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Faculty Senate Minutes - July 27, 2009

USM Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate meeting
July 27, 2009
International Building Auditorium
3:00 p. m.

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

President Jeff Evans called the meeting to order and asked for the approval of the agenda. Senator Oshrin moved with Senator Gould seconding. Agenda approved.

President Evans thanked President Saunders and Provost Lyman for participating in Faculty Senate meetings and communicating openly with the Senate.

President Saunders

President Saunders noted that we are operating under one of the worst economic environments in many years. She thanked Faculty Senate members who were on the Academic Planning Group and applauded their hard work and even-handed decisions. To put the work of the APG in context, she went over the timeline on how we got to this point. At the town meeting in February, she announced that for FY 2010 the university would look into a \$10 million cut. She asked the CFO and Provost to work with an existing committee to review the budget in February. In June the budget was still uncertain, but it was known that a 4.5% budget cut was guaranteed. She communicated this via letter to the university community. At this point, she asked the Provost to step up procedures because more cuts were expected. The President was assured that a mid-year cut was imminent.

The questions submitted by the Faculty Senate to the President and Provost were answered and posted on the President's blog at <http://edudev.usm.edu/blogs/president/2009/07/qa-on-budget.html>.

Provost Lyman

Dr. Lyman detailed the formation of the APG, which was established in August/September as part of a consultation about retention and increasing enrollment. The APG started looking at the cost of programs and payoffs of student credit hours, among other issues. Its focus was to identify programs where a greater allocation of resources could be made. In January, they were notified to anticipate a 4.5% budget cut. At this point, the Provost "hijacked" the APG from its previous task and had them focus on a short term budget reduction task. They identified criteria by which to evaluate programs and asked each college dean to look at programs that could be cut.

In June, the university found out that there would be no tuition increase which eliminated \$3 million that the University would have received. Prior to this, they compiled 4.5% budget cuts for the current year. In July, they realized that planning was needed for FY 2011. The university anticipates that they will be short approximately \$10-12 million for FY 2011. He stated that this is not a short term problem. This is the new norm. The university needs to be leaner.

The Provost stated that the APG's process has been transparent. In late spring, the APG broke into two groups – AAPG (Academic) and the non-academic APG. He split the group, so that academics could make decisions about the academic cuts. The APG came up with a set of criteria for academic programs, drawing on Robert Dickeson's *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, that included centrality to

core curriculum and university mission, enrollment and degree production, scholarly productivity, cost analysis, uniqueness and history, future prospects, and the overall quality of the program.

A similar set of criteria was used for academic support programs. These criteria included contributions to enrollment and degree production, contribution to the research mission, strategic mission, university assessment, breadth and magnitude of services, centrality to university missions/strategic planning, cost, essentiality, uniqueness and history, efficiency of service delivery, university assessment report, quality of program and the potential for outsourcing.

Dr. Lyman addressed the question asking why APG minutes have been so general/brief. Up until the summer, the process had been general. Only in July did activities get more specific. He stated that the process is not secret. Instead, he considers the process to be discrete. They have started reviewing the proposed program cuts, but have not compiled them into a final list.

The APG asked for \$2 million from each college. They don't anticipate using all \$10 million for the cuts. Academic support programs like iTech, LEC, and the library have been asked to send cuts of 10% of their budgets. They do not want to have across the board cuts. Dr. Lyman believes that across the board cuts are ineffective for this type of budget situation. Once a comprehensive list is compiled, the list will be made public. At this time, there will be time for discussion of these items.

He addressed the question about why the APG is moving so fast. The group is moving fast in order to meet the September 1 deadline for notifying tenure track faculty members that their positions will be eliminated. The non-academic side of the APG is not limited by this constraint and has more time to work on their list.

The cuts are not going to be harder on the academic side. Academic side is approximately 75% of the total budget. If the projected cuts of \$7.5 million are implemented, that will amount to 62% of all cuts.

If a program is chosen for reduction, the faculty will be notified. If fiscal changes come about such as a tuition increase in the spring or an additional stimulus program, the projected cuts may change.

Dr. Lyman stated that the deans at Mississippi State University had to submit a list of 5% cuts. Increased enrollment in past years has helped their situation. The University of Mississippi voluntarily cut 5% from FY 2010. They have received lists from the deans addressing a possible additional 5% cut.

Regarding questions that the APG is not complying with AAUP guidelines, he responded that the APG is complying with the spirit of the guidelines. He emphasized that the makeup of the APG is primarily faculty and that appropriate notice will be given to any faculty members whose position may be terminated.

Senator Bristol asked when the IHL will approve the proposed cuts. Provost Lyman projected that the IHL will vote on it in September or October. A guest asked if any program will be completely removed. Lyman said that the deans did put academic programs on the list, and the possibility of eliminating a program is there.

Senator Rehner stated that the \$2 million request from each college can be especially difficult for smaller colleges. The Provost remarked that if the programs are healthy, then they will not make it on the list.

Senator Haley asked why the cuts are being rushed this summer, and why can't the university make 50% of the cuts now with additional cuts later if necessary. The Provost stated that this process is going on this summer because they have to give notice to faculty members by September 1.

Senator McCormick asked what the 2008-09 budget was. Joe Morgan stated that the 2009 budget was \$7.3 million greater on the state appropriations side because of the stimulus. The Provost said that we are about the same now as we were last year.

Mary Beth Applin stated that even though the APG is faculty driven, it appears that the parameters are defined by the administration. Possibilities like furloughs, athletic cuts can't be considered by the APG. The Provost replied that the athletic department cuts are not being considered by the academic side of the APG. Furloughs were considered at one point, but with the budget being a long term issue, he finds that furloughs are not appropriate for this situation.

Senator Young asked about the Provost's quote in the *Hattiesburg American* about how students in eliminated programs will have adjunct professors teaching remaining classes. The Provost said that students will have the ability to finish the program and that adjunct professors will be used in those situations. He said that he would not continue having tenure track faculty in programs that are discontinued.

Senator Daves asked if the APG is looking at cost analysis. The Provost stated that cost analysis is one aspect used to look at programs. Daves wondered if he could get an accurate account of how much his department costs the university. He stated that different numbers come from different areas around campus. He would like to know what information the APG is working from in determining cuts.

A guest stated that his department with a budget of \$30,000 was asked to cut \$200,000. The Provost stated that can be done by cutting personnel. The guest then asked if senior faculty would be allowed to retire in order for younger faculty to remain. The Provost said that the APG is not going to cherry pick faculty. They are looking at cuts on a program level.

Senator Beckett asked if the university could be less conservative about offering early retirement. The Provost stated that only 5 people took advantage of the early retirement option. Beckett mentioned that if the possibility of early retirement was publicized more, a greater number of people may take advantage of it. The Provost goes on to say that one stipulation of the early retirement is that the department is unable to hire for that position. If a number of senior faculty members from one department take advantage of the early retirement, this may dramatically impact that department.

Senator Haley asked questions about the AAPG. How does it work? Is the criteria weighted? Is there a ranking? Will there be an appeal process before September 1? The Provost responded saying that the criteria he mentioned earlier will be used to judge the items, and then the APG will rank the items on the list. The long list can then be cut at whatever level is necessary. The list will go to the cabinet the first week of August and hopefully appeals will happen before September 1.

A guest asked if the AAPG will become a permanent body that will take up budget advising, and if so, how often will the committee makeup change? The Provost said that he has not considered making the group permanent at this time.

A guest asked if there will be a college/university reorganization. The Provost said that a review, not reorganization, will probably be necessary in two years. A guest brought up the concern that the AAPG's process be as nonpolitical as possible. The Provost does not believe that politics are involved and that faculty members should ask AAPG members if this is the case.

A guest asked how 2010 midyear cuts will be made – across the board or more deliberate. The Provost responded that hiring/travel freezes may be considered. Questions arose about concerns of how the IHL will perceive the cuts. Seems that we can continue to cut and maintain same quality of education. The Provost said that the reality is that people are less likely to fund higher education than in the past. This is occurring all over the country.

Someone from the coast campus asked if operating cost cuts (i.e. air conditioning, lighting, etc) have been considered to save money. The President replied that this is being considered.

Senator Brannock asked if the list submitted to the AAPG will be kept in that order when placed on the list for cuts. The Provost stated that the submission order will be generally preserved because the colleges know better how things should be ranked.

Senator Rehner asked what strategies will be put in place to deal with future budget issues. Can we have a permanent budget committee? The President replied that it makes sense to have a budget committee. We do have a strategic budget committee that has been working with consultants for the past year to determine how to better manage our money. The university will change the way we manage our money. It will be a much clearer process.

A person from the coast asked if a program is cut that provides classes for other majors, how will those classes be covered? The Provost stated that we could use adjunct professors, retain existing professors. We will continue to offer courses the students need. Another person asked about the number of possible faculty members who could be dismissed under the cuts. The provost responded anywhere from 1-12.

Senator Oshrin asked if the IHL could file for financial exigency since some colleges in the state do not have to cut. If they did that, how would this impact USM? The Provost does not know if that is a possibility.

Someone from the coast asked what would happen if faculty members who are within 5 years of retirement are placed on the list for cuts. The Provost responded that it all depends on the situation. Some opportunities may be available. The AAPG is unable to cherry pick faculty members. Must eliminate entire programs. Senator Oshrin commented that possible one year contracts could be given to allow the people to work towards retirement.

The coast asked if the university has increased external fundraising activities to help generate additional income. The President said that the university has increased fundraising. USM is up 175% in 2008-09 from 2007-08.

A guest asked why Ole Miss and MSU aren't being affected like we are. If no one else is making the cuts, why are we? The President responded that she didn't know what the other universities are doing. Ole Miss and MSU have much heavier contingency budgets because we had to spend our savings to get through Katrina, and that the university over projected enrollment several years back.

A guest asked if USM received all of the insurance and FEMA money from Katrina. The President responded that we did receive all of our insurance money, but that we have not received all of the FEMA money.

Senator Young asked if there will be additional cuts with the APG in the future. The Provost stated that he didn't know, but he sees the formation of a permanent budget committee for cuts in future years. Senator Young asked if the cabinet will look at the cuts suggested by the APG and add cuts to that that weren't vetted by APG. The Provost said that he would be surprised if the cabinet would add additional academic cuts not on the list.

Senator Young asked if the General Education Curriculum would be impacted by the cuts. The Provost stated that they are dedicated to the GEC as it stands now. In the fall, there will be a GEC review process. Down the road, there may be a modified GEC, but it won't be any time soon.

