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Faculty Senate Minutes - September 11, 2009

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate
Minutes for the Meeting of September 11, 2009
216 Thad Cochran Center

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

Members Absent: D. Fletcher, C. McCormick, J. McGuire, R. Pandey, J. Shin, J. Wolfe

1.0 Call to order

Pres. Evans called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

2.0 Approval of the agenda

Sen. Klinedinst asked about a request to the IHL board to not consider faculty terminations at their meeting this month before proper hearings could be held. This request was put under New Business. The agenda was approved.

3.0 Approval of the minutes

Minutes from the special called meetings in July will be discussed next month, as senators just received them. Minutes from the June meeting of Faculty Senate were approved.

4.0 Remarks from the administration

4.1 **President Saunders**

Dr. Saunders said she would answer the questions provided by Pres. Evans in advance. The first question involved the budget:

1. How do we stand with the midyear budget cut? Who will decide how we will handle the cut? We know we have a hiring freeze in effect that is supposed to help, but there are doubts about how this will really affect this year's funds.

The Governor's cut was announced last week, as anticipated. A hiring freeze is in place that will have little effect on the academic side. An additional 3.5% reduction (from travel, purchasing, etc.) will meet the deficit. Deans and directors will have discretion as to the nature of these cuts.

2. Questions still remain about where we are in producing a list of cuts for fiscal year 2011 (July 2010)--The list has not been published yet for the academic side.

We are not prepared to produce a final document at this time. There is no list, yet. The purpose of starting early was to enable us to be as thoughtful as possible in identifying reductions. Any list published today would be wrong by the end of the year.

3. Is USM going to propose at the next IHL Board meeting elimination of programs? If so, isn't that premature since we don't yet know how much funds we will have for FY 2011? If we eliminate programs at the Board level now, it would be near impossible to revive them if sufficient funds are

received to keep viable programs going. Why not wait until the spring to actually eliminate programs if we must?

The Provost will answer this question.

4. Senators are aware of your stated commitment in the past to real searches and national searches to fill positions within the administration. Senators have noted that many administration positions are being filled or created and then filled with no evidence of searches. There appears to be an expansion of the administration without searches while the rest of the university is undergoing contraction. Have you changed your commitment to do real searches or is there some other explanation?

Dr. Saunders noted she was not sure what this question is about; she has hired two VPs since arrival, both as a result of national searches. The vacant dean positions were also filled through national searches. Bud Ginn's position was filled also after a national search.

Sen. Beckett asked about a national search for Vice President for Research as Cecil Burge plans to retire in January. Pres. Saunders said Dr. Burge has agreed to stay on to "pass the baton," after a national search, as he is crucial with connections to agencies and congressional staff in Washington. Pres. Evans mentioned the perception that Assistant Provosts were multiplying with no national searches being done. Pres. Saunders noted her philosophy that if a line position with authority, there should be a national search, but she was not personally troubled by staff positions being inside appointments who may have greater insights on the issues they are responsible for addressing.

5. ITECH charges for wireless access prompted another set of questions:
 - a. Will graduate students using their laptops for teaching purposes be exempt from this charge?
 - b. Will accreditation and other official visitors to campus who need access to wireless services to perform their duties be exempt?
 - c. If they are exempt in a and/or b, how will they gain access without paying?
 - d. Has the wireless charge been approved by the Itech Advisory Board?

Deferred to the Provost.

6. The flu – H1N1 in particular, has worked its way into our class room. The last flu update on USM webpage is August 24th.
 - a. Has there been further discussions or decisions about dealing with a large outbreak on campus?
 - b. Has the Health Services been proactive in establishing a campus wide and easily accessible immunization program? For students, for staff and faculty, for families of both?

Seasonal flu vaccine should arrive at the USM Health Services on September 21st and will be available to students, faculty and staff for \$20. (This is \$5 below Health Department charge). Health Services Director Dr. Ginny Crawford is in the process of applying through the Centers for Disease Control for the new H1N1 vaccine and expects arrival mid-October. We will be required to follow CDC guidelines on the distribution of the H1N1 vaccine, and do not yet know the quantity we will receive or whether certain populations will be prioritized (it is highly likely that traditional college age persons may receive highest priority). We will keep the campus community apprised on the availability of the vaccines through the web sites and e-messages. The Health Services plans to make arrangements to offer seasonal flu vaccines at USM Gulf Coast, and if possible H1N1. Sen Oshrin asked if they would be giving shots in various campus locations, as before. Pres. Saunders responded that she assumed so; it would be a good idea.

7. Has it been considered to have campus police patrol each building in the late evening hours to turn off unnecessary lighting? This was done in years past – sort of a light patrol.

Pres. Saunders said she had not heard of any such plan in any meeting. The university is in the process of engaging an energy management firm (at the request of the University Climate Commitment Committee) and would expect such initiatives to emerge from an overall campus-wide energy reduction plan. However, no such plan is in place yet.

8. Faculty Senate officers just heard today that there would not be funds for summer research awards and Summer Improvement of Instruction Grants for 2010. This is distressing to say the least. These never did require very much funding to keep going, as faculty receive the equivalent of summer teaching salary which is minimal. The summer research programs have proved very beneficial to faculty, especially new faculty, to initiate their research activities required for promotion and tenure. The grants for the improvement of instruction have often centered on alternative learning methods, e.g. online course development that have improved our enrollment and brings further funding to the university. Some had thought that surely this year we would be asked for a retention-themed Summer Improvement of Instruction Grants. We would like you to reconsider these decisions. Perhaps they can be cut to fund fewer summer grants but we urge you to keep these programs in place.

This question was deferred to the Provost.

9. With cuts in faculty (vacant or visiting lines) from many programs in the university, many faculty will be asked to teach more courses. How will this fit with the requirements of tenure and promotion? Will faculty who have increased teaching loads still be expected to have the same level of research and service? Who will make the decision about adjusting research expectations for those given more teaching? Many faculty are already spending 60-70 hours a week doing research, teaching, and service. Something has to give if they are assigned more teaching.

Pres. Saunders said she was unaware of any such requests. Standards for tenure and promotion remain at the department and college level. Sen. Burnett noted that faculty with small classes were asked to expect more preparation; that word seemed to come from the dean level. Pres. Saunders said that discussion should happen with faculty members “on the front end” of the tenure process; in the past at another university she once had to deny tenure due to a faculty member given a large teaching load, doing what was asked, but not meeting the tenure standards. That should be avoided by giving faculty enough notice of tenure standards so that they can be met.

10. You asked the Senate and faculty for its help in deciding on the direction the University has taken. We have formed a University Direction(s) committee of the Senate with a purpose of assisting in development of a university direction. How might USM use the talents and thoughts of that committee in furthering USM?

Dr. Saunders said she was not sure what was meant by “Directions.” The Strategic Planning Committee has been formed and includes substantial faculty representation including a faculty senate representative. Pres. Evans noted this was a new faculty senate committee. Dr. Saunders said she would give that more thought and get back to us. The Strategic Planning Committee is now ready to send suggestions for goals and metrics to the college level.

Dr. Saunders noted that apparently some faculty took exception to parts of her speech to the Extended Cabinet that was posted on the web. She did not intend the reference to it being more fun “to complain about our troubles—go ahead” to apply to faculty. She has been here two years and never has intended to say anything to hurt faculty feeling. Her remarks were not made to the faculty nor were they in any shape or form intended to imply what some may have inferred. They were made to a group composed of the leadership of the campus. She was addressing the leaders of the university in that room (deans, directors, vice presidents and associate vice presidents) and she wanted to make her position clear. Most of that meeting was about the budget, and it was more formal than usual because all needed to understand the

budget situation. Pres. Evans was the only faculty member there. Pres. Saunders was asked to publish the address so that all could know the budget situation. She hopes we, at least, accomplished that. She said “you know me better than that.” She did not mean to make anyone mad or hurt feelings.

Dr. Saunders responded to Sen. Redalje’s question about the search for a V. P. of Research that she has asked Prov. Lyman to chair the committee, and does not plan to use a search firm to avoid the expense. We should attract a good pool, she said, but the process has not begun yet. Sen. Rehner asked if this would be done by January, and Pres. Saunders said she did not want to appoint an interim to the position, and since Dr. Burge has agreed to remain, the search will definitely take longer than till January.

Sen. Hauer noted that last year the university underwent a series of cuts. Were these for the cuts recently announced by the governor? Yes, Dr. Saunders noted, but the upcoming 3 ½% cut is beyond those earlier cuts planned for.

Sen. Rushing noted his department is working on an updated tenure and promotion document. It has changed and had further recommended changes—will new faculty members coming in be accountable for newer changes to these? Dr. Saunders said the expectations should be made clear for faculty members in a reasonable amount of time for that expectation to be meant. She did want some standard—she came in and found a “hodge-podge” of standards or lack of them. The standards need to be clear, and this is likely the tail end of that initiative.

Sen. Oshrin asked about plans for a new budget model. Pres. Saunders said the Strategic Budget Planning Committee has brought to the executive cabinet a recommendation for a modified responsibility-centered model. Discussions continue on how best to adopt such a model. Two colleges – one large, one small – will likely pilot-test the model. The next step is to develop a permanent budget committee for the campus. Faculty advice will be needed.

Sen. Bristol noted that professors on the coast have been trouble getting students books. Books are still not in after weeks. Sen. Hauer noted that a colleague had asked the bookstore about buying some books and was told that it would be 4 weeks. They were self-ordered and could arrive in two days. Sen. Young noted that the bookstore seemed to routinely not order enough books and then were slow to order extra for students. Sen. Burnett noted that wrong books were being sent to distance-learning students and unless orders are “firm” then 50 books fewer than requested are regularly ordered. Clearly there is a problem this fall with book orders at the bookstore, and Dr. Saunders said she would look into the issue.

Sen. Beckett noted that Summer Faculty Research Grants and Summer Grants for the Improvement of Instruction were not to be awarded this year, and these never cost a whole lot. They motivated faculty and sparked funded research and new teaching programs. It seems “penny wise and pound foolish” to do these programs in. Pres. Evans, also a member of the Academic Planning Group, had said he was unaware of this decision, so there apparently was no conversation with faculty about this.

Sen. Haley asked if the new budget model would work on the department level. Dr. Saunders said the budget committee would need to address how far down the model would go, but it looks like the college level will be the logical focus. It could be terribly cumbersome for departments to follow, as some high-cost programs may be central to a unit’s mission. Sen. Young said Arts and Letters and Business would be the two colleges to pilot test [Prov. Lyman later confirmed this]. How would dual budgets be handled during the transition time? Pres. Saunders said we would have to use the model we do have now until then. The budget committee would have to make some specific decisions until the new model is in place, then it could focus on more general directions. Pres. Saunders appreciated the work of the Academic Planning Group, but it is time for a more permanent group—a University Budget Committee.

9.2 Provost Lyman

Provost Lyman began with the questions deferred to him by Pres. Saunders.

The IHL Board will be presented this month with requests for permission to delete the following degree programs after all current students have graduated: the B. A. in Geography, the B. S. in Business Administration and Economics, and the B. S. in Technical and Occupational Education. Admission to these programs has been suspended. Presenting these requests allows us to fulfill the requirements of tenure guidelines and allows possibly terminated faculty to move to appeals. These are not irrevocable actions—if the budget situation improves they could be reinstated.

As far as new hires, since he came on board he has hired one new person, Brett Kemker, to focus on issues brought forward by the Noel Levitz consulting firm on student retention. He was already in an administrative role and we were not going to do an external search anyway. He was moved over from the College of Health to get retention efforts started and coordinated since rapid action was called for on the retention issue. He removed the “interim” from Bill Powell’s title—he was hired by an interim provost so it seemed appropriate then, but not now two years into the job.

Two of the deans are currently interim, but he is committed to national searches. Two years have been spent looking for an Education and Psychology Dean—this will be difficult as salaries are insufficient, the pool of candidates was small, and the college has a diverse set of opinions about what the dean should be. Ann Blackwell has agreed to serve for two years, and started July 1. Joe Whitehead just started as Science and Technology interim dean, and it may not be a good time to search right now given the funding situation. We could do an internal search, or defer the search for a year. He will seek the advice of faculty but it will be a difficult decision either way. The priority is to get the best people into positions.

A national search is planned for Dr. Cecil Burge’s position (Vice President for Research and Economic Development) as it is absolutely crucial to the university. He has a great variety of contacts and responsibilities in Washington, D. C., in the halls of congress, granting agencies, and with our congressional delegation. The person should have been a funded researcher yet be able to relate to a wide variety of people and venues.

As for iTech issues, remember that everyone is scurrying around trying to make the best of the current financial climate. Teaching Assistants will be able to use wireless connection on campus without fees, on a semester by semester basis. The hope is by Fiscal Year 2011 to have no fees for faculty, staff, or students for wireless. Official visitors will also be exempt from fees. Departments should place a work order to iTech for a wireless account, with explanation for the purpose of the account. The iTech advisory council is to make recommendations to the provost. Currently, wireless is part of an auxiliary expected to be self-supporting, and thus the continuing fees without discussion so far.

Prov. Lyman looked at funds for Summer Faculty Research Grants and Summer Grants for the Improvement of Instruction from last summer. Dr. Burge administers the research grants but probably has similar issues. Prov. Lyman noted 3 summer grants totaling \$35,000 for improvement of instruction, all related to developing web-based courses. That is not much money, but remember everyone is scrambling for everything we’ve got. After review and appeals from the APG list, we only have \$6.9 million of the desired 7.5 million savings. With the 3.5 % cut announced for this year, lots of dollars we had to do things with in the past are simply not there. A new approach is also desired for online learning support—developing programs may attract new students, rather than developing courses individually which simply repositions current students in an online course. Development goals suggest developing new online programs like Construction Management has done. So what stipends there are should be focused on specific programs. Fewer dollars are involved, but two more are planned for this Spring and then two more next Fall.

Sen. Beckett noted that part of his involvement in straightening out and improving the awards and their guidelines had included removing the dedication to online courses that had emerged as part of the guidelines the past few years. These should be opened to a wider group, and they tried to get away from restricting the awards to new online courses only. Prov. Lyman said that was a good idea, and when the budget is better we should do it. Sen. Beckett pointed out that many of his colleagues had said “I had one of those,” and they may spark more teaching ideas and funded research programs than initially thought. Sen. Haley noted that intellectual capital was developed through those award programs that encouraged individual initiative and developed known research in a variety of fields. Cut programs tend to disappear, but reduced programs continue. . . . Why not reduce the awards rather than ending them? They can also be powerful recruiting tools, he noted, compensating some for lower salaries with a possible summer research or teaching grant. Prov. Lyman noted that budget calculations must consider where are priorities are—people here on this campus are our priority. Their presence and well-being come first, and then after that come awards like these. Prov. Lyman said he hopes money would fall from the sky so he could say “yes, go research this.” It was a nice thought, he said, maybe we could keep \$5,000 in.

Prov. Lyman said he was not sure where the questions on teaching load came from. We need to work more efficiently in terms of class sizes and streamlining curriculum. Sen. Burnett noted that her chair had said she would be expected to teach another class if only a few students signed up for one that would be offered. The provost suggested that such classes could be taught every other year, or sections could be combined. We need to max out room utilization and demand while conforming to the desired pedagogical qualities of the class. There is more problem with classes of five to seven students than trying to move from 50 to 70 students, for instance. Yet, some classes need to be that size pedagogically.

Sen. Bristol noted that licensure programs compete with alternative ways to be licensed to teach in schools. We were founded as a university to teach teachers. Prov. Lyman said we do not need to teach every kind of teacher . . . if there is a course of study students are not interested in, we need to carefully look at it and perhaps stop doing it. This might be done by combining degrees or something similar. Prov. Lyman said he has made no statement asking for greater teaching loads. Pres. Evans noted that deans are saying, with all the vacant positions, more teaching will be needed. Prov. Lyman suggested that students may need to make sacrifices through this too, in terms of not getting the classes they want right away, and having to plan ahead and make sure they get the classes they need. Sen. Rushing asked about the processes in place to guide student enrollment. Prov. Lyman mentioned the Enrollment Management Committee, and at the college level deans having to say “we can’t do this anymore.” It will take several years to move to a more efficient model of curriculum offerings. Sen. Rehner asked about hybrid courses, and Prov. Lyman noted they are a problem as there is no good mechanism for tracking them. Online courses are so designated, but the definition of hybrid courses (those partly online) is “squishy.” We do not want to force online courses on anyone . . . some new programs could pull new students in, like Sports and Coaching Administration is trying to do online. Sen. Young mentioned a planned online minor in Applied Anthropology, and suggested help with marketing such programs.

Sen. Hauer asked about the consequences if IHL approved the three program eliminations requested. Sen. Bass noted the Geography B. A. is an “empty shell” without students—“no students want to take a foreign language.” “That is a shame on the geography department!” noted Sen. Burnett. Prov. Lyman described the “emphatic response” to the proposal to eliminate Economics at USM, and through talks and selfless acts by members of that department an arrangement was made for no terminal contracts for that department. A proposal being discussed is for four junior economics faculty to move to the Department of Political Science in the College of Arts and Letters, and in that position grow the B. A. in Economics. The I.H.L. proposal would eliminate the B. S. B. A. degree in the College of Business. International Business will continue as a major in that college. Sen. Klinedinst noted that all ECO courses would also move to the College of Arts and Letters.

Prov. Lyman noted that deleting the Technical and Occupational Education degree would terminate two tenured and one tenure-track faculty members. Legally, Dir. of Human Resources Russ Willis had recommended going to the IHL board with the elimination of programs before cuts could be carried out.

Sen. Oshrin asked about other cuts to replace those planned from the Economics department, and Prov. Lyman said that cuts have not been resolved; a series of face-to-face appeals were heard ending Monday August 31, and in one case it was decided to proceed with letters of terminal contract (TOE) and in one case not to proceed (ECO). The president asked for and received the next set of items on the list from APG for a further \$800,000 in cuts to make up the difference. They involved one filled visiting instructor line, 10 staff lines, and 5 faculty relocated, but no tenure or tenure-track eliminations. Sen. Oshrin noted that staff members remain in a precarious position as no planned cuts have been suggested yet and they don't know if they will be retained. Prov. Lyman said the president has been given over \$4 million in cuts from the Vice Presidents on the non-academic side.

Sen. Redalje asked about the plans for the graduate studies unit given questions about its effectiveness. Prov. Lyman noted that the director was continuing in the position and when the unit was changed to the Graduate School the director naturally became the dean. At some point we may do a performance-based review of the School and of that individual, but before any change a performance assessment should be done. It would be inappropriate to bump that person out just because of a title change.

Prov. Lyman noted that he thought cutting MIDAS for savings would be appropriate, but "I'm whispering in one ear, others are whispering in the other ear," so that MIDAS will probably be kept and budget cuts will have to be found somewhere else. Sen. Redalje said even though he had benefitted he would "give it back," as he found it to be double-dipping in research funding and "borderline immoral." Sen. Beckett said that given previous discussions, \$700,000 is a lot of money. Prov. Lyman noted that the list of those receiving MIDAS funds is public record, and several wondered who was on that list.

Sen. Burnett asked about enrollment numbers, and Prov. Lyman noted USM was up 3.4 %, 560 students or so from last year. Yet, everybody else is up that or more than that. We're doing OK, but the real problem is retention—we lose students more than our peer institutions.

5.0 Faculty Senate Forum: University Decision Processes and Committees Provost Lyman

Prov. Lyman pointed out that the Executive Cabinet does not generally "get down into the weeds" or details of many of the issues discussed earlier. More decisions are made at the college level than even at the Provost Council.

There are four major ongoing strategic initiatives at the university, all involving faculty in a major way. All have some sort of web presence as well.

1. Strategic Planning Committee formed almost three years ago to develop the strategic plan for the university, but also to make it a real part of university life rather than simply being put on a shelf. Chaired by Pres. Saunders and V. Prov. Powell, it conducted dialogues with groups from the campus community to develop key goals for the university:
 - a. Develop a climate of academic success
 - b. Community engagement and involvement
 - c. Image enhancement and development
 - d. Healthy minds, bodies, and campuses

The next step involves discussing strategies for meeting and metrics for measuring these goals with units—college and departments. Some metrics suggested have included degrees awarded, graduation rate, student retention, percent of eligible programs accredited, external funding amounts, opportunities for action in the community, publication university rankings, student satisfaction inventory, and use of the Payne Center.

2. Strategic Enrollment Planning Council resulted from the consulting firm study suggesting a 176-page plan to enhance enrollment and retention. Chaired by Bill Powell, the committee is working on implementation of suggested actions. Bringing Brett Kemker in as Associate Provost to focus on these issues is part of that effort, along with establishing a new Student Success Center that unites several relevant units under one administrative umbrella, including the First Year Experience, Undergraduate Studies, and Admissions. Advising of undeclared majors is now based in the College of Arts and Letters.

3. Strategic Budget Model Task Force involved 16 members, five of them faculty members, chaired by Denise Von Herrmann and Bill Smith. They completed their task recently, involving recommending a budget model for the university. Working with consultant Larry Goldstein, a Responsibility-Centered Management model of budgeting was recommended to the cabinet, where the response was positive. Under that model, each unit (primarily colleges) will receive revenues based on tuition and external funding obtained to allocate. Some “bills” or a “tax” to cover administration would be taxed, and legislative appropriations would still be allocated to central administration. Each unit could establish a contingency fund. The Colleges of Business and Arts and Letters plan to pilot-test the model for a year starting FY 2011.

A key new committee will be the University Budget Committee. Prov. Lyman is drafting ideas for its make-up now. Knowing it must be representative of the campus, one suggested list has 23 members, which makes it too big. It was started with the idea of faculty representation, but the whole university must be represented. Responding to comments of not having “the usual suspects” on the committee, the provost said he was open as to means of selection. All the deans want to be on every committee, he noted, but perhaps two seats could be rotated among the deans. Deans here run colleges like fiefdoms, protecting them. The norm has been to have each faculty group appoint a representative—Faculty Senate, Academic Council, Graduate Council. The new committee would set overall budget directions once the new model is in place, but until then would have to make some specific decisions. Whatever metrics are used in the new model, the provost noted, we don’t want the process to become merely “bean counters” where the only concern is dollars obtained. Some expensive programs are crucial to the university and there must be ways of taking that into account.

The current budget model is historical—units get what they got last year except in an unusual situation. The new model is more entrepreneurial—units can get and keep their own revenues more and make their own decisions about how to allocate it.

4. Master Campus Facility Planning Committee has 23 members, chaired by Dick Conville, and reviews all proposed changes or growth regarding the physical plant and grounds. They have had input into the parking garage and its location, the new residence halls, and developed a master plan a couple of years ago.

A similar committee was the Cross Creek Planning committee on the coast, which involved at times close to 100 people. It developed plans that evolved from a campus surrounded by lawns and parking lots to an interactive town/gown type of plan like a Boulder, CO or Chapel Hill, NC.

Those are the groups that are currently setting our direction. Prov. Lyman liked what consultant Goldstein said about planning: “What your strategic plan really is is where you decide to put your money.” The budget committee will be the most critical committee for now, and we have a chance to construct it how we want to.

Thinking above and beyond these committees, there is the question of vision. We cannot continue to try to do all that we have been trying to do. Through these committees we need to focus on our goals and our mission. We know that : we are a general service public university for the state of Mississippi, we must offer a broad array of courses to attract students, we have overall very nonselective admissions, we will need to serve less-prepared students, yet we have some latitude in defining components of the university in terms of admissions. The Honors College is a crucial program for this university in elevating student body preparation and achievement. Some programs will need more resources than others to excel . . . is it worth it? We must ask. We offer a “buffet,” but in certain programs we can become something more distinctive—we can be a “fine dining establishment” in some areas.

This past year was reactive. Prov. Lyman appreciated the work of the Academic Planning Group, but the budget committee will wind up making many of these crucial decisions. Some need to occur at a decentralized level at the colleges. We’re going to have to make some prioritization decisions.

6.0 Officers' reports

6.1 President (Evans)

President Evans introduced three new faculty senators: Susan Howell, serving out Barry Piazza’s term, Teresa Welsh, serving out Ann Blackwell’s term, and Sharon Rouse, serving out Diane Fisher’s term. Dale Lunsford was elected from the Gulf Coast to serve as faculty senator until 2012.

Charles Hoyle, chemistry and polymer science professor, passed away on Monday and his funeral was this afternoon. He was a good person and we will miss him.

The former Government Relations committee has been changed to the University Directions committee to work on planning and strategic issues for the university from a faculty perspective. This is partly in response to Pres. Saunders request for such advice.

6.2 President-Elect (Davis)

The Faculty Senate “ning” site is up and running, many have joined, and committee groups have been created as well. This can support ongoing dialogues between meetings on issues. Thanks to Sen. Spencer for livening up the site with some fun pictures!

Sen. Davis noted that she was serving on several technology committees, to try to have a faculty presence there. CAMPUS HUB is coming out, a new web portal for accessing all USM web functions, including SOAR. Senators can try this out on “ning.” The hope is to involve all of the community, not just students.

6.3 Secretary (Meyer)

Sen. Meyer asked for reports of any senator carrying a proxy and any who needed a name sign. He meant to ask anyone who had not signed up for committees yet to do so, but promptly forgot to.

6.4 Secretary-Elect (Brannock) -- No report

7.0 Committee reports

7.1 Academic and Governance (Redalje) – No Report

7.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations (Oshrin)

No committee report, but Sen. Oshrin commended Pres. Evans for serving on both Faculty Senate and the Academic Planning Group with “style and acumen.” Applause.

7.3 Awards (Brannock)

Announcements of awards will soon be sent to departments. Through a misunderstanding, the Excellence in Librarianship Award was discontinued, and Sen. Brannock will apply to restore it. It is the only university award directly rewarding librarians.

Sen. Beckett noted that he had reportedly eliminated the award, which was ridiculous given how hard he has been fighting for awards. He had actually said that the librarians had determined the winner of that award among themselves, which was then extrapolated by administrators to mean the university did not need to give the award.

7.4 Constitution and Bylaws (Rehner)

Pres. Evans noted revisions would be needed to provide for upcoming online elections.

7.5 Elections (Burgess) – No report

7.6 Faculty Welfare (Davis)

Plans to administer the annual Faculty Satisfaction Survey again soon. Now we can compare data across three years. The committee should meet and compare past budgets to this year to emphasize budget cuts related to percentage of salary money in each unit cut.

7.7 Research and Grants (McCormick) – No report

7.8 Technology (Bass) – No report

7.9 University Directions (Davis) – No report

7.10 Other committee and liaison reports

7.10.1 Faculty Handbook Committee

The updated version as of August, 2009 includes four changes:

Each college now sends two members to the University Advisory Council

No withholding a vote at the departmental level to vote at a higher committee level is allowed

Faculty members with fractional appointments greater than .5 FTE in a department are accounted for
Procedures for sabbaticals were added

Sen. Bristol asked if the provost had followed the Faculty Handbook last year. Sen Beckett noted the committee made recommendations to the provost; he does not necessarily follow them. Pres. Evans emphasized that the Faculty Handbook Committee is not a Faculty Senate Committee. We appoint 2 out of 7 members.

1. Gulf Coast Faculty Council – No report

Two Gulf Coast members present by speaker phone reported that they could hear most people, and at least get an idea of what was going on.

7.10.3 Academic/Graduate Council (Daves) – No report

7.10.4 AAUP (Klinedinst)

There is a party out at Canebreak this evening. The chapter supports efforts to request IHL not consider dropping programs at this month's meeting prior to faculty opportunity to appeal.

8.0 Old Business

The resolution regarding health care for Gulf Coast students and faculty passed at the June meeting was sent to the President.

9.0 New Business

Sen. Klinedinst offered a request that the IHL not take up any items concerned with terminations of programs involving tenured or tenure-track faculty prior to their being granted a hearing before an impartial board. The appeal process granted before the Executive Council could not be called impartial. The Economics department was allowed to reach an arrangement, but the Technical and Occupational Education faculty were not. USM is the first in the state to make such dramatic a cut, and those affected have not had a chance to present their side.

Discussion followed on how the process seemed backward if one asks that the programs be discontinued and then holds an appeal after that. Why are we leading the state in making such a dramatic cut? The amount of money saved is not that great compared to high-budget items like MIDAS (\$700,000). Some Senators thought that USM had not complied with AAUP guidelines, and Sen. Klinedinst noted that even IHL requirements were being neglected. Senators noted that this seemed like a huge action to simply get rid of three people; was there no way to figure out how to keep them?

It was pointed out that resolutions must be presented one month in advance of voting on them. Sen. Oshrin moved to suspend the rules to allow for discussion and vote on this resolution. Sen. Haley seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The content of the resolution was reiterated:

We request that you defer USM agenda items at the September IHL meeting concerning termination of faculty and elimination of academic programs until appeal hearings for those involved be heard.

Multiple seconds offered.

Senators noted the need to document “chapter and verse” what parts of AAUP, IHL and Faculty Handbook policies may have been violated. The importance of defending tenure was discussed, as well as giving affected faculty members the right to an impartial hearing. Discussion followed about the perceived need to ask IHL for program elimination before hearings of appeal were held. Delaying this would seem to give us more time to avoid an unfortunate precedent of cutting programs eliminating tenured faculty. Also, there would seem to be nothing wrong in asking that the rules be followed.

Discussion followed about addressing this message directly to IHL board members, or to the university president. Bypassing her could create acrimony, it was suggested. The board would go along with what the president asks for.

Sen. Klinedinst withdrew his resolution, seconds agreed. Sen. Klinedinst moved that this message, with supporting documentation, be conveyed to Pres. Saunders. Sen. Burnett seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

10.0 Adjournment

Moved and Seconded, Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:34 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Meyer
Secretary for Faculty Senate

Approved by
Jeff Evans
President of Faculty Senate