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Faculty Senate Minutes - March 6, 2015

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Fleming Education Center 301/Joseph Green Hall 203
March 6, 2015

Members Present and Represented (by proxy): M. Alford (F. Heitmuller), J. Anderson, T. Barry, A. Beck, D. Booth (D. Fletcher), R. Buchanan (O. Harvey), S. Cloud, K. Davis, D. Fletcher, D. Griffin, R. Griffitt, A. Haley (C. Tardy), B. Harbaugh (S. Hayden), O. Harvey, B. Hayden, S. Hayden, F. Heitmuller, D. Holt (F. Heitmuller), S. Hrostowski, L. Iglesias, J. Lambers (T. Welsh), M. Leonard, M. Lux, H. Lyn (M. Leonard), C. Meyers (B. Hayden), E. Molaison (M. Lux), C. Miller, L. Neelis, W. Odom, J. Olmi, R. Press, P. Price, L. Rackoff, S. Reischman-Fletcher, T. Roberson (J. Anderson), C. Sirola, S. Rouse, K. Shelley, C. Tardy, M. Van Norden (K. Zantow), T. Welsh, J. White, K. Zantow

Members Absent: K. Goodwin

Guests: Bill Powell, Doug Vinzant, Kyle Stoner, Christa McLeod and Marissa McGillis

- 1.0 The meeting was call to order by Pres. Press, 2:02 PM
- 2.0 The agenda was approved as amended by unanimous voice vote on motion by Sen. Reischman-Fletcher
- 3.0 The February minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote on motion by Sen. Cloud.
- 4.0 Officer Reports
 - 4.1. President Press presented the following report:

To those of you who were able to drive down for today's meeting, my thanks. I understand many of our Hattiesburg colleagues have busy schedules. I want to commend our Coast colleagues for the frequent appearances at our meeting in Hattiesburg; that kind of in-person contact is effective in keeping in touch with colleagues on the other campus.

My thanks to Senator Thelma Roberson who has served us well as Parliamentarian but is soon stepping down from that post. She has prepared a package of bylaw changes for our consideration today and has been an active and very helpful non-voting member of our Executive Committee.

We have representatives from the Student Government Association with us in Hattiesburg today who will report on an SGA proposal for a smoke free campus. An all-faculty ballot was circulated and the result was 43 against and 135 for. We can do another round if there is interest. The SGA also is proposing a new set of suggestions for Dead Week. I suggest we consider both as a Senate and share our deliberations in the April meeting after the relevant committees have looked at the proposals.

We will hear today from the chair of the Welfare and Environmental Concerns on the pending action on the representation of individuals accused of sexual misconduct on campus. And we have some interesting reports from several other committees.

The second rounds of budget cuts are nearly ready. Once again the process has taken place with only limited faculty input despite requests from the Senate. The reason offered is that most of it has to do with personnel. The question still not clear is who will teach the students in classes of adjuncts or lecturers whose contracts are terminated.

The question of on line vs. in-person classes has been raised by our Senate colleagues on the Coast with concern that students on the coast need faculty they can talk to in person in order to support and expand classes and programs. So far there is no clear plan other than trying to meet the needs of students. How that plays out will be something we want to be involved with.

Later this term we will have elections for both President and President-elect. While traditionally the choice of leadership elections has been limited to nominations at the time of the elections, I suggest we consider a process by which candidates be encouraged to present themselves in advance, perhaps with their qualifications and reasons for being willing to serve as leaders, rather than having names put forward only minutes before a vote.

Senators and faculty have been encouraged to contact their representatives to support the 5% pay raise for staff and faculty that all eight of the institutional Presidents are supporting. The Faculty

Senate Presidents are drafting a letter of support as well and have begun asking their faculty to do likewise.

4.3. Secretary Anderson – No report

4.4. Secretary-Elect Welsh – No report

5.0 Remarks from Administration and SGA President

5.1 President Rodney Bennett

President Bennett stated that the University is purchasing [Point Sur](#) a unique vessel to explore and research the Gulf of Mexico, which will advance coastal research and economic development. The vessel, purchased from San Jose State University, is scheduled to arrive on the coast on March 25th or 26th.

Dr. Monty Graham has agreed to serve as Interim Director of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

Southern Miss is partnering with Forest General Hospital to reduce the number of patients with staph infections by identifying risk factors.

The USM Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry earned accreditation for seven years.

The U.S. Small Business Administration will hold a series of workshops, the [Business 101 Series](#), at the Gulf Coast Innovation Center as well as the Trent Lott Center in Hattiesburg during March.

Two USM students were chosen to attend the Clinton Global Initiative at the University of Miami, March 6-8. Council for Undergraduate Research selected a USM student to participate in the 19th Annual Posters on the Hill event this spring in Washington, D.C. The student was one of 60 chosen from more than 500 entries.

Explore British Studies is celebrating four decades – 40 years of study in London with more than 9,000 students.

Building for the future, the completion of three facilities on the Gulf Coast campus: Fitness Center, Health Center, and School for Social Work, scheduled for a March 17th celebration on St. Patrick's Day.

USM alum Cagney Weaver, 4th grade teacher in Biloxi and teacher consultant at Southern Miss Gulf Park, is the recipient of a prestigious teaching award, the \$10,000 Milken Educator Award. She was also invited to become a fellow at the Lowell Milken Center.

USM alum and Mississippi Commissioner of Higher Education Hank Bounds has been appointed as President of the University of Nebraska. USM will host a going-away reception for him and there will be a welcoming reception for the new incoming IHL Commissioner, MUW President Jim Borsig, who is also an alum of Southern Miss.

Founder's Day, Monday, March 30th – 10am in Gulf Park, 3pm in Hattiesburg
Thursday, April 9th, will dedicate Century Park South new dorm for Luckyday Scholars.

Legislative update – working to advocate for 5% salary increase for higher education employees and it's off to a good start.

Hundreds of high school and transfer students visited Gulf Park this week.

Four goals for enrollment:

1. Increase quantity and quality of freshman class
2. Increase number of transfer students
3. Increase retention rate
4. Increase overall enrollment including graduate students, international students, and online students.

Strategic communication initiative – please complete the online survey about perceptions of USM as we work to refresh the institutional brand.

Working on a response to the RISE (Research Initiative on Social Justice and Equality) report re: institutional diversity – it is very important to embrace diversity.

Item from Faculty Senate Executive Committee – Pres. Press shared that there was some thought that there was an increase in some administration salaries just before the budget process began. This was very disturbing and disappointing for Pres. Bennett to hear so he distributed the salaries of University officers and deans that listed salaries for the previous year and for this year. He wants to be transparent, open, and ethical. There is no agenda other than the University to become the best it can be.

5.2 Provost Denis Wiesenburg

Provost Wiesenburg stated that there were two Associate Provosts and there were no salary increases in his office. The retiring position of Assoc. Provost Easterling will be used for the new Assoc. Provost for Student and Faculty Excellence – there will be an internal search for this position. The position for Assoc. Provost for Gulf Park will be a national search and he would like the Assoc. Deans to be part of the search.

The search for Assoc. V.P for Enrollment Management – two candidates have presented and online assessments will be combined.

Teaching forums were established a few years ago as a faculty-driven process to find/implement best practices. New faculty are required to attend at least four forums. Prov. Wiesenburg asked for

recommendations to improve attendance and encouraged the Teaching Committee to discuss forums to see what can be done to improve attendance – presently there are half at night and half afternoon in Hattiesburg but they need real feedback to use limited resources more effectively.

The Provost indicated he wanted to hear about the Coast's issue with online courses. He noted that he would like to increase opportunities for students everywhere, including the Coast and want to increase GEC courses online because we were paying community colleges to teach those online. The goal is to add about 15 courses online per year. There is an online student increase of about 12% per year. Keeping students engaged online in summer helps student retention rates and online courses do not affect revenue.

5.3 CFO Doug Vinzant

Dr. Vinzant stated that he wanted to address the earlier questions about salary increases. There were two administrative salary increases but both were due to promotions and increased responsibilities.

Dr. Vinzant wanted to address parking – parking fees are the only thing that's supporting parking costs and the fees are not enough to cover costs, which is a safety issue (lighting, emergency phones). There will be a rate increase to balance the budget.

Capital investments:

- Traffic control signage (stop, yield, speed limit)
- Way-finding signage
- Painting cross-walks, curbs, parking
- Accessible sidewalks
- Emergency phones, lighting
- Bicycle paths, storage (bike racks)

Hattiesburg and Gulf Park:

- Need for lighting, emergency phones
- Replace gravel lots with hard surfaces
- Address handicap needs for ramps, sidewalks
- Improve traffic control and directional signage
- Enhance bike paths and storage
- Balance who pays with receipt of benefits
- Create revenue stream that supports enhanced campus safety, security, and beautification
- Implementation of bus transit system
- Hillcrest lot on N. side needs to be paved, lighted, beautified with bike corridor
- SW side some houses will be razed, parking lot paved, beautified with bike corridor
- 34th Ave. Ross lot, 35th Ave lot, Montague Blvd. lot improved
- Some emergency phones and lighting in Hattiesburg, more at Gulf Park, GCRL

Problem 1. Inequitable treatment of people across campuses.

Problem 2. Parking fees not enough to support needed upgrades.

Will replace decal fees with single uniform fee on all campuses other than online proposed for fall 2016.

5.4 SGA Vice-President Kyle Stoner

SGA Vice-Pres. Kyle Stoner presented a report on a recent survey about designating USM as a smoke-free campus. The survey was sent to students, faculty, and staff and the data will be compiled. While USM already has a smoke-free policy, it does not include a deadline.

Mr. Stoner also presented a recommendation on “dead week” policies that was modeled on one from Marshall University.

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Gulf Coast Faculty Council

Sen. Leonard presented a RISE (Research Initiative on Social Justice and Equity) report. Pres. Press referred the report to the Welfare Committee and Sec. Anderson added that we should have the full report with qualitative data.

Sen. Hrostowski, Chair of the Welfare Committee and Chair of the University Diversity Committee, made assurances that there are efforts across the University to address this issue and there will be changes soon.

Sen. Leonard reported the following for Research and Scholarship on behalf of Sen. Buchanan: Over the course of this academic year, the Research and Scholarship Committee has met with Dr. Douglas Vinzant and Dr. Gordan Cannon. Currently, there is no consensus for a resolution from the committee. The committee is currently in the process of working with the Communications Committee to develop a faculty survey. The Communications Committee hopes to have the survey completed next month and to report to the senate at the May meeting.

6.2 Senate Committees

6.2.1 Academic and Governance

Sen. Heitmuller entered the following report on behalf of Chair, Sen. Holt: First, we would like to thank the president, Rodney Bennett, for working so quickly in response to our gender equity in pay resolution. The creation of a Title IX officer is a great step and we thank the administration.

We have been working on a resolution addressing salary inversion, a recommendation for annual evaluations, and a few other topics that may have to wait until next year. We have circulated two documents: a resolution in support of protecting existing faculty salaries against salary compression and salary inversion and a recommendation concerning the need for transparency and consistency in annual evaluations. We request that you read them and send any comments/recommendations to the committee through Sen. Hold (david.h.holt@usm.edu). We hope to finalize the documents and bring them to a vote at the next meeting.

March marks the one-year anniversary for the new governance system set forth by the President as Southern Miss as a single university. We continue to monitor the process of the unification and note that not all positions have been filled, the associate provost for the Gulf Coast and the vice president of the Gulf Park campus is still an interim. Finally, Sen. Heitmuller is our Chair Elect and will continue our efforts in the coming year.

6.2.2 Bylaws

Sen. Odom presented the recommendations for revisions to the by-laws on behalf of the Chair, Sen. Roberson. Sen. Inglesias moved that all the typographical revisions (except #8, #9, and #10) be approved and that the clarifications and substantive revisions be tabled until the next meeting. Both motions passed by unanimous voice vote.

6.2.3 Teaching and Service

Sen. B. Hayden reported that upon investigation of the deadline for grade entry into SOAR – the reason for the deadline for posting grades in SOAR is a compromise between deadlines needed for students and faculty.

6.2.4 Welfare and Environmental Concerns

Sen. Hrostowski reported that they met with Dr. Malley and Ms. Rasmussen to review concerns about due process. Malley explained the process and would like to discuss policies related to faculty accused of harassment, but not specific cases, in the April meeting. She also said she would not object to a review of the cases by a trained, independent person.

Sen. Hrostowski expressed concern about lack of training of faculty's direct supervisors in handling issues of accusations of harassment and said that mandatory training is coming soon.

6.2.5 Awards

Sen Barry reported the following:

- The Junior Faculty Awards—teaching, research, creativity awards—have been determined and recipients were informed by the Provost's Office in February.
- All Provost's Office awards (within this committee and beyond the scope of this committee) have been awarded. One exception—that has a March 16 deadline—is the Nina Bell Suggs Professorship (awarded in summer and recognized the following spring). Tammy Barry will be chairing that specific committee and representing the Faculty Senate on it, but the membership is outside of the Faculty Senate Awards Committee.
- Sen. Barry will be arranging with the Executive Cabinet to determine a process for awarding a scholarship that is awarded by Faculty Senate to a faculty member's dependent. Bob Press is signatory as FS President; it is beyond the original charge of the Awards Committee, so we may select a separate, subcommittee for this task.
- Final plans are being made for the Faculty Awards Ceremony on May 1st (occurring just before our May 1st Faculty Senate meeting, both of which will be at Trent Lott Center. All award recipients have been invited and the program is in production.

6.2.6 Research and Finance

Sen. Zantow stated that the committee would report on the budget next meeting. They received a request from Sen. Alford re: land use and that is being looked into as well as how to provide departments and programs with analytics to show productivity or adjust funding.

6.3 University Committees

6.3.1 Student Success Implementation Team

Sen. Price reported the following:

- The Student Success Implementation Team now has a feedback form available from the “Faculty and Staff” menu on the Student Success Web site (<http://www.usm.edu/success/student-success-committee-feedback>). Please see the email below from the chair of SSIT and circulate as needed. We are also happy to now have a link to the Student Success Web site from the USM homepage.
- Advising -- Status of the NEE: students are not advised yet their schedules are not dropped. The SSIT is exploring options for addressing this issue and also planning for advisor training.
- SOAR functionality and advising: The SSIT is exploring capacity for scheduling appointments online; will be testing Advisor Notes soon; may use pilot group.
- Financial Aid/Textbooks/B&N -- Office of First Year Initiative confirmed with Financial Aid Office that as long as students have accepted financial aid in SOAR, they are able to charge textbooks to their account at B&N.
The SSIT is working with B&N on promoting Student Success (flyers, bookmarks in purchases, etc.). Also exploring the idea of directing some funds earmarked for student retention to textbook scholarships.
- Dropping with a W -- A number of requests from students to drop with a W are based on misinformation (students do not think they need the course and they do, students think they get money back and they don't, etc.). Drop requests may be an “intrusive advising” opportunity to talk with the student.
- Membership – The SSIT is adding a library representative to the team
- Institutional Research – The SSIT is exploring software tool for data analysis and projections
- Interim Grades -- Input of interim grades greatly improved

6.3.2 Quality Enhancement Plan Research & Design Tem

The following report was entered by Sen. Barry:

- The QEP R&D Team met on Wednesday, February 11th
- Three departments were awarded travel grants to attend the Gateway to Completion Conference for specific courses in history, math, and biology (the former two are for traditional GEC 01-05 courses; the latter is for a course taught by CoST but heavily attended by CoH students and also not a widespread GEC 01-05 course).
- Some members of the QEP team (not the entire team) submitted an intent application for a Hearin Foundation Grant with a focus on experiential learning (i.e., to supplement QEP funds to meet QEP initiatives).
- Public relations team made plans for best ways to connect to students and faculty and are looking into having a logo contest for the QEP.
- Discussed final plans for specific QEP initiatives, so these initiatives can more fully developed in the written plan. Action team homework is to draft ideas on the components of this initiative.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at noon.

7.0 New Business

Sen. Hrostowski noted that it was only fitting to recognize Senate Secretary Dr. Anderson on the successful defense of her dissertation. Faculty Senate responded with a round of applause.

8.0 Adjournment

Upon a motion by Sen. Sirola, the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 PM by unanimous voice vote.