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University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 25, 2009
Meeting held in Bryant 209

Senators in Attendance: Robert Albritton, Deborah Barker, Allision Burkette, Pete Campbell, Joe Turner Cantu, Bill Chapel, Donna Davis, Douglas Davis, Melissa Dennis, Jason Dewland, Robert Doerksen, Daneel Ferreira, John Garner, Carol Gohm, Mary Hayes, Jason Klodt, Joel Kuszmaul, Laurel Lambert, John Lobur, Soumyajit Majumbar, Carmen Manning Miller, Stephanie Noble, Brice Noonan, Larry Pittman, Peter Reed, Brian Reithel, Philip Rhodes, Jason Ritchie, Jesse Scott, Zia Shariat-Madar, Steven Skultety, Chung Song, Debra Spurgeon, Don Summers, Joe Sumrall, Laura Vaughan, Mark Walker, Jinquang Wang, Alex Watson, Lorri C. Williamson, Alexander Yakovlov, Yi Yang, Ahmet Yukleyen

Senators absent with prior notification: Angela Rutherford, Jeffery Roux, Amanda Johnston

Senators absent without notification: Przemo Krantz, Angela Rutherford, Jesse Scott, Mark Bing, Durant Thompson

- Senator Sufka opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- First order of business: Election of Officers
 - The Senate voted on a slate of nominees that had been distributed to Senators via email prior to the meeting
 - Election of Jason Klodt as Secretary: 36 in favor, no opposed, no abstentions
 - Election of Jason Ritchie as Vice Chair: 38 in favor, no opposed, no abstentions
 - Election of Ken Sufka as Chair: 39 in favor, no opposed, no abstentions
- Second order of business: Committee Chair Selection
 - Senator Sufka reminded the Senate that subcommittees may meet no less than two times per semester
 - After dividing into groups, the Senate subcommittees elected the following chairs that will also serve on the Senate executive committee
 - University Services Committee: John Lobur
 - Finance Committee: Mark Walker
 - Governance Committee: Robert Albritton
 - Academic Affairs Committee: Joe Turner Cantu
 - Academic Support Committee: Brian Reithel
 - Senator Sufka reminded Senators that absences may be excused if they notify the Chair in advance of meetings. Senators may also send a representative from their department in their absence
 - After four unexcused absences, the Chair will instruct the Senator's department to elect another Senator
- Third order of business: Issues for the 2009-2010 Senate Term
 - The Senate's resolution on the plus/minus grading scale will be implemented over the next year and the Academic Affairs subcommittee is charged with monitoring its progress

- According to a new state law, universities must inform students of a course's textbook requirements at the time that students register for classes
 - Graduate School Dean Maurice Eftink will work with the Senate in the coming months to ensure that UM complies with this law
- A search committee has produced a short list of candidates to replace Gloria Kellum as Vice Chancellor for University Relations; Senator Sufka represents the Senate on this committee and updates on this search are forthcoming
- Following the Journalism Department's change to the School of Journalism and New Media, the Senate will need to ensure its appropriate representation on university committees
- Senator Sumrall volunteered to fill the vacancy on the Athletics Committee, which meets four to five times per year with Pete Boone, Annette Johnson, and Karen Schiferl to be briefed on academic and athletics issues
 - The committee includes three Senate representatives, three other faculty members, and five other representatives from the university
- It is customary for the Senate to invite the chancellor to address its members, and this year the Senate is particularly interested in following up on two resolutions that were passed during the 2008-2009 academic year: the Reaffirmation of Governance resolution and the Plus/Minus Grading resolution
 - Senator Sufka recommended trying to schedule Chancellor Jones for the October meeting to allow time to gauge how these resolutions are being implemented
- The Senate will continue to invite the provost and the media to its meetings
 - Senator Sufka affirmed that Provost Stocks is a valuable resource that can provide immediate information in response to many of the questions that arise during the Senate's discussions
 - The Senate will invite CFO Larry Sparks to its September meeting to discuss the university's current cash flow
- Since the Senate has no history with the new Chancellor, Senator Sufka suggested that the Senate can begin to define a positive relationship with him, set an open and honest tone, and forge an effective decision-making role with Chancellor Jones
- Based on the last IHL meeting in May, it has become clear that there is not a strong advocate for higher education in the state. Senator Sufka questioned what would happen if UM faced more budget cuts after the federal stimulus money is spent
 - Based on calculations by IHL's budget planners, to cover expenses next year it is forecasted that the university must increase efficiency 2%, tuition will increase 5.8%, and there will be no COLA (Cost Of Living Allowance) increase
 - Based on calculations by IHL's budget planners, for the following year it is forecasted that the university must increase efficiency another 2%, tuition will increase another 12%, and there will again be no COLA increase

- Senator Sufka reported from a meeting with Chancellor Jones that the Chancellor has committed to raising UM faculty salaries to the SUG average
 - Through increased efficiency, to date the university has absorbed budget cuts. If the faculty could increase efficiency, Chancellor Jones would be open to discussing an increased compensation package
 - Senator Sufka encouraged Senators to rally their colleagues to support an increased compensation package and asked Senators to brainstorm how faculty can become more efficient in the classroom
- Since IHL is budgeting no allocation for COLA increases through 2014, Senator Sufka warned that new faculty may seek job opportunities elsewhere
- An increased compensation package would cost approximately \$10 million, and thus Larry Sparks will be addressing the Senate so that Senators can better understand the university's money flow
- Senator Sufka remarked that if IHL would adopt the funding formula, UM could provide this compensation package. Therefore UM needs leverage with IHL and needs to lobby the state legislature
- Senator Albritton asked how UM measures efficiency? What does a 2% increase in efficiency look like?
 - Senator Sufka responded that he does not know exactly, but speculated that eliminating overlapping positions could produce a quantifiable measure of efficiency. Senator Sufka reiterated that such questions could be answered by Morris Stocks, who will be attending an upcoming meeting
 - Senator Sufka mentioned that increasing class size, with appropriate support (such as TAs), could save money as well
- Fourth order of business: Items from the Floor
 - Senator Albritton explained the problem of medical coverage for spouses and dependents, in that adding them to faculty insurance is more expensive than buying insurance independently
 - When Senator Albritton asked HR if it could set up an independent plan to cover spouses, the initial answer was no and HR was not sure if such a plan would be legal
 - Senator Vaughan described an accident in which a university golf cart collided with a faculty member's automobile and explained the problem that UM's golf carts are not covered under fleet insurance
 - Senator Lobur said that as it strengthens its voice in interacting with the administration, the Senate should examine the way it recruits new members and should consider lengthening Senators' terms in office to improve consistency from year to year
 - Senator Sufka agreed that sometimes continuity is a problem on the Senate and that Senators' current one year terms may be ineffective

- Senator Lobur also brought up the issue of carefully timing the request for a faculty pay increase, considering that the University of Southern Mississippi recently eliminated an entire department. Senator Lobur questioned whether the university was advocating for higher education in general or advocating for UM. If it advocates solely for UM, it may be at a disadvantage
 - Senator Sufka mentioned that other state universities game the system for their own benefit and have not been as fiscally conservative as UM. Chancellor Jones has said that IHL has never objected to pay raises during economic downturns if the university in question could find ways to pay for them
- Senator Shariat-Madar mentioned that students cannot access the Medical School's electronic journals from the Oxford campus
 - Senator Dennis responded that the library is aware of these complaints and is examining the licensing issues that are preventing students' access to these journals
- Senator Sufka reminded Senators that items must be submitted to the Chair one week before the Senate's scheduled meeting to be included on the agenda
- During the 2009-2010 academic year, the Senate will meet on the second Tuesday of each month (except when classes are not in session) on the following dates: September 8, October 13, November 10, December 8, January 26, February 9, March 9, April 13, and May 4
- The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.