family. The Eubank's family has, in light of Mr. Jeff Eubank's death, established an endowment fund in his name on behalf of UNA.

Upon her return to UNA, Ms. Eubanks will continue her work to develop a website that will become the UNA Speaker's Bureau.

## **VII. Reports**

### **A. Standing Committees**

#### **1. Faculty Affairs Committee**

Senator Klein reported that feedback from the academic deans regarding faculty workload has been secured and will be reported to the Faculty Senate at its next meeting.

#### **2. Academic Affairs**

No report was offered.

#### **3. Faculty Attitude Survey**

The committee is working to refine the Faculty Attitude Survey for its subsequent delivery. The survey should be open for faculty/instructional staff participation after UNA's Spring Break.

#### **4. Faculty Handbook Oversight Committee**

No report was offered.

## **VIII. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Course Evaluations – Open and Close Dates**

**See Appendix A.**

Concerns have been raised regarding the opening and closing dates for online course evaluations.

Senator Stovall motioned that course evaluations open each semester after the last date to drop a course and the close date for course evaluations each semester be the actual last day of class.

Dr. Cicala (proxy for Senator Butler) seconded the motion.

The motion was approved.

## **IX. New Business**

There was no new business.

## **X. Information Items**

### **A. Jason “Jay” Cochran – Executive Director, Governmental Relations and Economic Development**

Mr. Cochran introduced himself to the Faculty Senate and reinforced his mission to advance UNA’s interests in Montgomery and bring as much money as possible to Florence. He discussed the current state of the budget for higher education and UNA noting that UNA is gaining ground in appropriations and asked that faculty and staff thank our local politicians for their help in lobbying for UNA’s interests.

Mr. Cochran discussed the current status of the bond bill. Exact wording of the bill is not known but funds may range from one million to 1.25 million. He sees the billing passing but a big issue may be state prison reform which may derail funding for higher education.

Mr. Cochran can be reached at 205.249.4478.

### **B. Michelle Eubanks - Speakers Bureau Update**

Ms. Eubanks was unable to attend this meeting (please see above comments pertaining to the Speaker’s Bureau by President Renfroe)

### **C. University of North Alabama-Guizhou University 4+0/2+0 International Collaboration**

#### **See Appendix B.**

Dr. Alexander addressed this issue to seek Faculty Senate support of this initiative that extends UNA’s diversified approach to student enrollment by developing instructional relationships at a global level. He argued that such a program would reap benefits to the whole campus.

He addressed the following issues:

Voluntary participation in this program, where UNA faculty teach in China could be part of the faculty member’s load.

A monetary incentive would be extended to participating faculty.

Housing for participating faculty would be provided by the Chinese institution.

Free expression by participating faculty is not a concern given the caliber of Guizhou University.

Senator Thompson made a motion to apply Faculty Senate endorsement to UNA's collaboration with Guizhou University. Senator Richardson seconded the motion.

The motion was approved.

## **XI. Adjourn**

Senator Williams motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Senator Robertson seconded the motion.

The Faculty Senate's meeting adjourned at 4:16pm.

## Appendix A

### **Unfinished Business – Open and Close Dates for Course Evaluations**

#### **Issue:**

Students taking the final exam and then completing a course evaluation.

#### **Resolve:**

Open date for course evaluations is after the drop date.

Close date for course evaluations is the last day of class, as designated by the University academic calendar for the current semester.

## Appendix B.

### ***University of North Alabama-Guizhou University 4+0/2+0 International Collaboration***

#### **UNA International Education Strategy and the Changing Landscape of International Education**

International education and international students are integral components of UNA's "smart growth" strategy and its distinction as a global campus, a stated priority in the "2019-2024 Roaring with Excellence" Strategic Plan. According to a 2018 *CHE* article, international student enrollment is down 32% nationwide, but new international student enrollment at UNA has increased 80% over the past two years. As of Fall 2019, international students comprise 8.6% of the total UNA student body. This international student recruitment and retention success is due to several factors—most notably the quality of UNA's academic programs; its fine faculty; welcoming campus; and attractive scholarship package, including housing scholarships. The University's innovative and student-focused "a la carte" programmatic strategy for international student recruitment and engagement has proven successful, whereby students can choose from a host of options at the graduate and undergraduate levels, studying for varying lengths of time. Of special note are UNA's 1+2+1 programs, 3+1+1 programs, 2+2 programs, and Academic English Program (AEP). For example, in the 1+2+1 program, students study at their home university in China for one (1) year, attend UNA for the next two (2) years, and then finish their last year in China; ultimately earning two (2) baccalaureate degrees—one from UNA and one from their home university.

As evidenced by national and international trends, the **landscape of international education is changing rapidly**. While UNA's "a la carte" strategy has produced positive outcomes in international student recruitment, the market is evolving quickly. International students experience the same pressures and realities as domestic students—financial, familial, and even political. UNA's partner institutions, particularly those in China and east Asia (which comprise 88% of total UNA international student enrollment), increasingly desire and demand programming and educational options delivered on-site and in-country. As evidenced by its recent successes and overall "smart growth" strategy, UNA has proven to be an innovative, agile, and flexible university that can provide educational options, programs, and solutions for a diverse and expanding constituency of learners. Furthermore, UNA is well-poised and positioned to meet these shifting demands from the international educational market, partnering with similar institutions.

#### **Guizhou University and Current UNA Collaborations**

Guizhou University (GU) is a highly-ranked, top tier, flagship Chinese university in the city of Guiyang in Guizhou province (population approx. 35 million) in southwest China. Guizhou University is growing rapidly and boasts an enrollment of 50,000+ full-time students (in addition to 50,000+ part-time students). It is an existing 1+2+1 partner and UNA will welcome GU's first cohort of undergraduate Finance students to campus in Fall 2020. Conversations and collaborations with GU have been fruitful, cordial, and frequent. GU deeply desires to formally expand its relationship with UNA in an innovative and large-scale manner, a desire which is

reciprocal. Due to the size, scope, mission, and location of GU, further and large-scale collaborations are logical and natural for UNA.

#### **4+0/2+0 Collaboration and Proposal**

With a rapidly expanding market, the demand from Chinese partner universities and students to deliver baccalaureate and graduate programs and educational options completely on-site is acute and growing—hence the distinction as either “4+0” or “2+0” programs. As a result, UNA and GU have negotiated an agreement in principle to collaborate on a comprehensive 4+0/2+0 endeavor, featuring six (6) UNA degrees—three (3) undergraduate and three (3) graduate. Programs include:

#### **Undergraduate (4+0)**

- 1) **B.S. in Chemistry and Industrial Hygiene**
- 2) **B.S. in Engineering Technology**
- 3) **B.S. in Earth Systems Sustainability**

#### **Graduate (2+0)**

- 1) **M.S. in Applied Manufacturing Engineering**
- 2) **MBA—CIS Concentration**
- 3) **MSN**

Many programs were discussed and considered, but the above six (6) were ultimately chosen for several reasons. First, the academic quality of the programs, including specialized/disciplinary accreditation (e.g. AACSB, ABET) appeal to GU and will resonate in the Chinese market. Second, only those programs that GU Admissions feel confidently will meet or exceed the Chinese Ministry of Education-imposed enrollment quotas were chosen. Those quotas are 100 students/year for undergraduate programs and 50 students/year for graduate programs (i.e., **450 students total/year for all six programs**). Third, as a university, GU has several foci, including sustainability, technology, and healthcare, among others. Chosen UNA programs align to those focus areas and priorities.

While GU currently has 4+0 collaborations with three international universities, including one American university (Western Carolina University in Information Technology), all feature only one (1) program each. GU seeks an American partner that is willing to collaborate in a large-scale manner, bringing up to six (6) programs simultaneously to market. Due to UNA’s agility, quality, and flexibility, both entities feel that UNA is the ideal American partner to forge such a unique and first-in-market (American and Chinese) partnership and collaboration. Initial feedback from the ultimate approving authority, the Chinese Ministry of Education, regarding this new endeavor has been extremely positive and supportive. Interestingly, GU has also expressed interest in UNA’s recently-launched micro-credentials, especially the micro-credential in Instructional Technology and Design.



### Partnership Structure, Logistics, Launch

To best launch such a large-scale 4+0/2+0 suite of programs, both parties agree that the creation of a new entity would best facilitate marketing, administration, and branding of this unique collaboration. As such, the proposed administrative unit is the **Guizhou University-University of North Alabama International College of Engineering and Technology**. This “college” is dissimilar to other UNA academic colleges and is more so an administrative structure that will best recruit and support students. While there will be an eventual need to hire a limited number of on-site administrative personnel, there will be no dean, for example. A seven (7) member “council,” comprised of both UNA and GU personnel, will provide overall direction, policy, and planning. For example, UNA personnel could include one or more academic deans, the Senior Vice Provost for International Affairs, or even the Provost.

While **delivered on-site in Guiyang**, UNA will be largely responsible for supplying the curriculum and instructional “talent.” UNA professors will deliver between one-third and one-half of all courses (a higher percentage for the graduate programs), focused primarily on major core courses, with GU professors delivering the remainder. GU professors will need to meet the same SACSCOC/ABET/AACSB qualifications as UNA professors. GU will provide the capital resources, majority of administrative infrastructure, and a significant portion of the instruction. GU has already reserved several floors of a new academic building with at least six (6) new “smart” classrooms with state-of-the-art technology (in addition to several labs) to accommodate the UNA program. Individual departments and programs would determine the length of instructional terms in collaboration with their GU counterparts, but there is incredible discretion and flexibility. Terms could be as short as 10 days in length, as long as contact hour minimums are met. Undergraduate students participating in the program would earn two baccalaureate degrees—one from GU and one from UNA. Graduate students would earn a UNA degree. In addition, UNA will be able to “brand” the collaboration with permanent signage and marketing materials. In addition, all GU students participating in the program will have the option of studying on the UNA campus in the Shoals for at least one semester. Instruction will be in English and all GU participating students must achieve the same English proficiency scores as other international students studying at UNA. Importantly, GU would become a hub for UNA students and faculty studying in China for varying periods.

Because GU is assuming the overwhelming majority of capital and administrative expenditures (in addition to a large percentage of the instruction), the **proposed revenue share** is either 33% UNA/67% GU or 40% UNA/60% GU (note: UNA will realize a larger percentage of the revenue share for graduate programs—50%+) (please see attached Excel sheets for revenue estimates). At either revenue share rate, the profit potential for UNA is significant—several million dollars annually. Those realized resources can support all university programs, activities, projects, and priorities across all departments, units, and areas.

This innovative, unique, and large-scale collaboration with GU can be transformational for UNA and provide a **reliable revenue stream** for the foreseeable future that will **benefit the entire University**, while also creating new opportunities for students and faculty members, without taxing the infrastructure on the traditional campus. In addition, while it features and showcases

several vibrant and growing programs, it also includes several quality and accredited degree programs that are declining in enrollment and credit hour production, struggling to find a domestic market, and in need of a new opportunity to engage new constituencies of eager learners.

Pending all approvals in the United States (BOT, ACHE, SACSCOC) and in China (Ministry of Education, Bureau of Price), this collaboration could launch as soon as **Fall 2020**. Because UNA will be largely responsible for delivering major-level courses, UNA faculty will not need to travel to China for at least one-year post-launch.

This collaboration represents the next phase of academic innovation at UNA. Once launched and implemented, the UNA-GU 4+0/2+0 collaboration will become a template for future collaborations with existing and new partner universities in China, east Asia, and beyond. Several current partners in Chengdu (China), Nantong (China), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), and Guayaquil (Ecuador) have already expressed interest, featuring a number of programs including GIS, Information Technology, Finance, and others. **This model is replicable, sustainable, and viable.** UNA is a leader in forging and developing collaborations and programs of this type, especially on this scale. This UNA-GU collaboration and all subsequent and similar collaborations with other universities will allow UNA to establish its global brand and offer quality programs in-country approved by the Ministry of Education. Such collaborations will also enable UNA to realize a reliable revenue stream, expand its brand, provide opportunities for students, and empower it to continue to evolve and mature as a university.