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Issues of Process in Determining Raises for Faculty and Staff

USM Faculty Senate

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The Faculty Senate

of

The University of Southern Mississippi



May 10, 2007

To: Dr. Jay Grimes, Provost
The University of Southern Mississippi

From: Myron Henry, Mary Beth Applin, Stephen Judd, and Amy Young, 2006-2007 Faculty Senate Officers

The Faculty Senate thoroughly discussed the processes for merit raises at its May 4 meeting on the Gulf Park Campus of USM. By unanimous vote, senators expressed their dismay at your response to a request from the officers of the Senate that the processes (not individual salaries) for allocating salary increases be transparent at every level. Your response was addressed to Dr. Henry and read:

"Earlier today I provided you with a copy of the merit raise instructions that were provided to the deans. However, information about how each dean arrives at his or her recommendations for raises cannot and will not be provided to the Faculty Senate."

The unanimous vote by the Senate contained other features. Senators expressed concern about the additional information you have request about individual faculty such as what is now described as the FAR-lite [an abbreviation of the Faculty Activity Report (FAR) that each faculty members fills out on-line]. Senators noted that language in the Faculty Handbook references the annual review of faculty performance as the main document to be considered in the merit raise processes at each level of review. Specifically, language from section 8.4.1 of the *Faculty Handbook* reads *"Annual Performance Reviews are intended: (d) to provide a written record of faculty performance to support personnel decisions and merit pay increases."*

Senators also believe each faculty member should be advised of the recommendation for his or her raise at each level. Thus, it would be incumbent upon chairs to tell individual faculty the raise recommendation that was forwarded to the dean's level, and then incumbent on each dean to inform individual faculty through the chairs of the raise recommended by the dean to the provost. Similarly, the provost and president would inform a faculty member if the recommended salary increase from the dean is altered by the provost or president. Here we mention the primary concern focused on reductions from department recommendations at the dean, provost, or presidential levels. Not much time was spent discussing additional increases that might be initiated at the dean, provost, or presidential levels.

We hope you will respond positively to the unanimous motion from the May 4 Senate meeting. Once again, it had three primary thrusts: concern that you did not support transparency of processes at the deans levels; the additional "evidence" you are apparently requiring beyond already completed and accessible annual reviews and the electronic FAR, and a request that individual faculty be informed of the raise recommendations for them from each level of deliberation.

Thanks for your consideration.

xc: Faculty Senators