Faculty Senate Minutes - May 5, 2006

USM Faculty Senate

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Minutes
The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Meeting on May 5, 2006
Gulf Coast Student Service Center, Room 138 M at 3:00 p.m.

1.0 The meeting was called to order at 3:15pm.

Dr. Pat Joachim, Associate Provost for the Gulf Coast Campus, welcomed the Faculty Senate to the coast and expressed her appreciation of the Senate’s hard work and loyalty to the University. She appreciated the strong show of support for the coast campus and faculty, staff, and students after Katrina. Dr. Bill Powell in turn thanked Dr. Joachim for her admirable efforts to move and preserve USM on the coast after Katrina. He also expressed that she had earned the faculty’s respect for her leadership after Katrina.

2.0 Approval of February and April meeting minutes-Delayed until June meeting.

3.0 Approval of Agenda- Approved unanimously with additions under 4.11.1 Other: AAUP resolution, Library Faculty Searches, Emeritus Status, MSU Presidential Search.

4.0 Officers’ Reports
4.1 President- Bill Powell

4.1.1 Raises- Bill Powell reported that a document was sent to Dr. Grimes and Exline with copies to Dr. Thames raising concerns about the process and forms that will be used to evaluate faculty for the merit raises for AY 2006-7. He reported that the Executive Committee had met with Provost Grimes and got assurances that while it is preferred that the form is filled out, if it is not, then the faculty or department could attach the last 2 years of evaluations from the chairs to it. Dr. Grimes said that there would “be no penalties” for those who attached the evals to the form without filling it out. Joe Morgan will be present during the Dean’s presentations in order to make sure the numbers worked out, but the weight of the raise recommendations rested with the Deans and Chairs. Further, the department chairs and directors can accompany the College Deans when presenting their raise recommendations to the Provost.

Discussion included questions about why additional evaluation and forms are necessary, when Department Chair and Dean recommendations should be used based on already completed annual evaluations, per the Faculty Handbook. Suspicion was raised concerning the transparency of the process by which final amounts would be
decided. Also expressed by a senator was whether it was usual for Provosts to go over every evaluation and raise recommendation case by case. Bill Powell stated that it has happened during the Lucas administration, and that Dr. Grimes said that Dr. Thames had asked him to review the raise recommendations. Valerie Horne, president of the Staff Council asked about staff raises. Concerns were also expressed regarding how much staff would receive, with agreement that their need for substantial raises was critical.

4.1.1.1 Motion moved, seconded and voted unanimously to convey the following statement to the Administration: The USM Faculty Senate encourages the administration to take the opportunity to enhance staff compensation as part of this raise process.

4.1.1.2 Motion moved, seconded and voted unanimously by the USM Faculty Senate were endorsement of

Two Council of Chairs Resolutions passed May 4, 2006 as follows:

1. Resolution Proposal on ’06 Faculty Raises

   The Council of Chairs calls upon the provost and president to accept the results of annual faculty performance reviews, conducted according to procedures described in the Faculty Handbook and reviewed by deans, as the sole basis for assessing merit and determining the size of faculty raises.

2. Resolution Proposal on Transparency Regarding Raises

   The Council of Chairs recommends maximum transparency in the decision making process concerning faculty raises, and calls upon chair/directors and deans to share specific raise recommendations with individual faculty via private written communication.

4.1.2 SACS- Bill Powell reported that the report is not in yet, they were expecting it at any time. One senator reported that someone at SACS had a problem with what had been written, and it was sent back to visitors for revision. Other senators reported that they had heard similar information.

4.1.3 NCATE- The Report has not arrived yet.

4.1.4 Gulf Coast Status – Bill Powell commended the new facilities at Gulf Park, and Gulf Coast colleagues who were working despite their
losses. Parking will become more of an issue when a hospice opens in the building, and 150 spots will be lost.

4.1.4.1 Space for faculty offices is still being worked on, and trailers may be moved in for that purpose.

4.1.4.2 A Coast Senator reported that where the Gulf Coast Campus will be located in the future remains unknown. The Gulf Coast Faculty and Staff survey and meetings with a planner may be used in planning the next facility.

4.1.4.3 Eric Luce expressed thanks to those who helped him save his house after Katrina. He presented framed photos to Joe Olmi, Anita Davis, Bob Press, Mary Beth Applin and Bill Powell in appreciation. Senators applauded those senators for going above and beyond the call of duty to assist a colleague.

4.1.4.4 Stennis and GCRL are being evaluated by MEMA, which says that they are in a flood plain. This, in turn, has implications for high deductibles, which is not good news.

4.1.4.5 The Gulf Coast Faculty and Staff Survey results showed that personal losses were substantial, and that there was a feeling that administrative support from College Deans and Chairs in Hattiesburg was lacking. Bill Powell said that he and Myron Henry would meet with chairs and directors to make them aware of that finding, particularly in light of annual evaluations and the enormous challenges faced by faculty and staff.

4.1.5 Cabinet meetings, meetings with Dr. Thames & Dr. Grimes

4.1.5.1 There have been no recent meetings with Dr. Thames, though the Senate did request to meet with him about the raise issue. However, we were unable to do so.

4.1.5.2 Cabinet Meetings revealed information on the USM financial situation, estimating 9.5 million dollars in Katrina losses, 5.5 million in lost student tuition (a multi year impact), and 7.7 million lost due to increased operating costs after Katrina. Bill Powell will check with Joe Morgan and ask for a more detailed account of the financial losses. USM is operating in a critically tight budget period. Cabinet meetings also included good news: USM would have 2 Merit Finalists and 27 Presidential Scholars next year, and fall 2006 enrollment should look a lot like 2004-2005 and that Freshman admissions were predicted to be up next year.

4.1.6 Calendar Committee- Bill Powell reported that Spring Break 2007 would be the week of March 12, 2007, which coincides with local school
calendars. He stated that we also would not lose the Monday before Mardi Gras.

4.1.7 Distance Education Committee- Bill Powell informed the Senate that Web Ct is being upgraded to the 6.1 Campus Edition. Also, he stated that some tuition revenues are going to Distance Education instead of the General Fund. The IHL is discussing a $25/credit hour surcharge added on to IVN and online courses, even for groups where the professor is on site (IVN). A fee is also being discussed for having a course supplement or even putting a syllabus online through WebCT. He will continue to monitor this situation.

4.1.8 Syllabus review committee Bill Powell and Ann Blackwell are on a committee to review Syllabi format. The goal is to create a standard format that meets accreditation standards.

4.1.9 Evaluations of Teaching- The online teaching evaluations were not promoted as heavily this semester, but the same mechanism is in place as last semester. Each course must be evaluated every semester. Bill Powell reminded faculty that the scale used in this online system is different than the original scale, so comparisons between the two need to be done with this in mind.

4.1.10 Shared Governance document This document has been sent to administration. The Faculty Senate has not received a response yet, and anticipates negotiating its points with administration. This item will remain on the agenda until we have one. SACS accreditation visitors were interested in whether USM had a Shared Government document.

4.1.11 Other

4.1.11.1 AAUP members reported that a resolution was sent to Dr. Meredith at IHL regarding the process of past midyear raises, including the one given to Dr. Dana Thames. There has been no response yet.

4.1.11.2 Senators reported that some Library Sciences and Psychology (1 position) faculty positions have been re-opened in order to meet accreditation concerns.

4.1.11.3 Emeritus status- Bill Powell reported that the criteria for Emeritus Status on the Provost website are different than in the Faculty Handbook. Senators reaffirmed the policy in the Faculty Handbook, which was agreed upon by Dr. Thames.

A motion was introduced, moved, seconded, and passed unanimously as follows: The Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Mississippi endorses the policy regarding emeritus status as stated in the Faculty Handbook. This motion will be sent to Dr. Thames and Dr. Grimes.
4.1.11.4 **MSU Presidential Search** - The MSU Presidential Search was reported to have cost $160,000 by Richard Lake of the Clarion-Ledger. Also, there were 47 applicants considered in the search. Of these applicants, 14 were Presidents, 5 Deans, were 20 Provosts, 1 Faculty member. Seven were from the outside. 9 responded to the ad, 124 were nominated, 4 were recruited.

4.2 **President-Elect - Myron Henry**

4.2.1 **Outsourcing** - The committee for Physical Plant Outsourcing was asked to vote and rank the vendors. Aramark appeared to be the favored vendor after the ranking. The members were also asked to vote for or against outsourcing. Myron Henry believes that he was the lone vote against outsourcing. According to his analysis, he did not believe that the benefits package for employees were as good as benefits (retirement specifically) within the State System. He also brought up the point that USM will have new leadership soon, and since this issue will have long term effects on USM, it should be addressed by the next administration.

4.2.2 **Heroes of Katrina** - Myron Henry reported that in a wonderful ceremony today at the Gulf Coast Campus, 27 colleagues were honored as Heroes of Katrina. He commented that many more could also have been honored for their extraordinary service. Senators who were presented with awards and plaques were Joe Olmi, Mary Beth Applin, and Bill Powell, along with Lisa Williams, who was serving as a proxy at this meeting.

4.3 **Secretary - No report**

4.4 **Secretary-Elect No report**

5.0 **Committee Reports**

5.1 **Academic and Governance** - Bill Scarborough, chair. The committee has been examining the teaching load policy which slightly changes the one in the handbook. Bill Scarborough stated that the first paragraph in the Faculty Handbook policy meets IHL requirements, so it has to remain as is. The second paragraph read that the University’s mission sometimes renders exceptions, in this version sometimes was struck out. The committee also added items for which one could receive reassigned time direction of graduate theses and dissertations. The last paragraph was changed appreciably. In the handbook, it says that within 15 days after the beginning of each semester (Fall and Spring) department chairs shall provide to their respective deans, and deans shall provide to the provost, a written report stating the responsibilities. However, the committee did not see the need to include the provost in this process. So, that was changed, as was the statement that it would be performed twice a year, so that was changes to once at the end of each academic year. The committee report was presented as a motion and therefore did not require a second:
Teaching Load Policy Motion

“The expected undergraduate teaching load for full-time members of the Corps of Instruction is four (4) course or twelve (12) credit hours per semester for the fall and spring semesters. Three (3) courses or nine (9) credit hours are required to qualify for full-time status during the summer semester.

The University’s comprehensive mission and related institutional goals render exceptions necessary and desirable for the public interest. Hence, the University considers reassignment, extension, honors, and other specialized courses a part of the normal teaching load and, whenever justifiable, grants reassigned time from teaching to members of the instructional staff engaged in uncompensated administrative and committee work, supervision of approved extracurricular activities, direction of graduate theses and dissertations, research projects, and service projects that benefit the public.

At the end of each academic year, department chairs shall provide to their respective deans a written report stating the responsibilities assigned to each faculty member, including total courses and semester hours being taught, research and grant projects, reassigned time and service assignments for the following year.”

Discussion included comments about directed research and independent study and that these assignments needed to be considered in workload decisions. Others stated that they thought those courses were included under “specialized courses”, though some senators said that those courses were not included in their workload. It was suggested that directed research courses be included in the motion, to be added as “for example, directed research, independent study, and creative projects” inserted after specialized courses. Another senator stated that faculty workload at other universities across the country is 2 courses per semester at research extensive universities. It was stated that for History and Psychology at Ole Miss was 2 courses each semester, and there is a great deal of inequity between campuses within the state. The Faculty Welfare committee will be charged with investigating the standard assignments for faculty at Ole Miss and MSU, and other Mississippi and comparable universities. Another senator asked if the first paragraph of the motion meant graduate classes also. A senator stated that the first paragraph referred to undergraduate loads, only. However, historically graduate courses have had a different workload attached to them due to the extra advising and research associated with graduate students.

This motion will be sent to the Faculty Handbook Committee for consideration. The motion passed unanimously
5.2 **Administration and Faculty Evaluations:** Steve Oshrin, chair - No report
5.3 **Awards:** Mary Lux, chair - Names of Faculty Senate and Office of the President Awardees have been forwarded to the President. These names will be announced later and plaques will be awarded in the fall. Bobby Middlebrooks was awarded Grand Marshall.
5.4 **Budget:** Myron Henry, chair No Report
5.5 **Constitution and Bylaws:** Randy Buchanan, chair No Report
5.6 **Faculty Welfare:** Tim Rehner, chair No Report
5.7 **Government Relations:** Dave Duhon, chair No Report
5.8 **Technology:** Barton Spencer, chair No Report
5.9 **Elections:** Paula Smithka, chair. Elections are occurring now.

Be sure your departments vote.

5.10 **Ad hoc committee reports** and liaison reports

5.10.1 **President’s Council** will meet next Wednesday.

5.10.2 **American Association of University Professors**

The AAUP met a few weeks ago and passed four resolutions, which have been posted on the AAUP website. The four areas of concern are 1) calls for the president of USM to desist from making substantive decisions that affect faculty and staff and wait until the new administration is in place, 2) the issue of midyear raises, particularly for a chair in Education & Psychology, 3) the situation regarding Psychology department searches and comments attacking productivity, and 4) A call to delay reorganization of the Graduate Assistant allocation. A letter expressing concern about the four items has been sent to Dr. Meredith at IHL.

5.10.3 **Academic/Graduate Council** - A senator asked that the Academic Council reiterate the steps needed for the approval process before it comes to the councils. One senator commented that the AC needs to rapidly complete a process for approval of online programs so programs can be implemented. Bobby Middlebrooks reported that the GC sent a letter registering dismay that it was not approached about the changes in GA stipends and appropriations proposed by Dr. Grimes. The GC was told that the document was meant as a strawman, for suggestions and reactions, with limited implementation at this time. It appears that he is implementing the policy. Discussion included that it was late in the cycle to get funding from outside sources to replace GA’s that would be lost to departments if this policy is put in place.

5.10.4 **Faculty Leadership Council.** Bill Powell reported that there was no formal meeting, but a joint response letter by chairs of the Academic Council, Graduate Council and Faculty senate concerning the GA change plan was under discussion.
5.10.5  **Transportation.** Bill Scarborough stated that decals would be $50 for everyone next year (same as this year). He also said that the fines for Handicap violations would be increased to $100 for the first violation. The fees would increase to $200 after 2 violations. Handicapped parkers will be required to register and get a special decal from parking. The issue of non USM student/faculty/staff handicapped visitors was discussed. A means for them to park on campus will be looked into by Dr. Scarborough. The Polymer Science Reserve Lot will be gated this summer, and the fee be $300 next year. First come, first serve. After faculty and staff sign up, students would be eligible. The Lucas lot by McCain Library will be available for Faculty and Staff for $300/year also. Parking management has complained of abuses: Departments are reserving many parking spots for workshops and meetings, and that some people are putting up A frame signs in spots, which will be confiscated by Parking services.

6.0  **New Business**

6.1  A senator brought up the issue of how it will be decided whether a summer course makes or not. Another senator stated that he thought that Associate Provost Moore will make that decision. Another senator suggested that department courses’ student averages be used since some classes will be smaller (e.g. graduate courses) and some will be larger (instead of making decisions on a class by class basis).

7.0  **Old Business**- Senators discussed going into executive session for discussion of the following personnel issues. It was moved and seconded that the Faculty Senate go into executive session for discussion of the two issues. In favor of the motion – 13, Opposed-22 by hand count.

7.1  **Discussion of a possible Motion on No Confidence**- A senator moved that the senate should only consider the Motion reiterating the upcoming Presidential search and need for Oversight (7.2). The motion was seconded, and passed. Discussants emphasized that the previous vote of no confidence still stands. Discussion moved on to 7.2.

7.2  **Discussion of a Motion on Search & Board Oversight.** After discussion, it was moved, seconded and passed, with one abstention, to send the following letter to the President of the IHL Board and Dr. Meredith:

“Although members of the Faculty Senate had hoped for an earlier start date for the search for a new president of USM, we support the Board of Trustees and Commissioner Tom Meredith as they initiate the search process in fall 2006.

We respectfully ask that the Board of Trustees and Commissioner Meredith utilize a presidential search process that ensures meaningful involvement of faculty, staff, alumni, and other members of the USM community.
The Faculty Senate will work constructively with the Board of Trustees and Commissioner Meredith as well as other appropriate parties to assure a new USM president is appointed in spring 2007 who will lead and serve the USM community in respectful, engaging, and effective ways.

Because the appointment of a new USM president is nearly a year away, we encourage the Board of Trustees and Commissioner Meredith to exercise more oversight over the current USM administration in order to avoid short term decisions that could have a negative long term impact on the University and on the Presidential Search Process.”

8.0 Other

8.1 Bob Press stated that this was his last meeting, and that he enjoyed meeting and working with Faculty Senators, a group he applauded as deeply concerned about USM and were exerting positive influences upon the University.

8.2 Bill Powell thanked Patsy Anderson and Darlys Alford for organizing the G.P. meeting. He also thanked Amy Young for driving the FacSenVan.

9.0 Continuation of May meeting on June 9, 2006.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to suspend the May meeting at this time and resume the meeting on June 9, 2007 to elect Faculty Senate Officers for 2006-2007.