

Members Absent: College of Business Administration: Ernest King. Center for Marine Science: Steve Lohrenz.

Business Meeting:
1.0 Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.
2.0 Approval of Agenda The agenda was approved as distributed.
3.0 Approval of Minutes the minutes were approved as distributed.

4.0 Executive Committee Reports
4.1 President's Report Jesse Palmer

IHL: The IHL approved a change in the name of the Department of Polymer Science to the School of Polymer Science and High Performance Materials. The school will be allowed to offer doctoral and masters degrees in Polymer Science and Engineering. USM also gave notice of the intent to establish a Master of Science degree in Workforce Training and Development. Miscellaneous: A recent Hattiesburg American article (2/6/99) on salaries reflected how faculty and staff salaries have lost ground to the University of Mississippi and to Mississippi State University; however, the article would have had more impact if it had not listed the top salaries in the University. It appeared that what began as an article in support of more pay left the reader with the thought that faculty are overpaid. The article was discussed at the President's cabinet and there was consensus that it did a poor job of informing the public of the salary needs at the University. The President is committed to increasing faculty and staff pay. The child care issue was discussed at a recent open luncheon with President Fleming. It appears that positive steps will be taken to improve child care for students, staff, and faculty. I have presented and discussed with the President the senate resolution concerning Faculty Salary Appeals. Some faculty had questioned the number of faculty on the Athletic Director Search Committee (1 faculty member out of 17). Bob Boothe was the faculty representative. After discussions with the President, I was added to the search committee, so now there are two faculty representatives. The President has suggested that the Senate recommend a procedure for establishing various search committees for replacing university-wide positions such as the Athletic Director and Vice Presidents. There is activity by the Transportation Committee considering the Hattiesburg Regional Transit Authority plan to establish a circular system of transportation for the USM campus. This could be part of a plan to make the center of campus more pedestrian friendly. Spring convocation has been scheduled for April 9th at 3:30. I met with the University Faculty Senate Association in Jackson. Other senates are facing some of the same issues we are. MSU is in the process of reviewing its university core; MSU has increased the summer pay percentage for a three hour course from 7.5% to 8.5%. There is a workshop on April 15-17 in Chapel Hill, NC, on "Reclaiming the Faculty Role in Governance." Allan McBride has been appointed to the Senate as a replacement from Liberal Arts for Kate
Greene. The Faculty Senate's representative to the University Publications Board is Dean Dunn.

4.2 President Elect's Report Art Kaul No report
4.3 Secretary's Report Sherry Laughlin No report
4.4 Secretary Elect's Report Shellie Nielsen
Proxies were announced and the attendance roster was passed.

5.0 Committee Reports
5.1 Academic and Governance: Karen Thrash
The committee presented a resolution regarding plus/minus grading in graduate courses. Since the Graduate Council is scheduled to vote on this next week, the committee requested that the rules be suspended and the resolution be voted on today.

**Resolution on Plus/Minus Grading for Graduate Courses**
Resolved: The Faculty Senate endorses the option of plus/minus grades for graduate courses. This resolution in no way implies an opinion from the Faculty Senate regarding plus/minus grades in undergraduate courses.

Recommended quality points for graduate courses:

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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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This resolution concurs with a recommendation made by Liberal Arts to the Graduate Council. The committee feels there are good reasons for plus/minus grading in graduate courses. The range of grades in many graduate courses is often much narrower than in undergraduate courses and there is often not enough ability to distinguish between student performance. The committee suggested that faculty would not be required to use plus/minus grading, but it would be an option open to them. There will be no A+ grade, but quality points would be assigned to other plus/minus increments. There was a question regarding whether or not plus/minus grades could be appealed, and it was stated that as long as the grading scale was clear from the beginning of the class, this shouldn't be a problem. The vote to suspend the rules was unanimous and the resolution passed.

Karen Thrash asked for feedback on the University Handbook; President Palmer said it was clear that some things in the handbook may need to be reviewed.

5.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations Bill Powell
When administrative evaluation forms were discussed at the Deans Council, there was concern about the "consistency issue," that is if written comments by faculty for administrator evaluations are to be passed on to the next level of administrators, then comments written by students for faculty evaluations should be passed on to chairs. The Senate is being asked to affirm that any written comments of anyone being evaluated should be given to the person being evaluated as well as to that person's supervisor. There was much discussion of the importance of written comments and the expectation of the evaluator that the comments would be seen by someone other than the individual being evaluated. The Senate voted to affirm the distribution of written evaluative comments to the person being evaluated and to that individual's supervisor.

5.3 Athletic Liaison Trellis Green
Trellis Green met with Bill McClellan and Rick Villareal about faculty/staff football season ticket discounts. In 1997 the discount was 50%. The athletic department received a subsidy from the University President to make up the difference of 50% so that there was no financial loss to athletics. In 1998, the discount was reduced to 20% and all subsidy to the athletic department was removed, resulting in a loss of 20% for each faculty/staff ticket.

5.4 Awards Linda Dysart Goff No report.

5.5 Benefits and Work Environment Mike Forster
John Rachal reported for Mike Forster. Human Resources is putting on weekly workshops on university benefits every Wednesday at noon. We need to have someone from Human Resources speak to the senate about retirement benefits. The committee has discussed Payne Center benefits for faculty and staff, and was in support of the child care brown bag seminar. Another issue that has been of concern is 12 month employee sick leave. Employees must take a day of personal leave before they can take a day of sick leave. The committee has been in touch with Representative Lee Jarrell Davis who has put a provision in a current bill to change this. This bill has passed the House and is now in the Senate. Senator Jim Bean also supports it. The committee has also discussed two resolutions that will be brought before the senate at the next meeting. The first one requests restoration of the full tuition benefit for faculty/staff dependents, and the second requests that this benefit be portable from one Mississippi institution to another. There was general discussion about what happens to senate resolutions after they are passed. President Palmer said that when resolutions are passed, he takes them to the President for discussion and then possibly to the Cabinet. There was concern that the senate and the administration might be at odds on some issues, and that senate resolutions should not be subject to being blocked by the administration. President Palmer said that he has no problems with taking senate resolutions directly to the individual or body that needs to deal with them. At the end of the year he plans to take all resolutions back to the President and discuss the progress made on them. Delia Anderson said that some faculty members had found some irregularities in their PERS forms regarding retirement contributions not being properly credited. All employees need to check their forms.

5.6 Constitution and Bylaws  Sherry Laughlin
The committee distributed a list of constitution and bylaws amendments and requested a vote. Constitutional amendments were:
Division 2 Membership: Article 1 Composition; Section 111
Add the College of International and Continuing Education
Division 2 Membership: Article 3 Eligibility Requirements; Section 130
Require that faculty member must be an employee of USM in order to be eligible for membership in the Senate.
Division 3 Officers and Committees: Article 4 Duties of Officers; Section 177 and Section 178
Require the secretary to maintain the senate web site, notify Senate member of meetings, distribute agenda, minutes, and proposals.
Division 4 Meetings of the Faculty Senate: Article 2; Section 196
Allows the secretary to distribute agenda by electronic means.
Division 4 Meetings of the Faculty Senate: Article 3 Meeting Procedures; Section 207
Allows email proxies, requires senate members to get proxy statements to the secretary or secretary elect before the meeting, and restricts proxies held by one individual to two.
Division 4 Meetings of the Faculty Senate; Article 3 Meeting Procedures; Section 208
New section setting forth rules for dealing with resolutions.
Bylaws Amendments:
Division 1 Faculty Senate Elections: Article 4 Voter Eligibility
Requires faculty to be employees of USM in order to vote in Faculty Senate elections.
Division 1 Faculty Senate Elections: Article 5 Preparation of Election Ballots; Section 331
Requires the Elections Committee to announce the Senate elections at the first of the spring semester and allows the removal of names from the ballot if an individual faculty member requests that his/her name be removed.
Division 1 Faculty Senate Elections: Article 6 Voting Procedures; Section 340
Increases the time allowed for voting in Senate elections from 8 to 10 class days.
Division 1 Faculty Senate Elections: Article 6, Voting Procedures
Removes the requirement that voters be instructed to vote for twice as many nominees as the number of representatives to be elected.
Division 5 Standing Committees: Article 1 Definition; Section 451 and Section 453
Removes requirement to name standing committees in the bylaws.
The amendments were unanimously approved. Amendments will be incorporated into the Constitution and Bylaws on the Senate web site.

5.7 Elections Mary Dayne Gregg
The ballots are being prepared and will go forth under the procedures provided for in the amendments that have just been passed.
5.8 **Environment** Dick Conville  No report

5.9 **Faculty Development** Norma Cuellar
The committee is investigating the possibility of a faculty development center with resources to support classroom teaching and will report further at another meeting.

5.10 **Technology** Dan Surry
The Technology Committee is trying to identify a list of technology related committees or groups on campus.

5.11 **University Club** Kim Herzinger  No report

5.12 **Parking** Bill Scarborough
The color coded parking zone signs are up; they are coded like the parking decals. The ticket count has been going up about 2,000 per year. Fines are now being taken out of payroll for faculty/staff. The business office will take over the ticket collections later this year. Supposedly students will not be able to graduate with unpaid parking tickets. Bids will be received March 3rd for the University plaza, with construction beginning about 30 days after the bid is accepted. On March 15th, College Drive in front of the Hub will be made one way going east. We will be trying to integrate the Hattiesburg bus system with the campus. In FY 1999 city buses will be brought in at the front of the campus and in a loop behind Danforth Chapel. The next year two buses will run through the campus. There is some cost to the University to do this. These buses will be circulating around the campus, and they will be operated and maintained by the city. The buses will carry 19 passengers. The pedestrian bicycle plan is being submitted for grant funding. Montague will be three-laned and will be made the main east/west artery entering the campus. Pearl Street will be a secondary entrance. Some streets leading into the campus from Hardy Street will be reconfigured.

6.0 **Old Business**

7.0 **New Business**

7.1 **Resolution on Diversity**
A resolution affirming campus diversity was introduced by President Palmer. The rules were suspended and the resolution was voted upon and passed unanimously:

**Resolution on Diversity**
As the Report of the Commission on the Future of the University so eloquently states, "it is essential that USM's faculty and staff reflect the diversity of the student body, and be committed to working together as a team for the benefit of the entire USM community."

It is unfortunate that sometimes events occur that disrupt the vision of the university to have a harmonious environment where diversity is accepted and applauded for the benefits it offers the university community. It is well understood that freedom of speech and press are rights protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. However, with freedom comes responsibility and derogatory comments in speech and written word about different ethnic groups are harmful, lack sensitivity, and undermine the desired goals of the university community.

The Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Mississippi supports freedom of speech and press. However, the Faculty Senate:

- is opposed to using those constitutionally protected freedoms to make negative, harmful, and insensitive statements about any ethnic group;
- deplores racism and bigotry in any form;
- is committed to treating all people with dignity and respect;
- is dedicated to providing a work and learning environment whereby faculty, staff, and students feel comfortable.

Janie Butts reported from the President's Council on Diversity. The Council has met twice and has discussed the fundamental issues of diversity. They will be gathering diversity data for the campus and will be looking at needs and working on a mission statement.

8.0 **Announcements**

9.0 **Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at 3:35.
Respectfully submitted: Sherry Laughlin