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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes--September 9, 2022

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 2, 2:00p.m.
Via Zoom

Call to Order

President Denis Wiesenberg called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Roll Call

Members present:

Adkins, Nell	LeBert, Amy
Anderson, Patsy	McCardle, Emileigh
Arnau, Randolph	Mclain, Nina
Bai, Fengwei	Mezzadri, Danilo
Beedle, Jon	Mistretta, Vincenzo
Bernstein, Joshua	Morgan, Hani
Bomhold, Catharine	Nazarenko, Sergei
Bradley, Greg (proxy for Mary Funk)	Press, Bob
Burnett, Joanne	Puckett, Mark
Ciraldo, Nick	Salyers, Candice
Courts, Jen	Scott, Jeremy
Cullum, Terry	Shaw, Joyce
Donahue, Paul "Tyler"	Shin, Jae-Hwa
Franke, Damon	Smith, Kim
Funchess, Tanya	Spuhler, Bryan
Greer, Tammy	Stanback, Emily
Grivno, Max	Troughton, Lennie
Gulledge, Laura	Wallace, Maria
Hrostowski, Susan	Wang, Wei
Kanuri, Srindidhi	Wiesenburg, Denis
Kilgore, Jonathan	Zhang, Fan

Members who were not in attendance:

Darnell, Zack
Funk, Mary

Quorum: A quorum (22) was established and recognized. (42 members present).

Voting Membership Present: $\frac{2}{3}$ membership for voting on Bylaws and Resolutions (29) was established. (42 members present).

Adoption of Agenda

A motion to accept the agenda was made. The motion was seconded. The motion to accept the agenda was approved by the majority of the members.

Approval of the Minutes (previous month)

A motion to accept the minutes was made. The motion was seconded. The motion to accept the May, 2022 meeting minutes was approved by the majority of the members.

Program

Quentisha Jones, EEO / Employee Relations Manager

Ms. Jones introduced herself and her history at USM. She then explained USM's AAP (Affirmative Action Plan), including why it's necessary; the changes in the program between last year and this year (including new codes, which will create new data); how the plan is implemented through the annual workforce analysis, which identifies employment gaps; and the standards by which the plan is judged (good-faith efforts). Ms. Jones also shared sample data related to gender and race, and explained some of the challenges with data collection, such as the fact that the reliance on self-identification for identity factors such as disability may lead to totals that undercount faculty members in those categories. Ms. Jones shared her office's upcoming goals: AAP training for leaders and collaboration with USM's Chief Diversity Officer, as well as both ongoing and targeted efforts to address AAP issues.

Ms. Jones also clarified her position as Employee Relations Manager. She explained that she is an "additional resource" for faculty and staff, who can approach her with discrimination complaints and grievances with managers, and she will let them know the next steps they can take, and the process for filing complaints / grievances. Whereas the HR partners work more with managers and administrators, Ms. Jones's role is to work more with faculty and staff.

Officer Reports

President

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate met with President Joe Paul and Interim Provost Gordon Cannon on August 31. We asked President Paul if he had any update on the search for the next USM President and he did not. There was also no news to share from the last meeting of the IHL Board. We requested that the President of the Faculty Senate be included in the new faculty orientation next year as we have been in the past, but we were not included this year. President Paul advised us that the President of the Faculty Senate would be included next year. We also requested that a representative of the Faculty Senate, appointed by the Executive Committee, be added to the Employee Handbook Advisory Group. It was confirmed today by the President's office that we will appoint a representative to the Employee Handbook Advisory Group this year. Jennifer Courts has agreed to serve.

Much of the discussion with President Paul concerned the USM volleyball arena and how federal funds intended for families in need were used for its construction. If you are not familiar with this issue, I encourage you to read the articles by Anna Wolfe in Mississippi Today. How our volleyball arena was funded has tarnished the reputation of the University. This is not just a local story. How the funds were misused and the ramifications has received national and international attention. A major story on the scandal appeared in *The Guardian* newspaper in London. The story also has been covered on MSNBC including an interview with Anna Wolfe. Earlier this week, NBC News reported on the scandal on their nightly newscast. President Paul is working the problem daily, but he noted that the University cannot solve the problem unilaterally. Federal and state agencies have to be engaged in any solution. Based on a legal

review of USM's involvement in the scandal, President Paul advised us that nothing illegal was done by the University or by the USM Athletic Foundation. We expressed our concern for how the University is being perceived. And, we asked that the Faculty Senate Welfare and Environment Committee be included in the development and implementation of the effort to repair our reputation. President Paul agreed to this request.

In our meeting with President Paul and Provost Cannon we were surprised that Dr. Cannon had not heard about the controversy surrounding Policy 3.11 that was inserted in the USM Employee Handbook during the summer of 2019. At the time, it was the only faculty-only policy in the employee handbook. I have provided Dr. Cannon with a copy of the policy and a chronology of the two-year efforts made by the faculty, the USM Chapter of the AAUP, the Faculty Senate and the University Faculty Handbook Committee to successfully have this policy removed from the USM Employee Handbook. I have asked Provost Cannon for an official communication that in the future, no faculty-only policies will be included in the USM Employee Handbook. The previous Provost refused to do so.

Finally, the Executive Committee has appointed the chairs of each of our committees. The list of chairs was distributed earlier this afternoon. I thank everyone who volunteered to serve and look forward to working with you on the year ahead. Much of our work is conducted by our committee with the products of their work being presented to the full Senate for further consideration and action.

President-Elect

No report

Secretary

Emily asked Senators to let her know if they're leaving Zoom meetings for any reason so that she can update attendance numbers for purposes of voting and maintaining quorum.

Secretary-Elect

Candice reported that, though it had been dormant for over two years, she is now working on updating the Faculty Senate archive.

6.0 Discussion/Decision/Action Items

The Executive Committee has raised the issue of potential committee modifications to meet current Faculty Senate needs. The Senate discussed the size and scope of the Welfare and Environment Committee, as well as issues that the University Relations and Communications Committee might take on. Welfare and Environment Committee Chair Max Grivno will put together a formal proposal about the scope of the Welfare and Environment committee; the Senate will vote on this proposal at a future meeting, after which the Senate can update bylaws as necessary.

The Senate discussed the new tenure and promotion evaluation process. Senators discussed how to best address this new policy, both at USM and in conversation with other IHL institutions.

Committee Reports

Academics

No full report, but Emileigh McCardle would like to address the issue of when students are dropped for non-payment, which currently happens the Friday before classes start. This timing is problematic for students, but also skews enrollment numbers, particularly as students are able to re-register after paying their tuition bill.

Administrative Evaluation

No report

Awards

No report

Bylaws

No report

Elections

No report

Faculty Handbook Advisory

No full report, but Jeremy noted that the previously approved Faculty Handbook changes are working their way through the process for second votes and/or implementation. Jeremy invited Senators to join the next Faculty Handbook Advisory Meeting on Teams.

Finance.

No full report, but Nell Adkins noted that she will be meeting with Allyson Easterwood in about three weeks, and asked that people submit questions to her via email.

Governance

No report

Gulf Coast

The committee noted major changes that are happening on gulf coast campus, including significant changes to physical spaces—for example, building renovations and the moving of programs to new buildings. Last year the tennis and basketball courts were razed; the nursing BA was converted into an accelerated program for those seeking a second degree. Some space (including Hardy Hall) remains largely vacant. Immediate plans for Elizabeth Hall are unknown. There is a general sense that the faculty have not been part of the process for making these decisions, and have not been aware of the decisions that have been made until they are implemented. The suggestion was made that a Space and Design Review Committee is needed for the Gulf Park Campus, as the Hattiesburg committee doesn't have any authority on the coast.

University Relations and Communications

No report

Welfare and Environment

Max Grivno shared the committee's plan for upcoming year: more limited and targeted goals. First, at present there is no University policy for mental health, addiction, and maternity leave, and much is left up to director discretion. What are best practices, and how can the committee help the University establish relevant policies? Second, the committee plans to take up the equity issues of faculty salary and faculty retention according to race, gender, and other identity factors. Tammy Greer gathered data last year that can be used to work towards meaningful policies.

There was discussion of the fact that at USM, we lack a traditional ombudsman that faculty can approach with concerns or problems. There was also the question of what committee might take up the issue of the work that is regularly required of faculty members over the summer, beyond their contract dates.

Outside Committee Reports/Other University Advisory Committees' Reports

Carl Thomas, Staff Senate President, spoke about increasing outreach and participation in Staff Council events. He also addressed the issues related to faculty / staff discounts in dining halls, and food kiosks.

Consent Items

None

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

None

Good of the Order

Jeremy Scott announced events related to the AAUP, and encouraged Senators to join; Bob Press raised the issue of the volleyball arena; Jen Courts announced the USM Art and Design faculty show.

Announcements

Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made. The motion was seconded. The motion passed by a majority of the Faculty Senate.