

9-5-2008

Faculty Senate Minutes - September 5, 2008

USM Faculty Senate

Follow this and additional works at: http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty_senate_minutes

Recommended Citation

USM Faculty Senate, "Faculty Senate Minutes - September 5, 2008" (2008). *Faculty Senate Minutes*. Paper 109.
http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty_senate_minutes/109

This 2008/09 Minutes is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Senate Archive at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Senate Minutes by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

Faculty Senate Meeting of September 5, 2008

Minutes

Attendance. The following Senators were present (proxies in parenthesis): Annulis (Scurfield), Bass, Beckett, Blackwell (Fisher), Buchanan (Beckett), Burgess, Campbell, Daves, Davis, Evans, Fisher, Goggin, Gould, Green, Greene, Hannon, Harbough, Hauer, Judd, Klinedinst, Kyriakoudes, McCormick, McGuire (Rachal), Meyer, Oshrin, Pandey, Pate, Piazza, Rachal, Rakocinski (Hauer), Redalje, Rehner (Rushing), Scurfield, Smithka, Spencer (Brannock), Tingstrom, Young, Zantow. Senator Bristol was unable to attend.

Faculty Senate President Stephen Oshrin called the meeting to order at 2:03 on the afternoon of Friday, September 5, 2008, in room 216 of the Thad Cochran Center of the Hattiesburg campus. The agenda and the minutes for the meetings of May and June were swiftly approved.

Report from President Saunders. As is customary with her, the President addressed the Senate and answered questions. Highlights of her comments include: (1) On October 27-28 Dr. Burge=s office and the national Grants Resource Center will sponsor a workshop for grants in the humanities, notable the NEA and NEH. Contact Vice President Burge=s office for further details. (2) The university=s Emergency Response Team has nearly completed its preparation for disasters and emergencies, notably the Eagle Alert system. This procedure seemed to work fairly well during the recent Hurricane Gustav. (3) From athletics: sale of football tickets is at record high, and twelve new tennis courts will be completed by this spring. (In response to a later question about whether these courts will be available for public use, not just for the tennis team, the President=s answer was that they be open Awhen not in use@ by the tennis squad.) (4) Enrollment is up in almost all categories: 2% overall, 10% in the freshman class (a record), 5% among transfer students, and an astonishing 16% on the Gulf Coast. Only enrollment for returning undergraduates from Hattiesburg was down somewhat, and Vice President Paul=s office is investigating possible causes of that downturn. (5) The University Advancement Team is making great strides in private funding, most recently with a one million dollar grant from the Osher Foundation. (6) The Strategic Plan is regularly updated on its website:

(<http://edudev.usm.edu/strategicplanning/>)

The final measures will be announced at a University Convocation on September 23 in Bennett Auditorium. (7) There was a serious hazing incident on campus last week, with several students injured and one still in the hospital; the charter of the fraternity responsible has been revoked, the house closed, and guilty parties will be charged and tried legally. (8) The Heart Walk is set for September 27 in Pride Field; for details see:

<http://forrestlamarheartwalk.kintera.org/faf/help/helpEventInfo.asp?ievent=262791&lis=1&kntae262791=0C82189722464106BEB6D7BE074D1986>

or call Mrs. Mary Dayne Gregg in the President=s office.

In response to questions, the President remarked that the Eagle Bikes program has begun. This is a system of bicycles available at no charge across campus. For details, see:

http://edudev.usm.edu/coh/news_events_templates/news.php?id=199

One Senator suggested that staff not have to report to work on Friday, January 2, 2009, but might remain on holiday until the following Monday. The President called this a great idea and promised to check into it.

Report from Provost Lyman. The Senate kept the Provost at the lectern for almost an hour. (1) He reiterated the President's emphasis on the importance of a viable enrollment. (2) His office is investigating a list of killer courses that undergraduates find especially difficult; they are trying to determine if this short list is a detriment to retention and what the university might do about it. (3) In a similar regard, the Department of Mathematics wants to return to the use of MAT 099 as mandatory for all students under a 20 ACT subscore; the Provost reports that the language of the IHL which had seemed to prevent this measure might be reinterpreted. (4) So serious is the IHL about institutional enrollment that they recommended one USM program for deletion and seven for suspension. (5) The Provost is trying for the first time to create a budget for part-time faculty, instead of paying these wages on an ad hoc basis. (6) An Ad Astra study of classroom usage reveals not a classroom shortage but a scheduling problem. Henceforth departmental ownership of rooms, even when they are not in use, will cease. A new classroom building will be erected on the site of the present Commons; indeed, this building is at the top of the university's priorities listing. (7) The Provost acknowledged that textbook costs are a serious problem, both for students and faculty. The three central issues seem to be customized texts, course packs not being used adequately, and the saleability of used textbooks. A long discussion arose among the Senate about the bookstore on campus and possible price-gouging by Barnes and Noble. (8) To a question about increasing the funds for electronic journals, the Provost responded that the new Dean of Libraries is establishing policies rather contrary to such a notion, attempting to rebalance the budgeting inequities between serials and books/monographs. Somewhat later, the discussion of this issue continued with a suggestion that the IHL system might pool funding together for the purchase of expensive electronic journals. (9) Course fees need a review process to determine their appropriateness. Such fees are to be used for special purposes and are not to be used for departmental funding. (10) Three searches for deans are underway: Education and Psychology, Health, and the Gulf Coast. The E&P committee has requested and received permission to use a consulting firm. The result of the Coastal search should be announced this month. (11) The planning phase of the Cross Creek campus has begun. Of the 2,000 acres on the site, the university has received 200 of them. The proposed university site is due north of Gulf Park and on higher ground but unfortunately not visible from the interstate highway. The cost for the initial four buildings considered the minimum for start-up is \$200 million. In the meantime, 55% of instruction will return to Gulf Park this year, with the goal of having most programs at Cross Creek, rather than being bisected onto two campuses. Student population on the Coast is rising at a healthy rate: the present figure of 2,800 students should rise to 5,000 within a few years. To a question about the viability of other Coastal campuses, the Provost responded that the Stennis Center will certainly remain open, as will the teaching site in Jackson County; the present, unsatisfactory Student Services Center will close.

Faculty Senate President's Report. President Oshrin presented a number of points for the consideration of the Senate: (1) He thanked Sid Gonsoulin of Student Services for the use of the new facility in the Cochran Center. (2) A Web Task Force has been appointed by the President to address some of the more crucial issues affecting the university's web presence. (3) Faculty have often requested a twelve-month distribution of their nine-month pay. Russ Willis will run a survey in October to determine if there is

sufficient interest in such a proposal to merit the reprogramming necessary. (4) President Oshrin proposed that the Senate return to the Faculty Senate Forum customary in past years, wherein the Senate invites a university official to address the Senate and speak to some common concerns. Larry Lee, the institution's Chief Sustainability Officer, and Kathy Hayman of the Barnes and Noble bookstore were names prominently mentioned by Senators as of especial interest. (5) At the request of Associate Provost William Powell, the Senate might wish to implement the national Faculty Survey of Student Engagement. The cost is modest (\$1,700) and the possible results of interest. The Senate agreed to recommend its implementation. (6) The Staff Council is interested in four-day workweek, and President Oshrin canvassed the Senate for its views; a considerable discussion resulted with far from unanimous endorsement of the idea.

The Secretary to the Senate sought the Senate's views on audiocasting the meetings through the website; a measure to this effect was proposed, seconded, and passed unanimously.

There were no committee reports.

Senator David Beckett, the Senate's representative on the Faculty Handbook Committee, spoke in some detail about the progress on that document. All sixteen of last year's amendments have been approved by the administration. Then he made suggestions for possible changes to be considered this year: (1) the separation of the dual duties of the Departmental Personnel Committees into two different bodies, (2) the enlargement of the University Advisory Council, and (3) the establishment of clearer procedures for the awarding of salary raises.

Senator Scurfield, the Senate's representative of the Gulf Coast Faculty Council, reported the regrettable death of a USMGC security officer. Senator Scurfield observed several related issues have come to light, including the question of whether the background checks given to applicants are sufficient; there are also concerns that the pay for the security staff who are USM employees is only about \$7.25 an hour. Senator Scurfield asked the Senate to prepare a letter of condolence and appreciation to the USMGC security chief. He agreed to write a first draft and transmit it to the Secretary. Senator Scurfield also responded to the Provost's earlier remarks on the appointment of a new academic dean for the Gulf Coast. He reported that faculty are very happy that finally there has been movement to re-establish a new chief academic officer position on the Coast, although concerns remain as to (1) whether Academic Dean of Gulf Coast Campuses will have sufficient authority to be fully effective (the actual position description had not been circulated) and (2) if and when there will also be a return to the former administrative policy of a fully-entitled vice-president for operations on the Coast.

There was no Old Business.

In New Business, President Oshrin and the membership addressed several issues. (1) The Senate moved, seconded, and unanimously approved the creation of a new Research and Grants Committee, to be chaired by Senator McCormick. (2) The charge to revise the Senate Constitution was entrusted to the appropriate committee. The special issue at hand is the recent Band unconstitutional change in meeting dates. Now we meet in December (contrary to the Constitution) and plan one meeting in January-February (also unconstitutional). New wording should reflect this change. (3) Senators and their constituencies are encouraged to find ways to enhance university efficiency and effectiveness. Assoc. Provost Powell reminded the Senate that such provisions are a vital part of the Strategic Plan. Some Senators mooted, for example, the possibilities of paperless ballots for Senatorial races. (4) One Senator regretted the Annual trek to the Parking Management Office@ and wondered if some more efficient means of acquiring hangtags might be devised. (5) President Oshrin asked for the Senate=s formal endorsement to a proposal for a new University Club. The Committee on Faculty Welfare agreed to undertake discussion on the measure and report back to the Senate.

President Oshrin adjourned the Senate at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Stanley Hauer

Secretary to the Senate

Approved by

Oshrin

President

Stephen E.