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Faculty Senate Minutes - May 1, 2009

USM Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting of May 1, 2009 Minutes

Attendance. As this meeting was on the Gulf Coast, attendance was sparser than usual, though most Senators unable to be present sent proxies, as detailed below.

The following Senators were present: Bass, Beckett, Blackwell, Brannock, Bristol, Burgess, Davis, Evans, Fisher, Green, Hannon, Hauer, Judd, Kyriakoudes, Lunsford, Meyer, Oshrin, Piazza, Rakocinski, Redalje, Rehner, Rushing, and Young.

The following Senators were represented by proxies: Annulis (Bristol), Buchanan (Beckett), Burnett (Hauer), Daves (Fisher), Goggin (Brannock), Gould (Rehner), Greene (Hauer), Harbaugh (Rushing), Pandey (Hannon), Rachal (Blackwell), Scurfield (Lunsford), Smithka (Meyer), Spencer (Brannock), and Tingstrom (Davis).

The following Senators were absent: Anderson, Klinedinst, McCormick, and McGuire. Senator Campbell's designated proxy failed to appear.

(Incidentally, Senate attendance has been rather good this year. Your Secretary has kept a log of attendance, reflected in the spreadsheet linked [here](#).)

President Oshrin convened the Senate to order at 2:12 p.m. on Friday afternoon, May 1, 2009. The venue was the annual meeting of the Senate on the Gulf Coast, this year in room 202 of the Advanced Education Center.

President Oshrin announced that President Saunders' mother died the previous night. Likewise former university President Horace W. Fleming died the same day. The Senate observed a moment of silence in their memories.

Associate Provost Pat Joachim greeted the Senate on behalf of the Coastal faculty. She stressed the building of community among the various campuses of the university. The record should reflect that Provost Joachim provided an excellent luncheon for the Senate; we are indeed appreciative.

The agenda was moved and approved unanimously; likewise the minutes.

In the absence of President Saunders, **Provost Lyman** came to the podium for a very long session with the Senate. First was his update on the "budget saga": The passage of the cigarette tax may ease the state budget crunch slightly—but to what extent is still uncertain. The university will submit three budgets: 3%, 4.5%, and 6% proposed cuts. Nevertheless, our hope is that no such cut will be imposed. The federal stimulus funds may provide enough dollars—the amount likewise still uncertain—to float the university for a further time. The Governor, however, may wish to attenuate these funds over a two year period, making a certain level of budget cuts

almost inevitable.

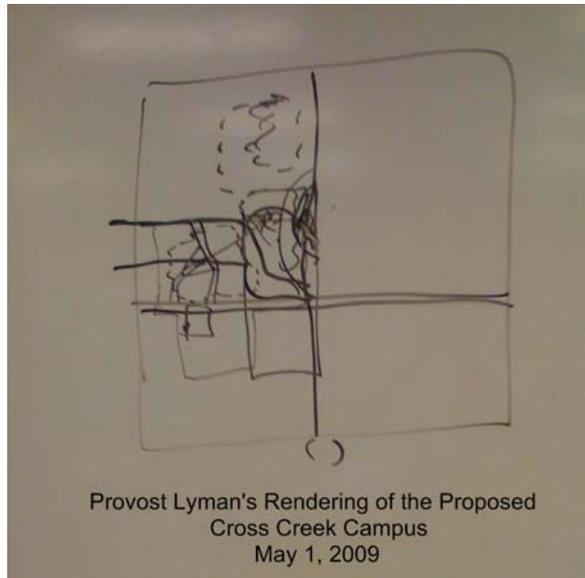
The Academic Planning Group (APG) is meeting weekly now to discuss the “tedious process” of budgeting. At each meeting the group has discussed various programs—academic or supporting—and their viability in the university’s mission. They are still in the initial, data-gathering phase. A possible deadline for their completion is December 1, 2009. Several specific programs were enumerated to the Senate and the problems with each discussed, all of which was an attempt to show how wide and difficult are the parameters of budget and program cuts. The APG is splitting into two groups: academic and non-academic; this bifurcation may expedite their explorations. The Provost welcomes input from faculty.

Briefly, the Provost raised the issue of hiring freezes and whether they should be reopened next year. This delicate matter will need to be debated by the APG and the cabinet before any decision is made.

Turning to the “bad situation” in the library, the Provost discussed his meeting earlier in the day with the librarians and their “issues” with the Dean of Libraries. As a result of some “mis-steps” in the matter of governance and procedures, there has been some friction between the dean and her librarians. The Provost emphasized the anomalous situation of university librarians and their “awkward fit” in the scheme outlined by the *Faculty Handbook*. He intends to spend more time with the librarians to heal these fissures. Do librarians “teach,” for example? In a sense, “librarianship” is a form of teaching—though an unusual one. As for governance, the library does not have “departments” in the sense that faculty do. In essence, the library functions under Governance Option 1, with the dean as a singular evaluating authority.

Addressing the issue of Cross Creek, the Provost acknowledged a problem with the selection of the 200 acre plot, with Cross Creek Developers (Hancock Bank and Cotton Fore) asking that the university shift itself several hundred yards to the northeast, thoroughly scrambling the plans drafted at great expense by the university. Developers of the site seem to feel that they have given to the university the finest, most financially viable property in the development. We must go back now and renegotiate. The Provost shrugged and candidly admitted, “The other part of the matter is that there’s no money for this.” Still, “we cannot advance without a plan.”

Questions ensued. Who paid for the planning so far? The answer: the IHL. What is the new timetable? Perhaps mid-fall. (At this point the Provost asked for a marker and proceeded to doodle on the Promethean board, before moving to an appropriate marker board intended for that purpose.) With a drawing he explained the geographic situation.



A central problem is that some of the new site is wetland: “it looks like Africa; you expect to see giraffes.” The manipulation of the plat is difficult to describe in words; in any case, the drawing is reproduced above and, if nothing else, should provide some amusement for the day. The Provost shared his pleasant and enlightening experiences at the “charets” with the architect. Puzzled at this new moniker, your faithful Secretary consulted the *OED* and found the following definition:

Chiefly N. Amer. (orig. Archit.). A period of intense (group) work, typically undertaken in order to meet a deadline. Also: a collaborative workshop focusing on a particular problem or project; (Town Planning) a public meeting or conference devoted to discussion of a proposed community building project.

And who says the Academy is set in its ways?

Moving into uncharted territory, the questions continued. Will graduation be compromised by the Swine Flu epidemic? Almost certainly not. Should we continue to shake hands with graduates? Yes. Senator Rehner offered a supply of hand sanitizer, which the Provost graciously declined.

Finally the Provost turned to the controversy about the Faculty Activity Report (FAR). Some Senators had attended the demonstration of [Digital Measures](#). Another company, [Faculty 180](#), will also demonstrate its product soon. The Provost addressed frankly the uses of a database reporting system. If nothing else, SACS demands the ability to provide electronic data. As explained last month, the Department of History is doing a pilot project on a FAR. The “Faculty Credentials” standard of SACS insists on a “database of faculty credentials.” A columnar graph would link courses taught with the instructor’s credentials. SACS wants the university to hyperlink all these data, with credentials, courses, curriculum, and even syllabi into one central database. Moreover these data must be maintained continually, not annually or periodically. The Provost insisted to the Senate that a FAR would be the *sole* reporting mechanism, not duplicative

of other efforts. He also soothed the Senate's concern that the FAR would be punitive to faculty; instead, it would be used primarily in the aggregate.

Senator Davis supported the Provost's remarks by saying that such data would be valuable in enhancing the Faculty Satisfaction Survey administered annually by the Senate. She stressed that we should see the impetus as "positive," even though some faculty are uncomfortable with administrative intrusion. Professor Judd spoke forthrightly to the issue: "I don't understand why SACS wants to see my syllabi." The Provost responded that the "unfortunate reality" is that SACS demands such usage. The Provost then demonstrated the utility of FAR software by accessing the relevant site of his former university: the University of Alabama Profile System. Unfortunately the program did not work very well, rather supporting the views of Senate dissenters than his own. Some Senators still balked at the time-consuming and intrusive nature of the FAR. The Provost responded that Old Miss got "dinged" by SACS for having in its Department of Foreign Languages native speakers without American credentials. Considerable dissent scintillated throughout the Senate. "Credentials are my *preparation*; scholarship is my *profession*," summarized Senator Rehner. The Provost admitted the aptness of this objection. He alluded, however, to a vehicle resembling the FAR within the College of Business; Senator Young quickly responded by noting the considerable differences between the COB and her native COAL. The Provost rejoined that he simply did not understand the objection to the FAR, claiming that it is exactly the same information that we submit now, but input through a new vehicle. "I'm seeing this as much less of a long reaching change than you do," the Provost asserted, evincing an analogy between the typewriter and the computer, merely a matter of formatting. Discussion continued, generating more light than heat, mostly reiteration of former strains.

At the prompting of Senator Young, the Provost discussed the issue of increased teaching loads. He expressed his strong disapproval of such measures. He noted that 4-4 loads merely reduce the number of adjuncts, whom he termed "the most powerful teaching machines in our arsenal." Senator Young countered that adjuncts lack commitment to the academic unit. The Provost iterated that "we must live within our budget; this is a zero-sum game."

Noting that the Arts Fund has been reduced, Senator Judd asked whether athletics is included in the budget cuts. Yes, the Provost responded, in several ways. The President has also delayed the imposition of a proposed increase to the Athletic Fee.

A final return to the budget: the Provost expects a flat budget. Even with a tuition increase, departments should not expect increases except in extraordinary circumstances.

Senator Beckett inquired about the resignation of the COST dean; Associate Dean Whitehead has been asked to act in an interim capacity. A search for a new dean will begin in the fall.

The Provost left the lectern after a long hour and a half on his feet—his longest audience yet before the Senate.

President Oshrin then introduced **Tom Lansford**, academic dean on the Gulf Coast. He reported to the Senate about the new four-day class week on the Coast (see the Senate minutes of [October 3, 2008](#)); MW and TTh classes begin at 7:30, including a planning period in the middle of the day. He believes that this tactic has been successful, with thirteen sections at the earliest hour. A student satisfaction survey showed that 62% were highly in favor of the new schedule, with 73% in favor of retaining it permanently. Fridays are now free days on Gulf Coast campuses. He admitted to some problems, that certain programs cannot function within this schedule; such have been accommodated.

On an unrelated matter, Senator Rehner voiced an issue of communications between Hattiesburg and Coastal faculties. How does a program straddling both campuses articulate better? Specifically Senator Rehner mentioned a set of student awards in which the Hattiesburg faculty were not consulted. Dean Lansford responded that coordination should be the responsibility of the associate deans and he would try to promote better results in the future.

Bryan Billings, Director of Project Planning on the Coast, spoke next, on recovery from Hurricane Katrina. Before the storm Gulf Park had 23 structures and approximately 280,000 square feet of interior space. Katrina damaged many buildings and completely destroyed eight, or 35,000 square feet. To date the university has restored 9 buildings, or 120,000 square feet. Two major projects are underway: Hardy Hall, the largest structure on campus, with 50,000 square feet should be reopened in the spring of 2011; and Elizabeth Hall, housing the College of Arts and Letters, should be completed by the summer of 2010. We are awaiting word from FEMA about two important buildings in the front of the campus, Lloyd Hall and the Administration Building. On the other hand, insurance for these four buildings (Hardy, Elizabeth, and Lloyd Halls, plus the Administration Building) has been estimated at \$581,000. By contrast, insurance on the total occupied buildings is approximately \$600,000. The Provost stated that in reality due to the high cost of insurance on the Coast, we may not wish to rebuild Lloyd Hall or the Administration Building. Mr. Billings noted that the university has the option to apply for an insurance waiver for both Elizabeth and Hardy Halls; these waivers can be granted if insurance cost is prohibitive or unavailable. An Allied Health/Science building was on the drawing board before Katrina, and the \$7 million designated for that purpose will be used either for that structure or another on campus. (A copy of Mr. Billings' notes is [here](#).)

Then **Ann Billings**, Director of Student Services, addressed the Senate. She reported the administration of a [Noel-Levitz](#) student satisfaction and needs survey on the Gulf Coast. It reflected both satisfaction and importance. Then the same survey was sent to the Coastal community. Graduate programs, however, were not surveyed at that time but will begin this summer. The results should help USMGC assess its needs and priorities. (The survey is available [here](#).)

After a brief (but much needed) recess, President Oshrin reconvened the Senate at 4:00. He announced visitation hours and the funeral time for Mrs. Dunagin, the President's late mother. (By the way, the Senate sent flowers and condolences to the President later that day.)

Then he proceeded with the **President's Report**, which was brief. The electronic balloting program is now in testing and will be running next year for Senatorial elections. President Oshrin asked Senator Rehner to elaborate on last month's comments about "collegiality" in matters of promotion and tenure. Is there interest in convening a workshop on this issue? A speaker employed by the University of Mississippi has some expertise in the matter and might be a good resource. Senator Rehner agreed to help organize this meeting. The Provost inserted that these issues are not hypothetical but could be seen even in the most recent T&P cycle just finished. There was a consensus to proceed. There was no consensus about how to handle the \$2-3,000 tab of such a conference.

The President-Elect, Secretary, and Secretary-Elect were blessedly silent.

Then the Senate moved to **Committee Reports**.

Senator Beckett spoke for the *Awards* committee. The winners were Prof. Anne Marie Kinnell for Service and Prof. Mark Miller for Teaching. There were twelve and seven applicants for these rewards, respectively. The Provost remarked that each of the colleges (save COH) will honor a Distinguished Professor. Finally Senator Beckett moved that former Senator William Scarborough be recognized by the Senate with a plaque upon his approaching retirement.

Elections Senator Brannock spoke on behalf of the committee. The results of the recent elections are as follows:

College of Arts and Letters	Stanley Hauer*	English
	Jae-Hwa Shin	Mass Comm. & Journalism
	Andrew Haley	History
	Christopher Meyers	Philosophy & Religion
	James Wolfe	Political Science
	Stacy Reischman	Theatre & Dance
College of Business Admin.	Donna Davis	Accountancy & Info. Systems
	Babu George	Tourism Mgt.
College of Educ. & Psych.	Thomas Lipscomb	Ed. Leadership & Research
College of Health	Mary Lux	Medical Technology

	Stephen Oshrin*	Speech and Hearing
College of Science and Tech.	Desmond Fletcher	School of Construction
	Charles McCormick*	Polymers & High Perf. Mat.
	Nancy Howell	School of Computing

Asterisks mark Senators elected to a second term. A spreadsheet of the Senate's new membership is [here](#).

A third round of voting will be required for Gulf Park in order to break a tie between candidates Dale Lunsford (Business) and Jonathan Beedle (Education and Psychology). This ballot will be distributed in the fall.

The Elections Committee prepared the following chart of voting patterns across colleges and campuses:

College/Campus	First round of balloting (%)	Second round (%)
Arts and Letters	36	44
Business	46	54
Education and Psychology	36	51
Health	44	58
Science and Technology	29	37
Gulf Park	24	27

In the first round there were 23/238 defective ballots (9.66%), in the second maters were much improved: 3/274 (1.09%).

Faculty Welfare. Senator Davis spoke to the issue of 9 to 12 month pay periods. The issue has been referred to Human Resources for implementation.

Senator Beckett asked the committee and the Provost about the plans to implement phased retirement. Is the three-year retirement period established yet? Can it be imposed upon any department? The Provost's respective answers were, respectively, yes and no, though he admitted the latter was a problem.

Research and Grants. Senator Redalje spoke for the committee about the difficulty in accessing electronic journals through the library. He found that the library has only 10% of the journal holdings necessary for his scholarship. Perhaps returned overhead from research monies

be invested for this purpose through the Office of the Vice President for Research.

In similar wise he queried the method of budget reductions in the library. Should departments regularly be poled to see if some journals should be discontinued due to faculty departures and the like? He regretted the lack of library funding for research departments. Speaking for his Department of Marine Science, “We are not being supported.”

Liaison Reports followed. Only the *Faculty Handbook Committee* had an extensive report. Senator Beckett agreed that changes to the Handbook should be made to adapt certain paragraphs better for the use of librarians, notably the creation of a Dean’s Advisory Committee or a Departmental Personnel Committee. He then reviewed the four issues raised at the last meeting (minutes are [here](#)), noting that the Handbook Committee passed the measures, and the Provost and President will be receiving them soon. The Council of Chairs is considering the issue—mostly frowned upon by the Senate—of whether assistant and associate deans and provosts may take part in personnel committees.

Senator Lunsford spoke for the *Gulf Coast Faculty Council*, about the issue of long-distance communication with Hattiesburg. Senator Bristol commented on the disadvantage of Coastal faculties having to drive three hours for a meeting. The matter was referred to the Faculty Welfare Committee.

There was only one matter of **Old Business**, namely a pair of [resolutions](#) on the implementing health services on campuses away from Hattiesburg, by two teams of Senators: Scurfield and Rachel, and Rehner and Bristol. Neither member of the former team was present, however. President Oshrin remarked that since the resolutions themselves were new, the matter is technically New Business and will be voted upon in the June meeting. There was a motion to receive both resolutions; unanimously approved.

Traditionally the May meeting is not adjourned but prorogued. Senators are reminded that the first item of business in that meeting will be the election of officers. Please consider the matter carefully.

The meeting was recessed at 4:30 p.m.

And so, Constant Reader, we come to the end of another academic and Senatorial year and the conclusion of my term as your Secretary. Accordingly, this will be the last set of minutes from my hand. It has been a pleasure to serve you as an officer, and I look forward to four more years with you as a Senator. Thank you for your patience, encouragement, assistance, and fidelity.

Respectfully submitted by
Stanley Hauer
Secretary to the Senate

Approved by
Stephen Oshrin
Senate President

Tuesday, May 12, 2009