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Faculty Senate Minutes - June 21, 2002

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting
June 21, 2002
Union Hall of Honors
2:00 p.m.


Members Represented by Proxy: College of the Arts: Kimberley Davis (J. Olmi) College of Education & Psychology: J. Palmer (D. Duhon), E. Lundin (J. Rachal) College of International and Continuing Education: M. Miller (A. Chasteen) College of Liberal Arts: Anne Wallace (J. Rachal), M. Dearnmy (B. Scarbrough) USM-Gulf Coast: Kathy Davis (J.P. Smith)

Members Absent: College of Business: J. Crockett College of Science & Technology: B. Coates, P. Butko USM-Gulf Coast: S. Naghshpour

1.0 Call to Order 2:00 p.m.

2.0 Approval of Agenda: Addition of reports by Administration and Faculty Evaluations Committee and UFSA; Moved: M. Hall; Second: D. Alford

3.0 Approval of Minutes (May 3 meeting) Moved: D. Cabana. Second: D. Alford.

4.0 Officers' Reports

4.1 President's Report: S. Hubble: Academic Council has approved the new proposed General Education core, and there is general consensus regarding core by the deans.

In a cabinet meeting in May when the start of the budget process was announced Mary Sumrall and I made an immediate request to Dr. Thames that the same budget team as last year be used for the budget hearings. That team included faculty and staff representation. It is my understanding that instead deans and unit heads presented to Dr. Thames, Dr. McFall, and Ms. Dana Keith. Dr. Thames has said that the budget-- once approved by IHL--will be available for distribution.

At the IHL Board meeting, the Board approved the fiscal year 2003 operating budget. For the third stage, the institutions must now present detailed internal budgets. So, that is the approval that Dr. Thames is waiting on, and then the budget will be made available on campus and externally.

In July, the Board will begin its review of fiscal year 2004 budget priorities, and Mr. Klum noted the apparent growth in personnel listed as “institutional support,” and those in non-teaching roles. He has concerns about growth in those types of positions.

The Tuition and Fees Task Force recommended by a 5-1 vote a tuition adjustment of $150/year for Jackson State and $85/year for USM for Spring 2003. Ms. Garrett offered an alternate motion for $150/year for Jackson State and USM effective spring 2003. Then Mr. Crawford used his prerogative of a 30-day delay in the vote. Ms. Newton initiated, which was seconded by Mr. Nicholson, a motion to not delay the vote. Mr. Ross and Mr. Colver indicated an intent to support the alternate motion and also supported the
30-day delay. So, Ms. Newton withdrew her motion to override the delay, since the intent of the board was relayed to the president. To clarify, every Board member has a prerogative once at a meeting to ask on any item for a 30-day hold on the vote, and it takes 2/3 of the Board to override that request. Ms. Newton's intent from her comments was that the presidents of USM and Jackson State needed to know whether or not that tuition adjustment was going to be approved so that they could do some planning. Once it seemed that the alternate motion that Ms. Garrett made would give both JSU and USM an additional $150/year in tuition, then she backed off on her motion to override the delay once she got a feel that the presidents could count on the increase. This increase would not take affect until the spring 2003. In other words, half of that $150 will be realized for this coming fiscal year.

In the Ayers case, Mr. Chambliss has filed an appeal with the Court of Appeals, so it is anticipated that that litigation may resume. In executive session, Point Cadet was discussed as well as an increase in presidents' salaries. It is my understanding that those were approved. When contacted by the local media, I reiterated the Senate position that while we support competitive salaries for university presidents, we expect the same commitment for competitive salaries for faculty and staff. We did pass resolution on this.

J. Lytle: What was discussed about Point Cadet?

S. Hubble: There was still some negotiations going on to avoid litigation.

4.2 President-Elect's Report: D. Cabana: No report.

4.3 Secretary's Report: D. Alford: No report.

4.4 Secretary-Elect's Report: T. Graham: See above for proxies.

5.0 Old Business

5.1 Technology Security

Isaac Johnston (OTR): Dr. Miller indicated that there were concerns about the wording of document and a few changes were made. Most notable were on the “General Responsibilities” section on the first page, which stated previously that the “user must comply with any requests made by authorized individuals.” That was updated to read “any reasonable requests.” On the second page in the “Unacceptable Use” topic, we had originally stated that “using University resources to store, distribute, or collect pornography” would be a violation of policy. That was amended “without legitimate academic purpose.” The section on using University property for personal gain or profit, under the section “Rights of the University,” we had originally stated that we have the right to seize any University computers “for any purpose.” That was modified to state that the University has the right to “impound University owned computers for any appropriate reason.” On the final page of the document there was a statement that the “policies and provisions of this document are not intended to describe all possible situations,” and that the “University retains the right to intervene at any time when inappropriate activities are detected, even if said activities have not been expressly prohibited.” That should read, the University “retains the right to modify this document at any time.” Are there any questions about the intent of this document or any of the details in it?

M. Hall: Should I leave my computer on? I keep hearing that people are hacking into people's computers for illegal purposes.

I. Johnston: I turn mine off at night, but not much of a danger unless it is being used as a server. We see more hacking during holidays.

M. Hall: Should I stop using my work PC for personal email?
I. Johnston: This is not a concern of the University. The intention is to address use for personal gain.

S. Oshrin: Does the University monitor computer use?

I. Johnson: We have no means or desire to monitor communication or to monitor every site. We won't do this unless we become required to do so.

M. Henry: I felt uncomfortable with “seize for any purpose” at the end of page 2, but this change to “impound for appropriate reasons” resolves the concerns that I had.

M. Norton: Do we have a firewall?

I. Johnston: We will within a month or so.

J. Olmi: How frequent is the hacking?

I. Johnston: We see scans constantly, but actual hacking, I've only seen two in the past month.

J. Olmi: Hacking would be an attempt to do what?

I. Johnston: In cases that I've seen recently, people used services configured on a computer to get into it and install software packages. As far as we can tell, they use them to scan other machines on the Internet. People try to use many computers to bombard sites like CNN.com, Amazon, or FBI computers. We have an intentionally open environment, so it's inviting to hackers.

M. Forster: Where are we with this document?

I. Johnston: If this group approves it then it will go to President Thames for approval.

S. Hubble: We need to figure a way to vote on this, because we don't meet again until September. [The document had not reached all members, probably as a result of a listserv malfunction].

D. Alford: Moved: That we accept document pending inclusion of changes described by I. Johnson in today's meeting.

Second: M. Henry.

S. Hubble: Based on my circulating the updated version, which I. Johnson will get to me this afternoon, are we ready to vote? Passed.

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Awards: No report.

6.2 Elections: M.F. Nettles: We had to go to third round (run-off) balloting in three colleges. Newly elected Senators for the 2002-2005 term are, for the Arts: Tony Lewis (1st term); for CBA: James Crockett (1st term); for EdPsy: Taralynn Hartsell (1st term); for the Gulf Coast: J. Pat Smith (2nd term); for H&HS: Joyous Bethel (1st term), Susan Hubble (2nd term), and Mary Frances Nettles (2nd term); Liberal Arts: Susan Malone (1st term), Melanie Norton (1st term), and Phillip Gentile (1st term); for COST: David Beckett (2nd term), Gail Russell (1st term), Raymond Folse (1st term), and Gerald Mattson (1st term). The Committee recommends that: 1) Members on elections committee should serve staggered terms (as outlined in the bylaws). 2) FS revise Constitution Article 3 Eligibility Requirements Section 130 to
describe eligibility of faculty members with administrative appointments. 3) FS clarify Bylaws Article 6 Voting Procedures Section 345. It states “A majority vote (one more than half of the valid votes cast) shall be required . . .” The committee was unclear as to whether “one more than half” meant one more than half of the ballots cast for the College or votes in the department. The committee recommends that an example be added to section in the Bylaws. Report submitted.

6.3 Administration and Faculty Evaluation Committee: J. Lytle presented a report on the activities of the Committee. These activities included submitting a resolution at the May 3 meeting (which passed) that evaluation of assistant and associate deans be dropped from the annual evaluation, except when assistance in administering such an evaluation is requested by the dean. The Committee submitted a second resolution at the same meeting recommending that only tenured [tenure-track] faculty be given authority to participate in the evaluations, which was tabled. The Committee's revision of this resolution, in the form of a final recommendation is: “The Administration and Faculty Evaluations Committee recommends that only the Corps of Instruction, as defined in Chapter V (section 3.1) of the Faculty Handbook, be given authority to evaluate administrative or faculty appointees. We further recommend that Faculty Senate find ways to strengthen the interactions of Adjunct faculty with regular faculty.”

6.4 UFSA: A. Kaul: I attended a meeting of the State and School Employees Insurance Advisory Council on June 10. As UFSA president-elect, I have a seat on this body. The report had an interesting page in it that has a detailed summary from 1986 to present on health insurance premium increases [provided in submitted report]. Then I went back and dug up a memorandum from Hugh West that details the pay raises. There are some revealing numbers here. We're pushing 40-50% health care increases over the past 4-5 years. They are projecting 8% increase each year for the next two years. [A. Kaul provided report: Summary of Active Employee Health Insurance Rate Increases and USM Faculty Pay Raises.]

J. Rachal: That is 8% of what?

A. Kaul: It is not clear to me. They are talking about a summary of employee rate increases, for premiums. What apparently is driving this issue is a substantial increase in the number of retired employees and drug costs.

D. Alford: This is for premiums for others on policy, the dependents, and not self.

S. Hubble: It also impacts what the University has to pay for each employee. We assume it's across the board.

J.P. Smith: Will we see changes in deductibles?

A. Kaul: And changes in co-pay.

D. Beckett: We're also seeing elimination of benefits. Some of the things that used to be included are no longer covered, like wisdom teeth removal.

7.0 Outgoing President's Comments: S. Hubble: This year has seen challenges for our nation and our university. As a Senate it has been our task to represent the diverse, but collective, views of USM faculty. I was pleased to represent the Senate and the faculty as a whole in the Presidential search. It is evident from that process that the challenge remains to further establish the role of Faculty Senate as an active and prominent participant in University decision making—not simply a body that will provide approval of decisions, but in providing input that will impact decisions before they are made.

Another challenge is the need to influence the legislature to view all levels of education in Mississippi a priority in funding. We must also find ways to communicate to our own Board of Trustees the breadth of our role as faculty at a comprehensive institution. Perceptions of workload must be accurate and must be
understood by those who determine policy and funding for our university so that they can serve as advocates for our institutions of higher learning.

Having served as an officer of the Senate for the past two years and because I will continue on the Senate as an elected representative of my College, it is quite apparent that we as a Senate must all make a commitment to contribute to the mission of the Senate. Our elected officers will represent the faculty to the university administration, to the Board of Trustees, to the Legislature, and to the public. But we will undermine their effectiveness as leaders if we do not commit to doing our part. We must make sure we establish effective means of communication with our college constituencies, we must commit to meaningful contributions on committees, and we must offer timely input to issues as they arise. As previous officers have discovered, each year brings challenges—some anticipated, some unanticipated; it will take our collective effort to meet those challenges for the betterment of faculty at USM.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those Senators who have completed their terms on the Senate: DeAnna Douglas, Robert Smith, Sheila Alber, David Goff, Art Kaul, Anne Wallace, Dean Dunn, Charles Hoyle, Grayson Rayborn, and Elizabeth Harrison.

Two other Senators who are completing their terms this year, Sherry Laughlin and Michael Forster, have served as Senate officers. I offer special thanks for their willingness to serve in that capacity and for the support and guidance they have provided me during my tenure as president.

To the respective committee chairs, who along with officers, comprised the Executive Committee, thank you for your dedication to the charges and issues you addressed.

I offer a special thanks to the officers who served with me: Toby Graham, secretary-elect. His efforts with our Web site and listserv have resulted in a more effective means of timely communication. Don Cabana, president-elect. His support and input have been invaluable in my representation of the Senate. And to Darlys Alford, as secretary, which Darlys if you would come forward . . . . On behalf of the Senate, I would like to present you with this plaque of appreciation for your efforts as our secretary, ensuring that the minutes of our meetings accurately reflect the deliberations of the Senate [applause].

This year has had its challenges, but I have been honored to represent the USM faculty. I appreciate your support and dedication throughout the year, and I have been blessed with an effective executive committee.

Looking back, I am glad I regained consciousness to experience the opportunities of this past year. However, it is with equal pleasure that I now pass the gavel of responsibility to your new president, Don Cabana. Thank you.

8.0 Transfer of Executive Committee and new Senate membership

9.0 2002-2003 Business: D. Cabana: For two years now I have watched with admiration and respect as first Sherry and then Sue maneuvered their way through the mine field that obviously strewn the pathway of FS presidency. They’ve done so skillfully, and with grace and dignity. Sherry had the difficult task of leading an often sharply divided senate through the turbulent final months of Horace Fleming's administration. Sue was most immediately thrust into a presidential search that was viewed by some with skepticism and distrust, and by others with ambivalence, at best. These events brought out the best in the leadership skills of both of these people.

In the brief time that I've served in this body I have watched this senate grow and mature. While we are not yet where we want to be, thanks to people like Art, Sherry, Sue, other officers, and all of you, we are much closer to becoming a full-fledged player on the stage. While USM is faced with many challenges, we also have so much going for us that I think all of us know that we will prevail, and more importantly, I think, we
will prosper. I hope you note that I said as Sue did in her comments “challenges” instead of “problems.” I guess because I am an eternal optimist that I prefer to see the glass as half full rather than half empty.

But whether we're talking about budget cuts, staff layoffs, faculty recruitment and retention, or the myriad of other crucial items that confront us, one of the things that this university must engage in is meaningful long-range planning. The FS must have a key role in that process. A dialog has been established with the president's office, which I hope will remain open, frank, and direct.

The commitment of all concerned, however, is crucial if we are to move the university ahead. The faculty stands ready to work and cooperate with the administration for the betterment of this institution, but in doing so there must be a recognition on the part of the administration that the faculty as a constituency is every bit as important to this university as any of the other constituencies that we so often hear about, be that athletics, alumni, Foundation members or business and community leaders. The time is long since past for this faculty to be accorded a meaningful sense of ownership in this university. To that end, the Senate leadership and all of us will continue to work tirelessly.

This coming academic year will--as in the presidencies of Sue, Sherry, and Art and those that preceded them--will be filled with challenges, many of them yet unknown. In fact, it has been my impression from watching them that the biggest challenge is trying to anticipate the unknown. We will face those challenges with resolve and determination, working towards solutions with reasoned approach, an understanding of the issue at hand, and clear purpose in mind.

My sense is that we are in for a very tough ride, the budget problems are obviously not going away. Economically, it appears that perhaps we are in the early stages of getting better. But $88 million has been cut, and previous track records with this kind of thing suggest that you hardly ever recover that money. So we have much to do. We hope that the administration will keep its promise that it has made to Sue and I for open dialog and involvement in the budget process, the one at hand not withstanding. We will continue to press on that issue as much as we possibly can.

I have such deep admiration and respect for Art Kaul. He got me fired up. I watched Sherry, and I don't know that anyone could have had a more difficult year than she had. Then Sue came along. It is a challenge to come behind those three and manage to somehow find a modicum of the dignity and respect with which they carried out the duties of this office, but I'm sure going to try. I wish that you would recognize them one more time [applause].

We have secured with the help of Bill Pace a place off campus, and on the 14th of August I would like for the FS to come together to have a working retreat. Please e-mail me by the first part of August to let me know if you can attend. We'll have lunch out there. I hope that the president's schedule will allow him to come out and meet with us at some point in time during the day. Start at 9am and finish at 2 or 3. This will be at a lodge owned by Mr. Phillips of the Foundation about 10 minutes from here. I would provide maps. My experience has been that sometimes you get more accomplished if you can get off campus and hammer some things out.

A. Kaul's insurance report has been passed along to the president. These are startling numbers, and they say a lot about the suffering that the faculty and staff have endured. It means that in the last six years we've had pay cuts of 30-35%.

We need to do well communicating with legislators. We have to get our story out to the community. Some view the faculty in terms that are not appreciable. We have to inform them how important the economic impact is, how important research and the money it brings in is, and how important teaching is to the community.

If there are major organizational changes or other issues that arise before September, we might want to meet earlier than the end of September.
B. Scarborough: I understand that you and Sue met with President Thames last Friday. Can you share the outcome of the meeting? A lot is going on here, and we're talking all around it.

D. Cabana: The first order of business was the budget process, then the Committee on Committees and the committee process in general.

S. Hubble: We also covered the calendar and the timeline for provost and vice-president for research. He already had narrowed down candidates for provost. That process was pretty much done in his mind. We pushed for input in selection for VP for research. He already had candidates in mind. President Thames said that he has to be careful, since some of the candidates' employers may not know that individuals are seeking employment. We stressed that there has to be a method, even if informally, where FS could meet with potential candidates and provide the president with feedback. My read is that that is the best we can hope for.

D. Cabana: That was the best we were going to do. He did commit to allowing an informal interview of the individuals involved, but he made it clear that there would not be a search process. He wants to make an internal candidate because that would be quicker. My sense was that that had been pretty well narrowed down when we met a week ago.

B. Scarborough: Any mention of the rumor that teaching loads will be increased?

D. Cabana: No.

S. Hubble: [President Thames] has mentioned in cabinet that he expects increased teaching loads. I don't know whether anything has been determined specifically. The talk is 12 hour loads and then what would constitute the exception for release time, whether that's funded research or just research in progress or release time for other activities. Those descriptors have not been released as far as I know.

B. Scarborough: Will he decree that, or will it be left to the colleges?

D. Cabana: It's hard to get a read on that. I would be terribly surprised if there were not some flexibility on the part of colleges. It never came up in our conversation.

S. Hubble: It's just been mentioned in passing in cabinet. In our unit, chairs and directors have been asked to forward information onto the dean's office.

M. Henry: Is there nothing in the Faculty Handbook on 12 hour equivalency?

M. Forster: I don't think so.

S. Hubble: I think that it's going to be redefined: what release time is given for.

D. Beckett: Is this from University or from the IHL Board?

S. Hubble: IHL board, in terms of efficiencies and cutbacks.

T. Green: So this would be in other universities too?

S. Hubble: For at least 10 years, the Board policy has been that every faculty member at every university or college has 12 hours, and USM has had an unofficial policy that allows release time for research and other types of activities. We kind of started with 9 hours.
B. Scarborough: We were counting upper level classes as two.

S. Hubble: I think that may vary from unit to unit. I think we'll see a reduced flexibility in that definition.

B. Scarborough: Do we know how many courses [President Thames] taught?

R. Folse: What percentage cut did the Board or Board staff take?

S. Hubble: I haven't seen that.

M. Forster: What kind of communication will you have with the president?

D. Cabana: The president agreed that the Senate leadership will meet with him monthly.

J. Lytle: Will the president meet with FS in Sept (as forum speaker)?

D. Cabana: Yes. The only other thing that the President asked about the meetings, Mike, was to have an agenda, so that we can accomplish the greatest amount possible.

J.P. Smith: It is incumbent upon us, our officers, to make it understood that teaching loads impact on research productivity. There should be a debate about whether we need research institutions or not. We're backing into decisions based on budgets without thinking about the policies, and that they will affect research adversely. We need to make it clear that they will transform the type of people we will recruit and retain. I can accept financial realities, but we want the public to be aware of the implications of things like load.

J. Olmi: There have been discussions about doing away with graduate assistant tuition waivers. This would significantly impact research, and it would significantly impact our ability to have any kind of graduate program. We can't compete in terms of stipends as it is.

D. Cabana: For a number of issues that we raised for discussion with President, the response generally was that they are working on it and formulating a plan, but not at a point where he could talk about a plan.

M. Henry: Isn't this our opportunity to help formulate the plan?

D. Duhon: Have we had any input at all? We complained a few years ago that we didn't have enough representation on the strategic planning committee.

S. Hubble: That's not a committee, anymore.

D. Cabana: As with the budget, we'll have to continue to hammer away if we're going to have a seat at that table.

B. Scarborough: I can see the right to make administrative appointments. But when [President Thames] starts meddling with programs--consolidating programs, eliminating programs, increasing workload-- that's where we need to get confrontational. Contact the press; get it out there. We need to prepare go to war if the programs are threatened by actions like the elimination of tuition waivers.

D. Cabana: It may be premature, because not all of this has been addressed. We've advised the president that the sooner we get all of this into the open the better off we'll be.
B. Scarborough: One last thing, I think we should give S. Hubble, our outgoing president, a rousing standing ovation [ovation].

D. Cabana: Is there a motion to adjourn?

S. Hubble: So moved.

M. Hall: We've had three fires started in the Johnson Science Tower. I was in the building when the third one started, and the fire alarms did not go off. Be very vigilant, because we think that someone is starting fires, although I would like to think that it's just bad wiring.

D. Beckett: Not bad wiring, because these are places where there are no wires. We think that people are shooting for specific targets. This is in the daytime.

M. Hall: How do you get a person in a wheelchair down stairs should there be a fire. I was told that the best way was to carry them, but I can't do that. Maybe you should think about how you'd handle such a situation.

\textbf{10.0 Adjournment} [3:15 p.m.]