Faculty Senate Minutes - December 5, 2003

USM Faculty Senate
The University of Southern Mississippi

Faculty Senate Meeting

December 5th, 2003

Union Hall of Honors

2:00 p.m.

Members Present and Those Represented by Proxy (listed in parentheses):

College of the Arts and Letters:

Amy Chasteen-Miller (Amy Young), Phillip Gentile, Kate Greene, Stephen Judd, Tony Lewis, John Meyer, Bill Powell, Bill Scarborough (Amy Young), Paula Smithka, Mary Ann Stringer, Susan Malone (Anne Wallace)

College of Business and International Development:

James Crockett, David Duhon, Trellis Green (Peter Butko), Mark Miller

College of Education and Psychology:

Taralyn Hartsell, Janet Nelson, Jay Norton (Elizabeth Haynes), Joe Olmi, John Rachal, Janice Thompson

College of Health:

Joyous Bethel, Margot Hall, Bonnie Harbaugh, Susan Hubble, Amal Khoury, Kathleen Masters, Stephen Oshrin, Mary Frances Nettles (Joyous Bethel)

College of Science and Technology:

David Beckett, Randy Buchanan, Peter Butko, Ray Folse, Mary Dayne Gregg (Mary Beth Applin), Myron Henry, Gerry Mattson, Gail Russell (Denis Wiesenburg), Alan Thompson (Amy Chasteen-Miller), Denis Wiesenburg
1.0 Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 2:02.

2.0 Approval of Abbreviated Agenda (moved/seconded/passed)

3.0 President’s Report

3.1 Update on the proposed drug/alcohol policy

The Senate officers met with President Thames on Dec 2nd and followed up on Dec 3rd to clarify several issues. A revised drug/alcohol policy should be forthcoming in late January as indicated by President Thames. The President stated, “It would be circulated ahead for input.” There continues to be concern in that there has been no statement from the Administration that the proposed policy is under review and should not be signed by the January 12th deadline. Dr. Henry stated that signing this current document by January 12th is not consistent with the words of the Administration (President Thames’ statements). The prevailing sentiment is that there should be a statement from the administration concerning signing the current policy. There were other expressed concerns that the current proposed policy was simply copied from the DEA site. Other concerns were voiced questioning why we have to sign this particular policy when we do not have to sign other policies. We may have time to respond prior to our next scheduled meeting in January. Clarification is needed from the Administration.

3.2 Update on Faculty Handbook

Section 11.3 of the Faculty Handbook has now become Section 10.2. Regarding the FAR and departmental evaluation, there continues to be concern regarding whether the FAR “must” or “may” supplement/replace current departmental evaluation procedures. There was not a wording change, but there was a compromise that basically stated that a department has the choice to give weighting to any part of the FAR evaluation components. There remain questions regarding the FAR because there has been no formal report from the Administration pertaining to the FAR.
Regarding the promotion and tenure section of the proposed handbook, the alternative proposed by the Faculty Senate was voted down 4-1. There continues to be concerns regarding the apparent absence of an appeal process in tenure/promotion proceedings. The compromise that was offered and might be acceptable is the following. If the Provost denies the tenure/promotion, he must list reasons; then it is remanded back to the College Advisory Committee, University Advisory Committee and the Dean of that respective college for review. This might be a viable alternative in that it appears to function as an appeal/due process. This alternative has more due process than that which has been proposed in the current handbook proposal.

Myron could offer no understanding of why the Senate version of 11.3 was voted down by other members of the Faculty Handbook Committee. The discussion now is centered on the version offered by Bill Taylor and Brad Bond, which contains an ombudsman (the Provost). This was deemed problematic, and an alternative is under consideration. Currently, the Faculty Handbook Committee is in discussion on this issue. We are also at odds on whether an individual’s attorney is allowed participation in the review meeting. A motion was related to the issue. It is attached at the end of the December meeting minutes. The motion was made/seconded/passed unanimously.

3.3 Awards Committee issue

Dr. Beckett recounted our meeting with Provost Tim Hudson (President Thames was not in attendance.). Dr. Hudson indicated that this task was being taken away from the Senate because the process has become “inbred.” Data regarding this implication was offered by Tony Lewis. The Senate officers’ recommendation to the Administration was that we combine our Awards Committee with the Administration committee as a plausible alternative. The key issue from the Senate’s prospective is the lack of communication by the Administration with the Senate on the issue. To date, there has not been a response to any request for rationale to why this task has been taken away from the Senate. A motion to send the draft letter from the Senate by Dr. Henry directly to Provost Hudson was made/seconded/passed unanimously. Please refer to the open letter on the Faculty Senate website.

3.4 Salary increases for top faculty

The intention of the Administration is to give raises to those most productive faculty members, if the money is available. The chairs of departments were charged by their respective deans with selecting the top 10% of faculty in terms of productivity in their respective departments. Again, the issue was how this has transpired (usurping the faculty governance policies for individual departments). The library is not included in this process.

Resolution passed on December 5th requesting the Faculty Handbook Committee reconsider the Senate version of termination of tenured faculty proposal:

The Faculty Senate requests that the Faculty Handbook Committee reconsider the Senate version of the proposed termination policy of tenured faculty and provide a rationale for the majority opinion to be made available across campus.