Faculty Senate Minutes - January 19, 2007

USM Faculty Senate

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1.0  Call to order

2.0  November and December minutes approved.

2.1  Senators considered 2 separate draft letters of condolence to the family of Dean Pood who died unexpectedly this past week. Stephen J. and Bob P. were asked to combine the two letters over the weekend and Myron H. would get it to the family on behalf of the senate.

3.0  Agenda approved

4.0  Officers’ Reports

4.1  President

4.1.1  Provosts Charge to Senate on Advisement – Myron sent around a volunteer sign-up sheet for the joint Senate and Academic Council Advisement committee.

4.1.2  Letter to Senate from Marek Urban (Polymer Science) – The chair of Polymer Science sent a letter to the senate via Myron to explain that all involved were told well in advance that classes would be bumped and attempts were made to relocate the classes. The senator whose class was bumped a number of times stated he was not made aware of the blackout dates until two weeks after classes began and was forced to re-do his syllabus and lectures.

4.1.4  The December letter to the editor and Get Well Cards to Senate Executive Officers – Copies were given to senators of “Get Well” cards that were sent to Executive Officers in response to an editorial they submitted to the Hattiesburg American about the president’s retroactive pay increase and the administrative pay raises. The get well cards included pennies and dimes to help us get over it and a message that we should apologize to Thames and be grateful that he keeps us on. One senator stated that he thought that the Senate Constitution and By-laws prohibited officers from receiving gifts…

4.1.5  Report on January 4 Cabinet Meeting and Jan. 16th meeting with Dr. Thames – At both meetings and here at the senate, Myron H. commended the university effort in making the bowl game such a terrific event.

The cabinet meeting Jan. 4th gave all an opportunity to reconnect after the New Year. No new information to report.

Some topics discussed at the meeting with President Jan. 16th:

Coast update – two facilities are being used at the Gulf Coast campus, business and education and psychology buildings. Library should be open in fall. The president indicated that enrollment at the coast might be down a bit but he would not have figures for 10 more days. President was privy to any information concerning the site location for the new campus.
**Upcoming challenges** – The president spoke about issues concerning program duplication and stated that the IHL board would be reviewing new program requests next meeting and that a couple of the new programs would be duplication of our programs. This duplication would not be good for USM.

Our meeting with the president was cut short as he was called away to meet with the parents of the students who had committed suicide over the holiday. We did mention to the president that the senate had discussed at the December meeting the salary increases and that it may be a topic at our next senate meeting.

A senator asked that the Executive officers discuss with the president or provost the rising cost of textbooks and other issues concerning the book store (making copies of class supplements without consulting faculty, textbooks coming in late, not enough textbooks, etc). Senators requested that we invite someone from Barnes and Noble to the senate meeting. Officers will try to arrange this for one of the next upcoming meetings.

4.1.6 **A conversation: Transition topics and** issues (e.g., budget participation, organizational stability) – senate discussed some items that should be discussed on an ongoing basis with the current administration. Myron H. also suggested that we may summarize these issues and send them forward to the administration instead of waiting for a meeting with the president or provost:

- Timeliness of approvals for job ads and permissions for searches. A senator asked if maybe the senate officers could ask the administration for the process for getting permissions for ads, searches and hires. Myron H. asked senators to notify Mary Beth A. about issues and executive officers would address those specific issues with the president.

- What is the president’s plans before he goes (his legacy) this semester? Are there things planned for this semester that are part of the legacy he plans to leave?

- Issues and problems with the Printing/Copy Center (delays, text changes, etc). Officers will contact Margie Jepson to discuss these issues.

- Transparency of the USM Athletic and Foundations. A recent Clarion-Ledger editorial reveals that the board is looking into issues of the transfer of $1.2 million of funds between the MS State Foundation and Athletics. Concerns have been raised that we have been raising here for some time.

- Salaries of staff, particularly in light of the last raises that were different for other “state employees” (minimum of $1500 increase) and university “state employees” (who got 5%).

- Better strategy for Information Technology (Itech employee salaries as well), email, system down during registration.

Stephen J. stated that Valerie Craig is putting a committee together concerning the new Oracle system. If any senators are interested in participating on this committee, they should contact Stephen J. One senator stated that he was privy to the issues concerning the computers going down at registration and just wanted to know that though he could not share the details, he did want senators to know that it was not an equipment or Itech failure but that Itech worked very hard to diagnose the problem and repair it. Senators expressed a desire to possibly having Homer Coffman to be a forum speaker at a senate meeting.
A senator asked if any information could be shared regarding the Presidential Search. No new information could be shared other than that things are happening fast or at least on track.

4.1.7 A conversation: Sharing thoughts with the New President from April through mid June, how and what?

Senate discussed some items that should be discussed with the new president once he is on board.

- Having faculty participation in the budget process. Myron H. shared with senate that he had invited Joe Morgan, Financial Officer to this senate meeting and was concerned with something he stated in his response. Mr. Morgan responded that he could not make it this month but maybe later. Mr. Morgan stated that he had a meeting in the budget office to “finalize the plan for the budget processes.” He would then be meeting with the Executive Cabinet and the deans to present the plan. In light of all the work that Bill Powell had done under Gregg Lassen in getting a Budget Committee together (of course, that committee only met 3 times and all it discussed organizational meeting) faculty still seem to be excluded in this process.

- Faculty involvement in selection of Interim Officers in new administration.

- Faculty involvement in national searches.

- More faculty interaction with administration and administrators and more conversations in major decisions.

- Possible reorganizations of departments or colleges?

- Role of the Faculty Activity Report (FAR).

- Awards.

- Need for or character of new President’s Council.

- Alternative Learning Pay.

How does the senate have a conversation with a new president to relate these issues? A senator suggested that possibly senate funds could be used to pay for travel for senate officers to go and meet with the president once he is selected and accepts.

4.2 President-Elect

4.3 Secretary

4.4 Secretary-Elect

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Academic and Governance

5.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations

5.3 Awards – Mary Lux has contacted the provost regarding having the selection of Awards
come back under senate. The provost has not yet responded.

5.4 Budget

5.5 Constitution and Bylaws – Randy Buchanan passed out a handout of recommendations of changes to Constitution and Bylaws concerning elections. (click here to view). The changes are recommended both by the Constitution and Bylaw and Election Committees. Motion passed unanimously to accept the changes.

5.6 Faculty Welfare

5.7 Government Relations

5.8 Technology – Barton S. will be trying to set up a meeting with Homer Coffman soon.

5.9 Elections – Paula Smithka is now securing faculty names from departments and she will soon be contacting Election Committee members.

5.10 Other committee and liaison reports

5.10.1 Presidents Council

5.10.2 AAUP

5.10.3 Facility Management Planning Committee – meeting in February.

5.10.4 Alternative Learning Committee – proposal was sent to Provost. Executive Officers may want to ask provost of its status.

5.10.5 Distance Education Committee

5.10.6 Faculty Handbook Committee: Third Year Review, Non-tenure track titles and processes (David Beckett) – Dave B. is chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee. He presented overhead views of the new 3rd Year Review form. The form is revised as a result of conversations between Dr. Grimes, Myron H. and Dave B. about the issues of this past review form. The form reverts back to the same form that was used previous to 2003 and revises a form that the provost issued in 2003 that had not faculty input. The change is in the heading that signifies whether or not a faculty member is making satisfactory progress. It changes from “Satisfactory” or “Not Satisfactory” to “Recommended Renewal” “Not Recommended Renewal.” This way a faculty can continue in employment but there can be an indication in the narrative that the person needs to improve. The old form was not interpreted that way by deans who felt that they either had to check “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” and if they said “unsatisfactory” they had to terminate the contract.

The new form also will have (if passed by Faculty Handbook committee) a check mark to indicate that the CAC has reviewed it. A senator stated that the Faculty Handbook does not have anything in it about sending 3rd Year Reviews being sent to CAC. Dave B. stated that until the Faculty Handbook revisions will show the wording soon and until then the form could be checked “N/A.” (It is still waiting on approval by president).

Dave B. also talked about the Draft Policy and Procedure Regarding Non-Tenure Track Research, Clinical, Artist-in-Residents, Professor of Practice and Post-Doctoral, Positions at USM (click here for draft). Senate committee formed by Dave B. made revisions to a draft policy that had been floating around and was sent to the senate by Ed Jackson. Under Bill Powell’s senate presidency, Bill P. believed the draft needed strengthening and re-submitted it to the Welfare committee that suggested wording. Dave B., as chair of the Faculty Handbook committee then had two versions. Dave B. merged the two documents and let Myron H. and Bill P. look at and revise as needed and the draft now before the senate is the result. Dave reviewed the essential aspects of the draft with senators and answered questions. Because of the changes, Myron H. suggested that the senate vote on the draft again to endorse or not endorse it. The senate voted unanimously to endorse it. The Council of Chairs and Lee Gore (university counselor) are also reviewing it before the Handbook Committee reviews it for inclusion in the handbook.

5.10.7 Evaluation of Teaching – returns of student evaluations of faculty are still high. Topic at the last committee meeting dealt with Pick-a-Prof – the university turned over grade distribution reports. Their decision was apparently based on a lawsuit that another university lost. But in addition to grade distributions, Pick-a-Prof also asked for the evaluation (descriptive/numerical) results
themselves. The committee discussed whether that information should be given to Pick-a-Prof or publish it themselves if it is to be made public. Senate asked that if faculty evaluations were made public if Administrative evaluations shouldn’t also be made public?

6.0 New Business
7.0 Old Business

7.1 Selected Administrative increases from 2005 USM budget book to the 2006 USM budget book – this item was introduced at the last senate meeting but the Executive Committee hadn’t gathered all the info together yet. Myron H. gave a handout at this meeting that included a more complete look at the Administrative raises given 2005-06. Bill P. stated that the senate requested administrative salary change information last August 2005-March 2006 and that information is on Reserve in Cook Library. A senator asked if there wasn’t an IHL policy that stated that raises beyond 7% have to be approved by the Board? Myron H. stated that he didn’t know if that was a standard policy but that the board had made that request specifically last July for the raises given. It appears that the raises given to administrators were not just given in July.

A senator moved that the senate request an explanation for raises given to administrators. Some thought it was a personnel issue and probably wouldn’t be released. Another senator suggested that we request from the administration what criteria was used for evaluating and giving raises. Another senator pointed out that if the justification being given by the administration was in part raising salaries to a regional level, then this administration was being unjustly rewarded for unsatisfactory performance evidenced by SACS probation and the non-renewal of the president’s contract for four years. Myron pointed out that with the financial difficulties the university is experiencing, the administration should be “leading by example” and limiting themselves to approximate the 5% raises afforded faculty. Another senator pointed out that % of the administrators large salaries (20+) is much larger than % of the faculty’s smaller raises. Bill P. stated that these raises probably came in stages during the fiscal year 2005-06 but that did not change the fact that the final result is that these administrators had a substantial raise from one fiscal year to the next. A senator pointed out that the Director of the Athletic Foundation and the Director of the USM Foundation were both recipients of large raises and that these individuals were also responsible for advocating a retroactive raise for the president which seemed a little shady.

A senator stated that students, above anyone, should be concerned about these raises since students have seen a substantial increase in their tuition and they should be made aware that their tuition dollars aren’t supporting faculty raises (paid for through the state) but are supporting these type of administrative raises. A senator suggested that this be a top agenda item for Myron H. and Joe Olmi’s meeting with the IHL Commissioner to determine how much information the board seeks for raises and if they were aware of these large raises. A senator asked if administrators would take these large salaries back with them when they returned to faculty. Myron H. stated that they would negotiate a salary when they returned but certainly having a larger salary puts them in a better negotiating spot when they do return.

7.2 The Faculty Handbook and Governance Options – postponed til next meeting

8.0 Other

9.0 Adjourned at 5pm
Members present and those absent but represented by proxy (in parentheses):

**College of the Arts & Letters**

Anita Davis
Cheryl Goggin (Paula Smithka)
Stan Hauer
Stephen Judd
John Meyer
Bill Powell
Bob Press
Greg O’Brien
Paula Smithka
Amy Young

**College of Business**

Catherine Price

**College of Education & Psychology**

Toralynn Hartsell
Joe Olmi
John Rachal

**College of Health**

Wendy Bounds
Bonnie Harbaugh (Wendy Bounds)
Mary Lux
Steve Oshrin (Stan Hauer)
Tim Rehner

College of Coastal Science
Chet Rakocinski
Don Redalje

College of Science & Technology
Jeff Evans
Randy Buchanan
Jerry Griffith
John Hannon
Myron Henry
Bobby Middlebrooks

University Libraries
Mary Beth Applin
Jay Barton Spencer

USM-Gulf Coast
Members Absent:

College of the Arts & Letters:

College of Business:

Stephen Burshardt
Bill Gunther
Scott Magruder

College of Education & Psychology:

Mary Ann Blackwell
Tony Rodriguez-Buckingham

College of Health:

College of Coastal Science:

College of Science & Technology:
Charles McCormick
Larry Mead
Gail Russell

University Libraries:

USM-Gulf Coast:

Patsy Anderson
Darlys Alford
Julie Cwikla