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Faculty Senate Minutes - June 10, 2005

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Faculty Senate Meeting

June 10, 2005

Union Hall of Honors

2:00 p.m.

8.0   Call to Order (Continuation of May 6, 2005 meeting): 2:06pm

9.0   Election of 2004-2005 Faculty Senate Officers

   9.1   Election of Senate President-Elect

          2 candidates were nominated: Myron Henry and Mary Beth Applin. Myron Henry was elected.

   9.2   Election of Senate Secretary-Elect

          Mary Beth Applin was the only candidate nominated and was elected.

10.0  Adjournment of May Meeting

1.0   Approval of June 10, 2005 Agenda

2.0   Approval of February 11, March 4, and April 8 minutes: Approved without changes.

3.0   Officers’ Reports

   3.1   President

       3.1.1   Toy McLaughlin

          Dave B. met with Mr. McLaughlin and discussed the faculty’s concerns regarding his
comments on the EagleTalk message board (see May 2005 minutes). Mr. McLauglin agreed to write an apology to faculty and sent it to Dave B. to read at the senate meeting. Mr. McLaughlin further paid to have it placed in the *Hattiesburg American*. Dave read the apology to the senate. A motion was made and passed requesting that the Executive Committee compose a letter and send it to Mr. McLaughlin accepting the apology.

3.1.2 Faculty Leadership Council

Dave B. announced that a new committee has been established of leaders of various councils on campus. The new committee will be called the “Faculty Leadership Council” (FLC) and will consist of past, present and elects of the Graduate Council, Academic Council, Faculty Senate, and the Council of Chairs.

3.1.3 Gulf Coast Library

Dave B. stated that plans are still in the works to convert the 3rd floor of the Gulf Coast Library facility into classrooms and Hardy Hall Auditorium into a bookstore. Pat Smith and Will Watson introduced to the senate a draft resolution opposing these renovations. After reviewing the resolution, a motion was made and approved to separate the resolution into 2 separate resolutions and to approve the resolutions with some editorial changes (see Appendix 1 & 2). A discussion ensued as to where to send the resolutions and whether or not they should be released to the press. It was decided to send them to the Provost first and see what response was garnered.

3.1.4 President’s Council Election (2 members)

The senate needed to elect 2 members to serve on the President’s Council – one to replace Anne Wallace whose term would end December 2005 (Dr. Wallace has left USM) and one member to replace the outgoing member Myron Henry. Joe Olmi was elected to replace Anne Wallace until December and Bobby Middlebrooks was elected to be Myron Henry’s replacement.

3.1.5 Budget

Dave B. announced that the IHL Board announced a 1% increase in funding to the university. A notice has been sent from President Thames to the deans that there is a temporary hiring freeze.

3.1.6 Search for Associate VP of Research
Dave B. announced that 3 candidates have been interviewed on campus for the Associate VP of Research job. The job was offered to Beverly Britt who turned it down. Another (fourth) candidate was in today. This candidate does not have a PhD.

A senator stated that she had heard that the VP of Research job search was discontinued and that the job ad was changed and a new search begun. Dave did not know but said that he could check on it.

### 3.1.7 Cabinet Report

Dave B. reported that at cabinet meeting this week there was a long discussion about ‘new faculty orientation.’ Dave made the suggestion that the senate president be given some time to speak to new faculty on behalf of the Faculty Senate at the orientation. Dave asked that Bill Powell call Cynthia Moore about getting on the schedule.

There will be a “new chairs” workshop for new chairs.

The issue of ‘Dead Week” was again brought up (the idea of having no exams the week before finals). Dave B. and Bill P. will be meeting next week with SGA President Jonathan Krebs to discuss this issue.

### 3.1.8 WP and WF (The assignment of a student grade of “Withdraw with a Passing Grade” vs. “Withdraw with an F”)

There have been some recent issues concerning the assignment of WP and WF grades to students withdrawing from classes this past semester. Typically, when a full-time student withdraws from a class after the drop date, the faculty assigns either a WP or a WF depending on what the student’s grade was upon withdrawing. Sometimes what happens, though, is that a student is only taking 1-2 classes and if they withdraw from all their classes and ultimately the university, they automatically get a WP for the classes unless the faculty goes through all the paperwork to change it. The policy between the two scenarios is not consistent. The President’s Cabinet agreed that Academic Council will deal with this problem. Dave suggested that a withdrawal form is sent to faculty anytime a student withdraws from a class so that the policy is consistent. Bill P. stated that Academic Council has formed a committee to address the issue.

### 3.1.9 Other
At this time, Dave B. awarded Myron Henry and Joe Olmi their plaques for last year’s service to the faculty senate.

3.2 President-Elect

3.2.1 Online Evaluations

Bill P. announced that a committee is being formed to review the faculty classroom evaluation. The committee will consist of two people from faculty senate, two from academic and graduate council, two from council of chairs, two from the 2002 evaluation committee and J.T. Johnson. The administration will also appoint member(s). Because of the subject matter of this committee, the senate executive committee firmly believes that this committee should operate under the purview of the Provost’s office (not the Office of Accreditation) and has made this clear to the administration.

3.2.2 Provost Council

Meeting canceled again.

3.2.3 Email Policy

Barton Spencer and Bill P. attended the ITech Security and Compliance committee meeting as guests. Bill P. and Barton S. insisted on faculty involvement in any email policy that was developed. There seemed to be a lot of confusion about exactly what was considered “email monitoring.” The committee suggested that the faculty senate draft an email monitoring policy and submit it to the committee. Bill P. said that he will work with the senate to do that. Also, he will continue to work on getting an official FS member on this committee.

3.3 Secretary

3.3.1 Follow-up on Faculty Departures

Mary Beth Applin gave a handout of 4-year Faculty Departures from sister institutions (as requested by the senate last month). Mary Beth requested the data from Ole Miss, MS State, Clemson and Auburn. At this time, Ole Miss and MS State are the only numbers received (see Appendix 3.) The charts show that USM has had a significantly higher mean departure rate than Ole Miss or State (USM 109, Ole Miss 64, and MS State 101 (MS State offered early retirement 3 years ago making their numbers higher in the 2001-2002 academic year.)

3.3.2 Follow-up on State Retirement
Mary Beth talked with Russ Willis about the increase in state retirement contributions and whether or not ORP participants would also get this increase. Russ stated that ORP participants would be getting this increase.

3.4 Secretary-Elect

4.0 Committee Reports
4.1 Academic and Governance
4.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations
4.3 Awards
Alan Thompson stated that there is still a delay in getting the award money to recipients (except the Grand Marshal). This should be resolved soon.

4.4 Budget
4.5 Constitution and Bylaws
4.6 Faculty Welfare
4.7 Government Relations
4.8 Technology
Homer Coffman responded to the senate’s letter sent to him concerning the web redesign that occurred last month (see Appendix 4). Though the answers were not exactly helpful, Homer did express a sincere desire to work together in the future so that this did not happen again.

4.9 Elections
There will be a third round election in the CoAL and the Gulf Coast. This will take place during the first week of the fall semester when faculty return.

4.10 Ad hoc committee reports and liaison reports (AAUP and others)

4.10.1 President’s Council
Myron submitted the PC report via email:

1. Approval of the May 2005 minutes. They were approved as distributed.

They are now public record, so I have attached them to this email. Since it is referenced in the minutes and was included as an attachment for PC members, I have also attached the spreadsheet I developed based on data from institutional research on student credit hour trends.

2. Priorities for the next two years.
Dr. Thames reported that his priorities for the next two years are the Strategic Initiatives for 2005-2008 that were formulated by the University Planning Committee. He went through the list of five and the "hows" associated with each Strategic Initiative. The "how" bullets Dr. Thames discussed at the PC sometimes resemble those that are under the "Strategic Initiatives" found through the USM Website and sometimes do not (the Strategic Initiatives may be found by going to the USM Homepage, clicking on "About Us," clicking on SACS Accreditation Information, and then clicking under the University Planning Committee Status Report). The list of Strategic Initiatives and "How" bullets that follow are those that were distributed and discussed by Dr. Thames at the PC yesterday morning:

• **Improve access to education** How?
  - Expand programs to coast and improve distance learning
  - Create environments conducive to learning
  - Increase scholarships and other funding
  - Improve retention rates

• **Ensure quality learning opportunities** How?
  - Maintain accreditation--SACS, NCATE, and others
  - Improve Program Assessment
  - Recruit/Retain quality faculty
  - Be efficient [in order] to internally fund merit raises
  - Recruit high ability students

• **Promote research, Innovation, and scholarship** How?
  - Support faculty in quest to obtain federal funding through grants
  - Continue funding the MIDAS program

• **Enhance the economic condition of Mississippi and beyond** How?
  - Develop/expand academic programs that will help MS work with ADP and businesses as partners in economic development

• **Enrich quality of life** How?
  - Improve access to campus facilities and events
  - Promote relationships with community groups and businesses to benefit our students

Much discussion among a few accompanied Dr. Thames' presentation of these initiatives, particularly concerning the "how" bullets "Expand programs to coast and improve distance learning," "Create environments conducive to learning," and "Recruit/Retain quality faculty." I will try to capture an overall spirit of this discussion, but I do not claim that the words that follow are quotes, nor is my description necessarily in the order of occurrence (but it's close). Tammy Greer spearheaded the discussion. She asked about further reorganizations and Dr. Thames stated that he did not foresee anymore major reorganizations but rather fine tuning of the current organization.

Tammy Greer asked why units such as the College of Business expressed concerns about distance delivery and coast programs. The Executive MBA (ExMBA) again became a focal point of discussion. Initially, this conversation was pretty much a two-way dialogue between Tammy Greer and Dr. Thames, with Tammy Greer asking good and rather direct questions, and Dr. Thames responding. Dr. Thames mentioned Tulane and how much tuition they generated from their ExMBA program. Tammy asked how we could complete and why we would want to. I entered the discussion when I thought Dr. Thames was suggesting that he did not know why faculty were reluctant to start new initiatives in distance education such as online courses and the ExMBA. I mentioned that I thought it was more process: an administration moving ahead without engaging, at the outset of the process, those who would be responsible for and impacted by program delivery, and I sited the ExMBA as an example. Dr. Thames said that I was wrong about the ExMBA and I responded by recalling the rather complete looking plan for the top floor of the library at Gulf Park and the fact that the "plan" for the top floor of the library specifically referenced the ExMBA.

Tammy Greer also asked about improving faculty and administration relations and mentioned that colleagues of hers feared "retaliation." Dr. Thames said he was not interested in retaliation. He said he couldn't fire someone like Tammy Greer even if he wanted to, and he did not want to any how. Tammy referenced Frank Glamser and Gary Stringer in veiled ways, and Dr. Thames came close to making
allegations against them again, but he stepped back from that before he "crossed the line." No names were mentioned. This line of discussion continued for a while. Dr. Thames finally told Tammy and others to just come by and see him if they had concerns. At around this time I asked Dr. Thames if he would be willing to come to Faculty Senate sometime in the fall. I think he said he would.

3. Update on Retirements and Departures

Russ Willis distributed an updated chart on retirements and departures. Data for 2004-2005 are not complete but so far, about fifty colleagues have left the university by assuming new positions elsewhere or retiring. In the past three years, USM has averaged 95 departures. Mary Beth constructed a chart for MSU and Ole Miss, and she mentioned that departures at Ole Miss averaged 65 over the same three years. MSU averages were higher but were overly influenced in one year because by MSU offered an early retirement incentive program (neither USM nor Ole Miss offered such a program). Russ Willis also gave some figures for staff departures: 301 staff left after 2003-2004. We asked about the number of faculty, and Russ reported we had about 650 not including one-year only appointments. I asked how many were tenure-track and he speculated about 600 or maybe 550.

4. Search for Marketing and Public Relations Director to replace Lisa Mader

There was great interest on this search. Three faculty are on the search committee including David Davies (Journalism) and Keith Erickson (Speech Communication). Several PC members expressed the point of view that we need a PR and Marketing Director who knows universities and higher education, experiences they felt Lisa Mader lacked.

5. Ad Astra and Room Scheduling

Much discussion centered on the problems this summer with scheduling. Casey Turnage and Gregg Pierce led the discussion. They were duly apologetic for this summer's experiences and assured PC members things would be better for the fall.

6. Website Plans

Dr. Thames and Dr. Exline left at this point. Homer Coffman gave a lengthy presentation which left me a bit in the dark. To me, his presentation sounded more like something he would deliver at a conference on Web pages. However, he did seem to say that the new approach would be "enabling for users." For example, it would be much easier for users to create their own Web pages, and they would not have to use software such as Dream Weaver. After Coffman's presentation, Mary Beth was the primary respondent.

The meeting ended without discussion on the seventh agenda item, "Accuracy of Published Data."

Finally, I have now concluded a one-year term on the PC. I think it is important for the Senate to continue to have active representation at PC meetings. Your Senate representatives, Ray Folse, Anne Wallace, Mary Beth Applin (she was a proxy more than once), and I hope we have made a difference in the dialogue that occurs at PC meetings. If the PC was intended to displace the Faculty Senate, it has not, mainly because real questions have been raised by Faculty Senate representatives (and a few others like Tammy Greer). Thanks to all of you for according to me the opportunity to serve on the PC.

Myron Henry

[End of PC Report]
4.10.2 AAUP

5.0 Out-going President’s Remarks and Reflections

Dave B. gave an overview of the accomplishments of the senate this year and thanked officers and senators for their work.

6.0 Seating of new senators/officers

New senators were recognized and welcomed.

7.0 Passing of gavel to Bill Powell

8.0 New President’s Remarks

Bill P. thanked Dave for his hard work and outlined some of his goals for the coming year.

9.0 Adjournment
Members present and those absent [in brackets] but represented by proxy (in parentheses):

**College of the Arts & Letters**

Joe Brumbeloe

Amy Chasteen-Miller

[Phillip Gentile] (Stephen Judd)

Kate Greene

Stephen Judd

John Meyer

Bill Powell, President-Elect

Paula Smithka

[Anne Wallace] (Mary Beth Apolin)

**College of Business**

[David Duhon] (Paula Smithka)

Bill Gunther

[Laurie Babin] (Paula Smithka)

**College of Education & Psychology**

[Taralynn Hartsell] (Mary Beth Apolin)

Melanie Norton

Joe Olmi

Janice Thompson

Daniel Tingstrom
College of Health
Bonnie Harbaugh, Secretary-Elect
Susan Hubble
[Margot Hall] (Mary Lux)
Mary Lux
Mary Frances Nettles (Bill Powell)
Tim Rehner

College of Coastal Science
Don Redalje

College of Science & Technology
David Beckett, President
Randy Buchanan
Peter Butko
Raymond Folse
Mary Dayne Gregg
Myron Henry
Bobby Middlebrooks
Gail Russell
Alan Thompson

University Libraries
Members Absent:

**College of the Arts & Letters:**

Bill Scarborough

Jennifer Torres

**College of Business:**

James Crockett

**College of Education & Psychology:**

**College of Health:**

**College of Coastal Science:**

Chet Rakocinski
College of Science & Technology:

University Libraries:

USM-Gulf Coast:
Appendix 1

Faculty Senate Resolution Regarding the Gulf Park Library June 10, 2005

The USM Gulf Park Library is the architectural “jewel” of the Gulf Park campus. The open, beautiful 3rd floor of the library is the main repository of the library's books and contains almost sixty percent of the building's study seating. An existing plan calls for subdividing the north wing of the 3rd floor into classrooms at a cost of $200,000 - $250,000. An additional amount would be necessary to restore the library back to its original condition after classrooms are constructed on the campus.

For the following reasons the USM Faculty Senate resolves that all plans for converting portions of the library at Gulf Park to temporary classroom space be halted.

1. The academic program need for library collection and study space is so great, especially given the 20 percent average annual growth being projected by the Gulf Park Master Planning Group, that the library conversion would hamper the delivery and quality of programs at Gulf Park, the main USM center on the Coast.
2. The 3rd floor of the library is the main repository for its books. The 3rd floor classroom conversion would impinge upon space for collection development and severely curtail space for current stacks and faculty/student study, in clear violation of the American Library Association square footage per student standards, and this during a SACS reaffirmation period.
3. Even the architects and planners acknowledge that the conversion would raise noise and foot traffic to the point where it would interfere with the normal function of the library.
4. The library conversion would violate the spirit of the “Bricks to Books” campaign by which the USM community, staff, alumni, local corporations and other supporters pledged tens of thousands of dollars to the library as it was planned and built. The University's acceptance of these monies for the library is a sacred trust with those contributors.
5. The perceived classroom crunch at Gulf Park results largely from the lack of any coordinated inter-college academic scheduling process for USM-Gulf Coast. The Gulf Park Advanced Education Center (AEC), Holloway Complex and the former Business College Building classrooms are demonstrably underutilized during the day. If properly coordinated and scheduled, these existing classroom spaces would ease the crunch that supposedly necessitates the library conversion.
6. The “Executive MBA (EMBA) Program” that the library conversion was planned to accommodate appears to be permanently tabled and the Dean of the College of Business publicly stated that no dedicated classroom space for the EMBA was going to be necessary at Gulf Park since on-campus class meetings for such a program would be limited to weekends when the AEC, the prime classroom space at Gulf Park, is very lightly used.
7. Infrastructure-dedicated monies slated for the library conversion could be better expended on either renovation of other existing space into classrooms or for the acquisition of portable classrooms.
Further, the Faculty Senate resolves that instead of converting library space to classrooms the administration pursue some or all of the following alternatives.

1. Determine whether additional on-campus space will soon become available for classrooms (for example, in Elizabeth Hall).
2. Determine whether space is available for temporary use as classrooms at nearby churches and hotels.
3. Acquire portable classrooms for deployment at Gulf Park, either as classrooms, or as auxiliary space (such as for the bookstore, or offices) or both.
4. Establish a USM-Gulf Coast scheduling authority to assure optimum coordination and use of available space, thus spreading classes over more daytime periods and over all four nights, and eliminating the two nights a week classroom crunch that ostensibly requires the library conversion.
Faculty Senate Resolution Regarding the Hardy Hall Auditorium June 10, 2005

Hardy Hall Auditorium is a large, open multipurpose room which looks out over the Mississippi Sound. Currently, much of the Hardy Hall Auditorium is slated to be converted into a bookstore.

For the following reasons, the USM Faculty Senate resolves that plans for the conversion of the Hardy Hall Auditorium into a bookstore be halted.

1. Hardy Hall Auditorium is an excellent location for large meetings and get-togethers. Unlike the AEC Auditorium, Hardy Hall Auditorium has a flat floor without fixed seats, making it adaptable for large or small conferences, luncheons, award ceremonies and meetings. A similar space does not exist on the Gulf Park campus.

2. The Hardy Hall Auditorium has excellent acoustics and is amenable as a venue for plays, recitals, concerts, and other similar programs. Its use in fine arts activities also enhances the importance of the USM Gulf Park campus as a link to the coast community. For example, the USM Gulf Coast Civic Chorale uses this auditorium for concerts.

The modification of the Hardy Hall Auditorium into a bookstore will make it unusable for the purposes listed above. The Faculty Senate therefore resolves that the USM administration halt the conversion of the Auditorium into a bookstore. We recommend that a portable (modular) building be rented or another space used until a more permanent bookstore is built.
Appendix 3

Faculty Departures Ole Miss

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### Faculty Departures Miss State

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<td>2001/02</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
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Appendix 4

to: ITech Advisory Committee, Judy Isbell
from: Faculty Senate and Technology Sub-Committee
subject: Restructured USM Web Site
date: May 10, 2005

On Monday, May 2, 2005, the University Web site went down for an hour or two around 8:00am so that a new Web page design could be uploaded. The implementation took the University community by surprise especially when no specific notification had been made beforehand. If the University community had been consulted prior to the upload of the new site, it probably would have advised delaying the implementation of the new design until semester break to avoid causing any confusion to students, staff, and faculty one week before finals. Furthermore, consultation or communication might have ensured that vital links such as the Online Course Evaluation, SOAR, and Library would not have been omitted.

Though we appreciate the time and effort employed in this endeavor to make the new Web site more appealing and organized, we have some observations and questions that we hope you can address:

Questions

[Faculty Senate question are in black, Homer Coffman’s responses are in blue]

Why were Public Relations personnel, as opposed to ITech Web personnel, primarily involved in redesigning the existing Web site? Could you please tell us their qualifications for such a project?

The department of Marketing and Public Relations is responsible for the consistency of the University’s overall message to the general public. So they provide marketing and public relations expertise for strategic planning, media exposure, and marketing strategies for any event, organization, department, or college. Marketing’s primary directive is to sell the university. Therefore, the redesign should have primarily resided with the Marketing and Public Relations department. ITech personnel were involved in the development / technical aspects of the website. The design was based on a focused study completed by the Godwin Group and was completed in a team environment with multiple inputs on creativity.

Judy Isbell is the director of Web-based marketing for Southern Miss Gulf Coast and was asked by Lisa Mader to assist this team because since she had a background in Web development and a Master’s degree in Communications (emphasis in Public Relations earned from Southern Miss in May 1993). She has developed the Memorial Hospital at Gulfport’s first Web site, and developed the Web site for the Department of Marine Science at Southern Miss. She has experience with relevant software and operating systems employed in this redevelopment, including Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat, DOS, Windows and Linux.
Jenny Watson, Web Developer for the Marketing and Public Relations Department, was asked to join the team because of her extensive knowledge of the current Web site as the webmaster for the existing top tier of university Web pages. Her design background in both print and Web environments made her a valuable asset to the team. Watson’s experience also includes the same relevant software and operating systems.

The overall project was owned equally by Lisa Mader and Homer Coffman as it is a blend of both university communications and technology resources. With Lisa Mader’s recent departure, I will continue to drive the process with input from the entire team.

In terms of the focus groups involved in gathering feedback for a new Web design, why were only high school students and their parents involved as participants? Why did the scope not include the University community so that functionality could have been addressed?

Several sessions were conducted (Dec. 14, 2004, Jan. 27, 2005, and Feb. 25, 2005) with a focus group of University “power users.” These individuals are spread throughout the University system and have particular and detailed knowledge of the needs of technology consumers at the various campuses and teaching sites. Current students were also questioned as a focus group during the development phase. The Southern Style group was used as they were a ready cross-section of students already meeting on a regular basis. In addition to the Godwin Group information provided as part of the initial recruitment research, we conducted a targeted focus group on Web communication with Sacred Heart students.

Why was a consultant company (Godwin) brought in to facilitate these focus groups when a research institution like USM could have performed a similar task with its qualified faculty and graduate students?

Godwin Group was acquired to conduct focus group research involving student recruitment in the fall of 2004. It was this initial study that initiated the Web redevelopment as a top priority for the University in attracting new students. Prospective students and their parents ranked Web sites as their first touch point with a potential university.

Did the new Web design undergo any type of usability studies before it was launched?

The Web Team compiled the information received from the Godwin study, surveys of prospective and current students, faculty, staff and the public at large as well as conducted additional studies with internal university personnel. In addition, an online survey was conducted in February. Usability analysis was performed using software which analyzes captured log files. Reports generated by this program offer “tracking” data of not only page hits and visits, but search terms requested, times of day that users most frequent the site, and trends site use. We found search terms particularly useful in that users were calling information by different names than we had envisioned on the site. We did not, however, have a working prototype open to public users for additional usability analysis prior to the new site upload. We continue to collect log files of user activity on the new pages and will analyze those for usage trends.

Observations for Consideration

The following are some ideas for contemplation in the future, as well as now in terms of making modifications to the new Web site.

1. The web survey data and graphs found at [http://edudev.usm.edu/newweb/what.html](http://edudev.usm.edu/newweb/what.html) did not seem to support the conclusions or the design that was implemented. For instance, a chart appears entitled Finding Info with the subordinate paragraph that says Most of you (60 percent) said you either found what you were looking for at edudev.usm.edu with some effort or you only found part of what you needed. That's effort you could better spend elsewhere in our opinion. The Web should serve up the information you want... quickly.
However, the graph that actually appeared on the site indicated that much more than 60% could find part or all of what they were looking for. That being the case, why were any of the links found on the initial USM Web site changed on the new design?

A careful look at the bar graph shows that the y axis extends beyond 100 representing actual numbers rather than percentages. We used actual responses as the plot points for the bar chart and used the percentage of total responses in the more analytical commentary.

Here are the numbers for the graph:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>If you were looking for specific information, were you able to find it?</th>
<th># replies % total</th>
<th># replies % total</th>
<th># replies % total</th>
<th># replies % total</th>
<th># replies % total</th>
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<td>111</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
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</table>

As noted in the table, the percentage of total, 46 (it took some effort) and 13 (only found part of it) come to 59 percent. The implication is that people were struggling to find what they needed online. Our effort is to try to make that easier by instituting a two-pronged entry to the top web pages – either major informational links (About Us, Programs of Study, etc.) or personal links (Prospective Students, Current Students, Faculty, Staff, etc.). Even if a new user doesn’t know how to find what they are looking for, they should be able to recognize “who they are” in relation to the University and find relative links there.

Had we also included the people who said they couldn’t find what they were looking for at all, another 11 percent, that figure would have been even higher at 70 percent.
2. Notify the university community with an exact date at least a week prior to new implementations so people aren't taken off guard by the changes.

This was a complete oversight regarding communication of the exact date of the changes. Our notifications to the campus were through the Student Printz as well as the USM Mailout. Admittedly, the Web Team never indicated the time frame as to when the changes would take place. We welcome additional suggestions for mechanisms of communication.

3. Implement changes during semester breaks and/or on weekends not during work hours and not one week before finals.

I fully agree with this suggestion and will use this as a guideline with future changes.

4. Use university focus groups to decide 1st and 2nd tier page content and links. For instance, on the "Faculty and Staff" page, services such as Bookstore, Dining, Health Services, etc., could be eliminated and placed on the page labeled "Services." A faculty focus group could have helped identify links for inclusion and elimination.

Links that are designed on the branch pages are always available for change consideration. The navigation in the initial plan was designed with the assistance of our focus groups. The web team always accepts suggestions. We have made numerous revisions to the web pages already, and always expect to make adjustments for improvements.

5. These are general observations and feedback that we, the Technology Committee, have received from faculty members, staff, and students:

   a. Use basic design rules in deciding color content of pages - the half white/half gold colors used in the content listings of 2nd tier pages suggest two different content areas (the sections do not reflect any sort of recognizable navigational hierarchy).
   
   b. Place links to integral places on the university campus on the Home page and in a visible place (e.g., Academics, Administration, Libraries, Soar, Online Evaluations, Directory, etc.)
   
   c. Employ style sheet coding to ensure consistent text sizing for all browsers.
   
   d. Font size is too small. Difficult to read for those with vision complexities.
   
   e. The link for Campus/Teaching Sites gets lost above the picture explanation on the Home page. It looks like a header for the caption information.
   
   f. Colors and design elements are used to indicate one thing in one place, but used to connote another in different place. For instance, an arrow is used to point to the caption on the Home page. However, it is not a link. That same arrow is also used to indicate a link on the Campus/Teaching Sites page. Thus, consistency in design and navigation are important to prevent confusing users.
   
   g. Avoid using all capital letters for words such as the main menu links (e.g., PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND PARENTS) on the Home page. In addition, these main menu links should not run onto two lines.
   
   h. Main menu links on the Home page should stand out (not with capitalized letters). For instance, some of our students did not know that the text were actually links (also the dim color is not that obvious with the gray color). The Button format with the links would have been much better.
   
   i. Need to ensure that Web pages meet ADA Compliancy. Right now, they do not appear to meet the ADA standards for accessible design.
j. Graphics on the main page are not professional and change each time a person enters the site. This may cause confusion among amateur computer users.

k. Missing buttons and links can be found throughout the various pages.

l. The rotating pictures on the front page are nice but don't reflect the diversity of our campus.

I appreciate all comments and will take them into serious consideration and will discuss them with the web team. I would encourage feedback regarding the missing buttons and links so that those may be corrected as soon as possible. All the web pages were explicitly tested to ensure ADA compliance within regulated standards. If this is found to be different than the software has indicated, we would encourage feedback in that area as well.

We hope that you will take these recommendations under consideration.

Sincerely,

USM Faculty Senate Technology Committee,

On Behalf of the USM Faculty Senate