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Faculty Senate Minutes - May 2, 2008

USM Faculty Senate

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Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting

of May 2, 2008

Pat Joachim, Associate Provost for the Gulf Coast, welcomed the faculty to the annual meeting held at USM Gulf Coast.

Report of President Saunders. President Saunders addressed the Senate, raising several issues: (1) David Wolfe, Director of Development, has assumed the management of marketing and public relations for the university; the former office handling these matters will be absorbed. (2) President Saunders spoke of the IHL's new funding formula, which emphasizes enrollment; growth is essential under this model. (3) She updated the Senate on the developing Emergency Notification System; public address systems are being installed across campus, and text-messaging software is being installed and tested. (4) The Strategic Planning Initiative is proceeding apace, with Senate representation on the principal committees. (5) Provost-Elect Lyman has agreed to start his duties early, in the month of June. (6) The cabinet is accepting proposals to outsource the management of Physical Plant. A considerable discussion ensued about this matter, with President Saunders affirming her commitment to openness and to "make this campus green."

Guest Speaker: George Schloegel. Senator J.P. Smith introduced the guest speaker, Mr. George Schloegel, President of Hancock Bank. (Incidentally, the digraph in the name is pronounced like a long *O*.) His speech-of considerable interest to the Senate-was a history of and commentary on higher education on the Gulf Coast. Here follows a brief digest:

"Most things in the world are market-driven," began Mr. Schloegel. Thus in the 1830's, when the Legislature was considering chartering the University of Mississippi, citizens in the southern part of the state lobbied for locating it in Mississippi City, on the Gulf. By one vote, however, the Legislature situated the institution in the (at that time) more prosperous Oxford. Coastal residents were bitter about the defeat and the lack of an institution of higher education on the Coast-and they still are.

Civil War veteran Captain William Hardy was the founder both of Hattiesburg and Gulfport, and he intended them to be twin cities, joined by the new railroad. It was this railroad link that prompted the construction of what is today Gulf Park, originally a two-year, girls' finishing school. The campus was severely damaged by Hurricane Camille in 1969 and was offered to the state as a university center; Mr. Schloegel was one of the men who negotiated the deal, lobbying with the Legislature for two years. The price was cheap: less than \$300,000 payable in bonds over a period of twenty years. The IHL approved the proposal by only one vote and with strong dissent from the northern part of the state.

President McCain saw great possibilities in the venture, though (Mr. Schloegel thought) President Lucas was rather less interested. During President Fleming's tenure a proposal was made by Gulf Coast residents to separate Gulf Park from USM and create a ninth state university. (Mr. Schloegel never supported this proposal.)

Hurricane Katrina presented both new challenges and new opportunities for the Gulf Coast. Mr. Schloegel argued that higher education is governed by two factors: affordability and ease of access. And there is a critical need for such opportunities on the Gulf Coast. Only 17.4% of Coastal residents have a university education (contrasted with, for example, 38% in Hinds County and 24.8% in Forrest and Lamar Counties). USM faces a huge market here, in no way jeopardizing Hattiesburg's viability as a campus. "Both can grow!" he stated. (Long applause here.)

Mr. Schloegel then turned his attention to the planned new campus at Crosscreek. Though USMGC had been looking for additional land as long ago as the Fleming administration, Hurricane Katrina made such a quest inevitable. President Thames advocated abandoning Gulf Park altogether and building a new campus north of Interstate 10. In this he faced stringent opposition from Coastal residents, who wanted both: a new campus further north and the restoration of historic Gulf Park. Superintendent Meredith seemed supportive, remarking that in ten years USMGC would have 10,000 students "if it had the right footprint."

That footprint is being provided by a number of Coastal businesses, notable among them being Hancock Bank. The bank lost much of its data in the destruction caused by Katrina, mandating a migration of facilities to higher ground further north of the Gulf. Accordingly, Mr. Schloegel and others planned to acquire fifty acres of land north of I-10. However the project escalated in magnitude when other agencies became involved, notably the Stennis Center, which needed additional space both for work and residences. Eventually some 2,000 acres were acquired to accommodate a "city of the future at Crosscreek." The IHL has been given two hundred of these acres, fifty to be used immediately and the remainder for future development. The Crosscreek plat is on both sides of the Interstate, with the majority of the property (including the university's share) on a fifty-foot elevation to the north. 67,000 automobiles drive past this site daily. Furthermore a road is planned linking the two campus of Hattiesburg and USMGC with a travel time of only forty-five minutes. Thus, concluded Mr. Schloegel eloquently, Captain Hardy's vision of twin cities will be accomplished at last.

In response to questions Mr. Schloegel and President Saunders provided some additional information: They reiterated that the university acquires fifty acres immediately, but two hundred altogether and for future use. There will be businesses, residential areas, and recreational parks and lakes. Private firms will construct dormitories and reasonably-priced faculty housing. The proposed timeline for the project is five years-pending, of course, funding.

Senate President Stephen Judd thanked Mr. Schloegel for his informative remarks, and the Senate took a ten minute break. The long second half of the meeting began with remarks from Interim Provost Bobby Middlebrooks, centering on a proposal that tenure and promotion committees should annotate their evaluations, not just assign unexplained numbers to the applications they review.

President Judd announced the death the previous week of Senator Art Kaul and read a brief eulogy for him. He called the Senate formally into session; the April minutes were moved, seconded, and approved, as was the agenda.

Senate President’s Report. President Judd’s remarks stressed two areas of interest to Senators: (1) The Awards Committee will work more closely with the Provost’s office to assure that the awards for teaching, service, and scholarship/creativity go more smoothly next year. (2) A workshop was held on the planning and budgeting process, and members of the executive committee attended. A consultant has been retained to supervise the initial stages of the process, which will be ongoing. Faculty must-and will-be involved in it. Indeed, 80% of the university’s budget is for academic purposes, with only 20% for administration. (Athletics is excluded from these figures.) Academics should be the last place to cut, and cuts should never be across the board.

President-Elect’s Report. President-Elect Oshrin spoke on several matters of concern: (1) He elaborated somewhat on President Saunders’s comments regarding the Emergency Notification System. He considers the text-messaging system especially important. There must be training for both students and faculty and staff. (2) Senator Oshrin represents us on the iTech Advisory Council, where he has recently learned that possible configurations of computer orders will be greatly reduced and standardized. Thereby iTech can provide more reliable service. In fact, an image of each computer will be made so that it can be restored to its original condition at any time. Senator Oshrin acknowledged that this arrangement will be difficult for certain faculty, especially in the research sciences. (3) A LAN is being proposed for campus-wide backups. (4) Long-distance conferencing ability will be developed for two rooms: Union H and TCC 216, where the Senate will meet next year. A considerable discussion ensued on this matter, with dissatisfaction from Gulf Coast faculty about the lack of conferencing facilities on their campuses. (5) President-Elect Oshrin proposed a change in the Senate’s calendar of meetings: either to cancel the January meeting or to combine it with the February meeting.

Secretary’s Report. Secretary Amy Young announced distressing news about relative average salaries at the state’s institutions of higher learning:

| Institution | Professors | Assoc. Profs. | Asst. Profs. | Instructors |
|-------------|------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| MSU | 92.1 | 70.6 | 61.7 | 39.4 |

| | | | | |
|-----|-------|------|------|------|
| UM | 100.3 | 76.2 | 61.8 | 35.9 |
| USM | 85.4 | 66.3 | 55.4 | 43.7 |

Committee Reports. Most committees had no report.

Senator Beckett of the University Handbook Committee introduced several proposed changes and discussed them in considerable depth. These will be voted upon in the June meeting. Copies of these items will be found appended to the June minutes.

Senator Meyer spoke for the Elections Committee and announced that the following faculty members have been elected by their peers to serve on the Senate:

College of Arts and Letters

Amy Young

Cheryl Goggin

Joanne Burnett

Anita Davis

College of Business

Gwendolyn Pate

Brigitte Burgess

College of Education and Psychology

Ann Blackwell

David Daves

Diane Fisher

College of Health

Keith Rushing

Timothy Rehner

College of Science and Technology

Jerry Bass

David Beckett

Ras Pandey

Coastal Science, Marine Science, and Gulf Coast Research Lab

Chet Rakocinski

Don Redalje

USM-Gulf Coast

Raymond Scurfield

Heather Annulis

Douglas Bristol

Kenneth Zantow

Senator Scurfield reported several items from the Gulf Coast Faculty Council (GCFC), of which he is president. He remarked in detail about the difficulties of recruiting new students to such a poor quality physical facility as the Student Services Center Gulfport teaching site; moreover, competition with the relatively low fees of the regional community colleges is challenging. The GCFC continues to be concerned that far too many decisions about USMGC are being made in Hattiesburg without proper consultation with the Gulf Coast people involved (food services, for example). The GCFC also has concerns that the (understandable but frustrating) interest in Crosscreek is not at the expense of full utilization of the Gulf Park campus over the next several years.

Accordingly President-Elect Oshrin suggested that USMGC be an important item in the Senate's annual August retreat.

Since the constitution dictates that the May meeting is not formally concluded but rather continued until June, Senate President Judd prorogued the meeting, after slightly more than three hours in session.

Respectively submitted by

Amy Young, Secretary

Stanley Hauer, Secretary-Elect

Approved by

Stephen Judd, President

Stephen Oshrin, President-Elect