Faculty Senate Minutes - November 16, 2001

USM Faculty Senate
The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting
November 16, 2001
Cook Library Room 123
2:00 p.m.


1.0 Call to Order  2:03 p.m.

2.0 Forum Speaker: Richard Giannini, Director of Athletics

I appreciate the invitation. We have had a great fall with the UAB game right after the Doc Severinsen concert. There were so many people that came to campus for those events. We are pleased to be partners with arts and the university. I want to give some background. I have two siblings and my brother has a Ph.D. and was at the University of South Sewanee and spent about six years as the dean of the College of Theology and my sister also has a Ph.D.s and is an assistant superintendent of schools in Florida. Unfortunately I am the only one without a Ph.D. I come from a strong academic background and I believe wholeheartedly that our mission in athletics is the same mission as the university. It is our mission to educate the athletes, give them a quality education, and make sure that they leave the university with a degree. So many things about athletics are wins and losses and I sometimes get e-mails from faculty who ask why I don’t get rid of a certain coach because he hasn’t won enough games. I really think it is a lot more than wins and losses. It is our responsibility to educate our athletes. This my third year as director of athletics and my first year we completely reorganized our student academic area and I think we have made giant strides in that area under the direction of Tracy Robinson. She has been a longtime school teacher in the Hattiesburg area and received her Master’s Degree in Education. She’s done a tremendous job for us.

I just want to cite a few statistics. People always look at athletics and the number of graduates that you have and the way the NCAA equates the number of graduates, they take a look at the freshman and over five years see how many graduate. When you lose a student academic-wise it hurts the whole program. Fortunately, our rates have been pretty substantial--in the high to mid 50s. We have had a better graduation rate than the overall student body. The statistic that we find very interesting-- the NCAA requires that athletes are making progress toward a degree to remain eligible. In the junior year, they have to have completed 25% of their degree work, forth year is 50%, and fifth year is 75% or they are not eligible. We went back and did a little study and 1993-1995 in football the athletes were at 38.7% of degree work at 3rd year. Basketball the rate was 39.8%. In 1999-2001 the rate had improved to 50.1%
(football) and basketball was 47%. That’s one year ahead of what the NCAA requires. That’s why you see some of our athletes in their fifth year of eligibility are working on graduate degrees. Jeff Kelly, our quarterback, got his degree in three years and he will graduate with his Master’s Degree in December. He has named the most outstanding scholar-athlete in conference USA in football. That award to me as athletic director means more than any other all-American award. This year he is one of eight individuals in Division I football that will receive academic all-American honors by the football hall of fame foundation. He will go to a dinner in New York in December and will get and $18,000 scholarship for that. In basketball last year we had a young man named Vandarel Jones. He was an athlete who was academically not eligible to play as a freshman. He graduated in four years and won back a year of eligibility. He was also named the Conference USA Basketball star athlete of the year. We’re very proud of these young men. We also have a female athlete-- Jamie Sims-- who was named female athlete of the year in Mississippi. That is for athletic, academic, and leadership ability. That was the second year that we have received that award in the state of Mississippi. Last year we had 89 of our student athletes on the honor role in Conference USA. That means that they had an overall 3.0 average. We also had 15 athletes that completed the year with over 3.75 GPA. We are doing what it takes to make sure that our men and women athletes are getting a quality education and are graduating. We have a strong academic support center.

Let me give you another statistic in football that is very meaningful to our university. The Conference also presents an award to the team with the highest GPA in a particular program. Last year Tulane won for football with a little over 2.51 GPA. We were in second place with 2.475. I think that shows where we are and what we are trying to do academically. Conference USA has no limits on how many athletes you can recruit who are deficient. We have proposed that there be a limit of how many students could be admitted who have academic deficiencies. We have 6 football players who came with deficiencies while some teams have 25-30. When we proposed the limit, others looked at us like we were crazy because they thought we had high numbers of these athletes on our team. TCU, Tulane, and Army are the only ones to support this new limit.

There have been a lot of stories in the media about disciplinary problems with athletes. I won’t say that it will never happen here, but we not had a lot of disciplinary problems. Our coaches keep a very strong discipline. They hold the student athletes accountable for academic work. If you see athletes leave this program that is because they are not doing what the coaches require.

Challenges: Scholarship budget in 1998 was $1.4 M; this year it is $2.9 M. Women’s athletics in 1998 our budget was $1.2 M; this year it is $2.4 M. Both of those programs are really mandated either by the NCAA or the federal government. We have to abide by the law. As everyone knows, whenever student costs go up (tuition, room and board) scholarships also have to go up. There is an increase of $3M since 1998. It is really difficult to sell enough tickets or raise ticket prices fast enough or raise money fast enough to meet the needs of these scholarship demands. We do receive some support from the university. From the E & G budget we get $950,000 and $1.9 M from student athletic fees. But every cent of that money goes back into the university in the form of scholarships. Our scholarship budget is about $2.9 M. Above that we probably pay the university another $750-800,000 in services (police, etc.). I think I have a few more years left in this business and I hope that before my tenure is up at USM we’ll be able to totally self-supporting. In our close to $11 M budget about 25% is coming from E & G or student fees. The rest of the money is totally self-sufficient on our part.

As everyone knows we are involved in the capital campaign. Athletics have raised about $22 M and most of that is going to athletic facilities. The state does not pay anything for facilities.

Let me talk a little bit about exposure. In Conference USA we negotiated a new contract with ESPN. Just to show you the difference in exposure that our university is getting, a year ago we were in a contract with FOX sports and anytime there was a game, an average of 250,000 households watched. So far this year, one appearance on ESPN was shown to over a million households. We will have six exposures before the year is out. This is tremendous exposure for our institution. I am trying to move our football program around the country. I think it is important to engage our alumni all over the nation. When we were at Penn state two weeks ago, I was amazed at the number of alumni in the northeast who came.
We will play a game with University of California and we have not played on the west coast. Although Bower was not happy about the travel, I emphasize that it is important to engage the alumni that we have in the west--we have over 2000 graduates living out there. Probably 99% have had very little contact with the university since moving there. Alumni Association will be able to engage them in supporting USM while we are out there.

I would like to come to talk to groups on campus to show how we are running our academic programs with the highest standards. I would like to come and put on a 30 minute program. We are a very strong partner on this campus and we want to show you that.

B. Coates: Graduation rates are higher than the student body in general. What could we do to get the general student body graduation rates up?

Giannini: One of the advantages that we have in athletics is that we are engaged with them and can offer academic services. In the general population we have a lot of nontraditional students and transfers and this makes it more difficult. We don’t have as many nontraditional students. We provide a lot of services for the freshman athletes. I don’t think that graduation rates are that out of the ordinary. Athletes are very motivated to stay on track academically so that they can play sports. I tell parents that if their son or daughter does not graduate, I have personally failed at my job. Not many can continue to use their physical talents after college so we really emphasize the importance of getting the degree.

B. Coates: You’re saying it is the different demographics?

Giannini: Yes. I think it is demographics and the type of student that you recruit. I was a Duke previously and when students got into Duke, they generally graduated from Duke. Athletics the graduation rate was 75-80%. You can look at other universities like ours and the graduation rate is fairly comparable.

B. Scarborough: I want to congratulate you for your emphasis on academic success. One of the things that has concerned me is the scheduling of spring sports, particularly baseball. In early May--and I know that you are locked into Conference USA tournaments--but I don’t think that it is fair to study an take final exams when they are playing baseball all week. What are your thoughts on that?

Giannini: The schedule is a problem with so many schools involved especially when you have 14 institutions in the league. Each one has a different exam schedule it is difficult to come up with a schedule that fits every university. We have this year a move to a different week, I hope. The NCAA is moving its college World Series back a week and we are trying to get it after exam week.

M. Hall: What are the typical majors of our athletes?

Giannini: Many majors, business, sports administration, chemistry, nursing, across the board. Typically, sports administration, athletic training.

M. Forster: Some feel that athletics and athletic supporters has a major role in the undoing of President Fleming. Could you say something about that?

Giannini: That’s a difficult question. I think a lot of that came from athletic supporters who echoed the comments from the IHL Board about “management style.” There was some things that happened in that we were told would go one way and it didn’t happen. I think that that’s why there were some objections there. I was really disappointed that we got pulled into that because I don’t think that that was a big issue, I think that it was good to blame it on athletics but I don’t think it was really a major part of the whole situation. Dr. Fleming and I talked a lot during the process and afterwards and we felt it had nothing to do with athletics and in the final sessions with the IHL Board athletics never came up. I think it was the management style in some meeting with athletic supporters that probably caused the reaction that
they gave and what disappointed me was that there was some reaction from people that had no knowledge of anything but they made comments that were inappropriate and these individuals were talking to the press after they hear one or two others say something and they jumped on the bandwagon. I don’t think it really had anything to do with funding. He had told some people in athletics that things would happen and it wasn’t happening.

K. Greene: When I bought season tickets, I was told that I had to bring my ID. Would I have to give my ID to the persons who used my tickets when I am unable to go to a game?

Giannini: You have hard tickets? Are you a student? Students have to show Ids. I don’t know what that is. I will check on that and get back to you.

D. Cabana: Are we going to stay in Division I?

Giannini: I think many of y’all that follow sports read an article that came from a students newspaper at TCU this past week that indicated that there was a question about whether we would stay in Conference USA. There were also questions about whether we would stay a member of Division I football. With new criteria we should have no problem whatsoever staying in Division I. In fact most of the criteria-- we only have to average 15,000 fans and we have been in the mid to upper 20s the last couple of years. You have to play at least five home games a year. I’ve been working with Trellis on that. Statistically some of the big boys are trying to make it hard for some of the institutions to have five home games but we are working on that. I really don’t see it as a problem from a financial standpoint. The new rule says that you have to sponsor 200 full scholarships a year. This year we are at 219. It says you have to have 16 sports. We now have 15 sports. Two years ago we dropped men’s cross-country and men’s indoor track for financial reasons. Right now we have 6 men’s sports and 9 women’s and we will probably add back indoor track which really won’t cost us any money because we only have to attend two meets and we won’t add any scholarships. We shouldn’t have any problems whatsoever staying in Division I. One interesting things on the I-A subject is that the NCAA compiled some statistics in football: we’re in 64th place and that is OK.

Senator: Would you comment on financial support for the band.

Giannini: About three years ago, athletics agreed to pay 50 cents to band for each football ticket. As you know, our athletic department was in a deficit situation for quite a long time. In 1998-1999 it got very severe where it was almost 1.2 M. This year we balanced our budget for the first time in 12-15 years. Linda Gilbert, a year ago, made the decision not pay the band when we were running a deficit. She told us that she would finance the band and we needed to pay attention to paying our way in athletics. This year we have decided instead of giving the band 50 cents a ticket to provide $25,000 to the band to help them out. Like us, the band is having to spread scholarship money over fewer students and it’s a real problem. We are working with Lucas to see about increasing the students fees which are below other universities. We are hoping that the student fees might be raised and some of that would go to the band. We should do everything we can to support the band. I have offered to help them raise money like we do. Maybe we should do a marching band concert in Reed Green Coliseum to raise money. That will help next year for funding the band.

J. Olmi: Is there anything being done about a drop-off point for elderly or families with kids.

Giannini: We do have this for handicapped. That’s a good point. I’ll look into that.

J. Olmi: Can parking places be released at some point in the game.
Giannini: What we have done in basketball this coming year--we surveyed our supporters who pay in order to have a parking place and they want to know that the space is available even if they are late. We have been able to open up about half of the Payne Center lot to help with Basketball.

T. Green: Could we add men’s soccer? Is it too expensive?

Giannini: I think it would be very difficult. Gender equity and Title IX have really challenged universities. We have to fund women’s programs and nonresident sports programs. The gender equity situation is heightened in our university because of the number of students. The spending is supposed to mirror your students and when we have 60% females and 40% males, there is little hope of adding another male sport. We have added women’s soccer and women’s softball. If we did add another men’s soccer, we would have to add a couple more women’s sports, too.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

S. Hubble: Thank you for spending this time with us. Let’s now call the business meeting to order.

3.0 Approval of Agenda: Dr. Scarborough has requested that we move transportation report to first place in committee reports so take note of that change. Are there any other changes? Is there a motion to accept the agenda? MOVED: D. Cabana, SECONDED: T. Green. PASSED.

4.0 Approval of Minutes. Are there corrections to the minutes?

D. Dunn: Change my question on second page from naming “auditorium” to “dormitory”
MOVED: J. Lytle. SECONDED: S. Neilsen. PASSED

5.0 Officer’s Reports

5.1 President’s Report: Susan Hubble

It has come to my attention that one of our colleagues, Howard Heiden in Polymer Science in the past went through some major bypass surgery and is now fighting another serious illness. Keep a good thought for him and his family. Thanks to university libraries for use of the space. There seems to be a need to reexamine the instrument and process for evaluation of teaching. Dr. Griffin has formed a university-wide committee to standardize faculty evaluations. I have asked three members of our own Faculty Senate Administrative and Faculty Evaluations Committee to serve on this committee. I need faculty members from the following colleges: Business Administration, International and Continuing Education, Ed/Psych, Health and Human Sciences, Liberal Arts, and Libraries. We don’t need to limit this committee to Senators. If you have a desire to serve or recommend someone, let me know.

The second item is about the campus advisory committee for the Presidential search. You may have read in the paper that the committee met on Oct. 31 and again this week. The next meeting is on November 27 and at that meeting the committee will finalize the list of desirable qualities for the new President. We will also meet again with the IHL members who are on the search committee. Of the 39 members, approximately 1/3 are campus-based. One-quarter are faculty. I was asked to submit a list of 15 names and 6 made it to the final committee. We did have some opportunity to have some input, but IHL
has the final decision. Confidentiality has been stressed and we along with other members will report what is not confidential. The committee has been charged with selecting 8-12 candidates. The board will further select from those to finalize 3-5 for campus interviews. HEB documents on presidential searches were provided in the committee packets and I will put these on reserve in the library. These documents were supplied to the entire committee. Could you please give the word to all students, staff and faculty. Whatever you wish to submit to the committee, the information is on the gold half-sheet that has been handed out. Nominations should go directly to Bill Funk. Dr. Griffin has set up an e-mail address for you to communicate your thoughts about the selection process.

You should have another handout. This was handed out at the Hattiesburg legislative meeting about the restructuring of the IHL Board. There were 13 legislators in attendance. There are several plans. The biggest concern is to get something out of committee and on the floor for a vote. Our local legislators seem to think that the time is right to get changes on the selection of College Board members this year. J. Palmer and T. Green have been meeting with local legislators and Trellis is going to share something on that later.

You have probably heard about the cuts in higher education. It is 3.57% this year. That is across the board for all institutions. We can cover that with the 5% holdback. We may have additional cuts in January.

We have asked Amy Tuck to be a forum speaker, but her staff informed us that she could not rearrange her schedule to come in November or December. I will continue to see if she can come in the spring. She said that she wanted to come. Any questions?

5.2 President-Elect’s Report

Don Cabana: I would suggest that we keep a close eye on the paper about the budget cuts. When senator Farris was here last year, the legislators and Gov. Musgrove disagreed with 5-7% budget cuts. Thus we are in a budget cutting mode and it looks like that they are doing the same thing again this session. This could mean 5% budget cuts again next year.

Greene: Don’t they know that they can raise taxes?

Olmi: This is not an option that the legislators see as viable.

T. Green: It looks like they are using the projection of a 4% budget increase again this year as a basis for structuring the budget.

Cabana: We need to make it clear to our representatives that we have been getting pay cuts in the last years because of the increase costs of health care. We need to send a message to these guys. Art, maybe the Senate organization can send this message loud and clear to the legislature.

M. Henry: The problem is that we can reduce 3% or 7% right now, but I think that waiting a little longer is all right. If we accept the arguments then we would face cuts right now, and I think that waiting a little longer would at least help in case things get better. We need to look at not only the tax reduction. We also have increases in student tuition and more students. These increases may offset the reductions somewhat.

J. Olmi: I am not an accountant. I would rather hold that line rather than projecting increases in revenues. I don’t want to cut back, but not spend what is not coming in.
5.3 Secretary’s Report: Darlys Alford  No Report

5.4 Secretary-Elect’s Report: Toby Graham  See proxies above.

6.0 Committee Reports

B. Scarborough: Transportation: There were two areas of concern. In the fine arts area, the gravel lot next to Kelly in order to accommodate some professor who complained, the service zone will be open to them. When they have been out visiting schools. The lot north at Bond hall, 30-40 spaces for faculty have been opened. We may change a fee for visitors (maybe $2). The students are abusing the visitor pass. When you have a visitor, we could give some out when arrangements are being made. Construction is taking up parking spaces. We think that the contractor should pay for that. Reserved parking for special events is a problem especially when the parking is overestimated and no one actually uses the spaces. If those who host these events were paying for the spaces, they might be more conservative. Charge whoever is having a special event so that overestimates and empty parking is not a problem. Including athletics.

6.1 Academic and Governance: Kate Greene: We are charged with determining who is going to control distance education on this campus. There is also concern about how faculty are selected for ad hoc committees. There is also concern about the ratio of faculty to administrators on the campus.

6.2 Administrative and Faculty Evaluations: Elizabeth Harrison: The committee has suggested that the Provost direct the deans to develop an evaluation tools for the associate deans. I will give more information about this in the next meetings.

6.3 Faculty Awards: Bob Smith. Award committee met and we are dealing with Headwae awards. On this award, the provost’s office is notified and that letter is sent to the Faculty Senate President and then to the committee. Other awards are solicited by the Provost and come directly to the committee. We wonder if it would be all right for the nominations could be changed to be consistent with other procedures.

S. Naghshpour: What is the process for nominations? Are there any restrictions on the way that nominations are made for awards?

B. Smith: The Provost’s Office sends out notices that nominations are being taken. They get nominations be a deadline and send the nominations to an evaluating committee and a letter to those who have been nominated.

S. Naghshpour: Who can make these nominations?

D. Alford: Nominations can be by phone, letter, or e-mail. The Provost’s office may not even keep track of who made the nomination. It is a very open process.

D. Dunn: No more self-nominations.

6.4 Faculty Handbook Task Force: M. Forester: Third year review process for faculty tenure and promotion is the section that needs clarification.

6.5 Faculty Welfare: John Meyer: IHL board has asked whether the President’s salary should be raised while at the same time we have seen no raises and our insurance co-pays are increasing. We are drafting a resolution and still working on the wording: The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Senate applauds the efforts of the IHL board for obtaining competitive salary for the state university presidents. We remind the board that the same problem of low salaries exists at the faculty and
staff levels at USM by state law. We ask the IHL Board to recognize and remedy declining real salaries resulting from the growing loss of valuable faculty and staff today in Mississippi higher education. We are still working on this.... We are also considering the issue of semester length. We are in a data gathering mode. Why do we not count our final exam times as contact minutes? We will get more hard data. Students work during the breaks. Summer session it is hard for teachers to get in and out with work restrictions. Finally, we are concerned about health care costs rising--defacto salary reduction.

K. Greene: Could faculty use the Payne center at no cost as a perk?

S. Hubble: That is an auxiliary and they must self-generate. We would want to look at that as a benefit and the university would have to reimburse for that perk.

6.6 Government Relations: Trellis Green: This past Tuesday, the committee met with Fillingame. Good format. Fillingame said in regard to using tobacco money for one time offset of raises, health costs: It is NOT going to happen. This is about the battle between the legislators and Musgrove. There might be some hope if the proposal comes from anyone else but Musgrove. In regard to including university faculty in pay raises along with K-12, he said that the legislature is unlikely to make a multiyear commitment to pay increases for higher education because it is not a high priority. The legislators know that there is a hemorrhage in faculty leaving and he says that they don’t care.

K. Greene: We should elect persons who do care.

T. Green: Why don’t they care about higher education? There was some success of the MAE in K-12 organizing to scare the legislators. One way would be to have the Senates hire a full time lobbyist. Amy Tuck’s name came up over and over. Tuck may be looking in the future toward running for office with strong support from Southern Mississippi.

M. Forster: There is no courage among legislators for raising taxes. There are very key leaders in the legislature who take care of their own and don’t care about much else. We have to organize.

J. Rachal: Why is there so much conflict between the Musgrove and the legislators?

D. Cabana: The Lt. Gov. has the most power. Musgrove has become as enemy of legislators. He has gone to the budget hearings and forced them to listen to him. He also embarrassed them with the budget projections.

E. Harrison: Why doesn’t the legislature care about higher education?

D. Alford: They are uneducated. You need to go to the legislative meetings. We are perceived as a privileged class. Our salaries are well above the Mississippi average and they see our complaints about salary losses as unimportant in comparison to so many more needy populations. When people have not been involved in higher education themselves, they are somewhat suspicious about highly educated persons.

T. Green: We are certainly viewed as a privileged class.

6.7 Sexual Harassment and Assault: Margot Hall: I passed out a sheet. I am reporting on the Nov. 1 meeting. There has been one rape and another incident and there is great concern. Already in place, list of dos and don’ts, newspaper articles, and 911 callbacks. There have been efforts to warn people not open their doors to those they don’t know. We would rather be proactive rather than reactive as in counseling. The immediate priority is on, additional lighting. I called Jones and physical plant to inform us of places where more lighting is needed and to find the costs. He will get back to us. Some members have already identified blanks spots. The second need is replacing the 5 security officers that we lost to
budget cuts. The security is stretched too thin. What we have now—roughly 25 officers for 24/7 and some are working double shifts. Security requests that we be more vigilant by locking buildings on weekends. Trimming bushes back is another possible approach. Another tactic would be to go into classes and suggest to students ways they could practice safety—don’t jog with headphones, for example. The committee members are talking about ways to raise money to help finance some of these solutions. There is also the possibility of raising students fees. Long term: security could be increased with all doors being changed from keys to ID cards. They committee needs more representation from the Gulf Coast.

Resolution: Be it resolved that the USM Faculty Senate supports the work of the Sexual Assault & Harassment Committee in its efforts to protect individuals from assault (prevention) and to help individuals cope with the aftermath of assault should such occur. Specifically, that we support the committee’s efforts to develop sources of funding for additional lighting, trimming of bushes, and law enforcement personnel.

Resolution: MOVED: M.:Hall, SECONDED: K. Greene PASSED

6.9 UFSA: Art Kaul: We will develop a legislative agenda and distribute it to the legislators. About a lobbyist, I think that there would be some interesting potential. How we would pay for it is a problem, but until we organize there is little hope. The relationship between the legislature and Musgrove in not improving.

D. Cabana: Musgrove’s has a committment to K-12. Those teachers must be trained, but Musgrove does not strongly support higher education that I can see.

A. Kaul: We confronted him about that. Time will tell if it did any good.

7.0 Old Business

8.0 New Business

8.1 S. Hubble: Change of December Meeting: The football schedule has changed and a game will be on our December meeting date. Our constitution does not mandate a December meeting.

Moved to cancel December meeting: MOVED: D. Cabana, SECONDED: A. Kaul. PASSED.

8.2 Naming New Dormitory Oseola McCarty Hall: D. Dunn: A resolution has originated with the student government. We have been asked to endorse this resolution.

S. Hubble: There are numerous typographical errors that need to be corrected. Could you give the student groups feedback about that?

MOVED to suspend the rules: D. Cabana, SECONDED: J. Olmi, PASSED

MOVED to adopt resolution (see attachment): D. Dunn SECONDED: S. Neilsen, PASSED (Vote was unanimaous).

9.0 Announcements

M. Henry: AAUP will meet on December 4, 4:30 pm, Lib Arts 103. This is consistent with our interest in getting organized to voice higher education issues to the legislature. I am concerned about getting word of our actions out more quickly than what can be done when we must get the minutes approved after a month.
Adjournment 3:58