

**SAMFORD UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY MEETING**

Thursday, May 5, 2005  
Brock Forum  
10:00 A.M.

**Call to Order:** Nancy Whitt, President of the Faculty Senate

**Invocation:** David Bains

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for December 2004 meeting were approved as posted on the faculty senate web page.

**Administration Remarks:**

Dr. Corts expressed appreciation for the words of appreciation he has received from faculty members since the announcement of his coming retirement. His final year will be marked by involvement in strong commitments made by the Board of Trustees concerning various campus projects. Due to major construction and renovation activities we can expect a major upset of usual campus operations. One of these projects will be the addition of approximately 333 new parking spaces under the Alabama Power line right of way just south of the track and football field. These spaces should be ready for the fall semester; the new recreation/fitness center will not be ready before early November.

A major concern for Dr. Corts and the Board of Trustees for the future is the continuing effort to arrive at a collective understanding of what it means to be a Christian institution. We all contribute to that and continue to work at it as there are different ways of defining it. The key to success is arriving at a collective understanding that we all can support. As a result of coming to a common understanding some will naturally withdraw themselves from us and others will want to join us, but it is essential that we be committed to the commonality. We want not to be hypocritical—not captive to Baptists, but to the ideal. We need to work toward consistency in being strong both in academics and in Christian identity.

He is impressed by the achievements of our faculty and students and hopes that a lot of positive things may happen in the coming year.

Brad Creed announced that the Parking Committee, chaired by Jean Thomason, had submitted its report to him. He is scheduled to meet with the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate this afternoon to share with them the results of the committee's work.

The Academic Integrity committee has prepared a draft statement and Brad will meet with that committee on May 16 to review it.

Preparations for the University's SACS review are underway. The leadership team has been appointed to prepare for the actual event two years hence. Plans are for the Faculty Institute on August 22 to address SACS issues.

### **Old Business:**

Sarah Latham (Institutional Research) reported for the Senate subcommittee on Academic Freedom that they received 118 responses to the survey they distributed. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the responses were from Arts and Sciences, with the majority from those teaching at the undergraduate level. The majority response was that they do not feel pressure from the Administration that constrains their academic freedom to teach. Most issues arise from students when discussion concerns controversial issues that may impact Samford's identity. Such issues involve current international matters, different religions, sexuality, etc. In response to student reactions, some faculty reported that they altered the course material or the nature of the discussion.

The generic definition of academic freedom that emerged was: Freedom to research and teach anything in one's discipline without fear of reprisals. Eighty-eight percent (88%) said that academic freedom was not discussed at faculty forum or with new faculty members.

The full report will be posted on the website.

Rod Davis inquired whether the survey was only for Samford or if there were other school surveys with which Samford's could be compared? Sarah's response was affirmative, but she pointed out that some questions from other school surveys cannot be compared because of Samford's identity.

### **Committee Reports:**

Diversity: Paul Holloway reported that in response to the racial insensitivities reported, the following actions have been taken: Frank Parsons, Director of Greek Life, will implement changes in the time and space form to required fuller information about themes of parties. He will meet twice a year with appropriate fraternity and sorority groups to address sensitivity issues. T-shirt designs must be pre-approved (the Confederate battle flag is now off-limits at Samford). Frank will also work with the SGA and include training for panhellenic members.

Members of the Committee have met with key members of the African-American community on Samford's campus, and they are not so positive. They expressed some disappointment and mixed feelings about Samford's identity. They perceive an attitude of goodwill, but believe that problems of racial insensitivity are structural/cultural. They see the University's response in dealing with the recent issues as anomalies, not as systemic.

A question was raised as to whether women's issues are also under this committee's purview. The answer is "yes", and it includes class and gender issues as well.

Scott McGinnis asked if it is possible to do some benchmark comparisons with other schools. Paul indicated that the committee has done some of that and one result is the faculty statement on diversity that was recently circulated for our consideration.

Even though this committee's areas of responsibility are broad, some sentiment was expressed for keeping the focus on race because of our particular location in Birmingham and the racial history of this area.

Jean Thomason (Library) reminded the faculty of the Minority Scholarship Endowment that was initiated last year by a Samford student. The only qualifications for receiving this assistance are that the person be a minority and have financial need. She appealed to for contributions to the endowment as a faculty statement of commitment.

#### **New Business:**

Robin Snyder reported that the Restoring Eden program is initiating a paper recycling program with the SHRED IT company and would like for all university departments and schools to participate at a reduced rate. For additional information on the program you may contact Robin at 2508 or [rdsnyder@samford.edu](mailto:rdsnyder@samford.edu)

Tina Duffey (Elections Committee) reported that Nancy Whitt and Don Sandley will continue in their respective positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate for the second year of their terms so that only a Secretary need be elected. The name of Brian Toone was submitted by the committee, and there being no further nominations, Brian was elected to serve as Secretary of the Senate for 2005-2006.

#### **Announcements:**

Nancy Whitt expressed appreciation to Norfleete Day for her services this year as senate secretary and announced that there will be no additional faculty senate meetings this academic year.

Hugh Floyd called attention to the availability of copies of *Academe*, the AAUW newspaper and invited colleagues to consider membership in Samford's chapter of the AAUW.

Paul Aucoin (Academic Services) noted that today is the deadline for university catalog edits, reminded the faculty that the baccalaureate service begins at 5:00 p.m. this year vs. 6:00 p.m. as in the past, and that online grading will open May 12 and close May 24.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by Nancy Whitt