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Faculty Senate Minutes - May 6, 2011

USM Faculty Senate

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Members Present and Represented (by proxy): M.A. Adams, H. Annulis (Lunsford), J. Bass, D. Beckett, J. Brannock, A. Branton, D. Bristol (Haley), B. Burgess, J. Burnett (George), C. Chatham, R. Conville, D. Daves, A. Davis, L. Downey, D. Fletcher, B. George, C. Goggin, A. Haley, T. Hartsell (Brannock), S. Hauer, N. Howell, D. Lunsford, M. Lux, K. Masters, D. Masterson, C. McCormick, C. Meyers, S. Oshrin, R. Pandy, S. Piland, C. Rakocinski (Redalje), D. Redalje, T. Rehner, S. Reischman, A. Sevier (Burgess), K. Shelley, J.H. Shin (Brannock), D. Tingstrom, J. Wolfe.

Members Absent: S. Clark, J. Ding, A. Young.

1.0   Call to order

2.0   Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve by Sen. Masterson. Seconded. Change agenda to reflect that Dr. Saunders was unable to attend the meeting. Motion carried.

3.0   Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve by Sen. Lux. Seconded. Motion carried.

4. 0   Guest Reports – 45

Dr. Gerry Cadenhead Fletcher, former Dean of the College of Nursing talked about the importance of athletics to a university. Some positive aspects of a strong athletics program at a university include.

1. Public relations vehicle for the university. Newspapers and local news cover USM athletics.
2. She believes that a strong athletics program helps recruit students.   Provides an opportunity for students to attend college who could not have otherwise.
3. Helps student see athletics as part of the college experience. People choose a college at times because of the athletics program.
4. Promotes engagement of students/alumni with the university. Brings alumni back to campus. Allows university people to engage these alumni. Way for academics to promote their areas.
5. Visibility and economic impact on the community. Allows the community to engage with the university.
6. Attract non alumni to the university. Allows them to participate in campus activities.

Sen. Rehner asked if she had any ideas for strengthening the relationship between academics and athletics. Dr. Fletcher thinks that with younger people coming into the athletics department the possibility of strengthening the relationship will increase.

   4.2 Kathy Hayman (Barnes & Noble bookstore)

Ms. Hayman discussed how many textbooks are available in an e-format that can be integrated into Blackboard. These can be downloaded to pc or Mac. Publishers decide what can be produced electronically. The e-books cannot be used on iPhones, iPads, or Android phones.

Barnes & Noble is starting to use rental books. Not all books are available, but this is an option for students.

4.2 Provost Lyman

Dr. Lyman talked about the current budget situation. He stated that the current cut in state appropriations is $845,000. The enhancement fund has increased. The current cuts to the University stand at $6.4 million. These cuts include an increase in worker's compensation, summer school profit sharing program with colleges, an increased student bad debt budget, faculty promotions, graduate assistant scholarship funds because of salary increases, facilities insurance, and an increase in the library's budget of $100,000. The University hopes to have an increase in the budget with tuition and enrollment increases.

The University budgets incrementally. If the budget goes up 3%, everyone goes up 3%. We have a funding formula based on the Texas model, but we do not implement it. It is based on a weighting scheme with weights assigned to types of student (i.e. humanities undergraduate, natural science graduate student, etc.). If the funding formula was implemented statewide, USM would be a relatively small loser with the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State doing well. If this formula focuses solely on in-state tuition, USM would do well because the other major Mississippi institutions have a high enrollment of out-of-state students.

Sen. McCormack asked if the University is growing or losing students because of community colleges. Dr. Lyman stated that 60% of students who attend USM have attended community colleges. The University of Mississippi and Mississippi State had big bumps in their enrollment. Our enrollment bump will come later when community college students attend in their third year. In 2015, the University would like to have an enrollment of 18,000.

A proposal was submitted to the IHL requesting permission to change the name of the undergraduate degree in polymer science to polymer science and engineering. This name change would enhance the employability of graduates, increase graduate salaries, and help with grant opportunities. The department would have to see accreditation for the newly named program. Even though it is a renaming situation, the University had to submit it as a new program. USM has no intention of starting an engineering program. Instead, USM wants to take a current, signature program and optimize it.

Dr. Lyman states that he supports the recommendation from Faculty Senate to create a student/faculty classroom conduct policy. No current policies exist. Sen. Rehner is concerned that the reputation of faculty may be damaged with fast actions. There need to be steps to protect faculty as well as students.

Dr. Lyman remarked that to deal with an out of control situation, the first thing to do is to separate the people. The administration has kept the matter quiet. Much of the talk has come from the two parties involved.

Sen. Haley asked if there are guidelines that exist where students can complain about faculty. Dr. Lyman responded that there are three grievance procedures but none that can be applied to all situations. The procedures need to include guidance on how to immediately respond to difficult situations.

5.0   Officer Reports – 15
        5.1 President

Sen. Davis asked for nominations for president elect and secretary elect. Dave Beckett agreed to run for president-elect with Ann Branton agreeing for secretary-elect. Nominations will continue to be received until the June meeting.

5.2 President-elect

Sen. Rehner gave the budget report.

5.3 Secretary/Secretary-elect
No report

6.0 Committee Reports
6.1 Academic and Governance (Redalje/Shelley) – 15
6.1.1 Reports
6.1.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

The committee has met via email about various policies and is looking into a recommendation for guidelines when dealing with complaints relating to classroom behavior for faculty/students.

6.1.1.2 Faculty Handbook (Lux)

The committee is looking into what "good standing" means. There have been discussions about evaluations and terms of chairs. Council of Chairs is forming a committee to talk about this topic. They will give a proposal to faculty handbook. Faculty handbook committee bylaws have been created.

6.1.1.3 Academic Council (Downey)

Sen. Masters stated that there is a new template for the general education curriculum (GEC). This leaves the credit hours the same, but creates a reorganization of categories. Some of these changes include omitting the finance course and adding a philosophy class to the humanities area. Next, the committee will discuss computer competency in the GEC.

Sen. Rehner thanked the entire GEC committee for all their hard work on creating the new template.

6.1.1.4 Council of Chairs (Branton)

Sen. Branton stated that Council of Chairs discussed the textbook policy. Council of Chairs will also look into forming an ad hoc committee to look at the terms of chairs. Dr. Francis Lucas will be the guest at the June meeting. Sen. Beckett stated that terms for chairs came from the provost in 1999. Sen. Lux stated that it was recommend to go into the faculty handbook, but that never happened. Sen. Oshrin stated that it was voted on by the Council of Chairs, but that it never went forward.

6.1.1.4 E-Learning Committee (Burnett)
No report
6.1.1.5 Graduate Council
No report
6.1.1.6 Internationalization Council

No report
6.1.1.6 Quality Enhancement Program (Howell)

The advisory board will solicit applications for the "Finding a Voice" seminar series.   There is a push to ensure that the committee is targeting senior capstone professors.

6.1.1.6 Professional Education Council

No report

6.1.1.7 Strategic Enrollment Planning Council

No report

6.1.1.8 Strategic Planning Council

No report
6.1.2 Charges and Current Issues
6.1.2.1 **Recommendation (Redalje/Shelley)**

A recommendation was presented to create a policy for student/faculty classroom conduct (see APPENDIX A). There are no current policies on how to deal with situations like this. The recommendation calls for the administration to appoint a committee to develop the policy with references to the policy in student/faculty/employee handbooks.

Motion to approve by Sen. Conville. Seconded.

Sen. Haley asked if the faculty senate should provide recommendations for the membership of the committee. Student members tend to be student government representatives. He suggested that we also look at including students not involved in student government. Sen. Redalje asked Sen. Haley to send him some suggestions.

Sen. Redalje noticed that staff was not included in the recommendation, but that they should be included in the future.

The recommendation carried.

6.2 Budget (Adams/Clark) – 5
6.2.1   Reports

6.2.1.4 University Priorities Committee (Rehner)

The committee needs maintain the structure they have. Any changes should be passed through the Faculty Senate since the basis of the committee came from the Senate.

6.3 Constitution, Bylaws, and Elections (Burgess/Annulis) – 15

Sen. Burgess stated that there were extreme inconsistencies in the data received from human resources and institutional research. Both areas are reevaluating the systems and updating the data. Due to this problem with the data, the first round of elections will need to be redone. The new election will occur in early May.

6.3.1   Reports
6.3.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

6.3.1.1 Committee on Committees (Haley)

6.3.2   Charges and Current Issues
6.3.2.1 Recommendation (Burgess)
6.3.2.1.1 Data Management

Due to issues encountered in the election process, the committee recommends that employee data Remain current. (See Appendix B)

Sen. Beckett requested that records committee be replaced by cabinet.

Moved by Sen. Brannock. Seconded. Motion Passed.

6.4 Evaluation and Assessment (Fletcher/Reischman) – 10
6.4.1   Reports
6.4.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings) – Admin Eval Report

6.4.1.2 Institutional Research and Effectiveness

6.4.1.4 Assessments
6.4.1.4.1 General Education
6.4.1.4.2 University Assessment Committee

Sen. Howell was thanked for all of her hard work in changing the assessment process. The UAC has passed a policy regarding academic programs' participation in the university-wide assessment process (see Appendix C). This document discusses the purpose and activities of the UAC. The document highlights how the UAC finds it unacceptable that some departments do not participate in the assessment process.

Motion to support policy by Sen. Rehner. Seconded. Motion passed.

6.4.2   Charges and Current Issues
6.4.2.1 Recommendations (Fletcher)
6.4.2.1.1 Admin Evaluation Processes
6.4.2.1.2 Annual Evaluation Congruence

The distribution of evaluation results should happen in the next week. 406 out of 600 faculty responded. The university auditor has agreed to analyze the data in the future since he is not associated with any academic department.
Some concerns that arose included undeliverable emails, flawed data (i.e. incorrect titles, retired faculty, etc), anonymity concerns, evaluations not limited to the evaluator's chair, deadline too short, and faculty not notified of electronic process. Next year a strong marketing campaign needs to occur prior to evaluations.

6.5 Materials and Resources (Branton/Lux) – 5
6.5.1   Reports
6.5.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)
No report.

6.5.1.2 Campus Master Facility Planning (Conville)

6.5.1.3 iTech Advisory Council

6.5.1.4 Libraries Advisory Council

6.5.1.5 Space Utilization Committee (Gould)

6.5.1.6 Textbook and Course Materials Committee (Davis)
6.5.1.7 Other

6.6 Research and Scholarship (Downey/Masterson) –5
    6.6.1   Reports
        6.6.1.1 Activities

No report

        6.6.1.2 Institutional Animal Care

        6.6.1.3 Institutional Review Board

        6.6.1.4 University Research Council (Shelley)

Sharon Topping is the new chair. University Research Day (formerly LETTERS Day) will be held on November 4.

        6.6.1.5 Other

Sen. Redalje stated that the limitations on computer purchases by the university are too stringent. The current options are not applicable to research in many fields with all of the computers being entry level. He also remarked that the wait can be long with one professor waiting six months. Sen. Rehner commented that if you buy your own computer, iTech will not service it. Sen. Masterson said that he would talk to Dr. Wiesenburg about the matter. Sen. Haley reminded that iTech will not support Apple computers.

Sen. Tingstrom stated that he was not prepared for the length of the Responsible Conduct of Research training. After the 4-6 hours on the introductory section, he had to complete other modules which took the same amount of time. In the end, he spent 12-16 hours on the training. He felt that the amount of time to complete the training was not communicated.

Sen. Downey said that alterations cannot be made to the training at this time. By not completing the training, a professor will not be allowed to teach graduate courses.

    6.7 University Awards - 15
        6.7.1   Reports
        6.7.1.1 Activities (Awards Revisions)

The Faculty Senate – University Presidents Awards applications have been received. Recipients of the awards will be determined the first week of May.

Sen. Brannock distributed drafts of requirements for awards given through the provost's office. She asked that any changes to the drafts be sent to her.

    6.8 University Relations (Conville/Sevier) –5

6.8.1 Reports
6.8.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Conville stated that alumni are interested in what faculty are doing on campus. He emphasizes how faculty need to determine how to communicate their activities.

6.8.1.2 Gulf Coast Faculty Council (Lunsford)

The council had its last meeting of the year. Dr. Lucas attended and addressed issues on the coast. They brainstormed about things that can be done to improve programs and the faculty work environment.

6.8.1.3 Alumni Affairs

6.8.1.6 Legislative Affairs

6.8.1.2 Staff Council

6.8.1.4 Student Organizations

6.8.1.7 Student Recruitment and Retention Initiative

6.8.1.8 Student Support Services

6.8.1.8 University Foundation/Gifts

6.9 University Welfare (Burnett/Haley) – 5
6.9.1 Reports
6.9.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Haley stated that the smoking resolution has gone to the president. Dr. Saunders has instructed Jody Ryder to develop some plans. The nonsmoking plan will be adopted in one of two ways. 1. Smoking areas will be established with small fines. Participation will be encouraged. 2. . Smoking areas will be established with large fines. After one year, the university will be smoke free.

6.9.1.2 Faculty Pay and Benefits

6.9.1.3 University Climate Committee

6.9.1.4 University Club

6.9.1.5 University Health Initiative

7.0 Other Business -15
7.1 Individual Concerns

The May meeting is recessed until the June meeting.

APPENDIX A

The Need for the Development of a Student-Faculty Classroom
Conduct Policy and Process at USM

Over the past few years there have been several instances where there have been complaints filed about faculty conduct in the classroom. In these cases, the faculty members were, in general, suspended from classroom duties until the appropriate information was gathered and/or a remedy was enacted.

During the course of these events, it was made clear that at USM, there was no clear policy on Faculty-Student Conduct in the classroom and that there was no clear guidance or process in place for how to address a complaint filed against a faculty member or a student. There was no process in place for gathering information, holding a hearing on the situation, making a decision of an action, or for there to be an appeal of that decision.

There was also no policy for a follow-through evaluation of the outcome of the action and/or remedy to the situation.

This void needs to be addressed in a comprehensive and inclusive manner so that there is a clear set of Faculty-Student Classroom Conduct policies that are known by all at USM, a process for bringing a complaint about inappropriate conduct, an information gathering process, a hearing of such information, a set of possible remedial actions, a process for appeals of the proposed remedial action and a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the action in addressing proper classroom conduct by either a student or a faculty member.

Therefore, the Faculty Senate recommends that the administration appoint a committee with representation from all stakeholder groups to develop the framework for Faculty-Student Conduct in the classroom that addresses policy and process from the initial filing of a complaint to the eventual resolution and solution of the conduct issue. This Conduct Policy should be included or referenced in the USM Student Handbook and the Faculty Handbook.

Recommendation to Russ Willis regarding management of University employee data

Accurate and current employee data are a necessity for colleges, departments, programs, committees, grant-seekers and others to conduct regular business and carry out employment duties.

Because of errors and inconsistencies between data received from Institutional Research and Human Resources over the past several years, the Faculty Senate recommends that the University create a standardized list of all faculty and staff employed by the University. Additionally the Faculty Senate recommends that the University institute a uniform process for submitting changes to employee status, including change of address, rank, department, college, retirement and resignation that will result in these changes being submitted at a central point and dispersed to all applicable offices.

The faculty senate further recommends that this process be closely monitored by Executive Cabinet to ensure that the process is implemented and that all relevant bodies be made aware of the procedures by which this process shall be accomplished.

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University Assessment Committee Policy Regarding Academic Programs' Participation in the University-Wide Assessment Process

The purpose of the University Assessment Committee (UAC) is to support the process of continual self-evaluation and improvement across all academic and administrative units at The University of Southern Mississippi. Assessment involves the articulation of desired student learning outcomes, the design of measures to assess student learning in relationship to those outcomes, and the systematic collection of findings to determine if, and to what extent, student learning is occurring. Student learning outcomes assessment data is reported and preserved in WEAVEonline, the program adopted by the UAC as the university-wide assessment database.

Each year, a report of program and academic unit assessment participation is made to the deans, provost and president of The University of Southern Mississippi. The UAC will continue 1) its recognition of academic programs judged to provide adequate and commendable support to SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1, 2) to hold the annual Assessment Showcase that recognizes academic programs judged to provide commendable support to SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1; and 3) provide focused guidance and assistance to those programs that do not achieve at least an adequate rating in a given year. The UAC will include in that report a list of any academic programs that did not submit plans and reports required within the university-wide assessment process.

The UAC finds it unacceptable that some academic programs consistently do not participate in the university-wide assessment process and documentation of such in WEAVEonline. Such lack of participation undermines the university-wide efforts in assessment and jeopardizes the university response to SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1. The UAC supports academic programs' participation in discipline-specific accreditation processes; however, this participation does not exempt a program from participation in the university-wide assessment process.
End of Policy Statement

Items for future consideration:
UAC recommendations for the future are that 1) University Assessment Committee processes be used by the University Priorities Committee (UPC) as well as be incorporated into their program prioritization within the work of the UPC, and 2) successful completion of assessment documentation be incorporated in performance evaluations of those department chairs and program coordinators responsible and of their respective deans. It is essential to the continued success of the university that assessment data are collected and the results be acted upon for improvement of student learning.

Note: This policy will be placed on the USM Institutional Effectiveness and the Provost's websites.