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Faculty Senate Minutes - March 17, 2006

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting on March 17, 2006
Hall of Honors at 2:00 p.m.

Forum Speaker- No forum speaker scheduled.

1.0 Call to Order - 2:07pm

2.0 Approval of December 9, 2005 meeting minutes – Approved

Approval of January 27, 2006 minutes - Approved

3.0 Approval of Agenda - Approved with the following additions:

4.1.10 SACS update; 4.1.11 Meeting scheduled with Dr. Meredith; 7.1 QEP update;
7.2 Discussion of a No Confidence vote.

4.0 Officers' Reports

4.1 President

4.1.1 Gulf Coast Status – Gulf Coast senators gave update on coast progress. Some issues of concern: Parking at the Garden Park campus will soon be a real issue as the renters will soon move in the upstairs part of the building; Disaster Preparedness manual is being updated; It was reported that some administrators may not be taking in to account Katrina issues when evaluating coast faculty. In response, a coast senator reported that his evaluation committee requested statements from all faculty who felt that they had been impacted by Katrina. Bill Powell said that he would remind the Provost again about this issue.

4.1.2 Graduate Assistant Allocation Proposal – The Provost asked the deans for comments concerning this supposed ‘strawman’ proposal. These comments were sent out to senators by Bill P. prior to this meeting. Bill thought the

deans' comments were kind of scant so he asked the deans to send him their comments. Though he only received two so far, at least one of them was seven pages long indicating that what the provost sent to Bill was quite abbreviated. Graduate Council called a special meeting in which the Provost attended to speak to this issue. The provost said that he was charged to look at the grad assistant allocation on campus and that he alone had developed this proposal and it is based on economic and productivity needs. Supposedly, the university is losing money by the way that it is presently allocating graduate assistantships. Graduate Council sent a statement to the Provost opposing this proposal and outlining the role that faculty should have in this process and recommending that discussion of the proposal be put off until next year when the new university administration comes in.

The senate passed a motion 37-0 authorizing the senate Executive Committee to develop and send to the Provost and President a statement supporting the Graduate Council's recommendations and reaffirming the primary role of faculty (as per SACS) in the development of curricular activities and the shared responsibility in the fiscal process.

- 4.1.3 Teaching Loads Policy Proposal – Apparently the administration had requested information from deans justifying teaching load responsibilities and requests for positions in different depts. After going to the dome 3-4 times to do this, an associate dean finally asked if some criteria could be given to them to define what the administration wanted. As a response to this, draft #3 of the Teaching Loads Policy was circulated to deans for comment. There is already a standard Teaching Load Policy in the Faculty Handbook. The SACS team has not listed the current policy as inadequate in its audit report though it has been intimated that this is a response to SACS. A senator suggested that the teaching load policy currently in the handbook was a result of an IHL policy requirement. Another senator suggested that maybe there is a connection between this teaching load policy and the grad asst. proposal and that the administration is possibly trying to shift greater teaching loads on to faculty in programs that are non-PhD.

The senate passed a motion 37-0 to send a statement to the President and Provost to reject the 3rd draft of the Teaching Loads Policy and reaffirm our support for the current Teaching Load Policy in the Faculty Handbook while supporting the notion of a review over the next year of the current Handbook policy. In addition, the university should continue to operate under the current policy as outlined in the handbook. Bill P. charged the senate's Academic and Governance Committee with

reviewing the handbook's policy and making recommendations if needed.

- 4.1.4 Searches and Faculty Positions – A senator from Psychology explained that the dept. of Psychology had been given permission this year to advertise for six positions. As of two weeks ago, all six position searches had been canceled. At the same time, the Department of CISE (chaired by Dr. Dana Thames) was granted permission to search for 14 positions. The reasons given for the cancellation of positions in Psychology were 1) low productivity, 2) that faculty in that dept. were not “sufficiently engaged” and 3) that most faculty in that dept. only taught a 2-2 load. In addition to cancellations in Psychology, the Dept. of Library and Information Sciences also had one of its two position searches cancelled positions that had been cited as needed by their accrediting body. In response to the administration's assertions, the Psychology Dept. gathered stats from the FAR and IR to do a comparison of productivity in the different depts within the college (a summary data sheet was distributed to senators outlining productivity and faculty numbers in various depts in the College of Education and Psychology.) The data challenged the reasons given by administration for ending the searches.

One senator expressed dismay at the statement made by the Provost at the President's Council meeting regarding the Psychology faculty not being “sufficiently engaged” and thought that the Provost should apologize for such an outrageous and ludicrous statement. Another senator stated that if the administration believed that there was a problem in Psychology they should have addressed that problem with Psychology and not strip them of their entire faculty hires.

Senators deliberated on the wording of a resolution to express their outrage at the administration's differential treatment, apparent favoritism, and actions jeopardizing accreditation of a program. It was decided to move the issue to the bottom of the agenda (8.1) giving senators a chance to formalize a proper statement.

- 4.1.5 Midyear Raises since August 2005 – Bill P. received a spreadsheet today of raises. Though Bill asked for rationales for each raise (equity, counter-offers, merit, etc.), that information was not provided. Bill had only just received the information and so had not really had time to analyze it or to provide it to senators. He did state that a quick look showed that 9 faculty had received raises since last August ranging from \$2000-\$26,000. A senator asked if President's daughter, Dr. Dana Thames, was one of the raises. The answer was ‘yes’ - \$13,000. Another senator

asked if the raises were distributed across campus. Since Bill had not had time to review the data he couldn't answer with certainty but did see at least 4 colleges represented. Senators wanted the rationales for the raises before further discussing the issue. Bill will press the Provost for rationales. The raise information will be placed on reserve at the library.

- 4.1.6 Alternative Learning Formats – Dr. Cynthia Moore prepared a document defining Alternative Learning Formats which was given to the Council of Chairs to review. Academic and Graduate Councils have not had an opportunity to review it yet. The document outlined payments to faculty and instructors for various Learning Formats. Bill P. has seen the document and believes it has some basic flaws that need to be addressed and will ask the senate's Welfare Committee to review.

- 4.1.7 Evaluation of Teaching Committee – Bill said that the committee looking at the evaluation of teaching is getting together soon. Bill has appointed Steve Oshrin as the senate representative. The committee needs a tenure-track faculty member and a non-tenure-track instructor to participate on the committee and any recommendations can be sent to Steve Oshrin.

- 4.1.8 University Advisory Committee (UAC) Confidentiality – There was a breach of confidentiality by a faculty member sitting on a UAC Committee. As this is a very serious matter, Bill invited a motion from the senate to direct him to protest the breach of confidentiality and to instruct him to send a reminder to chairs, deans and the provost regarding the importance of confidentiality in this process. The senate passed such a motion unanimously.

- 4.1.9 Meetings with Dr. Thames and Dr. Grimes – Most of the issues already discussed in the senate meeting have been discussed with the president and provost, though several cabinet meetings have been canceled. Other topics discussed: In regards to the permissions to search, the exec. officers specifically asked why some colleges (particularly science) got more of their permissions to advertise than the other colleges and the president said that it was because they had gotten their paperwork in faster. We tried to get summer research awards back to no avail - also tried to get people who were selected some sort of privileged status (top of the list next year, etc), though no decision has been reached on this issue yet. The senate/office of the president awards will be funded this year. We asked about the status of coast and the president said that it is

in the hands of the IHL. We asked about the ownership of Garden Park. It is owned by the Foundation and we rent the first floor of the hospital for a nominal fee. The Shared Governance document is now being reviewed by the university attorney, where the “must” statements added by the senate appear to be an issue.

- 4.1.10 Bill requested and has received permission for the senate’s exec. committee to meet with the SACS team for 45 minutes. He stated that he planned to address shared governance and sound planning issues at the meeting and welcomed any suggestions from the senate. He then deferred to Myron H. who attended a meeting (with Bonnie Harbaugh and others) with Margaret Sullivan, the SACS consultant. Myron stated that he found the session with Dr. Sullivan more of a “don’t do this while the team is here” meeting. Myron asked Dr. Sullivan if there would be an opportunity at these sessions for faculty to raise legitimate issues. This didn’t go over well and in addition a comment was made by another faculty that this was just coming from a few disgruntled faculty. Myron stated that he felt that that statement was inappropriate and incorrect. Myron pointed to the SACS statement on shared governance and stated that many faculty felt that this administration did not practice shared governance though it was stated prominently in our mission. Dr. Sullivan made no suggestions as to how faculty with legitimate concerns might express those concerns to members of the SACS on-site team, and she then continued with the discussion about proper protocol during the SACS on-site team's visit.

A senator stated that it is important that these issues are brought to the attention of SACS so that they could address the issues with the university and ultimately the IHL. But this senator was told specifically not to talk to SACS about these issues under any circumstances. Myron stated that that was not the purpose of the preparation meetings or the site team visit. The site team is supposed to help us with issues in order to help make us a better institution.

After further discussion, the senate made a motion expressing its confidence and full support in the exec. committee to represent the senate openly and honestly at its meeting with the SACS team. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4.1.11 Meeting with Dr. Meredith – Bill stated that he had received an email from Dr. Meredith and has scheduled a meeting between Dr. Meredith and the senate’s exec. committee for 9:30a on April 7th. Bill asked that senators send any comments or suggestions to him before the meeting date. Bill has also

invited Dr. Meredith to address the senate but the at this time, Dr. Meredith was unable to attend any regularly scheduled senate meetings. Bill stated that a special meeting of the senate may be called if Dr. Meredith can attend at another time.

4.2 President-Elect

4.2.1 Outsourcing of physical plant – Upcoming meeting next Tuesday or Thursday. Nothing really new.

4.2.2 Faculty Handbook Committee – Myron H. deferred this report to Dave Beckett, chair of the handbook committee. Dave reported that the handbook committee has outlined a formal process for recommending changes to the handbook. Suggested change and a rationale for the change should be submitted to the handbook chair. Committee members will solicit input from their constituencies and then vote on the change at the following meeting. Dave reminded people that no changes in the handbook can be made without first being approved by the university president. Some of the changes passed by the handbook committee:

- The word ‘provosts’ was change throughout the handbook to ‘provost.’
- ‘College of Business and Economic Development’ was changed to ‘College of Business.’
- The Post-tenure Review’ document plus its Preamble was added.
- A change was made to the handbook’s tenure section on “Credit for Prior Accomplishment” to make the handbook consistent with IHL policy. The old handbook stated that incoming faculty member may be granted tenure: ...an administrative appointment maybe be granted tenure if so recommended by dept, dean and provost and the president and approved by the IHL board. The new handbook eliminates the “dept, dean and provost” although there has been a statement added in the handbook that says “it is expected that prior to making this recommendation, the president will seek input from the dept, the dean and the provost.”
- Dr. Grimes would like to see the issue of salary appeals addressed in the handbook. There is a grievance procedure but nothing dealing specifically with salary appeals. A senator made the point that there used to be a section on salary appeals. Another senator stated that there is a section on grievances for personnel issues and salaries are a personnel issue.
- The handbook committee is trying to find and move along the Drug and Alcohol policy. Bill asked that the handbook committee be sure to

check to see if the policy adequately addresses the Employee Assistance need.

- Dave B. wanted the senate's endorsement to add a section in the handbook to involve the College Advisory Committee (CAC) in third year reviews prior to it going to the dean. At present, the dept., dept. chair and dean are the only ones that make recommendations concerning third review. Dave felt that it was important to involve the CAC to give additional weight to the process and stated that the CAC would eventually be looking at the candidate for tenure consideration anyhow.

The senate voted 31-2-4 to endorse the suggested change to the handbook to involve the CAC in third year review.

4.2.3 Provost Council – no meeting

4.2.4 Other – n/a

4.3. Secretary–No report

4.4. Secretary-Elect

4.4.1 Office of Non Credit Programming Committee – no report

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Academic and Governance: Bill Scarborough, chair

5.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations: Steve Oshrin, chair

Evaluations have been tallied and given to the deans and chairs.

5.3 Awards: Mary Lux, chair

Mary said that announcements for nominees for awards have already been sent out. Deadline for submission of materials is March 31st. Bill P. asked that the announcement get sent to senators through the list.

5.4 Budget: Myron Henry, chair

5.5 Constitution and Bylaws: Randy Buchanan, chair

5.6 Faculty Welfare: Tim Rehner, chair

Tim reported that he had met with Russ Willis regarding the Drug and Alcohol policy and Tim asked that Russ (and Russ was willing) to work on the section dealing with employee assistance in early intervention. Tim was hoping to move our next senate meetings to the coast so that we could hear coast issues first hand and offer our support if possible. Moving the meeting has not worked out but we will be meeting at the coast in May. The Welfare Committee is also looking at a document (that has been discussed for several years) regarding evaluation and promotion for non-tenured, contingent faculty. There was concern about the protections given to faculty – in the current draft only chairs and deans serve as evaluators. Also there was a concern regarding that the proposed process looks too much like the process for tenure. The committee will review what other universities have done and try to expeditiously make a recommendation.

5.7 Government Relations: Dave Duhon, chair

5.8 Technology: Barton Spencer, chair

Barton S. reminded senators that the university portal would be up for testing on April 1st and then up and running for April 15th. The committee is still working on the wording for a proposed senate resolution on the CALEA mandate (upgrading the communication technology to allow monitoring by the feds). A senator reminded Bill P. that he was going to contact other state university senate presidents to see what actions they were taking in regards to CALEA.

5.9 Elections: Paula Smithka, chair

5.10 Ad hoc committee reports and liaison reports

5.10.1 Academic/Graduate Council – Academic Council is in the middle of Program Reviews – most have been turned in. They are also in the middle of re-evaluating and improving learning outcomes. There are still a couple of 124 programs that have not been approved by this committee. The General Education Core committee will be meeting with SACS when they come – we have been found not in compliance with 3.5.1.

5.10.2 American Association of University Professors – Amy Y. passed out flyers for the statewide AAUP conference at Milsaps on April 19th. All faculty are encouraged to attend.

5.10.3 Faculty Leadership Council

5.10.4 Presidents Council

5.10.5 Transportation

6.0 Old Business

7.0 New Business

7.1 Mary Lux gave a handout with some information concerning the Speaking Center, Writing Center and the Writing Lab. Mary described what the QEP has been doing and how excited faculty have been during the training and what they are planning for their courses.

7.2 Discussion of a vote of No Confidence – The senate held a lengthy discussion regarding the merits of a No Confidence vote. A senator stated that in light of all of the bad management decisions that continue to be made by the administration and continue to be made without the input of faculty, a vote of no confidence should be considered in May after SACS leaves (so accreditation is not jeopardized). A senator felt it important that the public be made aware that these bad decisions are adversely affecting the quality of education at the university. Bill P. asked senators to canvass their constituencies in the next month to elicit feedback on a No Confidence vote. A resolution will be worded to be considered at the next senate meeting. The No Confidence issue or at least the issues of poor management should be relayed to the IHL Commissioner.

8.0 Other

4.1.4 This issued had been moved to the bottom of the agenda to give a senator time to word an appropriate resolution. The resolution was read but because of the lack of time for appropriate discussion and also because a senator wanted to give the Psychology chair time to address this issue in a meeting with the president, the senate asked that the motion be tabled to the next meeting (vote 36-1).

8.1 The Center for Human Rights

There is a Human Rights minor and students can find more info about it at <http://edudev.usm.edu/humanrights>. If faculty have any courses that have human rights content that they would like to add to this minor, please let Bob Press know. There will be a International Human Rights Conference here April 28 & 29th. Presentations are still being accepted – contacted Jennifer.Cloud@usm.edu

9.0 Adjournment - 5:40pm

Members Present and Those Represented by Proxy (Proxies are in Parentheses):

College of the Arts & Letters

Cindy Brown

Anita Davis

Cheryl Goggin

Stanley Hauer

Stephen Judd

John Meyer

Bill Powell, President

Bob Press

Bill Scarborough (Amy Young)

Paula Smithka (Bill Powell)

Amy Young

College of Business

College of Education & Psychology

Ann Parker Blackwell

Taralynn Hartsell

Joe Olmi

Antonio Rodriguez-Buckingham

Janice Thompson (Lisa Williams)

College of Health

Wendy Bounds

Bonnie Harbaugh (MBA)

Mary Lux

Stephen Oshrin (Tim Rehner)

Tim Rehner

Coastal Science, Marine Science & Gulf Coast Research Lab

Chet Rakocinski

Don Redalje

College of Science & Technology

Randy Buchanan

Eyler "Bob" Coates (M. Henry)

Jeff Evans

Mary Dayne Gregg

Jerry Griffith

Myron Henry, President-Elect

Lawrence Mead

Bobby Middlebrooks

Gail Russell

University Libraries

Mary Beth Applin, Secretary-Elect

Jay Barton Spencer

USM-Gulf Coast

Darlys Alford

Allisa Beck

Eric Nelson (Allisa Beck)

Members Absent:

College of the Arts & Letters:

College of Business:

David Duhon

Bill Gunther

James Magruder

College of Education & Psychology:

College of Health:

Coastal/Marine/GCRL:

College of Science & Technology:

University Libraries:

USM-Gulf Coast:

Patsy Anderson