

Faculty Senate Plenary Meeting
August 20, 2025
MCOB Room 265
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
(Zoom Option included)

1. Preliminary Business

This meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. with Faculty Senate President, Christina Wassenaar presiding Quorum was met.

Guests: Dr. Joel Erdmann, University of South Alabama (USA) Director of Athletics

Approval of May 2025 Minutes

Approval of August 2025 Agenda

- Request from FS President for slight moderation to today's agenda starting first with Joel Erdmann, Athletic Program Update before President's report
- Agenda adjustment approved
- Saturday August 30, 2025 6 p.m. home game at USA will be 2 free tickets for Faculty/Staff and is the official Faculty/Staff appreciation game.

Athletic Program Update <https://usajaguars.com/>

Faculty Senate President, [Christina Wassenaar](#) shared that Saturday August 30, 2025 will be Faculty and Staff appreciation day at the first game of the fall 2025 season, 6 p.m. football game at USA vs. Morgan State.

The [University of South Alabama is part of the Sun Belt Conference](#). [SUN BELT CONFERENCE](#) which is very attune to regionality. Texas State in San Marcos, leaving the Sun Belt Conference to participate in the New Pack 12, and in exchange Louisiana Tech will be added to the Sun Belt. Plus \$200,000 to USA athletic budget because of this, so that is a good thing.

Overall, Dr. Erdmann provided the Faculty Senate with an update regarding the USA athletic program, and particulars that the Faculty Senate might not be aware of, including a stronger understanding of any athletic program context to ensure that any misconceptions are eliminated.

Particulars discussed included

1. NIL (Name/Image/Likeness) “we” have survived in this world for sometime now but NIL turned into a lawsuit called the HOUSE case vs. NCAA and was ruled on in Summer 2025 by Judge Wilkin of Northern California. More context on that case here:
<https://apnews.com/article/nil-ncaa-house-settlement-5937493302218963fc678562dcc8d222>
 - 1.6 million annually for the next ten years, 2016 to 2036, (USA will not write that check but the Sunbelt conference will write that check, and USA hopes to be flat soon)
 - NCAA Commissioner doing a good job and USA might be flat in one year but this is where we are now
2. [NCAA \(membership driven organization/Athletic governing body\)](#) that USA is a member of.
3. How moving forward?
 - a. NCAA is out of the scholarship business and participating in roster limits.
 - b. USA is keeping scholarship budget (8 million a year) and that is staying steady BUT scholarship money has to prioritize other sports and have to isolate a certain number of sports to be competitive.
 - c. New way of “doing” Transfer portal: Unlimited movement. If you were playing at a Division 1 school and you transferred you had to sit out a year (traditional way). That is gone now. Good change. Transfer freedom now, as long as have the right number of hours.
 - d. Coaches can leave anytime they want, and they have always had that power to do that, and now students can also have that free movement.
 - e. NIL can continue but in a much more controlled fashion from Summer 2025 ruling and moving forward.
 - f. New: Contracts have to be transparent and approved by a central clearing house.
 - g. Now USA participates in revenue sharing at USA, but doing so at a small level.
 - i. Supplementing car payments.
 - ii. Supplementing cellphone payments.
 - iii. If students receive a pell grant, ex. “Might be, half of pell grant and half of revenue sharing going home to Mom”
 - iv. In conclusion, USA Athletics are “in the game” but not at **perhaps the extreme** level you are hearing and that is what I want to ensure you understand today with my visit to the Faculty Senate.

- h. After last season USA football had 17 starters coming back for this year by the roster. After spring portal USA football lost 9 football players, four of these were quarterbacks. Starting quarterback, Huntsville, Alabama native, Geo Lopez, lost to Bill Belichick at UNC Chapel Hill for 3.5 million guaranteed over 24 months, and will go into fall camp as starting quarterback. Lost a running back to Mississippi State for \$350,00, but we now have 12 new guys, including the best wide receiver out of Sanford and he will start.
- i. [LSF \(Loyal, Strong, and Faithful\)](#) Revenue Sharing Fund that was created in 2025. Checks are being written directly to University of South Alabama and are tax deductible.
 - i. Launched in April of 2025 and inspired by the words of the school's beloved fight song, the Loyal, Strong & Faithful Fund reflects the unwavering pride, strength, and dedication that defines what it means to be a South Alabama Jaguar. By investing in its student-athletes and equipping its coaches with the tools necessary to build and sustain a culture of competitive excellence, the fund ensures that South Alabama has the championship resources to compete at the highest levels.
- j. In conclusion, this session is for Faculty Senate to better understand the money side of USA athletics and that there is thought behind this and we have more information moving forward into academic year. Go Jags!
- k. Faculty/Staff appreciation day! Saturday August 30, 2025 6 p.m. home football game at USA will be 2 free tickets for Faculty/Staff and is the official Faculty/Staff appreciation game.

President's Report:

1. Updates coming soon on both a dashboard as well as a written report to show the impact of grant funding and funding issues related to recent executive orders over the last 12 months. Dr. Joel Billingsley is involved with this. More on this soon, in fall 2025.
 - o There is a form you can submit in advance to ensure that your research is in compliance with the Trump executive order and not in any jeopardy of being cut or not funded.
2. Suggestions for Faculty Senate guest speakers. Senate is also a professional development opportunity to get a stronger idea of what is happening in and around the University. Email me if you have suggestions.
3. Workload/Salary Balance issue is still a major issue and needs to be addressed, and some of this will be addressed in the salary survey.

4. Fall 2025: Transfer students are down. Graduate admissions are down and the College of Nursing is hurt by this. Overall, the Freshman class is larger this year but have not seen the number yet.
 - Update/Question: Have you heard any more on the **salary survey discussion**, which sparked much discussion. This survey is being conducted/led by the Faculty Salaries & Benefits Committee and the chair is Geoffrey Hudson.
<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/fsenate/fsbc.html>
 - An upcoming meeting on this topic will take place soon and the move from Academic Affairs to put together a working group to discuss the needs for this survey were promising, the plan is that the survey will push for instructor levels as well, and will compare salaries and address workload issues as that relates to salary as well.
5. Upcoming: Research Town Hall: Marx Library 9/9/25 @ 2 pm. Library Auditorium. Hosted by Dr. Angela Jordan and Dr. Alan Parrish Room.
6. University of South Alabama Faculty Senate will host the Annual Faculty Senate President's Conference on March 20, 2026. Wassenaar and Streeter attended the conference in May of 2025 at Auburn University. Details to follow as we get closer to the date.

Old Business:

- Most current updates will be covered in reports
- Faculty One-Stop Site, please peruse & provide suggestions.
 - This is a work in progress, but would like to be completed soon so can be put to use. <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/facultyonestop/> (Umbrella page)
 - Idea to see how it works and make updates/changes as we move forward (if necessary)

Reports from Committees

- **Evaluation** (Clay Davidson) - ***1st meeting next Wednesday***
 - Evaluation committee meeting 8/27/25 at 3 p.m
- **FacDev&Ment** (Tracy O'Connor) - ***in writing in agenda attachments***
 - Worked with ILC on the Meple Mentoring program Fall 2025
 - Sent to all Caucus leaders to share out
 - Dissemination in the Digest
 - Participate in this program/great program
- **FacSal&Ben** (Geoffrey Hudson)

- Project ongoing on the salary survey.
- More information at the next meeting hopefully will be formalized, and then will plan to get survey questions to Clay once we get survey questions organized.
- How to calculate the workload costs will be part of the charge of this committee.
- CW shared: Promotion & Tenure survey was the main topic at the recent Dean's retreat. The survey went out in spring 2025 and had a response rate of close to 300, which is good considering we have just over 800 faculty.
- From the Dean's retreat, survey was a big topic, and Dean's are now working in subcommittees from this discussion at the retreat and drafting up some suggested responses due by October 2025, short turnaround, on the questions related to promotion and tenure that were raised by the survey.
- **Res&CreatAct** (Rebecca Thomas) Excused Absence
- **Sust&EnvirQual** (Dalton Fox)
 - Meeting on 9/2/25. New committee chair and all new committee members.
 - Working with Fox and Hauff will also work to ensure that the charges for these committees are where they need to be.
- **Teach/Learn&Tech** (Michael Black) - *nr*
- **UnivPlan&Dev** (Sean Walker)
 - Working with Master Plan and Buck Kelly on campus with facilities needs and assessment. Kelly along with Sean and his committee are working to ensure that the master plan is in alignment with the strategic plan of the University.
 - The consultant will be brought in to be part of the master plan process and then faculty meetings with the consultant will follow.
 - CW: Need to ensure that someone from every division and college are part of these meetings and from the College of Medicine (COM) from the different facilities.
 - What are our ideas? Do we have them? Who is talking/thinking about this? What should our classrooms look like in ten years? We need to have these conversations now.
- **UnivPol&HandBk** (Donna Streeter)
 - First committee meeting on Friday 8/22/25
 - Need to find out from Dr. Guest where we are on the two policies that were brought to CAD before the summer break?
 1. The Tenure and Promotion Policy
 2. The Non-Tenure track policy where the years of service would be counted instead of waiting the five/six years before someone can apply for the non-tenure track instructional contract.

- Committee working on a new process to make it easier for faculty to report suggestions to the handbook (details coming later as we work on this)
- Donna Streeter is the new Handbook Chair as we have unfortunately lost Sinead to the University of Arkansas this summer.
- CW nominated Donna Streeter to the Chair position.
- **Wellbeing&Ret** [*ad hoc*] (Caitlyn Hauff) - ***in writing in agenda attachments***
 - CW Working with Fox and Hauff will also work to ensure that the charge for this ad hoc committee is where it needs to be.
 - Working on budget questions/issues
 - Idea to survey faculty idea (an option)
 - Dataset called Healthy Minds out of the University of Michigan (to use that data is also an option committee considering)
 - Hired a second counselor on USA campus and that is a good thing that more mental health is recognized as a need
 - October 2025 will formally vote to see if we keep this committee or not.

Reports from Caucus Leaders

- A&S (Eleanor ter Horst)
 - Organizing to replace Sinead (work in progress)
 - CW wants to figure out actual turnover rates and is curious about that.
 - Say maybe close to 10%? And that would be interesting to find out.
- CAHP (Casey Brock)
 - Increasing number of students with accommodations and [CEADR](#) is discussion about the policies. Some discrepancies have been happening and a rep from CEADR will be visiting our caucus to share the particulars. Do all colleges know this? I will mention it again at next meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions.
 - CW have some anecdotes that we collect quickly in a form to say/share/show so think about that so we can move forward.
- CIS (Michael Black) - ***nr***
- CEPS (Caitlyn Hauff) - ***nr***
- ENGR (Brooks Rabideau)
 - Special election to replace one of our newly elected Senators.
- LIB (Tracy Cole) - ***in writing in agenda attachments***
 - New Information: Scholarly Communications Librarian
 - Vivienne Auvil starts on 9/1/25
 - AI Literacy: needs/ please reach out to USA Libraries to talk with your classes about AI.
 - OER day conference event on 9/11/25 please register and join us and learn about OER. More details on registration in the agenda submitted reports.

- MED (Greg Brower) - **Dr. Marymont retired in November, nfr**
- SIM (Robin Bates) - **nr**
- MCOB
 - Election in play right now for the open Faculty Senate seat. After that we will have an election for a caucus leader.
 - MCOB Faculty Retreat just took place.
- CON: Introduction of Elizabeth Vandewaa

Reports from University Committees:

CW suggestion for devising a Faculty Success Team (like we have for a student success team that she serves on)

CW will write a proposal to suggest this/floated the idea and it was NOT a No.

Closing Remarks from CW:

- In the Master Plan thinking, also be thinking of the future of your fields.
- Dr. Parrish is trying to also be our voice for this. [Christina Wassenaar](#) is working on this secondarily within her own work and the Senate.
- Any of the rooms/committees/and the field you are in, push for what you will be doing five years from now in your fields and what that looks like.
- Let's see how we can start building that narrative.

New Business

- Ad hoc Bylaws Review Committee - present to Senate for consideration
- Draft charge will be shared by CW (in very extreme draft mode) and will be in the shared drive.

Adjournment

4:52 meeting adjourned

References:

<https://apnews.com/article/nll-ncaa-house-settlement-5937493302218963fc678562dcc8d222>

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy M. Cole

August 27, 2025