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Faculty Senate Minutes - June 15, 2001

USM Faculty Senate

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1.0 Call to Order. President Laughlin called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

2.0 Approval of Agenda. Senator requested that discussion of the university changes in student bank accounts be added to the agenda. The president added Banking discussion as 7.1; renumbered Passing of the Gavel as 7.2 and Election as 7.3. Jesse Palmer moved (Shellie Nielsen, seconded) approval of the minutes with changes. Passed.

3.0 Approval of Minutes. Minutes of the May 4, 2001, meeting were approved as distributed.

4.0 Executive Committee Reports.

4.1 President’s Report. President Laughlin offered the following report:

Budget Issues:

The university budget that was sent to IHL was essentially the same as the summary that was distributed at the May Senate meeting. After the May 8th meeting with the President and his staff, Susan Hubble, Toby Graham, Bob Smith,
and I met with Karen Reidenbach and Candy Santell to take a closer look at the OTR budget. Out of that meeting came some specific recommendations for savings that I took to the Cabinet. There were: 1) reducing the Software Implementation fund in the VP for Business and Finance budget; 2) moving some of the savings from the maintenance on Bull into Academic Affairs; 3) reviewing the OTR reserve account; and 4) delaying any new projects. These suggestions were heard at the Cabinet, but no changes were made in the budget proposal.

**New Strategic Planning Committee:**

A new Strategic Planning Committee is being formed and will be chaired by Marjorie Spruill. It is my understanding that the committee will begin work this summer and the hope is to complete a revised strategic plan before the end of the fall term.

**Fall Faculty Meeting:**

I spoke with the President about our concern regarding the shabby treatment of our Faculty Excellence Award winners this year, and he apologized for the confusion surrounding this event. A fall faculty meeting is being planned and there will be some recognition of these individuals at that event.

**Cabinet:**

A representative from Financial Affairs spoke to the Cabinet this morning about PeopleSoft issues. The financial module will go live on July 1st, and you should look for upcoming information on changes in procedures for travel and reimbursements and faculty/staff charging.

At the IHL meeting next week, Dr. Fleming will present an Institutional Review to the Board and his personal review will take place after the general board meeting on Thursday.

**Questions and comments related to President Laughlin’s Report:**

Senator: What happened to the portability of tuition waiver benefit for faculty?

A. Kaul: I was told that there was an estimated cost of $8 Milllion to expand faculty benefits, according to Lazell’s calculations. It was dropped because of cost. I have no further information. I don’t know how much this would cost.

D. Beckett: I would like to know how this was calculated.

A. Kaul: There were two issues. One was changing the faculty-staff tuition break
from 50% to 100% and the other issues was the portability issue [dependents could receive break at any Mississippi University].

D. Beckett: I think that we should push hard on the portability issue because there should be no additional cost. I would think that this would be a good year to pursue this issue since faculty have done so poorly on raises and health care. I think that if we separated those two issues and pushed harder for the portability [tuition benefits], we would do better.

A. Kaul: Clearly the first would have a high cost, but it is not clear how portability would cost more.

S. Laughlin: I know that this has come up before and certain university presidents have opposed this--thinking that they would lose some students to other universities and it would cost too much.

A. Kaul: I was hopeful on the portability issue because at least one of the presidents, Bristow, was in favor of it.

D. Duhon: Apparently USM is not in favor of it. USM would probably lose students-- State and Old Miss would gain.

B. Smith: How so?

D. Duhon: To be honest--very few Old Miss faculty and staff children would come to USM. We are more likely to send students there.

Beckett: I wouldn’t be one of the WE that you are discussing. I’m not buying that. At this point I think we need to think a little about us and faculty benefits [in general] and not necessarily just about the university’s position.

Duhon: I have a child at University of Northern Mississippi and I would be positively affected by the change. Historically, it is a fact that faculty from northern universities do not encourage their children to come here.

B. Smith: I think that this is very hard to calculate [the exact costs of portability]. We may be able to have more faculty who want to take a job here with additional benefits. I would be curious how this estimate was calculated.

A. Kaul: I will continue to pursue this.

**4.2 President-Elect’s Report: Susan Hubble**

I did have the opportunity to hear more about People Soft and the report took over an hour and 15 minutes. Some modules are being implemented while other will
be implemented in phases over the next year and a half. Please check your name, address, and email on master list that is circulating.

President Laughlin: I do want to welcome the new Faculty Senate members.

4.3 Secretary’s Report: Michael Forster

There are five proxies [see Members Represented by Proxy above]. I will send around the attendance and new members should add their names.

4.4 Secretary-Elect’s Report: Darlys Alford No Report.

President Laughlin: Our job for today is to wrap up any old business for the year.

5.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Academic and Governance Committee: Mary Lux No Report.

5.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations: Kimberly Davis

We need to vote on a reversal of the decision we made earlier to institute the evaluation of assistant/associate deans. We had discussed changing now to give the colleges the choice about how these would be conducted.

M. Forster: I don’t believe we did vote on that, but why don’t we forestall this issues until we have a chance to search the minutes?

President Laughlin: Why don’t we refer that to next year’s evaluation committee?

K. Davis: I believe that will conclude my report.

5.3 Archives: Shellie Nielsen

Our committee did not get to meet before this meeting so we will continue on updating the archives.

5.4 Athletic Liaison: Trellis Green Report after 5.16.

5.5 Awards: Susan Graham-Kresge No report.

D. Alford: At our last meeting it was suggested that the Faculty Excellence Award Recipients be invited to our party tonight and I have contacted them. They were sent an invitation and most will be attending. They were delighted to be asked to join us.
5.6 Faculty Welfare: John Rachal

J. Rachal: Summarized committee accomplishments as follows: 1) blocked implementation of bi-weekly pay plan for faculty; 2) sponsored and passed a resolution endorsing equitable summer pay utilizing percentage-of-salary system, yet no change; 3) passed a resolution regarding parking violation enforcement (faculty were not allowed to give tickets); 4) passed a resolution opposing an increase in parking/transportation fees and won; 5) passed a resolution and communicated with legislators asking that state tobacco money be used to defray costs of health insurance with no success at present; 6) resolution was submitted to the legislature suggesting that university employees be allowed to utilize other vendors for travel if those vendors’ charges are less than the state-contracted vendor--not sure about status. The written report circulated at the meeting explained other issues that were investigated by the committee.

A committee report was circulated. The following information was provided by the College Deans across the campus and includes only the Hattiesburg campus. Ed/Psyc: 11 resignations, 7 retirements (note: 6 faculty positions lost over last two years; two positions have been filled; greater reliance on instructors/adjunct faculty to fill teaching needs). Nursing: 2 resignations, 5 retirements (note: one positions lost in 1999-00 budget year; 2 frozen positions in 2000-01 year; two unfilled positions currently). Liberal Arts: 8 resignations, 2 retirements (note: all 10 positions are frozen due to budget cuts; adversely affected departments include English, Speech, Communication, Foreign Languages). Science and Technology: Note: 10 tenure-track and 3 instructor positions lost due to budget cuts; 7 tenure-track and 1 instructor positions remain unfilled due to budget situation; hardest hit include Engineering Tech., Biological Sci., Mathematics, Computer Sci., Chemistry, Biochemistry. Business Admin: 7 resignations, 3 retirements (note: beginning fall with 7 vacancies; 5 of the resignations were assistant professors with 2/3 years experience). Health & Human Services: 4 resignations (note: 3 tenure-track positions lost due to budget cuts--now instructor positions).

J. Olmi: I want to thank the deans for providing the information. In my communications with the deans, there were many statements about reduced number of classes, refusal to go into overload situation and avoid the message that the lost positions “aren’t necessary.” In psychology alone, five faculty members have left in the last six months. We are down 7 faculty members. We are turning to adjuncts...

D. Dunn: Would this call into questions the belief of the administration that there is $10 Million in dean’s accounts.
J. Olmi: In Liberal Arts, the positions are being cut because of a lack of money.

K. Davis: What about Arts?

Olmi: I didn’t get a response from the Dean of Arts.

K. Davis: That’s because our Dean is leaving. He’s an Exodus person.

M. Gregg: Contracts don’t come out until July and I know in my area there are come who may not sign those contracts in July.

D. Cabana: When a full professor leaves, where does the money go? An assistant professor is usually hired when there are retirements. What happens to the difference? Does it just disappear into deans accounts? Second, for what it’s worth... Legislator Farris once again said that faculty salaries are competitive with other universities in the southeast. There is a general silence of others in our legislative delegation. We’re going to have to fight for ourselves. Very disappointing.

A. Kaul: Farris quote was: “Mississippi is competitive with states around us, in my view. There is not a single state around us that has not taken serious cuts in higher education.” Like Don, I don’t know what that means.

J. Olmi: If they are already 30% better to begin with -- their cuts are sure as hell less that our cuts. We have the data and its time we call IHL and our delegation and ask them what their plan is.

P. Smith: We need to see if in the good years there is a difference in faculty turnover.

J. Olmi: There is published data showing that the resignations are going to top 180 but I think that it may be 250. (Across all eight universities).

M. Forster: That statement was in response to President Fleming asking for use of the Stabilization Fund so you can look that up.

T. Green: Many faculty members are staying only because they are tied to PERS. There would be many more leaving if they could.

J. Rachal: We did contact Lazell and he was polite in responding to our questions, but I don’t feel like we made much progress with him. We were very active as a committee and successful on some. These are difficult issues.

D. Duhon: What about shortening the semester?
J. Rachal: We did not address that.

5.7 Constitution and By-laws: Bob Smith

5.8 Elections: Sue Hubble

This was the year for reapportionment. I have handed out the report. Changes in apportionment were: College of Business down by one senator; Gulf Coast increased by two senators; Liberal Arts increased by one senator; Libraries decreased by one senator. All other units remained the same. Special thanks to Doug McCain and other committee members who helped.

D. Duhon: Are these numbers all positions whether filled or not?

S. Hubble: The Deans gave me the number of funded positions.

5.9 Environment: Dick Conville No Report.

5.10 Faculty Development: Bob Coates No Report.

5.11 Government Relations: Jesse Palmer

Refer to last meeting notes for a good summary.

5.12 Technology: Toby Graham. Newspaper reported that McGowan is leaving.

5.13 Transportation: Bill Scarborough No Report.

5.14 AAUP Liaison: Michael Dearmey No Report.

5.15 Faculty Handbook Task Force (ad hoc): David Goff No Report.

5.16 University Faculty Senates Association: Art Kaul

Layzell spoke a lot of doom and gloom on the budget. It’s bad when the commissioner said we only had a $65 Million cut. It may get worse next year. The plan is to hold at the $65 M cut. If there are more cuts, there will be layoffs. The IHL budget request: Ask for multi-year salary increases. He didn’t mention a specific percentage. The goal is to maintain funding level of this year for next fiscal year. Some of this year’s budget was built on one-time money. It would take $8M for 1% pay raise. Budget proposals were vague. IHL is trying to take the tack that all of education should be treated the same: public school K-12, community colleges, and higher ed. There was a discussion at IHL of more “flexibility” regarding retirement without elaborating. Health insurance is expected to go up and we can expect two-three years of substantial tuition
increases. At the end of the meeting, MUW and Jackson State brought up the issue of faculty evaluation of university president. There is not now a systematic way for faculty feedback to get into the process of president evaluation. I got the idea from Layzell’s comments that IHL is not particularly interested in the faculty’s opinion about “THEIR” presidents. This issues is going to stay on the table. The board seems to feel that the presidents work for them, not necessarily for the faculty. This is well-worth pursuing. This will be #1 on next agenda.

K. Davis: Commissioner is not evaluated and the presidents are in the same class. Layzell seemed to be saying that faculty were not objective enough to evaluate presidents. I said that we are not less objective than students and they evaluate us. It was an insult in my opinion.

Stringer: What universities were represented?

A. Kaul: MUW, Valley State, Jackson State, USM, Med Center were present at the meeting. Absent were Old Miss, Mississippi State, Alcorn, Delta State.

G. Stringer: “University of Northern Mississippi” isn’t being hurt by these cuts in the same way or so I’ve heard recently.

A. Kaul: The notification was not adequate and I worried that there would not be a quorum. It seems bad to have a meeting with the Commissioner and not have anyone show.

G. Stringer: I wonder if we should take the same tack as “They” use with us.

A. Kaul: Old Miss has a new Senate President who has been very active. I have seen a shift and I hope it stays that way. There is more indication that [we are not divided as a faculty].

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Change of officer election date: Bob Smith

See minutes from last meeting. There was a consensus that we needed to move the election of officers back to May so that the members who are familiar with senators were in a better position to make a voting decision rather than asking new senators to vote when they may not know the candidates.

President Laughlin: Since it is a motion from the committee, no second is needed. Is there any discussion?

D. Duhon: Will Start next May? (Laugh)
B. Smith: Yes, 2002.

Vote: Motion unanimous yes

7.0 New Business

7.1 Banking for Student Groups: David Duhon

We were informed that the university bursar will no longer handle the accounts for student groups. This is an added complication for advisors of student groups. Here is another aggravation that makes it difficult for those who are volunteering their time.

Mary Dane Gregg: What happened this past year with the student group I advise was that when we got ready to have a reception, I called Catering and ordered the food and the bill was always paid. Now I have to go the caterer with a check up front. If we have fewer people than we at first predicted, then we have to hassle them to get a reimbursement. This makes being an advisor so difficult.

D. Duhon: I’m talking to Frank (a student group advisor) and he says, “What am I doing this for?” The credit union wouldn’t let him open an account because they only have interest-bearing accounts and you have to have an employee identification number. There is just one piece of red tape after another.

Dean: There is more: With an Fed ID number, you must fill out income tax information. Then you have to fill out IRS forms each year.

Duhon: But with the bursars office we never had to do this before. Faculty advisors are getting a great deal of aggravation because of PeopleSoft—more problems that will all fall on the backs of advisors.

M. Gregg: Because some fraternities owed money, the accountants have changed the rules and it makes it harder and harder for me. I am forced to do business with one caterer by the university and I would rather just do the food myself than to meet all these demands.

Several: You should do what is easiest.

M. Gregg: The people who sit in a room and make these decisions have never been faculty advisors and they have no idea how much work they are creating. Just blanket decisions without contacting the people who are most affected.

Cabana: I am an advisor for Criminal Justice and we have a big banquet each year. We have talked a lot about communication with faculty and administrators
this year. This is a minor thing relatively speaking, but it has a ripple effect and trouble for faculty advisors--just another thing that is frustrating. It makes being a faculty advisor frustrating--makes faculty want to withdraw and that’s not fair to students.

K. Greene: We were told that we owe $1300 (for Take Your Daughters to Work Day) for an account that was closed three years ago. We were told that this would not be transferred over to PeopleSoft until it was paid. I have a personal account that this happened--somebody is spending money out of my account.

D. Duhon: I think that PeopleSoft is one big excuse to not do whatever they don’t want to do.

Gregg: I just know that when I was told that I had to pay cash or pay ahead of time, I was told that there were no way that PeopleSoft could handle these things.

G. Stringer: I keep hearing “We are so far into People Soft” that we can’t get out. I wonder if we shouldn’t consider backing out of it now. We might be able to do something.

T. Green: Mcfall said that there was another system and maybe we aught to consider it.

P. Smith: Is this becoming a universal excuse for anything they don’t want to do?

President Laughlin: I now want to turn the meeting over to Susan Hubble who will conduct the election of officers.

**7.2 Election of President-Elect and Secretary-Elect: Susan Hubble**

Cabana: I don’t know if this is the appropriate time to say it, but this has been a remarkable year. I don’t know what we would have done without you and your leadership, Sherry. You have given us newfound muscle and we owe you so much for advocating for us.

ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE!!

S. Hubble: There are a few people who are willing to jump in and take part in leading the Faculty Senate. The Elections Committee has submitted the names of Jesse Palmer and Bob Smith for President-Elect. Are there any more nominations from the floor?

J. Rachal: I nominate Don Cabana.
S. Hubble: We add the name of Don Cabana to the ballot.

D. Dunn: Moved that the nominations be closed. Vote affirmative.

Candidates each made brief statements.

All the current members, outgoing members, and newly elected members were given ballots for voting. After the first ballot, there was a runoff between Bob Smith and Don Cabana.

S. Hubble: Don Cabana has been selected as the President-Elect for 2001-2002.

S. Hubble: Are there any further nominations for Secretary-Elect besides Toby Graham and Sybil Harrison? Hearing none, the voting will proceed.

S. Hubble: Toby Graham has been selected as Secretary-Elect for 2001-2002.

S. Hubble: I will now turn the floor back to Sherrie for her farewell speech.

Out-going President’s Farewell Speech: Sherrie Laughlin

This has been an incredible, exhausting, and rewarding year, and I have been very grateful for your support. The best part of this experience has been the opportunity to work with and get to know all of you.

When I first stood before you last June, I had one goal in mind for the year: At the end of it I didn’t want to look back and say, “The Faculty Senate didn’t do anything this year.” I believe we have been successful in meeting that goal, but there is still so much left to be done.

I have strong personal ties to this university, and I am deeply disturbed by what I see happening to it. We all know that USM does not have the image or the influence that it deserves at the state level. I believe there are individuals and groups that would be very happy to see USM become a second tier university in Mississippi. We can not let that happen. We must not let that happen. We have to fight this by continuing to develop relationships with our state leaders, but we have to be smart and strategic. Some of the issues we’ve faced this year and will face next year have been emotional, and sometimes that emotion gets in the way when we try to figure our what is the most effective thing to do to accomplish our goals.

I believe our greatest challenges next year may be internal ones. I don’t see a common vision or clear university priorities. Just a couple of years ago we were talking about what great potential we had here at USM--our location in the fastest
growing part of the state, our strategic position on the Gulf Coast, our thriving academic programs, increasing research dollars. We don’t hear much talk like that anymore. We hear about program review and capping enrollments. We hear about faculty leaving in droves, no salary increases, budget cuts. Almost everything you see in the media about USM right now is negative, and much of that negative talk is coming from the university. Although we can’t ignore our current fiscal problems, we can’t let a couple of years of national economic trouble change who we are or our perception of who we are. We face great challenges next year, but we are still geographically located in the same place, we still have excellent programs and faculty, and we are still doing things at this university.

As a university we have to refocus our priorities and the faculty are going to have to lead that conversation. I’ve had a ringside seat at the university table this year and believe me, the students and the staff are not going to do it. Neither are the alumni, the department chairs, the deans, or the university administration. The faculty are going to have to be out in front on the issues of what is important to our university, and that is not always a comfortable place to be.

I am very confident that your elected leadership for next year will be able to do the job we will need them to do if you give them the same support and encouragement you gave me. I still have another year on my term in the Senate, and I’ll be glad to serve in whatever capacity is needed, but for now, I’m delighted to turn the gavel to Susan Hubble.

APPLAUSE AND STANDING OVATION!!

S. Hubble: I want to thank the members who are ending their terms in the Faculty Senate: McGruder, Jaffe, Butts, Lux, McCain, McDowell. I also want to welcome those who are newly elected or reelected: T. Green, M. Miller, J. Rachal, D. Alford, K. Davis, S. Naughshpour, A. Chasteen, S. Oshrin, D. Masters, P. Butko, M. Hall, M. Henry. I also want to thank Michael Forster for all his tremendous work as secretary this year and present him with this plaque of appreciation. APPLAUSE for Michael!!! I also want to again thank Sherry Laughlin and give her this plaque from all of us. APPLAUSE for Sherrie. Also, we would like you to have this very fitting gift--a gift certificate for massage therapy. (Sherrie: That’s something I need!!!).

S. Hubble: Please indicate your preferences for committee service on the green forms that are being circulated. We have many of the same challenges ahead of us this year. Certainly, we want to continue the active dialogue and discussions with the President. Also, it will be important to develop more effective means of communicating our message to IHL. Our efforts are to establish long-term, consistent funding of higher education and find alternative solutions for problems
with a positive and determined attitude.

8.0 Announcements: Susan Hubble If there are no further announcements, we are adjourned.

9.0 Adjournment 3:45 p.m.