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Faculty Senate Minutes - April 9, 2010

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate
Minutes for the meeting of April 9, 2010
Long Beach Campus

Members Present and Represented (by proxy): H. Annulis, J. Bass (Young), D. Beckett, J. Brannock, D. Bristol, B. Burgess, J. Burnett, D. Daves, A. Davis, D. Davis, J. Evans, D. Fletcher (Davis), B. George, C. Goggin (Burgess), T. Gould, A. Haley, S. Hauer (Oshrin), N. Howell, S. Howell, M. Klinedinst (Young), T. Lipscomb, D. Lunsford, M. Lux, C. McCormick (Evans), J. McGuire (Lux), J. Meyer (Brannock), C. Meyers, S. Oshrin, R. Pandey (Evans), C. Rakocinski, D. Redalje, T. Rehner (Rushing), S. Reischman (Davis), K. Rushing, B. Spencer, D. Tingstrom (Lipscomb), T. Welsh, J. Wolfe, A. Young
Members Absent: S. Rouse, R. Scurfield, J.H. Shin

1. Call to order

Pres. Evans called the meeting to order at 2:06.

2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved by voice vote.

3. Approval of minutes

Minutes for the meeting of March 5, 2010 were approved by voice vote.

4. Remarks from administration

4.1 Vice President Pat Joachim

Dr. Pat Joachim provided an update on building projects on the Gulf Coast. They are moving forward with the science building on the northwest part of the campus. They had approximately \$3m to start renovations on the building. Some of this money is also going towards renovations on the College of Health building which didn't receive any FEMA money. Elizabeth Hall will be converted into office and conference space, as well as housing the film program.

Three buildings have been designated as historic structures. It will cost about \$2.5m to renovate the administration building according to the standards for historic structures. The university has received permission from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to tear down the administration building. The area will be used as green space. The \$2.5m, which came from FEMA, will be used for renovations to Hardy Hall. This is not enough money to complete renovations on the structure, and the university will continue looking for additional funding. Lloyd Hall will be renovated for classroom space. It will take three years to get everyone back on campus.

The Gulf Coast's 40 year anniversary will be in 2012. The motto for the anniversary will be "Forty years old with 4000 students."

Cross Creek is still a go. Once the master plan is finished, they will start fundraising activities. There are 2000 acres for the campus, as well as residential and commercial buildings. The Marine education center was rebuilt at GCRL. There is no longer an aquarium at this location.

4.2 Dean Tom Lansford

Gaylynn Parker resigned as the Associate Dean of the College of Education and Psychology on the Gulf Coast. The college is now in the midst of a search and hopefully the position will be filled in a short time.

Retention on the Gulf Coast is likely to improve by 10%. The GC is working closely with the Hattiesburg campus on retention initiatives, and the GC hopes to implement some of the retention strategies used on the Hattiesburg campus. They are developing a student centered learning community on the coast which highlights student activities and events.

Faculty on the coast are curious about the UPC and budget cuts. They are interested in knowing what these cuts will look like and how they will impact the coast. Many faculty feel that they are out of the loop with their departments and the UPC process. There is also a fear that coast faculty will be cut to save Hattiesburg faculty.

Summer Teaching. It appears that a large number of Hattiesburg faculty are teaching summer classes on the coast. Some faculty on the coast feel that they are being crowded out of summer teaching slots where they are given only one class when many asked for two. Gulf Coast Faculty would like departmental policies for allocating summer courses.

4.3 Provost Bob Lyman

Denis Weisenberg has been appointed the new Vice President of Research starting July 1. Bob Pierce has already started his duties as the new Vice President of Advancement. Joe Whitehead has started his duties as the Dean of Science and Technology.

Approximately \$13m of bond money has been allocated to start the business building. Another \$13m or more will be needed from the state with an additional \$5m from private donors. There is planning money for the new nursing building.

The itech computer center has been moved into the Information Services area of Cook Library. This has allowed for the Centennial Museum to move into the old itech space, in addition to increasing access to computers with the extended library hours.

Approximately twelve degree programs have been eliminated. Many of these were already defunct, in essence. These programs will be phased out as students graduate.

There is no hiring freeze, but there is very close scrutiny as to what positions are filled. Some positions may be classified as visiting over the next two years while the economy is still uncertain.

Enrollment is expected to increase 2-4% next year. The 7% tuition increase will be implemented next year which will help the budget.

Sen. Lunsford asked if the management information program is going to be eliminated. Dr. Lyman responded that this is not the case at this point. It was on the APG list but omitted from the final version.

Sen. Beckett asked if the salaries of people who resign will be put towards the \$10m that needs to be cut. Dr. Lyman said that if the position is vacant then it should be able to go towards budget reductions. Some may want to hire that position depending on its need while others may want to leave it vacant or give it up to the cuts.

Sen. Redalje asked if the university would be open to matching salaries for those currently at USM who have job offers from other institutions. Dr. Lyman said that it is possible, but that each situation has to be scrutinized to determine if it is a good case.

Sen. Oshrin asked what the dollar shortfall will be for 2012. Dr. Lyman said that it was originally \$30m for FY2011 and FY2012, but he believes that it may go down to \$12m for 2012. It's not definite what the number will be.

Sen. Burnett asked about an increase in a tech fees per hour for online learning that will go to \$45/credit hour. She wondered why that is not included in the upcoming 7% tuition increase. Dr. Lyman stated that initially the university wanted a tech fee that would be applied to all students that would be smaller than the per credit fee that is now being implemented. This fee is not only for those taking online classes. It is also for classes that tangentially use Blackboard or other programs. The university cannot roll the tech fee into the tuition increase because that would cut the gain that the university sees from the tuition hike. The charge will be applied to all commuter students and as an addition to the room/board students that will allow the fee to be dropped from those classes that is less than 50% online. The fee for 50% or more online is still being discussed.

Sen. Burnett asked if the fee will help defray wireless costs on campus. Dr. Lyman stated that the wireless fee that commuters have to pay will be removed.

Sen. Burnett asked if more money will be going to LEC to support online learning. Dr. Lyman said yes but that they are not promoting across-the-board online classes. The university does not want to compete with ourselves by having students take online courses instead of coming to class.

Sen. Oshrin asked how to dissuade people from using non-Blackboard programs. Dr. Lyman responded that that is hard to say. Using these other programs can be problematic because there is no one to help students troubleshoot and some actually are a security threat. He stated that it would be better to imbed the information into Blackboard than to use programs not supported by the university.

Sen. D. Davis commented that issues like using programs other than Blackboard need to be discussed prior to an announcement coming out that it is not an accepted format. Dr. Lyman mentioned that this should go to the textbook advisory committee which is headed by John Meyer.

Sen. Daves asked if there is a committee that oversees public relations for the campus including departmental public relations. Dr. Lyman said that this is covered in the University Communications Committee headed by Jana Bryant. Currently, they are working on a web redesign, inventorying web pages, fixing broken links, and developing a search optimization strategy (i.e. increasing Internet ranking).

Sen. A. Davis asked if there are any incentives for designing online or hybrid classes. Dr. Lyman said that the classes should be program-based not course based. LEC will support faculty when creating online classes. Online classes aren't appropriate for all courses.

Sen. Lux stated that Academic Council just passed a 100-level class to go online. Dr. Lyman said that he thought that we should not have online versions of 100-level classes because community colleges offer these classes.

Sen. Lipscomb asked if USM needs a marketing plan. Dr. Lyman stated that the University Communications Committee is working on this, especially in relation to the webpage.

The search for the Vice President of the Gulf Coast campus is underway. The three finalists will be announced on April 12.

5.0 Officers' reports

5.1 President (Evans)

The next meeting (May 7) will include the selection of Faculty Senate officers.

Report writing for the UPC has started. Instructions have been distributed to the academic departments. The hope is that faculty will be involved in the report process. Faculty will sign off stating that they have read the report being submitted by their department. Reports are due on May 10.

The UPC will evaluate reports and rate the programs. The weighting has not been determined at this point. In addition, deans and college faculty will also have a say in the rating of the programs in their areas. Reports for the administrative services subcommittee include 20 questions and are due on April 19. The questions for Academic Administration have been distributed, but a due date is unknown.

Sen. Redalje asked why the templates for the reports read as being preliminary. Sen. Evans stated that preliminary means that there is going to be additional information included with the report. The template will not change.

May 15 is the commencement in the stadium. All faculty are encouraged to attend.

The Faculty Senate executive council met with Dr. Saunders. Dr. Saunders stated that any retirement incentive programs must be brought before the IHL. It was also stated in the meeting that a furlough of one day a month comes to \$4.6m in savings.

5.2 President-Elect (A. Davis)

Textbook committee policy will have to go to IHL by June 1. Davis was appointed to a best practices committee with Morgan Rempel (Philosophy) and Katherine Nugent (Nursing). Dr. Lyman stated that one of the expectations of the textbook policy is that all sections of a class use the same textbook. Sen. Daves asked where the savings are with requiring a 3-year use on books. Dr. Lyman stated that the main reduction would come out of increasing the availability of used books. There are provisions for exceptions to almost every guideline. The committee will determine what exceptions should be given to classes. Sen. George asked if it is possible for faculty to not require any textbooks for classes. Sen. Davis stated that there is some emphasis on consistency in the classes.

Sen. Haley asked if supplemental works apply. Dr. Lyman stated that there are some possible exemptions for supplementary materials.

Sen. Brannock referred to the question asked by Sen. George about professors not requiring textbooks for class. She asked if it is required that the professor use textbooks. Sen. Davis stated that it depends on the course and how restrictive it is.

5.3 Secretary – No report

5.4 Secretary-Elect – No report

6.0 Committee reports

6.1 Academic & Governance (Redalje) – No report

6.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations (Oshrin)

J.T. Johnson has finished compiling the evaluations and those results have gone to the chairs and deans. Sen. Evans will forward the results for the President to the IHL. There was concern among some library faculty about departments receiving the evaluations late. Sen. Oshrin stated that the deans were responsible for distributing the evaluations and that evaluations received to J.T. Johnson by late March were tallied.

6.3 Awards (Brannock)

Sen. Brannock announced that applications for the Faculty Senate/University President's Awards are now being accepted.

6.4 Constitution/Bylaws (Rehner) – No report

6.5 Elections (Burgess)

Sen. Burgess stated that the online voting system worked well. The overall response rate of 54% was about 10% higher than last year. Education/Psychology had over 90% response rate. Round two candidates are now being contacted to determine if they are willing to serve as Faculty Senate representatives. There were some minor errors on the ballot, but these will be corrected for the second ballots. Ballots should go out the week of April 12th. Faculty Senate bylaws need to be altered to reflect the new online voting system.

6.6 Faculty Welfare (A. Davis)

The Faculty Welfare committee handed out a workforce management policy that addresses some possible activities that may help displaced employees, as well as retained employees, during this difficult economic time. After discussion, it was determined that the committee should create two separate documents – one for people whose jobs will be eliminated and the other addressing the general long term welfare of remaining faculty.

6.7 Research/Grants (McCormick)

The committee is still looking into tuition waivers.

6.8 Technology (Bass) – no report

6.9 University Direction (A. Davis)– no report

6.10 Other committee and liaison reports

6.10.1 Faculty Handbook Committee (Beckett)

Sen. Beckett continues to work on separating the different definitions of Department Personnel Committees that evolved from past versions of the handbook. The committee has also been working on the role of chairs in the promotion and tenure process. At present, some chairs vote as part of the tenure or promotion committee and then write an independent opinion, other chairs do not vote as a member of the committee since they provide an independent opinion (letter). There was a discussion about whether chairs may attend tenure meetings to act as information sources. Some believe that having the chair present may halt the free flow of information and that it may be more appropriate for the chair of the DPC to take any questions that come up to the chair after the meeting. There was discussion about rewording the addition (regarding the role of chairs) that the chair **may** attend the discussions (regarding tenure and promotion decisions within the department) rather than dictating that they must attend. The vote regarding these proposed changes will occur at the next Handbook Committee meeting.

6.10.2 Gulf Coast Faculty Council (Annulis)

The Gulf Coast Faculty Council is very appreciative of the effort of the Faculty Senate to meet down at the coast, and they hope this continues in the future.

6.10.3 Academic/Graduate Council (Daves)

Sen. Beckett addressed the approval of online courses for 100-level classes in Academic Council stating that the classes were approved because online classes are very common in universities. There was a discussion that online programs can be of high quality and that they offer a lot of flexibility for the students. Sen. Lux stated that online classes are a way to get around inadequate classroom space.

6.10.4 AAUP (Klinedinst)

The next meeting will be on April 16 in LAB 202 at 4:00.

7.0 Old business

7.1 Proposed Senate resolution

The following resolution was proposed...

The Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Mississippi urges the administration to make the commitment that it will terminate no tenured faculty. Failing to do so can only undermine the academic integrity and stability of the university, leading tenure track faculty to see positions at other institutions which have a stronger commitment to the institution of tenure.

There was debate about how this is a commitment that the administration cannot make at this point with the economic situation. It was mentioned that the proposal should be reworded to include something about the university reaffirming its commitment to tenure. It was also noted that the proposal only covers tenured

faculty and not untenured faculty and instructors which could damage morale among untenured faculty and instructors. It was stated that this was not the intention of the resolution. The use of tenured faculty in the resolution is to place emphasis on the importance of working hard and getting the point of being tenured (i.e. the tenure process). Sen. Haley stated that it appears that the idea of tenure is being used to mean job security when in his mind it guarantees academic freedom. Sen. Young stated that she believes the writers of the resolution wanted to show that there can be a fine line between eliminating a program for cost savings and eliminating a program for political reasons.

Sen. Oshrin called a vote on the resolution. There was a vote to call the question. It was unanimous. Vote by show of hands on accepting the resolution as is. Three in favor of resolution as written, one abstention and 38 against.

Dr. Lyman stated that an early retirement plan can happen without upfront money. The departments can afford to provide retiring faculty with one year of salary if they also pledge to not fill that position within the year.

8.0 New Business

9.0 Adjournment

Faculty Senate was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Brannock
Secretary-Elect for Faculty Senate

Approved by
Jeff Evans
President of Faculty Senate