

7-22-2009

## Faculty Senate Minutes - July 22, 2009

USM Faculty Senate

Follow this and additional works at: [http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty\\_senate\\_minutes](http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty_senate_minutes)

---

### Recommended Citation

USM Faculty Senate, "Faculty Senate Minutes - July 22, 2009" (2009). *Faculty Senate Minutes*. Paper 120.  
[http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty\\_senate\\_minutes/120](http://aquila.usm.edu/faculty_senate_minutes/120)

This 2009/10 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](mailto:Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu).

**The University of Southern Mississippi**  
**Faculty Senate**  
**Minutes July 22, 2009**  
**Cook Library Room 123**  
**7:30 p.m.**

Members Present and Represented (by proxy): H. Annuis, J. Brannock, D. Bristol(A. Haley), B. Burgess, J. Burnett, D. Daves, A. Davis, J. Evans, D. Fletcher(S. Reischman), C. Goggin, T. Gould, A. Haley, S. Hauer, N. Howell, T. Lipscomb, D. Lunsford, M. Lux, C. McCormick, C. Meyers, S. Oshrin, R. Pandey, C. Rakocinski (J. Evans), D. Redalje (A. Davis), T. Rehner, S. Reischman, R. Scurfield (T. Rehner), J. B. Spencer, D. Tingstrom, A. Young,

Members Absent: J. Bass, D. Beckett, B. George, M. Klinedinst, J. McGuire, J. Meyer, K. Rushing, J.H. Shin, J. Wolfe

Visitors: Lesley Walters, Thomas V. O'Brien, Nicolle Jordan, Ellen Weinauer, Michael Salda, Mary Beth Applin, Bob Bateman, Joe Olmi, Kimberly Davis, Bill Powell, Ed Jackson, Tom Osowski, Susan Hrostowski, Joyous Bethel, Marie Danforth, David Tisdale, Ed Kemp, Ann Marie Kinnell, Jeffrey Kaufmann, Michael DeArmedy, Max Grivno, William Scarborough, Sarah Franklin, Dana Fennell, Michael Mays

1. Call to Order

President Jeff Evans called the meeting to order at 7:30.

1. Approval of the Agenda

President Evans asked for the approval of the agenda. Senator Young moved and Senator Davis seconded approval of the agenda for the day as amended. Passed unanimously.

1. Officers' Reports  
1. President

President Jeff Evans welcomed senators and guests. He started off by stating that President Saunders was disappointed about not being invited to participate in this meeting.

1. Executive Council meeting with Dr. Saunders

The Faculty Senate Executive Council met for 2 hours with Dr. Saunders. Parking Fees – Dr. Saunders apologized about how this was handled. Fees will not be increased this year. They will be raised next year. Pres. Evans mentioned that there is a parking management committee and that it may be good to work with them on this matter.

Talked about increasing communication at all levels. This is to be addressed at the Faculty Senate retreat.

Talked about the budget. She explained that the IHL said there will probably be a midyear cut. A year from now, \$10-12 million will be needed. Instead of breaking the stimulus money into two years, all stimulus money will be used this year. This was a state decision. As Dr. Saunders stated in her letter to all faculty and staff, the APG is identifying more cuts for fiscal year 2011 (starting July 2010).

Discussed the Academic Planning Group. Told that they were supposed to come up with \$7.5 million for academics of the \$11 million in reductions. Academics picks up about ¾ of the total cut with non-academic areas picking up the remaining cuts. Evans mentioned to the President that it would take approximately 75 positions to make up that difference. She stated that we had already eliminated 77 staff

and faculty positions (half faculty, half staff). These come from vacant positions permanently allocated to the budget cuts.

Discussed budget cutting. Saunders said that she hoped not to do across the board budget cuts in the future.

Our current budget status... Joe Morgan has told the APG that a year from now, we will need to make \$10-11 million in cuts as things stand now without tuition increases or other sources of revenue. That's why the APG was charged with looking into possible \$7.5 million in cuts. The cuts will be applied to the next fiscal year not for the current year.

Pres. Evans discussed the role of the Academic Planning Group (APG). The APG was spun off the Strategic Enrollment Committee. Last fall, the APG started to meet to devise a model for prioritized budgets. In February or March, more faculty members added to the APG. Then the APG needed to come up with immediate budget cuts in the spring. The APG was tasked to come up with ways to deal with budget cuts. Budget cutting ideas can be suggested at [http://edudev.usm.edu/provost/budget\\_planning/suggestion\\_box.php](http://edudev.usm.edu/provost/budget_planning/suggestion_box.php). Summaries from the APG meetings can be found at [http://edudev.usm.edu/provost/budget\\_planning/summaries.php](http://edudev.usm.edu/provost/budget_planning/summaries.php). According to Bill Powell, the criteria can be found on the summary from April 7.

Stephen Judd stated that the original idea of the APG was to create a group of faculty and administrators that would look at and work with a model for prioritizing budgets. Would be the first line of dealing with budgets that would then go to the Provost and President. The idea was to bring the faculty into the budget process which had previously excluded faculty participation. Around February, the committee got "hijacked by the provost" in order to deal with the emergency budget issues. The long term task was redesigned to deal with current budget issues.

The criteria created by APG for evaluating programs for possible cuts include enrollment, degree production, scholarly productivity, centrality to core curriculum and university mission, cost analysis, uniqueness and history, future prospects, and quality of program.

The budget started to look better with an increase in funds especially from the stimulus, and it looked like the university was going to have a flat year. In planning, the APG wanted to go by the model developed, but wanted to give the colleges the power to provide a list based on top 25% middle 50% and lower 25% of programs with the understanding that the APG could look at any of those programs to determine if the programs should continue. The colleges sent that information to the APG. The committee started looking over the data. It was discussed how there are other areas that are not strictly academic, but they support the academic departments (library, itech, institutional research, etc). These groups met with the APG and informed it about their areas, so that the APG could determine if possible cuts could be made in these areas. All this time, the APG was working without really being aware of how much money they needed to cut. In the first or second week of June, the APG found out that the academic side had to cut \$7.5 million. In that process, the academic side split off from the non-academic side (i.e. residence life, etc. that did not report to the Provost). After looking at the lower 25% of programs from each college, there wasn't enough savings from those colleges to make up \$7.5 million. That's when APG decided to ask each college to complete a deep cut exercise that goes beyond what the University thinks would ever have to be cut. This exercise was designed to help each college determine their priorities. The APG faced that challenge that if a program with tenured faculty is eliminated, the faculty needs to know about it by September 1 to release them the following year.

Colleges have been busy developing lists. The APG has looked at the College of Arts and Letters list which was made public. The APG will combine all lists into one big list. Just because something is on the list does not mean that it will be eliminated. The APG will prioritize the list to see what it takes to come up with \$7.5 million. The APG has also looked at the Gulf Coast, College of Business, and College of Health. The APG will not reveal the list until they are finished talking to all units because things are

moving on and off the list. There was some debate about whether to release the list at all. Most members said yes. The list should be available publicly once it is sent up to the President's Cabinet

Senator Young asked if the APG voted to make the list public and when that would happen. Pres. Evans said that the APG discussed releasing it when it went to the President's Cabinet. Senator Young asked what the final decision was on releasing the list. Pres. Evans said that at that point they decided to release it.

Senator Young asked why the activities of the APG were so secret. Senator Oshrin said that right now they can't put out the list because it is fluid, and they have not talked to all of the Deans. His understanding is that once they have this final ranked list, the list will be made public with opportunities for affected parties and the community to respond to the list. The departments on the list will be able to defend why they should not be removed or lowered from the list. He believes that this will happen before the list goes to the President's Cabinet. Senator Hauer asked when they plan on having the list available. Pres. Evans said that a specific date is not available at this time.

Senator Oshrin stated that they should be finished hearing from all the deans by the end of the week. At that point, they will discuss and evaluate programs on the list and create the list.

Pres. Evans stated that once the President's Cabinet receives this list, they may decide not to accept all of the APG's recommendations. All proposed cuts may not be necessary. This number may be reduced in the following months. The university thought they were going to have to come up with that money by this July, but money appeared from the stimulus.

Senator Young stated that programs have to be cut by the IHL. She then asked if once a program is deleted, is it safe to say that it's not coming back? Senator Hauer stated that the budget changes may not go into effect until March or April, so there will be a chance to save the program.

Pres. Evans stated that the APG believes that some faculty members will be given terminal contracts, but those can be revoked up until June 30. Senator Young stated that faculty members may have found other positions by that time. Pres. Evans stated that he is not aware of how many faculty members may be impacted by the cuts.

Senator Haley stated that we are planning for a doomsday scenario. He asked why we are going for the worst case scenario by planning for a \$10-11 million right now, rather than going for \$5 million now and then go for an emergency across the board cut later, if needed. Pres. Evans stated that he needed to ask the administration about that.

Senator Davis stated that she thinks that we have used most of rainy day funds and that we are sitting on nothing to balance the situation.

Senator Haley stated that a lot of things can change in a year (another stimulus package, fundraising opportunities, tuition increases) that can positively impact our budget. We are expecting the worst case scenario which puts people's jobs on the line

Senator Burnett stated that the other universities in the state aren't doing this. She is afraid that if we go to the IHL saying that we are prepared to make millions of dollars in cuts, the IHL may think that USM is prepared and that the state should not have to manage their budget as tightly.

One visitor commented that it has happened in the past where the administration comes out with the worst case scenario and hands it over to the faculty to work within a particular framework. The faculty works within the framework and approves it. Then the administration places all responsibility on the faculty. Had a financial crisis during the Lucas times that was just as bad as this and a committee was formed to look at the situation. This group looked into combining departments (like anthropology, philosophy, and criminal justice). It turned out that the budget crisis was not that bad; it upset people on campus, and ruined programs. If you say to faculty members that their position is going to be terminated in one year, people are going to leave and even if the program ends up being reinstated, the faculty will have left. He also believes that we should go for a fraction of it now because we don't know what's going to happen in March or April. If we need additional cuts, make them then.

Mary Beth Applin stated that if the IHL says that it's an emergency, why aren't they officially declaring it? Pres. Evans was unaware as to why a fiscal emergency has not been called.

A visitor stated that the APG and the provost should be using AAUP handbook. Even though it's not compulsory that the APG follow it, it is the most reasonable thing out there and it has been court tested. He states that if things are not handled appropriately especially with firing tenured professors, we may risk damaging our reputation.

Senator Young stated that from her reading of the AAUP handbook without financial emergency, we are not following the AAUP standards.

Senator McCormick commented how the whole process is upsetting. He's been asking around, but no one can give him the total operating budget at USM. What percentage of that comes from the IHL?

Senator Haley commented that the administration has been absent in explaining this crisis to the university community. The last thing that the university heard from President Saunders was that things were going OK as she wrote in her letter at the beginning of the June. He stated that the administration has not had a forum where they have laid out what is happening with the budget. The university is being asked to decrease their budgets by an amount that seems to have popped out of thin air. He assumes that there are justifications for this number, but the administration should explain where this figure came from. He believes that the APG has been fairly transparent, but that in a situation where jobs are on the line, the President and Provost should be communicating with faculty, staff and students about the matter.

Senator Daves stated that the issue of the lack of transparency is a concern of many people that he has talked to. He also asked about the breakdown of the \$11-12 million. If the academic side has to come up with \$7.5 million, how much does the non-academic side have to set aside?

A visitor wondered why a college with a \$100 million budget is asked to give as much as a college that has a \$1 million budget. People are scared to death and the morale is disrupted because of this exercise.

Senator McCormick commented that getting rid of tuition waivers is going to decrease enrollment. He stated that the administration needs to give the departments time to work on increasing enrollment, increasing retention numbers, and focusing on external funding. He believes that it's hard to do all of this in a year, and in the meantime, people are worried about losing their jobs.

Senator Burnett commented on how we are making very important decisions that impact people's lives in a very short period of time.

A visitor stated that these cuts not only impact the university community, but the cutting of some programs may impact the community. She said that it's not only faculty jobs that are at stake, but our relationships with the community and it's the curriculum to the students who we serve.

Senator Daves stated the problem is the process. He said that his department was given 3 days to come up with \$2 million, and the only way to look at departments is to look at statistics that may not provide the best representation of them.

Senator Burnett does not have faith in the APG because the committee was designed for one purpose and then hijacked and reassigned to the current task. Pres. Evans stated that the APG originally was working towards this conclusion, but over a longer time frame.

Senator Burnett stated that this has been a very short time frame. She said that this is happening around the nation, but asked if USM could be more positive and creative about it and turn this place around. There are people who love USM and want to support the university, but the current process leaves the faculty/staff discouraged.

Senator Lipscomb stated that salaries for top administrators are coming out of their college budget. These numbers inflate the personnel costs of the departments and under represent the cost on the administrative side. Looking at the available data may not truly represent what is happening in the departments. Wonders why academics are taking on 75% of the cuts when academics are the reason why the university exists. Looking at salaries, you will see that it looks bad because the administrators make so much more money than faculty, but faculty members are being cut.

A visitor asked where is the \$2 million contingency fund that has existed to the president in the past? Has it been spent? Is it being allotted to help with this budget crisis? Dean von Herrmann listed in the cuts for the college that she is going to take 10% off her salary. Are they going to take a cut off their salaries? Are they reducing the number of executives they have in the dome? Pres. Evans responded that the administration said that they will take their share of cuts.

Senator Davis added that in the executive council meeting with the President, they talked about improving communication and transparency across the university. Dr. Saunders did express a desire to improve communication. Had a lengthy discussion about evaluating programs. Senator Haley asked what Dr. Saunders' response was. Pres. Evans stated that Dr. Saunders was aware that the APG had a lot to deal with in a short period of time, but she felt that we were going to have these cuts. Senator Davis said that the executive council warned Dr. Saunders that this process is happening may lower morale and reminded her that we just came through a difficult time. Dr. Saunders did not seem fully aware of the activities that occurred in recent years.

A visitor asked if it would be possible to have a secretarial service come in and take notes for APG meetings. Senator Burnett stated that the summaries of the meetings are online. Senator Haley stated that the latest minutes are from July 14 and when things are moving this quickly, the summaries need to be updated faster. Senator Lux stated that the minutes do not contain details from the meetings. If a program is brought up in her department, she wants to read what was discussed. The summary stated that a department was discussed with no further explanation. More detail is needed.

A visitor stated that he thinks that the administration should talk to Dr. Aubrey Lucas about the current situation for ideas because he has been through every up and down at this university. He's a pro-faculty president. During his time, morale was high, salaries increased, and USM attracted faculty from prestigious universities. Emphasized that the APG needs to take more detailed notes, so that we know what is being said.

Senator Young stated that there is a process established at this university to work with discontinuing a program. If you look at the AAUP or USM guidelines, discontinuing a program goes through a process that is thoroughly vetted by the faculty and then goes up through the Academic and Graduate Councils. Appears that the APG is eliminating programs without going through the normal processes. If there is a declaration of financial emergency, then things can be different, but there has been no declaration

of financial emergency. She also pointed out that when you start firing faculty based on a procedure that is flawed, there is a strong chance that a number of lawsuits will arise.

Senator Burnett added that the list distributed in April only came out with the bottom 25%. The mission of the APG was something different in the beginning. Believes it should be stopped until we have more information about the procedures of the group.

Senator Young asked if representatives from the various colleges/groups can be present when the APG speaks about those areas.

Senator Lipscomb stated that support for USM from the community is strong. Maybe we should let the community know about the budgetary issues at USM. At his previous institution, the university discontinued the football program during a difficult budget time, the university survived, and now the football program is back.

Senator Lunsford commented that the issues that are being mentioned are very similar to what is concerns Gulf Coast faculty. He has received questions about the impact of the cuts on athletics.

Senator Annulis stated that she is a member of APG and wanted to say that everything that Pres. Evans stated about the APG is accurate.

Senator Davis talked about the faculty welfare committee and the faculty satisfaction survey. Lots of productivity is not reflected in data. We should look into programs that work and model ourselves after those programs.

Senator Gould asked if the administration is willing to slow down the process or do they just want to move forward. Pres. Evans stated that he feels that the administration wants to move forward.

Senator Oshrin explained that there is time pressure because the IHL makes their allocation for next fiscal year in April/May. Between then and July 1, the university budget office has to submit a budget for that fiscal year. If the IHL has to tell us to cut \$10 million, we will have to produce a budget that is \$10 million less. If we can't cut from academic affairs, that means we have to cut from non-tenured/non-faculty positions, and \$10 million is not there. In order to plan for that possibility, we need to make decisions by September 1 to give faculty notice that this is a possibility. This is not saying that the faculty will not be kept on the following year, it just allows the university some flexibility when reducing the budget.

Senator Young asked why things like furloughs, pay cuts, and total freeze on hiring are not on the list. Is it true that the APG will only consider what is on the list from each college? Senator Oshrin said that they did consider furloughs and voluntary contributions to the scholarship fund. That was rejected by the cabinet. Bill Powell said that everything is still on the table. He also pointed out that total hiring freezes are great for this year, but it doesn't lower next year's budget.

Senator Young asked how the APG can deal with these proposals for cuts that have been pulled together in less than a week. Can't understand how that can be considered a good process. Bill Powell said that the process started last summer. APG has been looking at different models. Academics makes up 75% of the budget. Includes not just degree granting colleges, but also other areas in academic affairs. The lists contributed by each area will be compiled and sent to the cabinet as a recommendation from the APG. Items on the list to the cabinet may be removed as the year continues. A guest asked if it the university could make the cuts without a financial emergency being declared by the IRL board. Bill Powell said that they can make the cuts.

Stephen Judd mentioned how this university went 5 years with a lack of transparency. The current administration started off focusing on transparency. The APG was designed to be transparent. It has

become decreasingly so. The process by which programs are being eliminated is going to look bad. Wonders if the administration has their eyes on cutting specific programs. Better communication is needed about the APG process.

Senator Rehner said that it feels as though academic areas are taking it and that they continue to take it. Asks why the academic side has to put their info out a year in the future with the non-academic side given up to 11 more months. Emphasized the need for more transparency.

Senator Oshrin suggested that we need to have the president, provost and others visit with the faculty senate to answer questions. **Motion** by Senator Oshrin **to ask the administration to come and answer faculty questions about the budget.** Seconded by Senator Gould. Discussion addressed possibility of having another session that will be directed at staff and community. Senator Haley stated that as of July 14, Joe Morgan's statement to the APG was that the hit may come next summer or the summer after. Senator Oshrin said that it all depends on how the state deals with stimulus money. We need to go ahead and put people on one year contract because it will be more difficult to cut at a later date.

Senator Oshrin stated that the APG wanted the colleges to allocate more money than necessary to provide more flexibility when compiling the list for the Cabinet. Three quarters of the projected cuts will not be academic programs. The APG discussions have been very considerate, and they don't want to unnecessarily eliminate positions.

Senator Burnett emphasized that the APG should look at the lists contributed by the colleges and follow the order in which items are presented by each dean.

A student guest stated that she pays a lot in tuition and will pay more in the next year, and does not mind doing that as long as she can keep her faculty because the faculty contributes to her education – not the football team, the dance team, and other things that don't add value to her degree. Feels that she pays lots of money for a degree that is losing value.

Senator Oshrin restated the motion on the floor. **Motion carried.** Senator Haley wanted to add an amendment to **have a second meeting that will be open to the entire university and Hattiesburg communities.** Seconded by Senator Lipscomb. **Motion carried.**

Senator Shin stated that we compile questions and send them to the administration. Senator Brannock will distribute a list of all questions that arose from the meeting.

Senator Lunsford asked that a video connection be set up for the people on the Gulf Coast campuses to view the meeting with the ability to communicate with the people on the Hattiesburg campus.

Mary Beth Applin asked that Pres. Evans get in touch with the faculty senate presidents at Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi to determine if they are going through these budget crunches. Pres. Evans said that Alcorn State and Jackson State are going through these issues.

Senator Gould asked about ranking the programs for possible APG review. As part of the process in his department, they had to list consequences for the decision to put programs on the list. They found it hard to determine consequences because they are unaware as to how the APG will use the criteria in evaluating the programs. If the colleges knew what the APG was looking for, departments that may be cut will have a better opportunity to justify keeping their programs. Pres. Evans stated that the APG has not weighted the criteria; it is relying in part on the chairs and deans to do this.

Senator Rehner stated that he appreciated the work of Faculty Senators on APG. Senator Young echoed this by stating that we trust the members on the APG. The fast moving process is the alarming part.

Motion to adjourn, seconded, meeting adjourned, 9:09 pm.

