Faculty Senate Minutes - April 19, 2002

USM Faculty Senate
The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting
April 19, 2002
Union Hall of Honors
2:00 pm


1. Call to Order 2:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda: S. Hubble asked to add under new business: 7.3 Consider resolution to the IHL Board providing feedback on the USM Presidential Search. S. Oshin: MOVED, B. Scarborough: SECONDED. PASSED to approve agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes for February 15 and March 22. There were minor changes to February 15 Minutes and one spelling correction for March 22. B. Scarborough: MOVED, A. Wallace: SECONDED. PASSED to approve minutes from both meetings with corrections.

4. Officer’s Reports

4.1 President’s Report: S. Hubble: At the Deans’ Council, the budget is the main concern and Dr. Thames will take the lead in the budget process. IHL Board yesterday approached the issues of tuition and fees. They decided that decisions will not be made until the May meeting. The Board members have asked each institution to provide a summary showing what would be lost if there were no tuition raises. There must be separate scenarios for 3%, 5%, and 10% cuts. The examples will be created by L. McFall. There is a concern that there would be massive cuts if there are no tuition increases. Universities were instructed to identify specific impact of cuts. I have sent a letter to Dr. Thames stating that we want involvement in budget process.

Dr. Magee, a member of the IHL Board, said that the Presidential search process needed to be "tweaked" so that illegal questions were not asked during interviews of candidates. It is certainly an issue that needed to be addressed.

M. Henry: The details about what budget cuts would mean for us--should we be concerned? If you present a plan, then you may have to make these cuts when you provide such specific information.

S. Hubble: The IHL Board is concerned about double digit increases in tuition. Without that increase, it has to be clear what impact the cuts would have. Most of the board members want to be sure that the tuition increase is really necessary.
M. Henry: So if Forestry were reported as one possible program cut without tuition increases, does that mean that they would then get cut should the Board decide not to raise tuition? That would be the obvious cut. Do we as a Senate have any involvement in this process?

S. Hubble: That will be up to Dr. Thames. I have reminded him of our involvement in the last year regarding budget hearings.

R. Smith: When does the board usually make decisions about the budget?

S. Hubble: Usually in May.

4.2 President-Elect’s Report

D. Cabana: The Past President’s Breakfast will be April 30.

D. Alford: Which President will attend? [Lucas or Thames]

D. Cabana: If we had the breakfast at midnight we could have both. I am distressed that the poorest state in the nation cuts the most from higher education. Legislator Farris told us that Higher Education is a priority in Mississippi, but some of our neighbors were able to increase funding to higher education and they are certainly not that much better off than us. I am concerned that there have been editorial letters commending the legislature for protecting higher education. This bridge money is temporary and the chickens will come home to roost. The legislature has taken care of Medicaid and we are supporting the prison system with plenty of state money. The secret is out. The legislature does not have a commitment to higher education in this state.

4.3 Secretary’s Report: None

4.4 Secretary-Elect’s Report: See proxies above.

5. Committee Reports

5.1 Administration and Faculty Evaluations

J. Lytle: One of the problems is that assistant deans have resisted developing an evaluation questionnaire because most do not interact with faculty and these do not see the evaluation process as a necessary procedure. The deans have not been any help in resolving this problem. In general, the assistant deans asked us, "Why don’t you do something more productive." In addition, 60% of the faculty said that they don’t know what Assistant Deans do. We wish to drop the assistant deans from the evaluation process and add a comments section at the bottom of the deans evaluation. If faculty wish to make any comments about assistant deans they would have the opportunity to make these comments on the Dean’s evaluation questionnaire.

Another question that has come up is, "Who should be allowed to evaluate deans or other administrators." Should adjunct instructors be involved in the evaluation process, for example? We decided that we should stay with the Faculty Handbook which defines "voting faculty."

J. Palmer: I think that we should just take out the assistant deans from administrative evaluations. I think that it should be up to the colleges and when there is a need, let the senate administer special evaluation.

PJ. Smith: I have a some concern about eliminating adjuncts from evaluating administrators. More and more adjuncts are being utilized. They don’t often have the opportunity to give feedback to the dean. There
are problems that they need to have addressed about their working conditions and they need a mechanism for getting changes.

S. Naghshpour: I think that they should give feedback but not through the administrative evaluation. I recommend that we not include them in any voting.

J. Miller: Faculty should take up for them.

JP. Smith: Our [USMGC] adjunct pool will be sucked up by Tulane who will be paying them double. If they can’t get copies made, they get frustrated and walk. They need to give feedback without feeling their job is threatened. I think we need to hear from them.

M. Forster: As for Assistant Deans, the Dean is supposed to evaluate them. How would provide for feedback concerning the assistant dean in the regular procedures?

J. Lytle: We would add a comments section on the deans evaluation sheet.

M. Dearmey: I think we need to know who the adjunct faculty are. Then we should help them get organized if they want this. Then they could let us know if they want to be involved in evaluating administrators.

S. Hubble: What I hear is that there are two issues: Adjunct faculty being included in the evaluation process and evaluation of Assistant Deans. Perhaps when the chairs are evaluated, there could be some separate form to solicit feedback from adjunct faculty. Is there other feedback for J. Lytle?

B. Coates: I think Jesse’s ideas are good.

S. Hubble: That is, to encourage deans to provide a way for specific assistant deans who interact with faculty to have some form of evaluation that the senate would administer.

J. Lytle: There were really no deans that spoke up.

S. Hubble: I will take this issue to the Deans’ Council.

D. Duhon: We could save money by having an adjunct assistant dean.

S. Hubble: Did you have any other items?

J. Lytle: The committee will submit a written report.

5.2 Election Committee

M. Nettles: We have just sent out the second ballot. April 30 is the deadline.

Ka. Davis: We are not getting ballots for everybody on the coast.

M. Nettles: We are getting a list from human resources that does not indicate just who is eligible.

Ka. Davis: I sent out a memo and faculty members called me to get a ballot and there was not a way to get them a ballot

M. Forster: I think that is up to some committee in Florida.
M. Nettles: I will give a report at the end of the year about our problems and what we have learned.

M. Forster: Census is an important thing. Maybe we need to charge the faculty senate delegations with making sure that the faculty list from each area is correct.

5.3 Government Relations Committee

J. Palmer: The appropriations to the Board of Trustess for the eight universities shows that Mississippi is spending a lot on higher education. SB 3141: "out of money in the State General fund" $244 M; "out of proceeds from any federal, student fees or other special source funds," $391 M; "out of any money in the Ayers Endowment Interest Fund," Alcorn, Jackson State, MS Valley each get $300,000. ($5 M is set aside for Ayers Settlement Fund.) " It is the intent of the Legislature that the Board of Trustees of StateInstitution of Higher Learning shall allocate funds to the off-campus centers based on a minimum rate of 65 % of the on-campus cost of a full-time equivalent student." Education enhancement funds for all universities is $34 M. Budget Contingency Funds for all eight universities is $31.3 M. USM’s part of this is $2 M. To pay for Ayers Settlement issues: summer development money $500,000; from the General Fund money not otherwise appropriated, $7.2 M; Budget Contingency Fund, $1.5 M. Specific allocation to USMGC is $250,000. USM is allowed to purchase a police car. "It is the intention of the Legislature that the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning continue to review, and eliminate when possible, duplicating programs and degrees in the existing institutions of higher learning in this state" (Section 25). No state appropriations or student tuition and fee receipts, except those specifically charged for the provision of the services, shall be used to support auxiliary enterprises, with the exception of intercollegiate athletics at a level designated by the board of trustees. It is the intent of the Legislature that auxiliary enterprises shall be self-supporting; and that deficits not be taken from funds intended for instruction and academic programs" (Section 26).

SB 3142. "out of any money in the State General Fund . . . Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Polymer Institute, . . . Stennis Center for Higher Learning" $13.9 M; " . . . out of proceeds from any federal, student fees or other special source funds . . . Stennis Space Center’s Center for Higher Learning, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Polymer Institute" $53.8 M. Specific allocations of this money include: Gulf Coast Research Laboratory $3.1 M; Polymer Institute $421,490; Stennis $345,292.

SB 3143. "out of any money in the State General Fund support and maintenance of financial aid scholarship, lean and grant programs authorized by law and administered by the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and for support of the Mississippi Office of Financial Aid, $27.5 M. " . . . from any federal funds, grants, donations, fees, or other special source funds $8.6 M. " . . . for the support and maintenance of the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Program and the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant Program $648,561.

SB 3144. "An act making an appropriation for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the University of Mississippi Medical Center for Fiscal year 2003." State General Fund, $125 M. Patient fees, student fees or nay other special funds $544 M. "With the funds appropriated . . . the University of Mississippi Medical Center shall maintain the School of Medicine, the School of Dentistry, the School of Nursing, the School of Health Related Professions, the Teaching Hospital and the Medical Center Service Area.

SB 3145. Consolidated operation of the Education and Research Center, the University Research Center and MARIS (Mississippi Automated Resource Information System) . . . out of the State General Fund $2.93 M. Out of special funds $1.75 M.

HB 1386. "To require the Board of Trustees of the Public Employees’ Retirement system to design a plan of health insurance for all current and future retirees; to provide that the plan shall be implemented after the Board determines that the employer’s contribution rate to the retirement system can be reduced by one percent without causing the unfounded liability period for the retirement system to exceed twenty years;"
JP. Smith: If you tease out the money for the commissioner and board, they have spent a lot in the last two weeks.

B. Scarborough: The fact is that there is no commitment to higher education. We haven’t had a pay increase in three years while 4.8-5.8% a year is the average in the nation.

J. Palmer: I am just showing $125M and $544M for the UM Medical Center

Green: Is that $544M just out of the general appropriation? [544 M from patient fees, student fees and special funds]

D. Cabana: I understand what Jesse is saying. The med school is separate. Our cuts have been five times as great as the national average. People in the community are noticing the cuts to higher education. The commitment [of the Legislature] stops at the 12th grade and this is especially true for the governor. Yet, we are treated like we are just whining. Among the faculty here, there is no sense of ownership—by the faculty or staff. Other constituencies seem to feel that there is a commitment and ownership of USM. I think that our new president said that he is committed to work together and bring faculty forward. The legislature has certainly not been supportive of us.

5.5 Transportation Committee.

B. Scarborough: More bad news. Construction projects are leading to a loss of 276 faculty-staff spaces. Liberal Arts lot will close. Polymer Science lot is already closed off. We are going to gain 260 back in the Chain Tech lot. There was a conflict between students and faculty/staff in the meeting that I attended. The students were not happy to hear that faculty/staff spaces would increase on both sides of the coliseum. AT present there will be 142 faculty/staff spaces in Chain Tech lot. One-third of the space will be used as a staging area for new student union. Students will be sent to the Payne Center lot. We will actually have a net loss. S. Oshrin and I think that we may have to give some concessions at Natatorium. Students want some of Chain lot back. It is very confusing right now. Students are very upset and I am trying to keep as many faculty/staff spaces as possible.

Goff: Thames said something about parking. Will you go to him in May?

B. Scarborough: I am probably not the person to go see him. I will bring up the issue of gated lots. I think we had better lay low for a while. He needs to get situated and deal with the budget. He might be able to get a parking structure from Senator Lott.

PJ. Smith: We brought up that idea and we were told that it would be about $10,000 per parking space.

J. Rachal: The Polymer Science lot--will we get those back?

B. Scarborough: They have to remove the Hartwig Theater and there is a problem with that. One more lot will be blocked off in the summer and more in the fall. The whole thing will be decided this summer.

D. Dunn: Tell the students that library, polymer science, and education/psychology faculty and staff will have to walk considerable distances from parking lots. No matter where the new and improved lots and opened, there is no avoiding the fact everyone will have to walk farther from now on.

S. Nielsen: How long will it take for construction of the International/Continuing Education building?

B. Scarborough: Two years. More people will be housed in the new building and that will change the demand for parking in that area of campus.
S. Nielsen: There are many faculty and staff who will be working in that location of the campus.

T. Green: I forgot my question. Oh, whenever the International Tim Hudson Building is finished, will spaces be restored?

B. Scarborough: Some, not many.

5.6 UFSA

A. Kaul: There continues to be concern about faculty participation in Presidential Searches. At Mississippi State, the faculty sought to elect representatives to put on the search committee. They were told no. We have had recent experience with a Presidential search. MS State’s faculty senate is establishing a seven-member task force to study the policies and procedures of Presidential Search. They will develop recommendations. We agreed yesterday that each faculty senate should establish a task force and use UFSA as a staging area that would make recommendations and present these to the IHL Board. I wrote a proposed resolution. The Medical Center is meeting now for possible endorsement and action. If these senates lock on to this idea, there would be a meeting of various representatives who would hammer out the recommendations that would go to IHL. We have an open invitation from MS State to do this. Even those who had not participated in a Presidential Search felt that they had a vested interest. I will ask for a suspension of the rules…

J. Palmer: We can do this as a faculty senate [naming a task force] without passing a separate resolution. Typically, we make resolutions to communicate a position to someone else.

A. Kaul: We are seeking a commitment from other senates and then work together to craft a set of recommendations. There might be more weight in our working together with a separate resolution. One IHL member said that the process needs to be "Tweaked."

J. Palmer: I think that you just need to make a motion to do it and appoint a task force.

S. Hubble: Under new business we can discuss the resolution. Do we need to have a resolution to do a task force internally?

A. Kaul: The next UFSA is in mid-May.

JP. Smith: I met with Roy Klumb and I was impressed with how flexible he seemed about the idea that there might be a regular agenda item for faculty on the IHL board meeting agenda.

A. Kaul: UFSA requested meetings with members of the board two times a year. They said, "No."

JP. Smith: This action may be blocked by chief academic officers at the institutions.

5.4 Technology Task Force.

S. Laughlin: Administration appointed the task force and gave us a month to conduct our study. The task force had very long meetings and talked about money, time, and effort in non-academic areas. However, what we are recommending is that some efforts be expended on improving the Academic smart-sheet.

M. Forster: What exactly was the task force’s charge?

S. Laughlin: President Lucas was getting a lot of negative feedback about PeopleSoft and he wanted us to clarify these issues. We found that we are invested too far to stop at this point.
S. Hubble: There is a $1.3M upgrade coming for PeopleSoft. We may need to have our own people do the consulting to lower the price of the upgrade.

S. Laughlin: There is only one other choice. Banner has many problems, too. We can divert some of the money paid to outside consultants for the two weeks beginning the implementation. We may be able to have local people do the training, but we won’t be able to save money.

6. Old Business

6.1 Calendar Resolution:

J. Meyer: Refer to the handout from last meeting which was distributed again. There is a fall break and a change in the final exam time to make the minutes come out right. The rationale for the "stop" policy: if you are going to start finals in the middle of the week, there needs to be a few days when there are no exams in preparation for finals. No finals would be given on the day of graduation. Student organizations would stop meetings during the study time before finals. There is room for flexibility for alternative course meeting times. We certainly advocate a week shorter semester. However, we don’t think the time is right. I talked with Toby Barker. Students want a fall break. University Research Council wants to enhance time for research and there is a comparable calendar being suggested by them.

J. Palmer: The timing of the break—if the students ask for a Monday and Tuesday, I would prefer early in October.

J. Meyer: Notice that there is a reading day on Saturday.

K. Davis: I dispersed this to faculty and I have received no feedback yet. Concerts might conflict. The stop days may also conflict and those concert dates are set at least a year in advance.

J. Meyer: There will certainly be some exceptions.

M. Hall: My students need every possible moment in class and labs. I have to cover the information required by the accrediting agency. Every day less that I can give an exam or lecture is a problem. The students need to pass national certification exams. It does make it a little harder for us. I see a difference between teaching in fall and spring. Every time they go away for a break, there is a period of time that it takes to make up.

M. Miller: Our preference would be more time at the end of the semester for travel and other things. Shortening the semester would be best.

J. Meyer: The problem is micromanagement by the IHL Board.

M. Miller: We might just thumb our nose at the board.

P. Butko: In chemistry and biochemistry, I would welcome this change. We are pressed to get the material across. I would oppose shortening the semester. I am opposed to stop days and I don’t want Faculty Senate telling me how to teach my class.

D. Dunn: Stop days are already in the IHL plan. There are unique programs like medical technology. I think that we need to build in exceptions for specific 12 month programs. There may be other year-round programs that would conflict.

J. Meyer: We were thinking of regular academic programs in this calendar.
M. Forster: If we have a semester that is one week longer than others, programs are covering the same material in two weeks less a year at other universities.

D. Dunn: There are others who do it under accreditation demands. I think we should adopt this plan.

J. Rachal: We looked at many other programs. If others are doing it, why can’t we.

M. Hall: USM is turning out med techs for the state and abutting states. We are taking students that other universities are turning away because of low academic history. We have to make up a lot in the beginning to get students caught up. We have to teach more to get these students to meet requirements by the end of the two-year program.

S. Hubble: Give me the rationale for Stop days: two for MWF and TTH. Under the stop date policies, would there be exception made for requiring term papers: Does it mean that if I provide warning in the syllabus that I could still set deadlines during Stop days?

J. Meyer: There certainly should be exclusions for intensive courses and courses that meet half the semester.

D. Beckett: I teach ecology. I don’t get everything in. I feel bad about that, but I get over it. For that week we used to have before the semester was lengthened, I used to get some research done. Now we are so exhausted by the end of the semester, that we collapse and we turn around and get started on the next semester.

S. Neilsen: We really need the fall break. My students are getting injured in dance because there is no break.

M. Henry: If the Stop dates are issued, that is not the heart of it. The heart of it is the change in the calendar.

J. Meyer: The stop dates were seen as a way to make the final exam schedule more realistic.

J. Palmer: There have been several concerns about this. Are we voting on this as it is? What are we voting on?

JP. Smith: The question is whether we should stop debate. This is going to the calendar committee.

J. Palmer: But don’t you want the resolution to be right before voting on it?

D. Cabana: A motion to call the question. MOVED Scarborough, SECONDED JP. Smith: I think we have talked about it enough. If you will give us some flexibility about when the fall break date is set. Medical technology can get an exemption.

J. Palmer: What are we voting on?

T. Green: The proposal says "at or near" it’s present wording.

J. Palmer: I would like to eliminate the information about the stop dates.

JP. Smith: We have to vote on this motion and then you can work on the details.
J. Cabana: Resolution for Calendar change MOVED Faculty Welfare Committee SECONDED S. Naghshpour PASSED

6.2 Yearly Agenda

M. Miller: What I suggested two meetings ago, I have it phrased….Annual Priority Project. I have some examples about what we might want to take on.

S. Hubble: It has been MOVED JP. Smith to adopt the resolution. SECONDED Scarborough.

J. Olmi: How is this different than what we do now—taking on one project at the beginning of the year?

M. Miller: We can publicized this and notice whether we meet the goals.

J. Olmi: What happens if the administration is at odds with the faculty senate.

M. Miller: I think that there would be some consultation to make it a doable project.

M. Forster: I am in favor. I think that the things that we are most concerned about may not be in our hands to effect a change. I think we can be too inflexible.

M. Dearmey: There has been a lot of negative press about the Presidential Search. The new president is going to have to bring about some reconciliation. The other option that he is disgusted with us and has not interest in our concerns. What we could do is invite the new president here and tell him about one or two of our greatest concerns. The most important issues that we have been working for the last two years is to get faculty involved in the budgeting process. Teaching and research are the most important issues. We can invite him and talk to about two of our concerns. What he said is that faculty have an "advisory" role. We could make it known that he would be more successful if he would meet us on this point. When you have to pay $7.50 to have physical plant change a light bulb, something is going on there. I think that we could see what he has to say.

J. Olmi: Could I offer an amendment? Strategic planning at the beginning of the year…

M. Miller: I would accept any help here. I think that Faculty Senate could be the most powerful body on campus if we are not too wide in our focus. We can better harness the power that we can muster.

D. Cabana: We need to understand that there are things that happen that take our energy and side-track us. I would support the idea that when we meet the first time, we do strategic planning. We can spend all our time reacting to crises.

JP. Smith: Actually, USMGC Faculty Assembly has come to do one or two things each year. Particularly, at the beginning of Fleming’s presidency, we knew that we could set an agenda that was very diverse and confusing. Instead we repeated one theme and Fleming knew exactly what we needed from him. If we focus and let the President know what we need, then he can move forward in the direction we want.

B. Scarborough: I think that we need to have some flexibility for unexpected events, for example: The budget.

M. Henry: At the beginning of the meeting we discussed developing scenarios about what would happen if there were no tuition raise. These are very important issues. The percentage of possible tuition increases--

M. Dearmey: We have to approach this new Presidency assuming that he needs us to be successful.
J. Palmer: I think we are beating a dead horse. There are five previous presidents in the room. I think that each president sits with the administration at the beginning of the year and this resolution is the same thing. Let’s move on because--

A. Chasteen: Let’s take on one project and put it out in the media.

J. Palmer: We haven’t gone to the media before.

A. Kaul: There is always something that comes out of the woodwork and that takes up your priority. I don’t know of a Faculty Senate President who hasn’t changed the priorities according to the crisis of the time. I think that we need flexibility for this reason.

M. Miller: The Resolution: Be it resolved that at the beginning of each academic year, the Faculty Senate, in consultation with the Faculty Senate President, will identify and adopt one or more major projects to enhance academics at USM. This project(s) should be ambitious, yet tangible and feasible and a project that can be brought to objective completion within that academic year. Further, the Faculty Senate Secretary will then publicize this priority project(s) to all USM faculty, staff, students, and administrators via e-mail, the Student Printz, and any other appropriate media.

S. Hubble: It has been MOVED M. Miller, SECONDED JP. Smith, PASSED

7. New Business

7.1 Nominating Committee

D. Cabana: The nomination committee for Faculty Senate Officers is J. Meyer, J. Lytle, P. Butko, and A. Chasteen. Please forward any nominations to this committee as soon as possible. Election of officers will take place at the May meeting.

7.2 Recommendations on Presidential Hiring Process

S. Hubble: I want to thank the team that helped process the feedback when the Presidential Candidates were on this campus. In front of you is a letter to Virginia Shanteau-Newton. She has asked to speak with me in the near future. I feel that she had a commitment to the faculty and USM. What I need from you are some bullet facts that you think were good or bad in the process. If you could e-mail me by early next week I will compose feedback to give to the IHL.

B. Scarborough: Could you tell me what the numbers were on the individual sessions with the three candidates.

M. Miller: The community ratings were positive.

S. Hubble: The faculty ratings on Thames were mixed. The average was about 3. Both the other candidates were high.

D. Alford: On the Coast, the faculty rated Thames 1.6 overall and the other two candidates were 4.7 and 4.8. the comments for Thames were uniformly negative—three pages of them.

M. Dearmey: My neighbor who isn’t much involved in university business came over and said, "You got screwed."
S. Hubble: What I would like to hear is what you would like me to say to the board.

D. Alford: I want to make it clear that my time was wasted. My life was endangered traveling to these search committee meetings. I certainly hope that none of you ask those of us on the Coast to "just get over it." Thames lost his temper with the faculty just during the interview process . . .

S. Naghshpour: What are we supposed to say?

S. Hubble: We were asked to tell the board what we thought about what went well and what needs to be changed.

M. Dearmey: That’s another reason why they aught to be listening to faculty. I support this ideas of UFSA having a task force on Presidential Searches.

7.3 Resolution for a Task Force to Study the Presidential Search in Association with UFSA

A. Kaul: I would like to suspend the rules.

D. Dunn: We are just forming a task force so we don't need to have a resolution.

B. Scarborough: We would make a stronger statement to the other faculty senates in a resolution.

S. Hubble: MOVED A. Kaul, SECONDED D. Dunn, PASSED to establish a task force to make recommendations about Presidential Search Process and work through UFSA to present recommendations to the IHL Board.

M. Dearmey: Just as an insurance policy, you might want to join AAUP. Look on the Faculty Senate website to know about the meeting. There are things that AAUP can do that faculty senate cannot do. It is not expensive.

M. Henry: I want to commend our colleagues on the Gulf Coast. The new buildings are beautiful. I don’t know how Darlys could keep records so accurately from the speaker’s presentation.

M. Dearmey: Thanks to Scarborough for all that he has done in dealing with the media during the Presidential Search.

8. Adjournment 4:40 pm