

## **Faculty Senate Minutes**

January 8, 2026

### **Call to order:**

A regular meeting of the University of North Alabama's Faculty Senate (FS) convened via MS Teams Video Conferencing at 3:30pm with President Carter presiding.

### **Members in attendance**

Jackie Allen, Lisa Ann Blankinship, Sidney Blaylock, Miranda Bowie, Charles Brooks, Keli Brothers, Justin Carter, Freda Coleman-Reed, James DaSambiagio-Moore, Jenny Dawson, Ravi Gollapalli, Anissa Graham, Leah Graham, Einar Gudmundsson, John Hodges, Rebecca Hopkins, Andrea Hunt, Jason Imbrogno, Lorie Johnson, Mark Linder, Melanie Looser, Tom Lukowicz, Ashley Molina, Stephanie Montgomery, Andrea Nate, Brent Olive, Gary Padgett, Michael Pretes, Steven Puckett, Chris Purser, Candice Quinn, Robert Rausch, Suzanne Reese Mills, Beverly Russell, Matthew Schoenbachler, Justin Scott, Darlene Townsend, Gretchen Windt, Ping Zhao, Rui Zhou

### **Members not in attendance**

Argie Campbell, Jason McCann

### **I. Recognized Proxies**

Dr. Erin Fitzgerald for Sen. Latchaw

Dr. Greg Carnes for Sen. Cagle

Dr. George Makowski for Sen. Burton

### **II. Recognize guests**

Dr. Jeff Ray

### **III. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as submitted.

### **IV. Approval of the Minutes from December 4, 2025 meeting**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

### **V. Remarks from Dr. Ken Kitts, President**

Dr. Kitts welcomed the faculty back to a new year and a new semester. He noted that the Alabama state legislative session begins on 1.13.26 with Governor Ivey releasing the executive budget on 1.14.26. State elections will be held on 11.3.26.

Dr. Kitts provided information from a recent Gallup poll noting that only 35% of adults polled view higher education as "very important". He will further address this in an upcoming communique.

The lion habitat is being transformed into a temporary greenspace for the campus community to use. This does not limit or substantially change the habitat to prevent future lions on campus. Other points of interest included the average 2025 UNA student-athlete GPA of 3.26, up from 2.54 in 1997 and the impending close on the Shine On, Gold campaign of which 8.96% of funds

raised are to offset expenses. The national average for expenses involved with fund raising is 12-15%.

#### **VI. Remarks from Dr. Brien Smith, Provost/ EVPAA**

Dr. Stephen Pruitt, president of SACSCOC, is working with UNA to host a SACSCOC liaison meeting. This effort is being coordinated by Dr. Lorie Johnson and will take place on campus April 21-22, 2026.

The Speakers Bureau is a joint collaboration between the Provost's Office and University Media and Public Relations. Please ask faculty who are interested in serving as speakers for community, civic, and industrial partner to contact Michelle Eubanks with a list of their speaking interests and areas of expertise. While participation is voluntary, faculty buy in is key.

Provost Smith asks for ideas on how to regularly know and communicate faculty successes. Please email ideas and suggestions to the Office of the Provost.

#### **VII. Remarks from Dr. Justin Carter, Faculty Senate President (FSP)**

FSP Carter thanks those that have sent in comments related to the FAS and the Shared Governance report from November 2025. There will be initiatives coming from the feedback of both reports.

#### **VIII. Remarks from Jeff Ray, Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR)**

Dr. Ray provided a review of the successes of our student athletes for this year. The current student athlete GPA average is 3.25 with ~20% of student athletes retaining a 4.0 GPA. Two student athletes received Keller Keys and multiple teams have received APR awards which require that all team members are doing well academically and staying in school. Student athletes had over 4,400 hours of community service. Dr. Ray reminds the faculty that student athletes are only excused when travelling for games (set by the conference not UNA), and participating in active games, not for practice or other reasons. For excused absences, student athletes should be allowed to make up the work – not excused from the work. Please contact Dr. Ray with any questions or issues that may be encountered when working with student athletes. Of note, Fall 2026 will bring women's flag football and men's and women's track teams to UNA.

#### **XI. Reports**

- a. Standing Committees
  - i. Faculty Affairs (Sen. Hodges) – No report
    - 1. Grievance Process Review – FSP Carter notes that this is currently being reviewed. An update will be forthcoming.
  - ii. Academic Affairs – No report
  - iii. Faculty Attitude Survey (Sen. Purser) – No report.
  - iv. Faculty Handbook Oversight Committee (Sen. Lukowicz) – Committee is meeting next (1.12.26) week.

#### **X. Unfinished Business**

- a. Faculty Workloads and Teaching Loads (3.2.2)
- b. Department Chairperson Policy (3.2.4)

Both policies are currently being worked on. An update will be provided during the February 2026 meeting.

## **XI. New Business**

- a. Discussion: Format of Faculty Senate Meetings (In-Person vs. Virtual) – A motion was made by Sen. L. Graham with a second from Sen. Purser to open discussion. Discussion. Sen. Schoenbachler moved to vote on the issue. Motion: Contingent upon finding a suitable on-campus location, Faculty Senate will meet in person beginning February 2026. The motion was seconded by Sen. Proxy Makowski. [Vote: 20Y:19N:3Abs] Motion passes; Faculty Senate meeting location is TBD.
- b. Institutional Effectiveness Committee Nominations – Nominations for the position included Dr. Sean Jacobsen (CASE), Dr. Kyle Conkle (COEHS), Dr. Paige Martin (ACONHP) Dr. Grace Zills (ACONHP), and Dr. Mary Ann Parker (COEHS). Voting was carried out by raised hands with candidates receiving the most votes (top 3 due to a tie) moving forward. [Final vote: 20 Dr. S. Jacobsen: 4 Dr. P. Martin.] Dr. Jacobsen will be the proposed replacement for the vacant position.

## **XII. Information Items**

- a. Open Enrollment Presentation will occur on 1.21.26 at GUC Performance Center at 9am and 1pm. Please let faculty within your departments know or share the flyer found in the meeting packet.
- b. FSP Carter will send out the Provost's points to the Senate as Provost Smith was having microphone issues during the meeting.

## **XIII. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Sen. L. Graham and seconded by Sen. A. Graham. Meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.