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Faculty Senate Minutes - January 14, 2005

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Faculty Senate Meeting

January 14, 2005

Union Hall of Honors

2:00pm

Attendance: (See end of minutes)

1.0 Call to Order (2:06)

2.0 Forum Speakers:

2.1 Dr. Exline on SACS Probation – Dr. Exline brought copies of the SACS probation letter to hand out to all senators. She began by reading the letter and explaining what SACS wanted us to do (evaluation of all distance learning activities – anything off our campus – anything but traditional classroom learning in Hattiesburg). Report is due August 2nd – they’ll have a team come in 30 days later and validate the report and make recommendations to the SACS board in December 2005. Dr. Exline stated that we continue to prepare for reaffirmation – those reports are due in November 2005. Joy Hamilton and/or Dr. Exline have now met with deans and chairs from all the colleges to review the situation. Talked about what they need to do, offered assistance and gave a little in-service on assessment. Dr. Exline has met with the Compliance Leadership Team – they’ve broken into committees by the various compliance areas and they’re conducting an audit for the reaffirmation process. The University Assessment Committee met yesterday (Jan. 13th) and developed a methodology for conducting assessments of all units. The other outstanding issue has been the software – how are we going to write this report and capture things? We’ve been meeting with ITech about this – we’re probably going to use SOAR so that people can go to the site and see what’s there.

Opened the floor for questions:

Q: The only thing we were cited for was Distant Ed.?

A: Yes. 1st Letter we received '03/04 had 3 things, the 2nd letter had 2 things, this letter just specified distant and continuing education.

Q: Distant ed. included any classes not on Hattiesburg campus?

A: Yes. They want to see that academics is controlling classes, regardless of site (academic content). If you teach an Econ class here and one on the coast, are the learning outcomes the same? If they're different, why are they different? What are the factors affecting that? If you're teaching a class online, how are you assessing it to make sure your objectives are met?

Q: Does this include Study Abroad program?

A: Yes and I've talked with Suzy Steen and we haven't been doing a lot of assessment with that so we're going to have to get something in place.

Q: Also, when it comes to an equivalency question, how does that work when a class exists totally online or study abroad?

A: You just have to assess that the students are meeting the objectives. You don't always have to compare it.

Q: Continuing Education provides the mechanism for course provision. Doesn't the real focus of assessing effectiveness come back to the dept – its an academic issue not a continuing ed. issue?

A: Yes and as I've been going around to units I've asked every unit that has distance learning courses to please be sure to include learning objectives so that we can be sure that we're covered.

Q: I've talked with students who have taken online courses outside of USM at the Jr. College level and those classes are not anything that would make us happy. I'm a little worried about this core assessment because we can't identify students who have taken courses anywhere else online and if we have to produce some sort of evidence that our core produces some outcome, we are really in some murky areas here. It's a serious academic integrity issue out there. I urge that we work to get these things tagged. How can we properly, in the end, evaluate what we're doing if we don't know where the course has been taken?

A: As we talk about different ways that we look at the core, we can separate who is a transfer student and who is not. [Institutional Research has the information for every student and it is available for assessment purposes] So let's say we conduct some kind of GPA analysis, or survey assessment or whatever. We can relate that back to whether or not they were a transfer student. That doesn't get into whether or not they took an online

course but there can be some sort of separation. And that would identify the need to further look into, let's say there was a problem with transfer students, that would indicate a need to further look into that group and see what confounding factors there are.

Q: I suspect that if cheating is rampant in those kinds of things that they're probably vulnerable all over the place. I think all of them need to be tagged so that we can have a safe understanding of what happened. We could have the transcripts tagged at the Registrars office just like we use to do with correspondence courses – we knew what it was and whether it was a good substitute.

A: Now, also remember the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the reaffirmation. They had to pick a topic, analyze it, try an intervention, measure again – make improvements over a 3-4 year period. The committee's been working since July. They picked distant ed. as their topic which turned out to be a fortunate coincidence. So that will fit real well.

Q: It'd be helpful to keep the categories of distance learning very clear. There seem to be a variety here – full online courses, hybrid courses, Study Abroad.

Q: Tell me what constitutes an online as oppose to a hybrid class? At what point is a class considered "online"? Less than 50% taught online? Is there some sort of documentation that has to be done?

A: We do have distant programs, like the Executive MPH (Masters in Public Health) program, its less than 50% but it still would be distant learning and should be assessed separately. The contact hours don't qualify it as an online class.

Q: I'm getting confused – we're basically evaluating programs, not courses. But we do want to focus particularly on distance learning courses.

A: If we didn't have a citation, we might be able to do a random sample of courses – we might do something different. But because we're in this situation, we have to make sure that we're a bit more thorough.

Q: What happened to the things that SACS had mentioned as issues 2000, 2001, etc?

A: I'm only familiar with what the letters of 2003 and 2004. The Jan 2004 letter had 2 things – Institutional Effectiveness (in a broader sense) and continuing and distant ed. The report Brad sent in Sept. addressed both of those issues. And this is their action.

Q: So we have corrected any problems then?

A: We've made progress. I don't want to leave everybody with a feeling [that we can forget about those areas] ... I just want it to be good so we don't get cited again when we submit the materials in 2005. We're striving for very significant improvement and we've asked all the chairs, that for each program, their plans and documentation are in by

February 1st. Then the University Assessment Committee will review the quality of those plans and work with anything that might need to be improved.

Q: We are only doing one Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)? Most do 3-4?

A: The theme is actually technology. But because of the tie of distance learning to technology, that's where the team started. It may grow.

Q: The SACS consultant that the university has hired – Is she also here to help with reaffirmation? How will she assist us? Do we send her stuff?

A: She asked that we send stuff. I sent her a box of materials last week. She then called with suggestions and comments. That's one [the core] thing that she commented on – she said to be sure to look at the old core and why that decision was made (which I need to talk to you about Myron) – you missed that earlier – I needed to check with you because you were involved in changing the core – we're looking for [qualitative] assessment for why that action was taken.

[In terms of how she works with us,] she'll work through mail and phone, though I'm meeting with her at the end of the month. Her name is Margaret Sullivan and she is the Director of the SACS Consulting Network.

Q: There were enclosures included in the SACS letter. What were they and are they available?

A: They were instructions for how to prepare the next report. Yes, you can get a copy from me and they're online.

Q: The Strategic Plan seems to be a “top down” plan, “here it is, edit it” which is different than saying “What do you think our plan should be?” How is this going to proceed? How do you see where we're going with it?

A: Again, I was surprised that no one had seen it. And after that, there was another suggestion “Don't just give us the goals that are being talked about – give us the whole thing.” It wasn't totally top down because you remember the focus groups, I hate to bring that up again, but a lot of that went into where we started. Okay, the “Plan for the plan” – After our discussions, over the break, [I] put the whole thing up for everybody – ask the deans and chairs to discuss this with faculty and to please take minutes and to send feedback. If you want to do it as a group, great. I'm getting some really good feedback. The plan was to reconvene the University Planning Council and review those comments and make recommendations.

Q: The five goals are ridiculous. The last four are not even goals. But the first one, increasing enrollment to 20,000, comes from the top. And the mission statement doesn't meet the definition of a mission statement. And the vision statement is just a regurgitation of the mission. This thing needs a lot of work.

A: Send that as input. The mission statement is not a new one – that’s the one the IHL had.

Q: This question is about distance learning again. All courses taught go through a review process before they’re ever approved. Is there something in place to ensure that distant education courses meet some sort of standards and criteria.

A: (Bill Powell) It was addressed by Academic and Graduate Council 2 years ago. There was a policy implemented within the last 2 years that all new online classes have to be approved by these two councils. But only new classes – existing courses were allowed to continue on.

There was some more discussion of the weakness of the goals and the disconnect between the goals and what the focus groups discussed.

Q: Board defined and approved the Gulf Coast as “dual campus” with dual operation and dual accreditation. We have an inaccurate representation of dual – we ought to say “branch.”

A: I just turned in a fax document – No, SACS says we’re dual not branch. What you are describing is a branch campus. We don’t meet the criteria for branch campus. There were four criteria and we didn’t meet that. I don’t remember the criteria – I could send it to you later. Branch campus is more separate and distinct.

Dr. Exline left.

3.0 Approval of Agenda: One change, move Dr. Berman (Forum Speaker) to later in meeting when he arrives.

4.0 Approval of Minutes:

December 9, 2004 – approved. A senator commented that the minutes didn’t appear to have all the questions that were asked. The Faculty Senate secretary explained that over the holidays, her house was broken into and one of the items stolen was the tape recorder. Therefore, minutes were derived from incomplete notes.

December 15, 2004 – approved with one change to page 3, paragraph 2 changed from “formal student” to “former student.”

5.0 Officer’s Report:

5.1 President –

Dave B. took a moment to say good-bye to Senator Gerry Mattson and thanked him for his service. Senators wished Gerry farewell.

Dave B. stated that the new University Planning Committee needed a representative from the faculty senate. Nominees were asked for. Dave B. nominated Don Redalje who was unanimously accepted.

November meeting minutes will be posted when reviewed and edited.

5.1.1 Faculty Senate SACS statement – Dave B. distributed copies of and read the Dec. 16th statement concerning SACS issued by the FS Exec. Committee on behalf of the whole Faculty Senate.

5.1.2 Enrollment Caps – Dave B. investigated the issues regarding the lifting of enrollment caps on the coast and the \$100 refund given to students who dropped out of over-enrolled classes. After meeting and talking with Dr. Grimes, it was discerned that 5 students received “rebates” or “scholarships” for dropping an over-enrolled class and enrolling in another class.

Q: Is reducing tuition for such things even legal?

A: Dave B. didn’t know.

Q: I think the bigger issue is the overriding of enrollment without faculty knowledge. It goes back to this 20,000 student goal. Some adjuncts are doing an excellent job teaching classes but you just can’t let twice the number of people enroll in classes. You are going to have to open another section – the number of faculty are already reduced in all depts. – and scramble on 2-3 days notice to get a qualified instructor to teach another class is just not realistic.

Q: The memo from Jay about the organization or Dept. of Customer Service overriding academic decisions, it seems like this is the big issue – academics need to control academics and let customer service control complaints.

A: Dave B. talked about his meeting with Dr. Grimes. He said that both he and Dr. Grimes agreed that there should be a written or an unwritten policy that in the future, if customer service wants to put more students in a class, they have to have at least the chair's permission but hopefully, the chair and the instructors permission first. As to what happen, "Were students put in classes without permission of instructors or dept. chairs?" The answer is yes. All Dave B. could tell us is what Dr. Thames told the Exec. Committee at their monthly meeting - Dr. Thames said that when there was an override, customer service tried a number of times to get a hold of the instructor or dept. chair. Dave B. asked if some overrides happened even if customer service was unable to get a hold of the instructor or chair. The answer was yes. Dr. Thames stressed that customer service tried repeatedly before and after the override to get a hold of the chair/instructor.

Q: (sarcastically) Is there a communication problem down there? They had a hard time getting a hold of Dr. Stevenson too.

A coast senator explained that the people doing this are what use to be called academic advisors or worked in that dept. or division when we had some sort of a management structure at the Gulf Coast. Those people now work for the director of customer service. Those people doing the input of students in the courses do in fact have the computer knowledge necessary to grab what they want to and they have the pressure. They're not under the pay of academic depts.

Another senator said that she had worked at Freshmen Preview trying to register students and knows the difficulty of finding classes available to enroll students in just so they could be enrolled full time. She and others called chairs and didn't necessarily talk to instructors because they just needed to get students enrolled full time in something.

A senator commented that this is exactly why we shouldn't have non-academic depts. like customer service overriding at random because it covers up the lack of classes, the lack of faculty to teach the classes. That's why its important that at least the chair be notified.

Dave B. pointed out that part of the problem is that this kind of thing happens during the break when faculty and chairs aren't here. Other senators pointed out that chairs are here during those periods. Bill P. said that the English dept. chair was sitting in his office readily available and no one called him to override the English courses on the coast. Dave B. asked Bill to get him some documentation on that and that he would be happy to address it with Dr. Grimes.

Amy Young who attended the FS meeting stated that she had met with Dr. Grimes and addressed this issue with him as chair of the Academic Council. She pointed out to Dr. Grimes several reasons why there are caps on classes - from accreditation to substitute classes that aren't filled (she mentioned that PeopleSoft waiting lists sometimes has people asking for 3 more sections of Sociology 101 when there are 3 anthropology classes ready for students.) So she questioned the top-down decision making of overriding or waiting lists for that reason. She also stated that when she talked to Grimes about the override issue he defended it saying "We're only doing this on the Gulf Coast but its something we're looking at for up here in the future."

Amy Y. also asked Dave B. about his conversation with Kathy Yadrick. Kathy Y. apparently told Amy Y. that though she had some sort of agreement hammered out, that over the weekend, several more people were added to her class without her permission. Dave B. said that his conversation with Kathy wasn't about the overrides but about some mix up over an IVN class and some confusion about her class being cancelled. He only talked to her about that issue and though the whole thing remains a little murky, he found out that her class had not been cancelled.

A senator commented that other people were added on the Hattiesburg campus though they did send a memo out announcing it. The way PeopleSoft is set up you can do all kinds of things in there and I know they say "Well, nobody's going to abuse that because it can be tracked." She made the recommendation, and said that she knows it can be done, that PeopleSoft be set up so that overriding class limits is something that nobody can do except the academic authority in that dept.

Dave B. said that he would follow up and try to ensure that things are set up a lot tighter so that dept chairs and instructors be notified and asked before classes are overridden.

Another senator reflected that a pattern has emerged in that the administration tries something and if it doesn't receive any flack then it becomes policy. They got flack and they withdrew it. His inclination is that they will try it again and on the Hattiesburg campus and the next time it'll be a little more refined and suggested that we follow up now on it and continue to be vigilant.

3.2 Forum Speaker, Mitch Berman:

Dr. Berman, chair of the Drug & Alcohol Policy committee gave an overview of the committee's work towards completing the new policy. He then gave out copies of the new draft policy and asked that it be disseminated to faculty for input. FS secretary will put a copy on the FS web page for view asap.

5.1.3 Post-Tenure Review – Apparently, the deans had a problem with the algorithm when they reviewed our draft policy. Dave B. is meeting with Dr. Grimes and deans next week to discuss the policy. The executive committee met with Dr. Thames yesterday. His statement to us was that the PT review policy as it stands is inconsistent with the Board's policy. We went back and forth about that statement because we believe that our policy is not 'inconsistent,' it is incomplete (missing 2 items that the Board requested). Dave B. had copies of letters from the Board that demonstrated this point and will send them to Dr. Thames. Dave B. will contact MS State and Ole Miss FS presidents to see if they've finished their PT policies.

5.1.4 Other – The issue of the 3rd floor renovations to the Gulf Coast Library was brought up. Dave B. shared with senators what he knew about the situation. It was brought up with Dr. Thames at the executive committee meeting the day before. One of the things that Dave B. had heard was that no faculty had been on the committee considering this proposal. Dr. Thames had a very long list of who was on the committee – this list was different than the list that coast senators had. Dave B. made the observation to Dr. Thames that only one "faculty" member was on the list – there were administrative faculty but only one "faculty" faculty. Senators from the coast believed that there were 2 different committees and that faculty were not on the one making the decisions. A senator from the coast stated that the coast library director sent an email on the listserv clarifying that the discussions he had via his committee were "theory/concept" discussions, not actual plans. Senators stated that they had seen the renovation plans and there was a Project Planning Committee mentioned in the plans (no faculty were members of this committee). The plans talked about an Executive MBA (EMBA). Senators from the Business College felt that the existence of an EMBA was an

even bigger problem than the library renovation. Apparently there is no EMBA on the books under the College of Business.

Dr Smith, coast senator, stated that 3 to 4 faculty members went to see Dr. Grimes while he was down at the Coast. They were denied a meeting. Instead they were given a reprimand and Dr. Grimes accused them of lying about not ever being told of the library plan and “falsely portraying” information to faculty about the plan.

Dave B. asked the coast senators to stay after the meeting to fill him in on this news. In the meantime, he proposed a three part plan to help fix the communication problem that exists between the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast Campus: 1) Drs. Beckett and Powell will meet weekly with Dr. Grimes, 2) Drs. Thames and Grimes have agreed to include 2 ‘regular’ faculty members (non-administrative) on every Gulf Coast committee, and 3) There is a Colleges Liaison Committee (CLC) that meets once a month on the coast (Senators Pat Smith and Will Watson sit on this committee plus 2 members of each of the 5 colleges). From now on, Drs. Grimes, Malone, Beckett and Powell will attend some of these meetings.

A Gulf Coast senator added that at this CLC meeting in December, Ken Malone and the head of Physical Plant were asked “What renovations are planned for the coast?” No mention was made of the library.

A Hattiesburg senator observed that more communication is always better but that the administration has had an obligation all along to communicate with faculty – it has not done so and each time the senate is surprised by some action. This senator supported a strong public statement from the senate regarding the “lack of communication.”

Much discussion ensued concerning possible actions by the Faculty Senate. Finally, a motion was made and seconded to have a special meeting to discuss “special issues” within the next 2 weeks. Vote passed 33-7.

5.2 President-Elect

5.3. Secretary

5.4. Secretary-Elect

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Academic and Governance

6.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations

6.3 Awards

Senate Awards will be given out with the same monetary amount as the other awards.

6.4 Budget

6.5 Constitution and Bylaws

6.6 Faculty Welfare

6.7 Government Relations

6.8 Technology

6.9 Elections

6.10 Ad hoc committee reports and liaison reports (AAUP and others)

7.0 New Business

8.0 Old Business

9.0 Other

9.0 Meeting Adjourned

Members Present and Those Represented by Proxy (In Parenthesis):

College of the Arts & Letters

Joe Brumbeloe

Amy Chasteen-Miller

Phillip Gentile

Kate Greene

Stephen Judd

John Meyer

Bill Powell

Bill Scarborough

Jennifer Torres (Stephen Judd)

Anne Wallace

College of Business

James Crockett

David Duhon

Bill Gunther

Laurie Babin

College of Education & Psychology

Taralynn Hartsell

Melanie Norton (Mary Dayne Gregg)

Joe Olmi

Daniel Tingstrom

College of Health

Bonnie Harbaugh

Susan Hubble (Bonnie Harbaugh)

Margot Hall

Mary Lux

Mary Frances Nettles

Tim Rehner

College of Coastal Science

Chet Rakocinski

Don Redalje

College of Science & Technology

David Beckett, President

Randy Buchanan

Peter Butko

Raymond Folse

Mary Dayne Gregg

Myron Henry

Gerald Mattson

Gail Russell

Alan Thompson

University Libraries

Mary Beth Applin

Jay Barton Spencer

USM-Gulf Coast

Allisa Beck

J. Pat Smith

Wil Watson

Kay Harris

Members Absent:

College of the Arts & Letters: Paula Smithka

College of Business:

College of Education & Psychology: Janice Thompson

College of Health:

College of Coastal Science:

College of Science & Technology:

University Libraries:

USM-Gulf Coast: