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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate
Gulf Coast Campus – FEC 104
March 2, 2012

Members Present and Represented (by proxy): M.A. Adams, L. Agler, J. Anderson (A. Haley), A. Branton, R. Buchanan (D. Fletcher), D. Conville (D. Masterson), D. Daves, K. Davis (A. Branton), K. Dillon, J. Ding (M. Naquin), D. Douglas, L. Downey (A. Branton), M. Dugan (L. Flynn), D. Fletcher, S. Reischman Fletcher, L. Flynn, A. Haley, T. Hartsell, L. Iglesias, D. Lunsford (M. Naquin), M. Lux, D. Masterson, C. McCormick (D. Masterson), C. Meyers (A. Haley), M. Naquin, , W. Odom (R. Press), S. Oshrin (L. Story), S. Piland, R. Press, T. Rehner, A. Sevier, K. Shelley, J. H. Shin (C. Jenkins), C. Sirola, P. Smith (W. Watson), L. Story, D. Tingstrom (K. Shelley), J. Wiggert, T. Zelner.

Absent: M. Elasri, L. Nored

Guests: J. May, T. O'Brien, M. Mays, B. Powell, K. Reidenbach

Gulf Coast Council: P. Anderson, A. Beck, C. Chatham, B. Park, R. Rich, K. Stricklin, J. Walker, K. Zantow.

1.0 Call to order

Dr. Rehner called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM

2.0 Approval of agenda

President Rehner asked for a motion to approve of the agenda. Senator Daves motioned and Senator Fletcher seconded. All approved.

3.0 Approval of minutes (January)

President Rehner asked for a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Senator Lux motioned and Senator Haley seconded. All approved the January meeting minutes as circulated.

4.0 Officer Reports

4.1 President

President Rehner discussed his concern with the open nature of Faculty Senate meetings and particularly easy access to information about FS deliberations at meetings before minutes have been written and approved. The FS executive committee members discussed in their February 24th meeting the need for a recording of meetings for the purpose of accuracy in our minutes. Additional discussion with FS was opened to address concerns especially availability of recorded minutes to senators upon request. Perhaps the minutes really should not be posted to the general public in any format before FS has approved the minutes. Proposal to limit access to FS minutes until they are approved by Faculty Senate was unanimously approved.

4.2 President-elect

No report.

4.3 Secretary

No report.

4.4 Secretary-elect

No report.

5.0 Remarks from Administration

5.1 President Saunders

Dr. Saunders responded to questions regarding the status of the former provost, Bob Lyman by saying he is expected to return to campus in the fall 2012 to join the teaching faculty in Psychology. It is standard practice to provide a semester of transition when an administrator returns to the teaching faculty.

Dr. Saunders gave an update on the VP of Administration. From a pool of over twenty applicants, the committee has narrowed the field to five. Telephone interviews will be conducted and an announcement will be made in a few weeks.

Addressing concerns about salary compression in light of new faculty hires, Dr. Saunders said that while we must meet market rates, she understands that salary compression is a serious issue. Administration will be reviewing models to address compression by setting aside funds either by department by department or by milestone opportunities that would trigger a point when salary adjustments can be made.

Senator Naquin questioned how non-tenure track faculty would figure in salary adjustment. The Provost responded that he is gathering data of current faculty salaries with appropriate CIP code of positions. Dr. Saunders added that she is open to other models and ideas from Faculty Senate to address the problem. FS President Rehner commented that hiring faculty is a good problem to have.

When asked about the results of the University Personnel Committee (UPC) and the funding for higher rated program, Dr. Saunders responded there really is no additional funding. Faculty and staff retirements provided an opportunity to redirect funding to support new hires which were checked against the recommended UPC tiers by the Positions Allocation committee (PAC). The approved list was discussed with Faculty Senate and sent to deans with flexibility to adjust within departments. FS President Rehner asked about the proposed 5% cut to the budget and Dr. Saunders said that savings will buffer cuts somewhat stating we could probably handle a 2.5% cut.

5.2 Interim Provost Wiesenburg

Provost Wiesenburg brought attention to several current topics.

Strategic Enrollment committee has been reconstituted in scope but has not officially met yet. There is a serious need for greater effort in supporting retention and craft a better academic enrollment management that includes more input from all governance bodies. While we can look at data on freshmen, we need better understanding why the junior classmen are not returning. Strategies supported by the Student Success Center did not affect change or improvement and in fact created an undecided pool of students that required more time than expected. We need to re-energize the process and need ideas. A number of senators responded with ideas for student mentors, providing immediate department contacts. Rewards for successful programs to support student retention have been implemented but sustained funding has been difficult this past few years. In some departments, enrollment is not the problem so much as space to hold them. Some programs are actually growing faster than resources can support.

Reconciliation with the Gulf Coast Guidelines and communication about the processes on the Coast have been going on several levels. Deans talk to assistant deans on the Coast to see what issues are concerned with operationally. When there is a list we can have a discussion. The process must not undermine department chairs' responsibilities regardless of its location.

Travel expenses incurred while performing governance responsibilities need to be support centrally from the deans and allocation reimbursement requests funneled to the Provost's office and the new policy should be in place by July FY 2013.

Textbook selection process has been uneven; some faculty and chairs find that it works seamlessly, and others expressed concern per IHL policy where selection of the same text is strongly urged for the same course. The exception policy requires a “why?” The Provost suggested that if teaching a subject from a particular perspective was at issue, perhaps a different course may be offered. A justification for a different text is necessary and needs to be explained. Concern was expressed about the underlying issues IHL is addressing in the policy such as cost of textbooks and other related issues including concern for students on financial aid who have only one bookstore from which to purchase textbooks and customer service issues with the bookstore.

The need for more technology in both classrooms and group use rooms was discussed. Dr. Sliman and Sheri Rawls are sending out surveys to university personnel to determine the needs.

5.3 Interim Athletic Director Jeff Hammond

AD Hammond introduced himself to Senate and shared some facts about his history with USM and desire to return to Southern to serve as interim director to provide leadership to the athletic program the 360 athletes achieve academically and socially as well as athletically. Over the past 100 years success has been uneven and a challenge to maintain a high graduation rate, currently 78%. The other challenge is fundraising to increase athletic scholarships and sale of season tickets to the sports programs. AD Hammond pointed out that there needed to be more out-reach and encouraged senators to join the Centurion Club at \$100. Also on the agenda is a conference realignment which the NCAA will recommend soon. He would also like to see the athletes become more visible in campus student leadership roles and USM students more involved in the Student Eagle Club and to become life-long supporters of their Southern Miss team. Senators appreciated the AD communicating with Faculty Senate and expressed interest more games with sister institutions in Mississippi like Old Miss and MSU.

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Resolution for travel

State law supports travel reimbursement between campuses.

6.2 Classroom Conduct Committee (Michael Mays)

The two subcommittees, one for faculty and one for students, met in January in weekly meetings to discuss complex and multilayered issues and points of view. Borrowing from the University of California document, the committees will try to reconcile the two documents and send out for discussion. In early April the policy will be reviewed and vetted by faculty, feedback form governance groups will provide feedback to the committee with expectations of having the policy in place by fall 2012. Senator Naquin noted also that the student subcommittee is also compiling several documents about conduct and receiving good feedback from student surveys. While an outline on process is being discussed with an expectation that the Faculty Handbook will be the final formal process for faculty. The policy will apply to all faculty in the core of instruction. Other issues brought forward included concern that faculty rights are addressed and antagonistic situations and bullying or vindictive intent are included in the policy on inappropriate conduct.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Resolutions

Resolution on Mentoring: Senator Masterson read the resolution for 2nd reading. Additional comments of support for new faculty and recognition of the varying demands per discipline makes this a timely topic of concern. After the 2nd reading, the resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution in Recognition of Russ Willis: VP Adams read the 2nd reading of the resolution which was unanimously passed. President Rehner agreed to invite Russ to our March 30th Faculty Senate meeting to be recognized by the Senate.

7.2 Searches (faculty and administrative)
No discussion due to time shortage.

7.3 Strategic planning
No discussion due to time shortage.

8.0 Committee Reports

8.1 Academic and Governance (Shelley/Piland)
Two resolutions which would give faculty greater voice and advocacy were brought forward by Senator Haley. The first resolution supported having the FS president become a voting member of the university president's Executive Cabinet. The second resolution supported the creation of a new administrative position under the provost, a Dean of Faculties or Associate Provost who would take an active role in open conversations with university administration as an advocate for faculty interests and concerns. Discussion followed. L. Flynn expressed support for the idea as she had served in an institution in which the position was very effective in representing faculty, particularly in the tenure and promotion process where the Dean of Faculties conducted an annual seminar for faculty to standardize the process. The position also serves the faculty in a mentoring role, and participates in the grievance process. Related to the discussion was the question of whether to pair the two resolutions together or submit them individually. Pros and cons were explored and interests were expressed for a need to frame the resolution to explain the partnership of dean with administration and with faculty. President Rehner observed that we would need support from the entire core of instruction. What were the plans to present this new administrative role to campus governance groups?

8.2 Budget (Fletcher/Agler)
The Provost is requesting input on the current policy about outside employment and conflict of interest. An example of a possible conflict is if a faculty member is teaching the same course at two different institutions of higher learning.

8.3 Constitution and Bylaws (Tingstrom/Naquin)
No report.

8.4 Elections (Reischman Fletcher/Hartsell)

8.5 Evaluation and Assessment (Oshrin/Story)
No report.

8.6 Research and Scholarship (Masterson/Zelner)
No report.

8.7 University Awards (Lux)
Senator Lux made a call for nominees for university awards.

8.8 University Relations (Conville/Sevier)
No report.

8.9 University Welfare (Haley/Nored)
No report.

8.10 Faculty Handbook (Tingstrom)
No report.

8.11 Gulf Coast Faculty Council (Naquin)
The Faculty Council attended the Faculty Senate meeting on the Coast campus and enjoyed a light lunch with FS members.

9.0 Other Business
No other business.

10.0 Adjournment at 5:15PM (Subcommittee chairs – March 23; senate meeting - March 30)

Issues of Interest to the Senate: March 2, 2012

11.0 Issues for Dr Saunders

- 11.1 Many had expected the former Provost to be teaching this spring. What is the status of his academic appointment?
- 11.2 A number of administrative positions are open right now. What are the timelines and processes for either searching or stabilizing the following positions: VP for Admin Affairs, Provost, VPR, Athletic Director?
- 11.3 Many searches are underway for new faculty. Negotiations for closing the deals on hiring are happening now. The salaries that were approved were approved at the 2011 levels. You have said that you were commitment to new hires coming in at CUPA averages. Can you tell us the estimation of what the gap will be between approved salaries and CUPA averages and what is the plan for implementing it since potential faculty must make commitments now?
- 11.4 During the recent budget crisis, the administration asked faculty to cooperate with both a prioritization process and with significant implications for cuts with the promise that as things improved resources would be directed to our most efficient and effective programs. Can you cite five or six examples of the administration directing new resources to highly rated programs? What future plans do you have?

12.0 Issues for Dr Wiesenburg

- 12.1 The strategic enrollment committee met last week. They have been re-constituted. How will their efforts be integrated into a wider strategic planning effort for academics? What is the role that faculty and governance committees will play in that process?
- 12.2 This question may best be answered by the President but what is the latest development of the;
1) reconciliation of the coast guidelines and
2) the travel reimbursement for governance responsibilities?
- 12.3 Other questions?