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## Faculty Senate Minutes--May 8, 2020

USM Faculty Senate

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# The University of Southern Mississippi

## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 8, 2020, 2:00p.m.

Via Zoom

**Present:** Micheal Davis, Shahid Karim, Tom Rishel, Charlie Scheer, Lindsey Conlin-Maxwell, Jae-Hwa Shin, Leffi Cewe-Malloy, Damon Franke, Nicolle Jordan, Brian LaPierre, Kevin Greene, E. Susan Howell, Jeremy Scott, Richard Perry, Timothy Tesh, Jennifer Courts, Louis Rackoff, Bob Press (Kate Greene interim), Amber Cole, Shinhua Liu, Jacob Breland, John Miller, Michelle Jeanfreau, Lilian Hill, Anne Sylvest, Gary Krebs, Catharine Bomhold, Michael Madson, Susan Hrostowski, Tamara Hurst, Susan Mayfield-Johnson, Bonnie Harbaugh, Lisa Green, Kimberly Ward, Donald (Don) Redalje, Jennifer Brannock, Lin Agler, Westley (Lee) Follett, Kalyn Lamey, Whitney Martin, Sharon Rouse

**Absent:** Joe Olmi, Robert Leaf

### 1.0 Organizational Items

1.1 Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Susan Hrostowski.

1.2 Roll Call

1.3 Recognition of Quorum (22)

1.4 Recognition of  $\frac{2}{3}$  membership for voting on Bylaws and Resolutions (29)

### 2.0 Adoption of Agenda

- Approved unanimously by voice vote.

### 3.0 Approval of April Minutes

- Approved unanimously by voice vote.

### 4.0 Program

4.1 Douglas S. Masterson, Ph.D.

Senior Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness

SACSCOC Liaison

- The University is launching a survey for students related to the transition to online, including challenges they've faced. It will include 6 questions and will close on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Among other things, the results will be used to determine students' future plans, which will allow us to reach out to the students who plan not to return.
- Faculty are asked to encourage students to complete this survey. It will come through Evaluation Kit and students will have a notification in Canvas and an email notification asking them to complete the survey. It is for both undergraduate and graduate students. The results will be shared with the Council of Directors.
- Questions/concerns from senators:
  - Some faculty are concerned about going to face-to-face in the fall.

- Some faculty are concerned about how student evaluations will look this semester.
- If we return to online in the fall, can faculty require synchronous class meetings?
  - Dr. Masterson will forward this question to Dr. Chasteen.
  - Some senators expressed that students often do better with schedules and synchronous class meetings would encourage students to be on a schedule.
  - Other senators expressed the importance of flexibility for both faculty and students during these times.
- 8W1 classes in the fall may be a good idea, especially for hands-on classes.
- Complaints were expressed regarding the grading tool in Canvas. Can we improve?
  - Dr. Masterson will investigate.
  - Kelly Lester can help faculty with the Canvas gradebook.
- Some faculty are interested in adding Studio to Canvas (which allows lecture capture and seamless integration with Canvas).
  - Dr. Masterson will investigate.

## 5.0 Officer Reports

### 5.1 President

The president continues to be involved in numerous meetings and the information discussed in those meetings has been shared with faculty via emails from the Provost. Summer classes will be online and fall classes will be delivered as previously scheduled. Teachers may be asked to limit the number of students in the classroom (possibly teach ½ students on one lecture day and the other ½ the other day, which would result in a hybrid approach to the class – or possibly have ½ the class attend live and the other ½ attend virtually). Faculty should have everything in Canvas so if we must transition back to online, the transition will be easier.

- Question: Can we have access to a virtual meeting software that offers real-time closed captioning? The president will investigate.

A guideline for returning to campus will be published on the Provost's website and will be emailed to faculty. Face-to-face meetings with students are not allowed. Instead, office hours, advising, mentoring, etc. should take place virtually. The guidelines may also require the wearing of masks on campus. There will also be different guidelines for labs.

- Concerns/questions from senators regarding research participants were expressed.

Deans/directors need to analyze loss of income and additional expenses caused by the pandemic because CARES funds may be used to offset these expenses/losses of income. There may be more budget cuts depending on state income.

Congratulations to Don Redalje and Susan Howell on their upcoming retirements!

5.2 President-Elect: No report

5.3 Secretary: No report

5.4 Secretary-Elect: No report

## 6.0 Decision/Action Items

6.1 Library's Elsevier negotiation

- Will discuss during Academics report

6.2 Cancellation of June meeting

- Approved unanimously by voice vote.

## 7.0 Standing Committee Reports

### 7.1 Academics

The Academics Committee met on April 23, 2020 to discuss the following items.

## I. Senate Resolution in Support of Dean of Libraries

1. A Senate resolution in support of the Dean of the libraries, John Eye, and his negotiation process with academic journal subscription service Elsevier. As committee, we are a bit split on the support of a resolution to help the Dean reduce costs with Elsevier given the uncertainty of what those negotiations might mean in terms of removing scholarly access to specific journals. Those in the sciences, in particular, feel some of the following across their respective disciplines:
  - The loss of access to journal titles results in a loss of efficiency in the research enterprise of our Division. The Division of Coastal Sciences at USM is one of the top research (grants and publications) units at USM. The faculty has identified numerous titles focused on marine science, fishery science, aquaculture, and ecology that, if lost, would significantly hinder research and acquisition of external grant funding.
  - The use of "number of downloads" as a metric for determining usage of library resources is inappropriate. University Libraries cannot provide the information related to use by IP range to help us discern if these (and others) are used by SOSE faculty/students/staff. An accurate accounting of the use (and value) of primary literature would quantify those titles used (cited) in USM's scholarly output. The use of number of downloads will put schools in the SOSE at a disadvantage because of the size of its constituent units.
  - A portion of GCRL's budget is directly transferred to USM libraries to support the acquisition and maintenance of primary literature. There are likely other portions of the collection activities of university libraries that should be examined for use and value.
  - The faculty has voiced a strong and nearly universal concern about the loss of titles, and has done so repeatedly over the last eight years, since my start at USM. The COA faculty is generally supportive of USM's desire to lower costs. However, there

are grave concerns about the potential loss of titles and the effect on the research enterprise. The research enterprise is a core function of an R1 university. The faculty would like to have a greater voice in allocation and subscription decisions. To quote one faculty member, “We cannot be a world-class university without a world class research library”.

- A broader concern is the continual loss of journal access for faculty. We had losses in 2017 and will likely have losses in the future if Elsevier gets cancelled. As a matter of fact, University as a whole needs to think about what it means to be a Carnegie I High Research Activity institution with these types of library resources. Frankly it is embarrassing to see this year after year. A continual decline in library resources that impacts faculty across disciplines.
  
  - we accidentally got into this with a potential faculty hire because it seemed like safe and general ground. The state of our library system did not make us look very good. We will not be able to draw the best folks to COA if we don't have support from the administration. I cannot understand why this is not the single most important priority of the library. Our faculty is completely fatigued on this, what should in most institutions, be a non-issue. They have no expectation that the library will negotiate in a capable way.
2. The Humanities folks are a bit more supportive of the resolution but are in need of more information about Elsevier's impact on their respective disciplines. The committee has polled some School of Humanities Faculty, and those that have responded support the Library's position regarding Elsevier.
  
  3. As a result, as chair of Academics I cannot in good faith support this resolution at this moment. Given our current climate and the uncertainty surrounding the university and much of the country at the moment, I would argue that right now is the wrong time to alienate or create anxiety for our colleagues in the sciences, or anywhere in the university at the moment. Given the strong feelings shared by both the resolutions supporters and opposers, I might suggest this conversation needs to continue.

## II. Institutional Partnerships w/ Cengage Unlimited (or other textbook services)

1. Limiting the costs of textbooks is most certainly a need.
2. Many university faculty across disciplines are advocating for open access as a remedy for this problem. Open access doesn't fit neatly across all disciplines, nor does the university partnership model with a company like Cengage. We do feel that USM faculty need more information and data about open access materials for the specific disciplines. In addition, we would like to have an open access presentation to the Senate sometime in the foreseeable future.
3. Bottom line, though, given the current pandemic and the economic impact it's having on the nation, state, and university, attempting to develop institutional parentships at the moment seems moot.

### III. Canvas as Learning Management System

1. There is growing apprehension over the continued presence of distance learning and the exclusive use of Canvas as the university's LMS. For many it's an efficient tool, for others, it's not. If we continue to trend toward offering distance education as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the academics committee finds it pertinent to begin a conversation expressing concern over problems experienced with Canvas as the university's sole LMS.

#### **7.2 Administrative Evaluation**

Evaluations were distributed to faculty and were closed at the end of April.

Administrators will receive results after faculty evaluations are complete.

**7.3 Awards:** No report

**7.4 Bylaws:** No report

#### **7.5 Elections**

Emails were sent to all directors of schools that need new representation next year requesting that they hold elections within their schools. The coast election is being handled differently because it is a different kind of unit (it's not a school with a director). Gulf coast faculty will be sent an email to opt-in for consideration. An election will then be held.

- Question: Why was the elections process changed? For two reasons:
  - The senate is more "school-based" because of the reorganization.
  - Institutional Research no longer provides the support that they once did in the elections process.

**7.6 Finance:** No report

#### **7.7 Faculty Handbook**

##### 7.7.1 Contractual Obligations

- The senate discussed the following two competing proposals before the University Faculty Handbook Committee related to faculty contractual obligations.

1) (Holt)

The original language from the handbook

I move that the following section:

3.1. Introduction

Faculty members have three kinds of responsibilities: those deriving from their research/creative activities; those related to their role as teachers, and responsibilities stemming from their relation to the University and their disciplines. Each is addressed below.

Faculty are expected to fulfill their responsibilities promptly and conscientiously throughout their contract periods, University holidays excluded, even when classes are not in session.

Have its language changed to: (Flip paragraphs and new language recommended changes in blue)

### 3.1. Introduction

Faculty are expected to fulfill their responsibilities promptly and conscientiously throughout their contract periods, University holidays excluded, even when classes are not in session. Contractual obligations are defined in the Employee Handbook 3.11.

Faculty members have three kinds of responsibilities: those deriving from their research/creative activities; those related to their role as teachers, and responsibilities stemming from their relation to the University and their disciplines. Each is addressed below.

Rationale:

Flipping paragraphs

We have to work outside of 9-month contracts with orientation, advising, and committee work, but finding the exact language is difficult. So, referencing the employee handbook will have to cover the concerns about what happens in summer for 9-month contract people.

### 2) (Senate)

The Faculty Senate moves that the following section:

#### 3.1.Introduction

Faculty members have three kinds of responsibilities: those deriving from their research/creative activities; those related to their role as teachers, and responsibilities stemming from their relation to the University and their disciplines. Each is addressed below.

Faculty are expected to fulfill their responsibilities promptly and conscientiously throughout their contract periods, University holidays excluded, even when classes are not in session.

The University's Code of Ethical Conduct includes statements of general principles regarding respect for governance, others, information, and property as well as statements regarding conflicts of interest and commitment.

Have its language changed to: (Changes in yellow, moved language in green)

#### 3.1.Introduction

The University's Code of Ethical Conduct includes statements of general principles regarding respect for governance, others, information, and property as well as statements regarding conflicts of interest and commitment.

Faculty are expected to fulfill their responsibilities promptly and conscientiously throughout their contract periods, University holidays excluded, even when classes are not in session. Due to the diverse nature of faculty and faculty responsibilities, presence away from campus while performing faculty functions is not to be considered an absence. Additionally, tasks performed outside of the specified contract period shall neither be compulsory nor subject to compensation, absent a prior agreement.

Faculty members have three kinds of responsibilities: those deriving from their research/creative activities; those related to their role as teachers, and responsibilities stemming from their relation to the University and their disciplines. Each is addressed below.

Rationale:

Flipped the first and third paragraph. Faculty that are performing university functions off of campus should not be held to the four days a week on campus policy. Faculty should not be required to work outside of contract. Faculty that volunteer for work outside of their contract should understand that they are not entitled to compensation.

CoD comments:

Comments of those "for"

"Additionally, tasks performed outside of the specified contract period shall neither be compulsory nor subject to compensation, absent a prior agreement." is essential given the new timeline for annual evaluations.

Comments of those "against"

This appears to be an attempt to circumvent the Contractual Obligation Policy approved by the President. There is a provision already in the Contractual Obligation Policy that allows faculty members to negotiate with the director the ability to be away from campus when engaging in research, creative activities, clinical practice, supervision of students, or other professional responsibilities. Faculty engaging in these professional responsibilities are not considered absent but are contributing to the work of the institution. There is a level of accountability school directors must have in order to ensure equity and fairness among the faculty.

This is the problematic line: Due to the diverse nature of faculty and faculty responsibilities, presence away from campus while performing faculty functions is not to be considered an absence.

I think I would be okay with that if there was some wording to the effect of "with approval by the director" or that it is considered an absence, absent prior approval from director. With this proposed wording, faculty could say I am teaching and grading and advising from home three days a week and



there would be little a director could do as the proposed wording would directly contravene (if that's the correct word) the contractual obligation policy. If we want the Provost to rethink the policy, this is not the way to do it.

The statement is innocuous-sounding, but it could create a formal contradiction with the employee handbook. "Faculty functions" simply is too malleable a term here and listing the legitimate absences (conferences, field work, etc.) becomes a long list that invariably misses something.

"Due to the diverse nature of faculty and faculty responsibilities, presence away from campus while performing faculty functions is not to be considered an absence. (THE STATEMENT IS INDIRECTLY ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF BLANKET REQUIREMENTS FOR EVERYONE TO BE HERE BECAUSE THERE IS ABUSE OF THOSE WHO ARE ABSENT FROM CAMPUS NOT PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES, CAN THAT NOT BE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY? OR IS IT THAT WE HAVE SOME GRANDFATHERED IN SITUATION THAT CAUSE US TO BE INCONSISTENT IN THE APPLICATION OF THE EXPECTED BEHAVIOR? )

Additionally, tasks performed outside of the specified contract period shall neither be compulsory nor subject to compensation, absent a prior agreement." CAN YOU INCLUDE A WRITTEN AGREEMENT, SO IT IS DOCUMENTED?

Is the above statement written for the exceptional case or is this a common practice?

Do not see the need for this change. Most of this is already said or implied elsewhere.

DEANS comments:

The was consensus from all seven deans against adding the two sentences to section 3.1. The deans recognize there is some will to revise the Contractual Obligations policy, but it shouldn't be done through the FHC. The more appropriate body to engage is the Faculty Senate.

Senate Comments:

In regards to the last item, the language in 3.1 originated in Faculty Senate. It came from both the Faculty Senate Handbook Committee and Governance Committee. It was brought to the Senate floor and passed a nearly unanimous "Sense of the Senate" vote.

### 7.7.2 School directors

- The senate discussed the following proposal before the University Faculty Handbook Committee related to school director requirements.

The original language from the handbook

I move that the following section:

#### 4.5.2. Faculty Evaluation Meetings

##### 1.7.2 School Administration

School directors are the chief administrative officers of schools and report to the dean. They are responsible for the general direction and supervision of the school, including administrative and personnel responsibilities. Directors manage school budgets and oversee academic program delivery in consultation with school faculty. They assign service responsibilities and promote research and creative activity. Directors evaluate academic personnel and staff and make recommendations regarding salaries, promotions, tenure, and retention of school employees.

Have its language changed to: (recommended changes in blue)

##### 1.7.2 School Administration

School directors are the chief administrative officers of schools and report to the dean. School directors must be members of the corps of instruction and should be tenure-stream and either an associate professor or professor. They are responsible for the general direction and supervision of the school, including administrative and personnel responsibilities. Directors manage school budgets and oversee academic program delivery in consultation with school faculty. They assign service responsibilities and promote research and creative activity. Directors evaluate academic personnel and staff and make recommendations regarding salaries, promotions, tenure, and retention of school employees.

Rationale:

We should not have staff or low-ranking school directors. Because of their role, they need to be of a sufficient rank to evaluate their faculty members. Added “should” to the sentence to allow for flexibility of appointment.

- After much discussion regarding the above three proposals, the president suggested that these items be tabled until the president, president-elect, and members of the faculty handbook committee can meet to discuss and “sort them out.”

## **7.8 Governance**

The committee could not agree on an appropriate response to the Faculty Contractual Obligations policy in the Employee Handbook (section 3.11), so it was tabled to be addressed in the future.

## **7.9 Gulf Coast:**

The Gulf Coast Faculty Council has not met so no issues have been brought to the senate's committee from this council.

**7.10 University Relations and Communications:** No report

**7.11 Welfare and Environment:** No report

8.0 Outside Committee Reports

9.0 Reports from Other University Advisory Bodies

10.0 Consent Items

11.0 Unfinished Business

12.0 New Business

12.1 Election of Officers

- Brian LaPierre is the only nomination for president-elect.
  - The senate voted to close nominations.
  - Wins by acclamation
- Kalyn Lamey is the only nomination for secretary-elect.
  - The senate voted to close nominations.
  - Wins by acclamation

13.0 Good of the Order

- Closing remarks from the president: The president has thoroughly enjoyed getting to know and working with members of our administration. The president also reminds the senate that the true “work” of the senate lives in the subcommittees so she encourages the subcommittees to continue working diligently to reach the goals of the senate.

14.0 Announcements