Faculty Senate Minutes - September 1, 2018

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting

Friday, September 1, 2018, 2:00 p.m.
Union B (Hattiesburg), North Academic Building 125 (Gulf Park: IVN)


Absent: Miles Doleac, Leffi Cewe-Malloy, Jennifer Courts, Melinda Bowens, Lilian Hill, David Lee, Bonnie Harbaugh

1.0 Organizational Items
   1.1 Call to Order
   1.2 Roll Call
   1.3 Recognition of Quorum (17)
   1.4 Recognition of ⅔ membership for voting on Bylaws and Resolutions (22)

2.0 Adoption of Agenda: Approved unanimously by voice vote

3.0 Program
   3.1 Steven R. Moser (Provost) and Kate Howard (AVP and Dean of Admissions), presented on diversity and recruitment strategies for the university. Enrollment numbers are encouraging, especially in the incoming freshman class. Official enrollment numbers will be released to the public soon. Efforts to increase freshman enrollment included more strategic target market efforts. They are focusing on legacy recruitment initiatives. They are looking for faculty members to help the recruitment process at junior colleges by seeking volunteers to serve as a guest lecturer at these institutions. Interested faculty should contact Alden Bennett in the Dean of Admissions office.
   Dr. Moser discussed the formulas for recognizing the performance of units and encouraging collaborative teaching efforts across schools. They will model over the next two months to establish a plan. The results will be shared with the Faculty Senate at a later date. The point is to be able to compare efforts across a variety of profiles (heavy
student credit hours, others are heavy in research, etc.). Outside researchers are advising on these decisions and proposed models.

Dr. Moser addressed the topic of diversity in hiring and the misinterpretation of Krystyna Varnado’s presentation at the Faculty Senate retreat. Dr. Moser presented data to reflect how USM compares nationally in terms of hiring faculty. Krystyna referred to employment including staff. Dr. Moser mentioned that faculty diversity is up to the faculty. USM spends money on higher education listing services to target developing minority applicant pools. It has resulted in more diverse applications entering the candidate pool. The goal is to get more diversity in candidate pool, and they are still looking at data. The goal is to be broader in listings when seeking diverse candidates.

Addressing implicit bias is the next step to address. They will probably come to Faculty Senate for help. Issues that have been uncovered are mentoring, which is very uneven across the institution. Our students look like the state of MS in terms of diversity. Students seek faculty they think they can relate to based on external factors. As a result, the African American faculty have a more demanding load in terms of informal mentoring. Another issue is research, and community based research has not been supported as well. We need to be more intentional about our plan forward. They are looking to develop a future faculty development program. Dr. Moser mentioned several possible programs they are looking into developing to encourage diversity. We are not horrible, but we are not where we should be and we have not been doing the right things along the way. The most important piece is the conversations the faculty have during the screening and search committee. There is a lot of work left to do. The informal conversations are not complete and we need to do more of that. Faculty opinions are welcome in informing the process.

4.0 Approval of Minutes

4.1 May 2018: Approved unanimously by voice vote

4.2 June 2018: Approved unanimously by voice vote

5.0 Officer Reports

5.1 President: (Mac Alford)

1. The AA hiring plan is available in the AA/EEO office in McLemore Hall (Pattie Teague’s office). Dr. Moser will provide further information today about the development of a revised plan, which Krystyna Varnado will present on, perhaps in
November. The reports (one for Hattiesburg, one for Gulf Park, and one for GCRL) basically outline where the faculty and staff of USM are diverse relative to the field and where groups are “underutilized.” In general, we are doing well in terms of women on the faculty and staff, but need work on racial and ethnic groups in some faculty and specialized staff areas.

2. The Calendar Committee met in August to discuss the academic calendars for Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020. Summer 2019 had little discussion, and the only issue for Spring 2020 was the continued holiday for Easter Monday, which the Committee in large majority supported. Due to November 1 occurring on a Friday in 2019, Thanksgiving holiday occurs in late in the last week of November, and this presented issues for Fall 2019, the most important issue being the scheduling of exams on the week immediately following Thanksgiving break (i.e., exams would begin on the Monday following Thanksgiving). A long discussion ensued, and an alternative calendar was proposed that would move the August intersession to December and push up the regular semester so that it would end the week before Thanksgiving (i.e., commencement would be the Friday before Thanksgiving). These proposed calendars, with some pros and cons already noted, will be sent out to the Senate to gather feedback.

Pros and cons of the semester calendar options were then discussed among the senators.

3. Krystyna Varnado continues to work on the faculty/staff classification and compensation plans, and we hope to hear preliminary news by the end of the year.

4. Updates were provided on benefits for Retirees (Don’t Mention Age Association). These include photo identification, a $75 one-time parking fee, 6 credit hours per semester for free, use of libraries, etc. For an exhaustive list, you can contact me or Christa McLeod in the President’s office.

5. Several Senators met with the new IHL Commissioner, Dr. Al Rankins, on August 31, and others joined the conversation at the Open Forum. Major issues discussed were marketing and message about the strengths of USM, the financial situation at the University, use (or not) of an IHL funding formula, and diversity of faculty and staff.

6.0 Decision / Action Items

6.1 None

7.0 Standing Committee Reports

7.1 Governance: (Don Redalje) The Governance Committee continues to work on the items submitted in the June meeting.

7.2 Handbook: (Sharon Rouse) The Faculty Handbook Committee continues to reside under procedural abeyance. The Faculty Senate Handbook Committee members for 2018-2019 will determine a chair for this committee.
7.3 Welfare and Environment: (Bob Press) The welfare committee will be forming new committees including student liaison, mental health, faculty morale, suicide prevention, diversity, compensation, maternity leave/benefit, environment, online burnout, and campus gun policies. Faculty Senate members are encouraged to participate and choose their area of focus.

7.4 Others: No reports

8.0 Outside Committee Reports: No reports

9.0 Consent Items

A motion was made to take 9.1-9.6 as one motion/action. Seconded. The vote was unanimous in support of the motion.

9.1 One-year appointment of Melinda Bowens (School of Child and Family Studies)
9.2 One-year appointment of Leffi Cewe-Malloy (School of Construction and Design)
9.3 One-year appointment of Hwanseok (Winston) Choi (School of Health Professions)
9.4 One-year appointment of John Lambert (School of Management)
9.5 One-year appointment of Mike Morgan (School of Finance)
9.6 One-year appointment of Jonathan Yarrington (School of Music)

No opposition. Hearing none. Mac noted the consent and invited the new senators to the table.

10.0 Unfinished Business

10.1 None

11.0 New Business

11.1 Election of President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Secretary-Elect for 2018–2019:

Bylaws were adjusted to account for a second term of a sitting president, one vote dissenting. Mac Alford was nominated President and elected by majority

Susan Hrostowski was nominated President-Elect and elected by acclamation

Melinda McLelland was nominated Secretary and elected by acclamation

Amber Cole was nominated Secretary-Elect and elected by acclamation

Committee memberships were presented and discussed.

An open forum on senate composition was proposed for Hattiesburg and Gulf Park, plus electronic survey for those who can’t attend.
11.2 Staff Emeritus proposal — Faculty Senate agreed for the Faculty Senate President to send a Sense of the Senate letter to the VP for Human Resources in support of the proposal.

12.0 Good of the Order

The Dean of College of Arts & Sciences will meet with senators once a month.

13.0 Announcements

13.1 Next Senate Meeting: October 5, 2:00 p.m., Union Room B, IVN to NAB 125
13.2 Next Senate Executive Meeting: TBA
13.3 Next Senate Administration Meeting: TBA
13.4 Next Staff Council meeting: October 4, 9:30–11:00 a.m., Trent Lott 207

14.0 Adjourn: Moved to adjourn, seconded, and approved unanimously by voice vote.