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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 8, 2009
Meeting held in Bryant 209

Senators in Attendance: Robert Albritton, Deborah Barker, Melissa Bass, Mark Bing, Allison Burkette, Pete Campbell, Joe Turner Cantu, Bill Chapel, Donna Davis, Douglas Davis, Jason Dewland, Robert Doerksen, Charles Eagles, Daneel Ferreira, John Garner, Carol Gohm, Angela Hornsby-Gutting, Amanda Johnston, Jason Klodt, Przemot T. Kranz, 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, Charles Ross, Zia Shariat-Madar, Steven Skultety, Chung Song, Don Summers, Joe Sumrall, Durant Thompson, Laura Vaughan, Mark Walker, Alex Watson, Lorri C. Williamson, Alexander Yakovlev, Yi Yang, Ahmet Yukleyen

Senators absent with prior notification: Karl Wang, Angela Rutherford, Jeffrey Roux, Debra Spurgeon

Senators absent without notification: Melissa Dennis, Mary Hayes

- Senator Sufka opened the meeting at 7:00p
- First order of business: Approve November 10, 2009 minutes
 - Motioned to approve and seconded
 - The Senate approved the minutes unanimously
- Second order of business: Guiding Principles and Processes (GPP) Document
 - Senator Sufka explained the feedback on the GPP that faculty submitted via the web
 - Some faculty members expressed concerns over the lack of protection of non-tenure track faculty and Senator Sufka conceded that the GPP could use clarification on this issue. Specifically, the intention of the GPP was not to target departments that rely on non-tenure track faculty in catering to large numbers of students
 - Some faculty expressed concerns for cuts that targeted academic support units. Senator Sufka explained that some academic support units may not be essential to the mission of the university (i.e., research support, writing). The task force felt that cuts to academic support units should come before cuts to faculty positions
 - Senator Sufka then presented other ideas offered by faculty, such as tuition premiums charged on fifth year students and on out of state students, as well as efficiencies gained by sharing staff between units
 - Since IHL requires that UM continue to meet courses, furloughs are not a workable solution and the Provost has taken a stance against furloughs
 - Senator Reithel moved to accept the GPP and Senator Donna Davis seconded
 - The floor opened to discussion
 - Senator Ferreira expressed concern over possible cuts to travel expenditures

- Senator Ritchie clarified that such cuts would affect 10 accounts rather than grant dollars in 25 accounts. Senator Sufka agreed that such cuts may undermine the research agenda of some faculty
- Senator Song expressed concern about targeting academic support units for cuts and the methods used to evaluate academic support
- Senator Dolan expressed concern about the hierarchy proposed in the GPP and observed that the GPP does not consider what faculty have already been doing (i.e., some are already shouldering an increased teaching load)
 - Senator Sufka responded that quantitative metrics were removed from the GPP and thus some metrics may be qualitative
 - A Senator mentioned that page two of the GPP insures that random, arbitrary decisions will not be made
 - Senator Sufka reminded the Senate that of the 19 open faculty lines in Liberal Arts this year only 6 are being filled, and thus everything else is being protected at the expense of open lines
- Senator Barker asserted that many of the items in the GPP are local decisions that departments should make (e.g., sabbaticals, protecting highly productive faculty). While a department might weather budget cuts, it may not weather the animosity of those faculty that lose out as a result of such cuts. Senator Barker opined that certain departments may want to approach budget restrictions differently than others, and thus the GPP should acknowledge departmental autonomy
 - Senator Sufka responded that the GPP does not hand over decision making to the administration, as the first bullet point insists on faculty involvement
 - Senator Ritchie added that item 5 of Core Requirements and Values (“Preserve unit autonomy in determining curricula”) addressed departmental autonomy
 - Senator Reithel mentioned that item 7 of Core Requirements and Values (“Protect highly productive scholars, as determined by the unit’s promotion and tenure guidelines, from increased teaching loads”) addressed this point, as well, as the definition of productive scholars is determined at the departmental level
 - Senator Doug Davis added the GPP does not intend to shift autonomy from departments to the administration
 - Senator Donna Davis said that the point is moot since underproductive faculty can already be asked to teach more
 - Senator Barker stressed that such decisions should be left up to individual departments
- Senator Dolan remarked that there are already departments with higher teaching loads and that, by not considering units with heavy teaching loads, the GPP reinforces the division between the haves and have-nots
- Senator Albritton said that the GPP was not a policy document, rather it communicated to the administration the faculty’s priorities in the face of serious budget restrictions. Senator Albritton added that item 11 of Prioritized Budget Reductions and Implementations (“Reduce the faculty

workforce in accordance with AAUP guidelines”) was unacceptable under any conditions, but that the administration should cut lower priorities (e.g., items 1 through 10) before faculty positions

- Senator Eagles stated that item 7 of Core Requirements and Values (“Protect highly productive scholars, as determined by the unit’s promotion and tenure guidelines, from increased teaching loads”) is divisive. Since it does not benefit anyone and it is not tasteful to say that some faculty are better than others, it would be best to eliminate the item
 - Senator Ritchie did not see why the item was divisive, as such a practice already routinely happens in departments
 - Senator Eagles responded that he did not see point of including the item except to create animosity
 - Senator Bass identified a potential conflict in telling departments what to prioritize (e.g., protect productive scholars), as not all departments may want to protect their best scholars, some may wish to protect their best teachers
 - Senator Doug Davis reiterated that the GPP is not a policy document and that the item in question is saying that the faculty value research. Senator Doug Davis stated that the item is not telling chairs to assess productivity
 - Senator Donna Davis moved to remove item 7 of Core Requirements and Values, Senator Lobur seconded
 - The Senate voted 15 in favor, 25 opposed, 4 abstentions. The motion did not pass
- Senator Bass inquired about adding “underperforming or non-mission central” to item 5 of Prioritized Budget Reductions (“Reduce or eliminate academic support units”), such that a cut would not target every academic support unit
 - Senator Ritchie responded that none of the academic support units are mission critical, which is why they are not departments. A better question would be how do they perform vis-à-vis NACUBA metrics with peer institutions
 - Senator Dolan observed that some units may be critical to the future accreditation of the university
 - Senator Eagles asked for list of academic support units
 - Senator Ritchie cited TACIT, FTDC, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Writing Center, and Computer Services
 - Senator Barker observed that the Writing Center is funded with QEP monies, and thus the GPP cannot simply call for dismantling it
 - Senator Sufka asked if eliminating some academic support units would still serve UM’s mission as a flagship research university
 - Senator Barker asked which bodies or faculty would make the decision to cut academic support units

- Senator Sufka responded that ultimately the chancellor would decide
- Senator Donna Davis moved to add “underperforming” to item 5 of Prioritized Budget Reductions
 - Senator Doug Davis stated that the purpose is to look at academic support units for reductions before other priorities. If the Senate includes “underperforming,” it brings up the question of how UM measures performance
 - Senator Burkette asked how one would determine the definition of underperforming? For example, the ID center has four full time staff members that are busy at the beginning of the semester but less so at other times, and thus performance is a tricky point
 - Senator Lobur stated that UM has to gauge performance somehow
 - Senator Bing stated that the Senate and the administration would want to cut these academic support units before cutting faculty jobs, and thus Senator Bing opined that the Senate should not include the word “underperforming” because even high performing support units would need to be reduced or cut before faculty and departments
 - The Senate voted 8 in favor, 30 opposed, 6 abstentions. The motion did not pass
 - Senator Bing introduced a friendly amendment to strike “a four day work week or other” from item 2 of Prioritized Budget Reducitons [“Economize utility costs (potentially through a four day work week or other Green Initiatives”)], since “Green Initiatives” captures the essence of the idea
 - Senator Lobur seconded the amendment
 - On a voice vote, the Senate voted in favor of the amendment, with no opposed and 3 abstentions
 - Motion to adopt the GPP and seconded
 - The Senate voted 43 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention
 - The text of the Guiding Principles and Processes Document:

The Faculty Senate’s Guiding Principles and Processes for Administrative Budget Decisions¹

Principles

In the spirit of trust and cooperation, and to seek mutually acceptable solutions to problems that affect all levels of the university, the faculty affirms the principles of shared governance as approved in the April 2009 Faculty Senate resolution and endorsed by Chancellor Jones. The faculty affirms the importance of open communication, transparency, and faculty participation in planning and decision-making processes. The faculty’s goal is to protect and enhance the academic mission of the University of Mississippi², the quality of educational opportunities provided to our students, and the livelihood of university employees. Thus, any administrative action should preserve the core requirements, values, and priorities detailed below:

Core Requirements and Values

- Preservation of academic freedom to pursue scholarly activity without fear of arbitrary and capricious administrative actions
- Maintain the university's mission as a comprehensive research university
- Maintain university and unit level accreditation
- Optimize levels of student financial aid to maximize tuition revenue
- Preserve unit autonomy in determining curricula
- Protect productive teaching units, as compared to similar units in peer institutions, from reductions
- Protect highly productive scholars, as determined by the unit's promotion and tenure guidelines, from increased teaching loads
- Target actions/reductions in underperforming units (vertical) rather than across-the-board (horizontal) reductions
- Protect tenured and tenure-track faculty over other instructional faculty in accordance with AAUP guidelines
- Ensure that the reduction, merger, and/or discontinuation of programs results in material cost savings
- Permit students to complete degrees in programs targeted for elimination

Prioritized Budget Reductions and Implementations³

1. Increase efficiencies in central administration and nonacademic units, whose budgetary allocations exceed NACUBO metrics from similar institutions
2. Economize utility costs (potentially through Green Initiatives)
3. Defer maintenance, repair, and renovation where safety is not compromised
4. Increase efficiencies through unit mergers that result in material cost savings
5. Reduce or eliminate academic support units
6. Postpone sabbaticals
7. Reduce or eliminate travel expenditures
8. Implement selective hiring freezes
9. Reduce the faculty workforce through early retirement incentives
10. Increase teaching loads or student/teacher ratios as determined by each unit
11. Reduce the faculty workforce in accordance with AAUP guidelines

Processes

Ensuring that The University of Mississippi can continue to recruit and retain outstanding faculty for the long term requires acting with care and integrity, particularly when faced with implementing budget reductions or reallocations. Any evaluation of programs will utilize the best practices of *shared governance*, adhere to agreed-upon *processes*, use *evaluative criteria* established by consensus, and follow a published *timeline*. In addition, those making budget decisions must be accountable to constituencies within the university and must conduct their work in a transparent manner. Any administrative processes must incorporate the following guidelines:

- Transparency in and faculty participation at the highest level of decision-making (e.g., Faculty Representatives from Strategic Planning Council)
- Determination of the efficiency/productivity of university units will use agreed upon quantitative and qualitative criteria as compared to similar institutions, as well as national and regional standards
- Programs under consideration or targeted for reduction or elimination will have the right to appeal decisions through a formal process that includes principles of shared governance
- Termination of faculty conforms with existing AAUP guidelines approved in 2006⁴
- The final decision to reduce or eliminate any program rests with the Chancellor

Appendix: Recommendations for Increased Revenue Streams

- Increase enrollment being mindful of graduate/undergraduate student ratio relative to SUG peers
- Increase retention
- Increase tuition particularly where increases do not adversely affect enrollment (i.e., price elasticity)

- Develop incentives for teaching off-campus programs and online courses
- Develop incentives for seeking research grants and contracts
- Lobby for reimplementing of the funding formula
- Lobby for increased legislative allocation for higher education

Notes:

1. In his address to the Faculty Senate on October 13, 2009, Chancellor Jones noted that the University faces a potential funding shortfall of \$19 million during FY 2011 and 2012 according to current state budget forecasts. This shortfall follows UM's loss of \$4 million in state support during FY 2010. Barring unforeseen changes in revenue from tuition and state appropriations these challenging economic times will require additional reductions and/or reallocations within the university's budget. The following document presents the faculty's recommendations regarding principles, processes, and criteria to be incorporated into the budgetary decision-making process in order to maintain the institution's ability to appropriately fulfill its academic mission.

2. The University of Mississippi is a public, comprehensive, research institution whose mission is to enhance the educational, economic, healthcare, social, and cultural foundations of the state, region, and nation. As a Carnegie Research University (high research activity), the institution's primary functions are the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge through a variety of nationally recognized undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and through public service activities. The University educates students from not only the state, but also the nation and the world: to think critically; to communicate effectively; to be scientifically literate; and to understand and appreciate history, culture, and art so that they can live full, meaningful, and productive lives that contribute positively to society.

3. The Faculty Senate recognizes that other preferable reductions may be identified in future shared governance discussions.

4. AAUP *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (2006)

- Third order of business: Plus/Minus Grading Update
 - Senator Sufka reported that the plus/minus grading resolution has passed the Academic Council, which will form a task force to formulate a grading policy. The policy will then go before the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils, and then before the Council of Academic Administrators for approval
- Fourth order of business: Standing Committee on Appointments and Elections
 - The representatives on the Intercollegiate Athletics and Lecture Series Committees cycle off at odd times. Therefore, Senator Sufka asked the Senate to allow extending representatives' terms through August so that all elections are aligned
 - Senator Davis distributed a plan to make these elections coincide
 - Motion to change election dates and seconded
 - On a voice vote the Senate voted in favor of the proposal, with no abstentions. Senator Sufka will recommend the changes to Chancellor Jones
- Fifth order of business: Senate Committee Reports
 - No reports
- Sixth order of business: Items from the Floor
 - Administrative Searches
 - Senator Sufka reported that a recommendation to hire a candidate for Vice Chancellor for Development has been forwarded to Chancellor Jones
 - The Law Dean is to be seated by Fall 2010 and it is hoped that an Education Dean will be appointed by Fall 2010
 - The Chancellor's Senate Reception will be December 11 from 6:00 to 8:00p at the Carrier House

- The next Senate meeting will be Tuesday, January 26, 2010
- The meeting adjourned at 8:13p