Faculty Senate Minutes - January 18, 2002

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting
January 18, 2002
Union Hall of Honors
2:00 p.m.


1.0 Call to Order

2.0 Approval of Agenda

3.0 Minutes for November Meeting were Approved as Submitted.

4.0 Officer’s Reports

4.1 President’s Report: Susan Hubble

There are 35 applicants so far in the Presidential search. This number is expected to increase by Feb. 7, which is the next scheduled meeting of the committee. The committee is expected to narrow the number of candidates to a range of 8-12 and forward the names to the IHL. There were originally 90 referrals or nominations but there fewer applicants. The IHL timeline is to interview the semifinalists during the first two weeks in March and have campus interviews of the finalists in the first two weeks of April.

There is obvious concern over the budget. Projected cuts could mean as much as 17% cuts here. There is all speculation, but no certainty about exact numbers. The IHL board staff is processing the reports submitted concerning targeted programs.

Twenty faculty members applied for sabbaticals and 13 were approved. There is an appeal process and faculty may take advantage of this process.

B. Scarborough: Who is on the sabbatical committee and how do they get there?

S. Hubble: Those who have received sabbaticals before serve to evaluate applicants.
M. Dearmey: That committee should be elected by the faculty. There are guidelines: Sabbaticals are intended to bring ongoing research to fruition. A sabbatical is not a reward. It should not be automatic. There should be a small number of criteria that would easily indicate whether a faculty person is qualified. They must have a complete and reasonable plan. One of our faculty members who was turned down while the Dean felt it was the best proposal submitted from our area. After getting a sabbatical, a faculty member must sign an agreement to return to USM for at least one year. Applicants must report to the provost about the work accomplished while on sabbatical. It should not be made a competitive process. The consequences of not awarding sabbaticals is the we lose productive faculty. Denial of sabbaticals may also violate verbal instructions given at the time of hiring. Sabbaticals are important to the promotion process especially because we don’t get regular raises. We can’t honestly say what our sabbatical policy is. The Sabbatical committee should be elected and follow clear criteria.

S. Hubble: There was discussion on executive committee about how these committees are selected. This will be an item that we can discuss with the provost.

P. Smith: I did serve on the committee. We were told that no one was to be denied. We were to set a priority list for the board to use in making decisions about sabbaticals

MJ. McMahon: The committee ranked all applicants and the Provost makes the final recommendations. The funding for sabbaticals is internal. The dean and the chair have to say that they will cover the courses and advisement of the faculty member.

S. Hubble: Let me meet with the provost and get more information.

M. Dearmey: The applicants who were turned down are being told that the committee turned them down because there were weaknesses in the application. The provost is saying he doesn’t know what led to the decisions.

S. Hubble: Please submit your concerns to the Executive committee and we will meet with the Provost. Dr. Bob Lockhead is trying to come up with employee incentives.

D. Duhon: What incentives?

S. Hubble: Lockhead brought to the Dean’s Council ideas about ways to reward faculty and staff in light of the fact that there have been no raises.

J. Meyer: Our committee was not involved.

S. Hubble: Dr. Lucas is concerned about faculty positions that have been lost recently because of cutbacks in the budget. He realizes just how many positions have been lost. He will express his concerns to IHL. There has been concern about the Miss State search being conducted at the same time as USM’s. The board wants to go ahead with the search so that interviews can take place in the summer and hiring can be completed by fall. Ms. Newton is being a vocal advocate for us as the Chair of USM’s presidential search.

D. Dunn: There was information in the newspaper that the consulting firm in the Miss State Presidential search. Is Kornferry involved?

S. Hubble: Funk was involved in the search for Portera and Kyatt and there is some concern about his work on this search. There is a handout about budget information. The first page excludes Ayers finding and the second page includes Ayers funding. These figures come from the IHL annual report. Additional information is available on the website for IHL. Mr. Roy Klumb asked for information about duplication of academic programs (McHenry is studying programs statewide). Notice Item #3. If you eliminate programs, you will save money. That is not the case. Small programs may have faculty that teach at the graduate
level, but also have undergraduate teaching assignments. I don’t believe USM has many targeted programs. There is a window of time allowed for new programs to get up and running at full force. Dr. McHenry wants to make sure that the details of these various programs are reported accurately.

J. Olmi: When legislators see this, they are not necessarily going to see it as anything but a way to cut.

S. Hubble: This is a report to the IHL from McHenry.

B. Scarborough: Klumb said to me that there are duplicated Master’s Degrees in History. Three PhD programs is too much duplication and that is where they are going to look to cut.

M. Henry: I think it is dangerous to look just as programs in the absence of an emphasis on units.

M. Hall: Many of the accrediting agencies have explicit requirements and that must be considered.

P. Smith: This is a board issue, not on for the legislature. If the legislature is active, they will just be setting a total dollar amount for budget cuts. We need to talk to board members who are making the decisions about where the cuts will be taken.

M. Dearmey: The last time board did this, the board reorganized here. It was an embarrassment to the Board. Our name came up because of the low number of graduate students. Huffman said no one is going to touch the political science and the board just went on.

D. Duhon: I think that this is analysis what we want to have done--rather than across the board cuts. I don’t think that there will be increases in the overall budgets for several more years. We are going to have to make some decisions about how to target specific problem areas.

S. Hubble: We have been involved in identifying these programs and sent our report along to the board.

K. Davis: Is it a done deal then in terms of the recommendations that were made?

M. Henry: Have those recommendations been communicated to the faculty senate?

S. Hubble: Ideally, that should have been discussed in colleges.

K. Greene: Are we talking about duplicate programs?

S. Hubble: There is a difference between duplicated and targeted programs.

K. Greene: When I was a graduate student, there was talk of having Science and Technology at one campus and nowhere else.

M. Forster: Do you know what role faculty senate will play in this?

S. Hubble: We were involved in reports at the department levels certainly…

M. Dearmey: We unanimously passed a resolution that the faculty have representation on the budget committee. Is that in place?

S. Hubble: I will be meeting with the provost and I will be pushing for this.
M. Dearmey: I talked to Lucas about this and he seemed sympathetic to having faculty involved. He said that maybe things would not be so bad if more faculty had been involved.

S. Hubble: We want to be at the table, but we want some real input rather than to just be observers.

M. Henry: Could you tell us again about the report on targeted programs. We submitted information that identified targeted programs. Will McHenry come back and talk about this? When?

S. Hubble: Griffin delivered the USM report on program productivity last week and McHenry wants several weeks to review the information.

M. Henry: Wouldn’t a first step be that you get a copy of this report and get that to us.

P. Smith: I think that Dr. Henry’s point about units vs. Programs is important and this should be presented to educate the board.

B. Coates: We have a graduate program and we get a second program for free with the same faculty.

S. Hubble: McHenry seems to be aware of this and is trying to educate the IHL. The report submitted from the universities is in process.

B. Scarborough: They are already thinking about the budget cuts on this campus Are faculty members involved?

S. Hubble: No one now.

B. Scarborough: Shouldn’t you appoint that committee that we voted on so that it is in place when the budget talks start?

S. Hubble: We will have that in place when we go to talk to the Provost. There is now an ad hoc committee to discuss student absences. We need to send a member to that committee.

MJ. McMahon: We are trying to determined whether our policies are student-centered. Those students who are taking leadership roles and have many absences--is there anything that can be done? The committee will be looking at the policy and seeing if anything needs to be done.

S. Hubble: Volunteers for the committee? Greene and Douglas.

4.2 President-Elect’s Report: Don Cabana

I was gratified to hear Lucas say that we don’t need Tulane on the coast. He talked about the difference in fees. Tulane is expecting to get 1000 students. There is some talk about a pay raise bill in the legislature: 2% for consecutive years. There is also 4% multiyear proposal starting in 2004. They are not willing to make a commitment to pay raises for two years.

I have concerns about this focus on targeted programs and I agree with Henry that we need to be careful about this direction for assessing programs.

4.3 No report from Secretary.

4.4 Secretary-Elect’s Report: See above for Proxies.
5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Transportation: Bill Scarborough

There will be an emphasis on charging for parking at the front of campus. There needs to be an enforcement committee. The first thing we have to deal with is zone 5. The permits have been issued capriciously. The criteria needs to be more clear. We could change one lot back to faculty/staff. We might consider reserved parking. Those who go out during the day to visit schools and return to find no parking want reserved places. This creates problems. Another issue brought by the graduate students who teach is that they want zone 4 parking. That is not going to happen. Maybe we can compromise by giving some temporary special privileges, but there is no interest in giving more faculty space to students. Visitors are going to want to park in zone 4.

D. Goff: I have been parking next to PAC and spaces were reduced in size. There seems to be a law that the larger the vehicle, the more cockeyed they are parked. We need to put the signs back up: "Compact Only." There was a pickup parked in a handicapped space. This was a towable offense. They gave a ticket but did not tow. There is a contract for towing, but it isn't working.

B. Coates: When a parking restriction changes, could that be announced on the USM news on internet?

M. Hall: Could I suggest this: when you made faculty parking behind Bond hall--it would be better right behind the Tech building rather than on 4th street.

D. Dunn: That is not going to happen because the space is for tour busses and is controlled by Joe Paul.

S. Hubble: Anything else for Scarborough?

K. Davis: What about the gated parking?

B. Scarborough: Is there still interest?

K. Davis: Yes.

B. Scarborough: I will take it back to the committee.

5.2 Administrative and Faculty Evaluations: Elizabeth Harrison

We started to get information about how to evaluate Associate Deans in December and explained it to faculty. We put the sample questionnaire on the email. After feedback, we sent out requests to the deans. There was no response. A second request brought no response. In the packet that was delivered, dean and associate dean forms were essentially the same. We will now develop a questionnaire that is more appropriate for the Assistant Deans.

S. Nielsen: You are probably going to have to go directly to the Associate Deans to get information. We have just had our dean changed as well as our Chair. Who do we evaluate?

E. Harrison: It makes no sense to evaluate some one who is gone. Just be sure that the names are on the forms.
M.J. McMahon: The deans indicated to me in December that there was not anything on the present form that is usable for evaluating the associate deans. The deans want the associate deans involved in writing the forms to make these accurate.

K. Davis: The associate deans wanted some else besides themselves to write it. Many don’t have job descriptions.

E. Harrison: They have to give us some clues about what they do.

K. Davis: What about the assistant chairs?

5.3 Faculty Handbook: Michael Forster & David Goff. We circulated suggested changes in the policy before the meeting. Are there questions?

D. Beckett: In the proposed changes you have given what is meant by "qualified" or "not qualified" decisions at the third year review? Is this some official thing -- reporting that there is a "qualified" negative or positive? Does this mean a second vote? I think you are better off just giving feedback that is specific about what performance is good and what needs still to be done.

M. Forster: There should be a difference between those that have not made progress toward tenure and those who have made progress but need to (and can) improve by the fifth year.

D. Beckett: I think that if you should just vote negative or positive. People can read this "qualified" as the person just slipping by at the third year and this signals problems.

M. Forster: Yes, that is accurate. A qualified indicates that there are problems.

D. Beckett: I don’t think that is necessary. Just be specific in recommending changes that need to be made.

D. Dunn: If you have served on the Dean’s Advisory Committee you find out that when a person gets a positive third year review and does not achieve tenure they may have strong grounds to sue. There needs to be changed.

M. Hall: What should constitute a failure? What about the situation where the new people are being expected to teach more because of our lack of faculty. Isn’t that a tenure decision at the third year?

J. Palmer: If there is a negative decision, you are given a terminal contract. That was not the case in the past. We need to decide what we are going to say to people.

S. Naghshpour: When we think there is a chance the person can make it to tenure, let’s focus on how to improve.

J. Olmi: In my department it is a terminal process at the third year. Negative means terminal contract. We are addressing that in our department.

J. Rachal: I don’t object to the "qualified" and "unqualified." If I had more faith that a positive review would carry along with it clear recommendation for improving in areas of concern it might not be necessary. The language makes it more specific. I am comfortable with the designations.

M. Dearmey: About 13 years ago, a third year review did not lead to termination. There was a departmental conflict and a faculty member got caught in the middle. In this case, the fellow sued the university and before trial, the university paid the person off. No clear decision. Under no conditions should a person be
terminated in the third year if they are attending class. There is really a two year tenure track. I like the idea about saying what you want to say to the candidate. I don’t like terminology that says what the candidate is doing well and what needs to improve.

M. Henry: I spoke about this at some length on the listserv. This seems to be taking the place of a annual review. It does become a mini tenure review without enough time.

D. Beckett: The third year is good in letting the person know how they are doing. If we accept the "qualified" and "unqualified" then we have to discuss just how "qualified" they are. I think it is very subjective and it would be better to say what we mean in frank terms.

D. Dunn: There may be the elephant in the room. I wonder if the third year review is a bargaining tool to keep a faculty line open. It could be a budgetary holdout.

M. Forster: Remember the difference in the composition of the annual review process and the third year review committee.

S. Naghshpour: Can the committee request a fourth yr review if there are doubts?

5.4 Government Relations: Jesse Palmer. We have been meeting with legislators and have communicated our needs. The proposal for 4% raise may have come out of our conversations. We are willing to address the prospect of going to the capital as a group or you may prefer that the committee take on this task. Do you want some mass showing from USM on Mardi Gras Tuesday?

M. Henry: I read in the paper that there is one legislator that wants to control tuition increases. That would be very dangerous. What if we have budget cuts and the legislature prevents us from raising tuition. That would be a difficult thing.

P. Smith: I don’t believe that will go anywhere. The legislature has always said that the board should have some room to adapt.

M. Henry: I feel somewhat reassured.

J. Palmer: There needs to be plenty of people and good press coverage if we go as a group.

A. Kaul: There has to be a GREAT BIG group to be successful.

S. Laughlin: I think a smaller focus group would be better.

J. Palmer: Those who are interested should email Jesse.

G. Rayborn: I think that one of the most positive things to come out of our legislative efforts is the proposed reconstitution of the board. Are we actually going to get something this year?

J. Palmer: The house bill will be different than the one proposed by the senate.

D. Duhon: There is not any chance of it passing if there is a specified number of representatives from each institution required on the board.

B. Scarborough: We need to let the legislature know that 2% which costs 8M$ is peanuts when medicaid 124M$. We have millions being spent on viagra. Other states have put some limits on drugs to contain costs.
J. Palmer: 8M$ is required for 1% so it would take 16M$.

5.5 Faculty Welfare: John Meyer

Our needs are pretty easy to articulate: Money and time. Money is being addressed in a resolution. As far as time: we are long on semester weeks at USM though not quite so different on contact hours. There used to be a calendar committee. Other schools have fall breaks and reading days before finals.

M. Forster: Is there talk of shutting down the university during spring break?

Goff: I have not heard.

S. Hubble: That has been discussed and it has been rejected by the IHL. It would mean more days off for staff.

D. Beckett: I would like to see us get something since we are not getting raises. Tuition waiver and portability -- portability by itself may be something that we could get. We get a course for free but we are so busy we don’t take it, could that be extended to spouses if we are not able to use it ourselves?

6.0 Old Business:

6.1 Salary Resolution: This was presented last meeting.


M. Dearmey: Could I offer a friendly amendment to change structure of sentence — "These have resulted in the loss of valuable faculty and staff."

UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

6.2 March Meeting at USM-GC: Advanced Education Center Auditorium

D. Alford: I have been in contact with Diane Peranich and she is unable to be the speaker at the March meeting because it is so close to the end of the legislative session. Pat Smith is arranging for a local businessman who is active in advocating for the USM expansion on the coast to speak. We are looking forward to having the senators visit our new facilities.

7.0 New Business:

7.1 Presidential Search:

S. Laughlin: I suggested that we get some input as we begin to screen candidates. What are your priorities?

D. Goff: We would like longer sessions with the candidates that come on campus without the press in attendance.

M. Henry: Was there a closed forum last time?

P. Smith: Could we have some influence on the schedule?
B. Coates: Is there a requirement that the candidates be limited to provosts and presidents?

S. Hubble: There are no restrictions.

M. Dearmey: The problem is getting the word out to potential candidates since the consultant does not seek out people who do not already have experience at this level.

8.0 Adjourned at 4:20 pm.