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## Faculty Senate Minutes - December 5, 2008

USM Faculty Senate

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## Faculty Senate Meeting of December 5, 2008 Minutes

**Attendance.** The following Senators were in attendance (proxies in parentheses): Annulis, Bass (Greene), Beckett, Brannock, Bristol, Buchanan, Burgess, Burnett, Campbell, Daves, Davis, Evans, Goggin (Meyer), Gould, Green (Babu George), Greene, Hannon, Hargbaugh, Hauer, Judd, Klinedinst, Kyriakoudes, Lunsford, McGuire, Meyer, Oshrin, Pandey, Pate (Mary Anderson), Piazza, Rachal, Rakocinski, Redalje, Rehner, Rushing, Scurfield, Smithka (Hauer), Spencer (Brannock), Tingstrom, Young.

Absent were Senators Blackwell, Fisher, and McCormick.

**Report from Provost Lyman.** The Provost spoke for the administration, as President Saunders was away at a SACS conference. He began by reading a statement from the President, then he described briefly some events affecting the university.

1. The dysfunctional listserv caused considerable problems with document delivery at the last Academic Council meeting. The problem is a 20 megabyte cap on the size of mail packets; Mr. Coffman is investigating the problem and a resolution.
  
2. Some units in the institution are being reorganized. The proposed plan for the College of Business was rejected by the Academic Council the previous week; nevertheless, it will be referred to Graduate Council soon. The REF department in the College of Education and Psychology is also being reorganized, at their own wish. Nursing has requested to be made a separate college; the Provost has received the petition to that effect and is considering the matter. (Later in the meeting Senator Scurfield raised a concern that university reorganization is taking place without consultation of the faculty.)
  
3. As surely everyone must know, budget cuts are now in effect. The Provost emphasized that these are true budget *cuts*, not restrictions. Units must actually return funds, not just refrain from spending them. If a position line is eliminated, it is not frozen but permanently lost. These cuts are affecting all offices, units, colleges, and departments; the units themselves, or their directors, will decide how such cuts should be made. Budget cuts are 2% (\$1.9 million) this year and 4% next year; the Provost is not contemplating the latter yet, awaiting clarification. It is uncertain whether next year's 4% includes this year's 2% cut or will be added to it.

The Provost received a number of questions about the budget reductions. Some highlights: (1) There are a lot of unknown issues: what will tuition be, and whether enrollment will increase, as it often does during hard economic times. (2) The question of IT licenses came up. How long are these issued for? Should we consider open-source software? Provost Lyman answered "No" to the question: When issues of the budget are analyzed, are software licensing costs and terms considered? Homer Coffman disclosed that the cost of the OCS system hosting services (not the

license cost itself) is \$400k/annually and that Microsoft Office license is approximately \$135k/annually to the university. (3) Should differential cuts have been considered, a Senator queried. The Provost responded that they were not because these debits were imposed mid-year. Certainly if this condition continues, across-the-board cuts will not be the preferred method. (4) An important issue is the status of current hires; the Provost assured the Senate that the university is committed to hiring all positions advertised before the freeze. (5) One Senator raised the specter of possible salary cuts. The Provost demurred, reminding the Senate that the President still wants to institute pay raises next year—even if only slight ones. The matter arose at the Retention Summit that the President hosted two weeks ago. If we have a 700 student increase in enrollment, we can award ½ percent of raises for faculty. (6) Finally a Senator queried whether the Faculty Senate was the major outlet for the faculty to communicate with the Provost. The Provost answered by punning on the article: not “the” major outlet but “a” major one.

4. Beginning in January students will be able to use a Go Gold Card, allowing them access to their scholarship funds immediately. The attraction to the offering company is that students may continue with the company after graduation. See the website [www.gogoldcard.com](http://www.gogoldcard.com).

5. Football team is going to the New Orleans Bowl; there is a \$350,000 purse; tickets are \$15.

6. The President's Retention Summit presented many profitable ideas for adoption. The Provost is dedicated especially to improving retention between the first and second semesters, as well as retaining community-college transfers. A new assistant dean of student affairs will be added to address precisely this issue.

7. Finally the Provost addressed the controversial issue of the purchase of a university airplane. The USM Foundation will make the purchase; the university will be the lessee from them. The Provost emphasized strongly that the deal is still in negotiation, and is not complete. The airplane is not a jet, but a 1980 King Air Airplane, like the one we had for many years. In a written statement read by the Provost, President Saunders stressed the extensive amount of travel (over \$8 million last year alone) among the faculty, administration and other offices including athletics and development. The President's words summed the matter thus: “Instead of giving the money to Delta Airlines, we will be giving it to ourselves.” There will be scheduled trips with published rates. Total cost is approximately \$200,000 per year or about \$800 per hour. The Provost admitted that the cost might be slightly more expensive (about \$800 per hour) than commercial rates; the savings will be in volume, responsiveness, and flexibility. More passengers will, of course, share the cost. Heavy use means lower rates. Athletics and the Advancement Office will be assessed at the same rate as other units of the institution.

The question of the relationship between the Foundation and E&G monies was raised. It was observed that the budget cut is the same as that of the total cost of the airplane (roughly \$1.8 million). Townspeople may not see the difference between the two budget offices and are confused and angry at our buying an airplane at the time of a budget cut. The Provost queried in return whether faculty will cease flying because of budget restraints. “We can't stop doing business, and we must find revenue strains outside the normal.” The hope is that the airplane will

do this.

All agreed that the presentation of the data justifying this purchase will be important and should be released to the public. The Provost concurs that “the timing could not be worse,” emphasizing that the idea of purchasing an airplane is not a new one.

After an hour and a quarter of questions the Provost limped from the lectern, his pride still intact.

**Forum Speaker: Dr. Carole Kiehl, Dean of University Libraries.** President Oshrin introduced Dean of Libraries Dr. Carole Kiehl as the Senate Forum speaker. Her remarks were full and of considerable interest.

Dean Kiehl’s plan is to make the University Library a research-level institution, which it is not now. The Association of South Eastern Research Libraries (ASERL) does not recognize USM for the simple reason that we are not able to provide the kind of research collections that faculty and students require. The university does not allocate enough funds to make the expenditures necessary to enter ASERL. Some institutions in this group spend as much as a staggering \$34 million annually. It should be noted that the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University are members, as is the University of Memphis. In 2007-08 the target expense was \$8.7 million to enter ASERL; we received \$7.2 million, well below that goal. And the forecast is dim: the inflation rate for serials is 9-10%, for books and monographs about 4%. Her investigation suggests that serials have been better supported than books and monographs. To supplement the university funds, we must look for grants, even those do not support collections directly.

Dean Kiehl then turned to the “Approval Plan” which she wishes to introduce to collection development. “Essentially we were getting very little [value] in relation to books,” as opposed to serials. The library has good usage data on print journals, and the librarians are inclined to cancel any journal used less than six times in the past year. Such action has already freed up \$100,000. The new practice of book approvals does *not* replace the departments’ ability to have “firm orders” (i.e., annual library allocations as in the past). In the approval plan the university works with a vendor who examines new publications and evaluates and codes them; the university submits a profile of scholarly and subject needs. Then these are transmitted to the jobber to suggest appropriate titles for examination. Thus we get a much more measured and “across-the-board” collection. Faculty may then accept or reject the books sent for approval. Dean Kiehl stressed that such a system can be finely tuned, so that eventually we will return very little. She emphasized that approval plans present much higher discounts than firm orders, which often create imbalances within the collection.

A Senator asked how the budget for firm orders will be changed when we shift to the approval plan. Dean Kiehl responded that there should be very little difference, or only a total of \$20,000 less. Sen. Kyriakoudes raised the specific example of the history department where the coding of call numbers provided by the library and the academic needs of the department do not correspond. The Librarian responded that the profile should be reviewed.

A Senator queried why the University Library Committee was not convened to discuss this important change. The Librarian responded that it “was about to be.”

After a short recess, President Oshrin reconvened the Senate for officers' reports. He welcomed new Senator Dale Lunsford, replacing Kenneth Zantow who was sublimated into the Gulf Coast administration.

**The Report of the President** was fairly concise. President Oshrin spoke of the Strategic Budget Committee (*recte* Task Force) and the consultant they hired. The strategic plan should have preplanned allowances for budget cuts and increases. This spring President Saunders expects her cabinet to develop strategies in this direction. President Oshrin also spoke of the Strategic Enrollment Planning meetings and their separate consultant, this one from Noel-Levitz. His recommendations are posted at <http://www.usm.edu/fsenate/reports/retentioninitiatives-1.pdf>. The final report of the consultant will be released on January 15, 2009.

In conjunction with Staff Council next Thursday, December 11, in TCC 214 there will be a Legislative Forum. Time for the Senate begins at 3:30, with others to attend at 4:00.

The President Elect spoke briefly about the University Assessment Committee and the survey it sent out. 137 responses to the survey have been received.

Pres. Oshrin entertained a motion to amend the agenda and consider Senator Greene's **Resolution to fully fund the Honors Forum**. The resolution passed without dissent. The Secretary will transmit the resolution to the administration (The resolution is posted at [http://www.usm.edu/fsenate/resolutions/greene\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.usm.edu/fsenate/resolutions/greene_resolution.pdf))

The Senate returned to its published agenda with committee reports and final items of business.

Senator Beckett spoke on behalf of the Awards Committee. Prof. Charles McCormick will be the university's candidate for the HEADWAE Award. He noted problems in the awards process last year, with several persons still to be recognized; they will be so acknowledged at the next meeting of the Senate.

Senator Davis of the Faculty Welfare Committee reported that 150 responses had been received from the faculty satisfaction survey. We need to encourage our faculty colleagues to participate. The deadline is the beginning of the spring semester.

Senator Beckett announced several changes in the constituency of the Faculty Handbook Committee.

Senator Scurfield announced that Tom Lansford has been made Academic Dean of USMGC.

On behalf of the Academic Council, Senator Beckett recommended that departments with proposals before the council should send a representative to speak on behalf of that unit and the

proposal. The problems of electronic transmission of documents were reiterated. iTech will have proposed resolutions to this problem at the next Senate meeting.

Senator Campbell reported that on Friday, February 27, 2009, the School of Mass Comm and Journalism will host a conference in memory of the late Senator Arthur Kaul. There will be a fund-raising luncheon. Faculty are invited to attend.

There being no further business, President Oshrin adjourned the Senate at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stanley Hauer  
Secretary to the Senate

Approved by,  
Stephen Oshrin  
Senate President

December 8, 2008