Academic Steering Committee Minutes
April 15th, 1:30 pm
General Academic Building Conference Room

*Action Items are noted below in red

1. **No Action Items from this meeting.**

**Present:** Ed Roach, Lance Tatum, Curtis Pitts, Edith Smith, Dianne Barron, Don Jeffrey, Henry Stewart, Hal Fulmer, Eleanor Lee, Vickie Miles, Bill Richardson, John Dew, Ray White, Keith Sessions, Buddy Starling

**Guest:** Mr. Jim Bookout

**Absent:** Earl Ingram, Don Hines

I. **Opening Comments - Dr. Ed Roach**
Dr. Roach stated that Dr. Hawkins had signed the chair stipend policy to provide uniformity across campuses. Dr. Tatum asked if we could operationalize this policy and Dr. Roach said yes. Effective Fall 2008 all chairs should be on a 12 month contract.

II. **Review of Outstanding Action Items from Previous Meetings**
Dr. Roach asked individuals to note which items were assigned to them and provide status updates as available.

III. **Approval of Minutes from April 1st meeting – Dr. Ed Roach**
Two typographical errors were noted in the April 1st minutes. The corrected minutes were approved.

IV. **SACS Update**
Dr. Dew stated that getting the faculty rosters in order has been a challenge. Dr. Roach mentioned that this is evidence that we are still working to merge the three previously separately accredited campuses. Dr. Dew stated that this summer we will be submitting a level change document to SACS. We are putting together a team to plan the site visit here and the University College site visits are still speculative at this point. We will be moving forward with the DNP in August 2009 and will have a level change visit in January 2010. Questions were raised over what to show Dr. Silver on his visit scheduled for April 28th – 30th. Dr. Dew asked them show the facilities to Dr. Silver and introduce him to key players at the campuses.
V. Discussion Items

- **Tuition** - Dr. Roach asked Mr. Bookout to address the plan for the proposed tuition increases for next year. Mr. Bookout stated that we are still uncertain with regard to what state appropriations will be for next year. There may be a double digit decrease in appropriations; however, we feel that the likely scenario is a 7% decrease. The proposal is to eliminate the flat tuition rate and charge for all courses by the hour in addition to adding fees in different areas. Among schools within the state, only the University of Alabama and Auburn University offer “flat” rate tuition. The additional fees are needed to pay for services we are providing where there is not currently a dedicated revenue stream to fund them. Discussion ensued regarding the positives and negatives that could result from this change. Mr. Bookout showed that we were middle of road in comparison to peer institutions within the state with regard to tuition and fees. Concern was expressed over how the tuition and fee changes would be viewed by students.

- **Faculty Handbook** - Dr. Roach presented the revised Faculty Handbook to the committee. He stated that the changes were primarily editorial. The ADA statement had been updated, the grade appeal policy and some other modifications due to various staffing changes. The biggest change was the removal of the statement that University College faculty would be tenured by region. Dr. Richardson stated that individuals could contact himself or Ms. Donna Schubert with any questions they had regarding the changes. Dr. Roach stated that he planned to present it at the Faculty Council meeting later this month and then at the May 1st Board of Trustees meeting. Dr. Richardson asked that Donna Schubert be commended for her efforts on this project.

- **Clarification of Annual Full Time Faculty Evaluation** - Dr. Tatum questioned what instrument should be used for the May 31st deadline. There were some issues with regard to difference in dates in the instrument and in the faculty handbook. The instrument that was presented will be piloted for one year before a final determination is made.

- **Percentage Response Needed to Distribute the End of Course Surveys** – Dr. Barron stated that they did not have the T3 data yet. Dr. Tatum recommended that we work with Dr. Hines to get the data. Dr. Roach said that we needed to get the information so a decision can be made.

- **End of Course Survey Instrument** – Dr. Barron stated the end of course evaluations would go out on April 22nd. Dr. Dew stated that it is essential that we move forward since we will need this data for SACS review. A suggestion was made to shorten the survey to prevent “drop off”. Dr. Barron stated that the response was up by 3%. Dr. Tatum made a motion that we adopt the electronic format for collecting end of course evaluations for the upcoming terms & semester. Dr. Jeffrey seconded. The motion passed with all approved.

VI. Decision Items

- **Plus/Minus Grading System** – Dr. Smith presented the subcommittees’ recommendation on the plus/minus grading system that was proposed by the
Faculty Council. The subcommittee did not vote totally against the possibility of enacting such a system, but made the recommendation that we not adopt it at this time because of a lack of sufficient supporting evidence regarding the benefits and the viability of putting such a plan in place. Dr. Smith made a motion that we not adopt the plus/minus system at this time. Dr. Jeffrey seconded. The motion passed with all approved.

• **Adopting of Wording for Strategic Objective 2.5** – Dr. Dew proposed that we adopt the operational definition of new programs for the purpose of quantifying our progress towards the new program goal number identified in Strategic Objective 2.5. The determination was made that for purposes of the Strategic Objective new programs would be defined as those that would be listed as ACHE decision items. Dr. Fulmer made a motion that we adopt this policy with regard to Strategic Objective 2.5. Dr. Barron seconded. The motion passed with all approved. It was stated that there was need to have a single person tracking this objective. Dr. Roach appointed Dr. Fulmer to be responsible for this objective.

VII. **Information**

- Vicki Miles stated that they are considering moving the Phenix City commencement date to more closely coordinate with the other campuses from January to December.

VIII. **Other**

- Dr. Roach stated that one issue we deal with is that our infrastructure has not kept pace with our growth. It is important that quality control takes place at the front of the “assembly line”. He cited Dr. Barron’s having to inspect graduate theses for errors. He stated that these will be returned to the colleges for correction.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.