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Faculty Senate Minutes - April 1, 2011

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate
Fleming Education Center 104
Gulf Park Campus
April 1, 2011

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

Members Absent: D. Bristol, S. Clark, A. Young.

1.0 Call to order

2.0 Approval of Agenda

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

3.0 Approval of Minutes

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

4.0 Guest Reports – 45

4.1 President Saunders

Dr. Saunders has a prior engagement and could not attend.

4.2 Provost Lyman

University administration is closely following the state budget. We are close to having a completed budget. Budget reductions will be far less than anticipated last year. The cut should be 2-4%. Unanticipated costs have come up like retirement and health insurance, but in the end, the deficit will probably be less than the \$15m anticipated last year. The university has taken steps to cost save.

The retirement incentive program has resulted in 120-130 people enrolled which is above target. More staff than faculty are retiring which makes the money recovered from this initiative less. The final numbers of retirees and money will be available next fiscal year.

It is fairly certain that furloughs are not being considered. Dr. Saunders if very interested in a way to provide salary increases, and she hopes to make it a priority.

Sen. Haley asked if staff will get a salary raise first followed by faculty. Dr. Lyman believes that the raise would be across the board.

Dr. Lyman stated that everyone on campus is working on increasing enrollment numbers. There will be a 7% tuition increase starting in fall 2011. All of the numbers point to us coming out of the budget slump. The next stage will be to reallocate and enhance academic programs which will start next spring.

Sen. Hauer asked why business was chosen to get a new building when there are other buildings in far worse shape. Dr. Lyman responded that private donors could more likely provide the additional money needed to construct a building for the College of Business. Joseph A. Green building will probably become a commons building not belonging to any one college.

Sen. Rehner asked how the university is going to deal with so many staff members retiring. Dr. Lyman stated that some areas will have some difficulties for the year. He believes that essential staff positions will probably be rehired. The next year is going to be tough on remaining faculty and staff, but we should go back to full strength in 2012.

Sen. Oshrin asked if there has been discussion about increasing parking fees. Dr. Lyman said that this has not been discussed.

Dr. Lyman said that the university is trying a new advising module in SOAR. It is a screen-based format rather than pencil and paper. It has its advantages and disadvantages, but they are going to try it to see if it improves the process. Sen. Rehner commented how this has not been communicated fully around campus. Dr. Lyman stated that he believes that there were classes offered on the system.

Sen. Oshrin asked if the new faculty members in Curriculum and Instruction will be located in the Speech/Hearing Building. Dr. Lyman stated that the Instruction Technology professors will be moved to that building. Sen. Oshrin stated that the Speech/Hearing Building is critically short on space with many people in using rooms for offices that are intended for other purposes. Dr. Lyman encouraged the Speech/Hearing department to submit a request to the space utilization committee for more space in the building.

4.3 Vice President Lucas

Dr. Lucas gave an update on building construction on the gulf coast campus. Construction on a new science building will begin in the following months with nine designated laboratories. The old community recreation building will be adapted to become the new health building. She is waiting on approval to start Hardy Hall and is searching for additional funding for Elizabeth and Lloyd Halls.

Dr. Lucas stated that these buildings will have offices and classrooms. Sen. Beckett asked if the science building will have teaching and research laboratories. Dr. Tom Lansford stated that there are going to be research labs in the building.

Sen. Haley asked if there is a projected completion date. Dr. Lucas hopes to have the Science Building completed in 18 months, but is uncertain about the other projects.

Sen. Beckett asked about the status on the Cross Creek campus. Dr. Lucas stated that they realized that if they did not rebuild Gulf Park then they may lose it. The decision was made to stay at Gulf Park. She remarked that Cross Creek is still on the horizon.

There was a discussion about issues that were addressed at the gulf coast town hall meeting that preceded the Faculty Senate meeting. Many of the concerns had to deal with the governance structure on the coast. Many of the deans lack job descriptions for their jobs. There is confusion about who to report to on the coast campus because of the current structure.

Sen. Rehner expressed his interest in the gulf coast campus because he has a program there. He has questions about who is responsible for the academic side. It appears that the administration is overseeing academic functions.

Dr. Lansford reports to Dr. Lyman on academic issues. Issues relating to the budget and physical space go to Dr. Lucas. Dr. Lyman stated that most academic issues are probably governed within the colleges and departments. Local issues need additional clarification regarding line of command.

Sen. Fletcher stated that the school of construction was once on the coast, but a decision was made to back out because there was not a proper line of command on budget, annual evaluations, and academics. He wants his department to be on the coast, but it's difficult to manage at this time. Dr. Lucas realizes that there are some issues relating to lines of command and that they are talking about these issues. Sen. Annulis pointed out that these issues are not new and have existed for a very long time.

Sen. Rehner asked how issues like budget accounts and advising are being communicated. Does the information come from the vice president of the campus or the vice president of academic affairs?

Dr. Lansford spoke about it to the deans and associate deans. He believes that it was not communicated to faculty chairs. He had hoped that the departments would have been involved in the discussion.

5.0 Officer Reports – 10

5.1 President

5.1.1 Communications

Two resolutions went to the cabinet where they are being considered. Elections will be held at the May meeting. Nominations for president elect and secretary are being accepted.

Sen. Becket asked if the Faculty Senate had received a response from the president, provost, and dean of libraries about the resolution defending the tenure track status of librarians. Dr. Lyman stated that he was unable to give a meaningful answer to that question because some people should be tenure track and some should not be. It depends what status best suits the position. Dr. Lyman remarked that the library is being treated like departments with vacancies being filled with visiting or instructor hires instead of tenure track positions until the budget improves.

Sen. Haley asked if faculty are going to have input when tenure track positions are converted to untenured positions. Dr. Lyman stated that faculty should have input.

Sen. Brannock asked if the administration was thinking about moving librarians to untenured status. Dr. Lyman stated that there is no movement to change the tenure status of librarians.

5.2 President-elect

Sen. Rehner gave the budget report. He stated that Dr. Saunders has offered to cover honorariums for the Faculty Senate – Office of the President Awards. The Faculty Senate thanks Dr. Saunders for this support.

5.3 Secretary/Secretary-elect

No report

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Academic and Governance (Redalje/Shelley) – 25

Sen. Redalje stated that the committee has been working via email.

6.1.1.2 Faculty Handbook (Lux)

Sen. Lux stated that she had distributed the revisions to the bylaws and that many early suggestions were incorporated into the bylaws. The remaining suggestions will be brought to the faculty handbook committee.

6.1.1.3 Academic Council (Downey)

No report

6.1.1.4 Council of Chairs (Branton)

No report

6.1.1.4 E-Learning Committee (Burnett)

No report

Sen. Lyman stated that the federal department of education has suggested regulations on distance learning which will probably go into effect in July 2011. The regulations will require universities to obtain authorization from states to offer online and other distance education services to residents of those states. The application process can be costly with fees up to \$10,000 annually. This legislation may make it difficult for USM to accept students from some states. Sen. Lux asked how this will impact people in the military. Dr. Lyman said that there may be stipulations for military personnel, but that he is not aware of the particulars at this time.

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 is meeting and looking at recommendations from the GEC on the 2500 word requirement. Capstone syllabi are being looked over by the subcommittee. The QEP report is being compiled for the report due in 2012.

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

6.2.1.1 Resolutions (Redalje)

Both resolutions were read at the last meeting and revised according to suggestions.

The first resolution supports the gulf coast resolution on advisement. Sen. Redalje said that the committee believed that the resolution put forth by the gulf coast campus relating to advisement was on point and succinct.

The resolution passed.

Dr. Lyman stated that the administration is looking at creating a center for undeclared majors similar to the University of Central Florida model. The advisers for these students would mainly be staff. Once a major is declared, the students would go to the departments for advising.

The second resolution states that unfilled tenure track vacancies should be replaced by tenure track faculty to the greatest extent possible.

The resolution passed.

6.2 Budget (Adams/Clark) – 5

A resolution was sent to the cabinet, and the committee is waiting on a response.

6.2.1.2 Budget Team

6.2.1.3 Strategic Planning Council

6.2.1.4 University Priorities Committee (Rehner)

6.3 Constitution, Bylaws, and Elections (Burgess/Annulis) –20

6.3.1 Reports

6.3.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Election ballots are ready for distribution. There have been some issue relating to research faculty and who is able to serve on Faculty Senate. Those issues have been resolved. Sen. Annulis commended Sen. Burgess for her detailed work with getting the ballots out.

6.3.2 Charges and Current Issues

6.3.2.1 Resolution (Burgess)

Sen. Burgess presented a resolution that changes language in the bylaws. This includes the addition of electronic voting and the use of proxies. After some discussion, section 145 will be removed for consideration at the next meeting. The resolution passed.

6.4 Evaluation and Assessment (Fletcher/Reischman) – 20

6.4.1 Reports

6.4.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings) – Admin Eval Report

Sen. Fletcher provided an overview of the administrative election process. One issue with the process is that faculty information received from IR is only 90% accurate. This was fixed by contacting the deans regarding questionable information. There were concerns from faculty regarding anonymity. There was discussion about whether anonymity concerns came from administrators or faculty. Sen. Lunsford asked if there was a way for the software to be accessed via SOAR, so that one person does not have access to the evaluations. Sen. Howell brought up the point that a person was not limited to evaluating her chair or dean because she was able to choose any person on the list to evaluate.

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

6.4.2 Charges and Current Issues

6.4.2.1 Recommendations (Fletcher)

6.5 Materials and Resources (Branton/Lux) – 10

6.5.1 Reports

6.5.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

No report

6.5.1.2 Campus Master Facility Planning (Conville)

No report

6.5.1.3 iTech Advisory Council

No report

6.5.1.4 Libraries Advisory Council

No report

6.5.1.5 Space Utilization Committee (Gould)

No report

6.5.1.6 Textbook and Course Materials Committee

No report

A resolution was discussed about funding to the library. Sen. Rehner suggested adding a line that the Faculty Senate appoints someone to the Library Advisory Committee. The resolution passed.

6.6 Research and Scholarship (Downey/Masterson) –10

6.6.1 Reports

6.6.1.1 Activities

Sen. Downey reported that she had talked to Dr. Wiesenburg about Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) training and that 8 hours of face-to-face training is required by many granting agencies. Training will hopefully be offered in the fall. They are discussing ways to deliver the training and how to break it down (1 day training, two 4 hour sessions, etc).

6.6.1.2 Institutional Animal Care

No report

6.6.1.3 Institutional Review Board

No report

6.6.1.4 University Research Council (Shelley)

Sen. Shelley stated that the committee has selected Innovation Award recipients. The awards will be officially presented at the Research Awards Day in the fall.

6.7 University Awards - 5

6.7.1 Reports

6.7.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

The Faculty Senate-Office of the President Awards have been advertised. The recipients should be announced at the June meeting.

Dr. Cynthia Easterling requests that the Faculty Senate looks over the suggested edits for awards administered by the provost's office. These will be distributed electronically prior to the next meeting.

6.8 University Relations (Conville/Sevier) –15

6.8.1 Reports

6.8.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

No report

6.8.1.2 Gulf Coast Faculty Council (Lunsford)

No report

6.8.1.3 Alumni Affairs

No report 6.8.1.6 Legislative Affairs
 No report 6.8.1.2 Staff Council
 No report 6.8.1.4 Student Organizations
 No report 6.8.1.7 Student Recruitment and Retention Initiative
 No report 6.8.1.8 Student Support Services
 No report 6.8.1.8 University Foundation/Gifts
 No report

6.9 University Welfare (Burnett/Haley) – 20
 6.9.1 Reports
 6.9.1.1 Activities (Committee Meetings)

Sen. Haley stated that he and Sen. Burnett attended the listening session on the gulf coast campus. There were many issues raised at the meeting. These include a shortage of quality office and research space, the need for better communication technology between campuses, and ways to improve the methods for coast professors to participate in university affairs. The committee is discussing a future resolution to address some of these issues.

No report 6.9.1.2 Faculty Pay and Benefits
 No report 6.9.1.3 University Climate Committee
 No report 6.9.1.4 University Club
 No report 6.9.1.5 University Health Initiatives
 No report

6.9.2 Charges and Current Issues
 6.9.2.1 Resolutions (Haley)

The first resolution calls for salary increases. Sen. Rehner asked that this include staff as well as faculty. The resolution passed.

The second resolution supports the initiative to make USM campuses smoke free. The resolution also states that certain aspects should be taken into consideration like personal choice, enforcement, using smoking section, and adequate funding.

Sen. Oshrin stated that he is still concerned about the smoking sections being located in places that are not convenient to some smokers which could be problematic when smoking on a 15 minute break. Sen. Haley remarked that he thinks that Faculty Senate should not be involved in the placement of the smoking areas. The resolution passed with 19 for, 17 against, and 1 abstaining.

7.0 Other Business
 7.1 Individual Concerns

Sen. Beckett reminded senators that the Faculty Senate mailing list is read by people outside Faculty Senate. He received emails from Dr. Lyman and Dean Kiehl regarding statements made on the mailing list to senators. He urged that senators show caution when posting.

7.0 Adjournment

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