

Senate Steering Meeting
January 15, 2025
3:30 pm
107 Samford

Present: Lori Eckhardt (Chair), Jaena Alabi (Secretary), Virginia Davis (Chair-Elect), Rachel Prado (Secretary-Elect), Lisa Kensler (Immediate Past Chair), Andrew Pendola (Rules Appointee), J. Brian Anderson (Presidential Appointee), Tom Leathem (Presidential Appointee), Vini Nathan (Provost),

Absent: L. Octavia Tripp

Special Guests: Michael Pendowski, Chair, Senate Administrator Evaluation Committee; Jim O'Connor, Chief Information Officer, Chief Information Office; Dona Yarbrough, Associate University Ombuds, Ombuds Office; Allison Batts, Senate Parliamentarian

Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 3:34 pm by Chair Eckhardt

[Minutes from the November 5, 2024 Steering Meeting](#) were approved by unanimous consent.

Agenda for the November Senate Meeting was approved by unanimous consent.

Announcements

Provost Nathan shared that she and President Roberts will be finalizing their updates for the Senate Meeting next week. There will likely be updates related to the Board of Trustees meeting, and acknowledgment and congratulations to an Auburn student on becoming Miss America, academic affairs items, and some personnel updates as well.

Information Item Presentations

Cybersecurity Update: Jim O'Connor previewed his presentation on cybersecurity, focusing on the current risks to education, campus programs to mitigate risk, and what members of the university community can do to protect themselves and their colleagues. Some clarifying questions were asked and suggestions for streamlining the presentation were provided.

Ombuds Program Update: Dona Yarbrough shared her presentation on the Ombuds office and its new awareness campaign aimed at undergraduates. The program seeks to spread awareness of the office and its services to undergraduate students. Some requests for more information were made, as well as some suggestions for clarifying takeaways for Senate meeting attendees.

Action Item Presentations

Administrator Evaluation Committee: Michael Pendowski shared information about how changes made to the annual administrator evaluation survey questions and timeline have resulted in increased participation over the past three years. He shared the timeline for this year's surveys on deans and department chairs/heads: January 21 an email will go out announcing the upcoming

surveys. The surveys will go live on January 27 and all faculty and staff will receive notifications (if their dean or department head/chair) is being reviewed by this committee this year. There will be two reminders sent out – February 6 and 12 – and the surveys will close on February 17th. There was a suggestion that Pendowski request that Senators encourage their constituents to participate when receiving these surveys.

Academic Standards Committee: Jaena Alabi presented on behalf of Damion McIntosh, chair of the Academic Standards Committee, because he had a scheduling conflict. Revisions to the Undergraduate Examinations policy were shared.

New Business

There was a brief discussion of the Senate's administrative support position. Although in recent years, this has been a half-time, TES position, it had previously been a full-time position (half for Senate and half for another office on campus).

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Mission: The Steering Committee acts on behalf of the AU Senate on matters requiring attention between meetings of that body and assists the chair of the Senate in setting the agenda for Senate meetings. In addition, it is concerned with the academic affairs of the University, with particular attention given to the need for developing and recommending policies under which these affairs are conducted. It works closely with other Senate committees to aid them in their assignments.