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University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 26, 2010
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, Melissa Dennis, Jason Dewland, Robert Doerksen, John Garner, Carol Gohm, Jason Klodt, Przemo T. Kranz, Joel Kuszmaul, Laurel Lambert, John Lobur, Soumyajit Majumbar, Carmen Manning Miller, Stephanie Noble, Brice Noonan, Peter Reed, Brian Reithel, Philip Rhodes, Jason Ritchie, Zia Shariat-Madar, Steven Skultety, Chung Song, Debra Spurgeon, Joe Sumrall, Durant Thompson, Laura Vaughan, Jinquang Wang, Alex Watson, Lorri C. Williamson, Alexander Yakovlev, Yi Yang

Senators absent with prior notification: Adnan Aydin, Douglas Davis (replaced by Dennis Burch), Mark Dolan, Charles Eagles, Daneel Ferreira (replaced by Mark Hamann) Amanda Johnston (replaced by Alan Spurgeon), Angela Rutherford, Don Summers, Mark Walker, Ahmet Yukleyen

Senators absent without notification: Donna Davis, Angela Hornsby-Gutting, Larry Pittman, Charles Ross, Jeffery Roux

- Senator Sufka opened the meeting at 7:00 pm
- First order of business: Approve December 8, 2009 Meeting Minutes
 - Motioned to approve and seconded
 - The Senate approved the minutes unanimously
- Second order of business: Higher Education Issues from IHL and the State Legislature
 - Senator Sufka explained that IHL had received a draft policy from one or two university attorneys and presidents to shorten the minimum time required to terminate faculty
 - In a January 14, 2010 memo, Provost Stocks informed Senator Sufka that UM had drafted a response opposing this policy and, due to strong opposition from the state's other universities, the policy will not likely get a second reading
 - Senator Sufka reiterated that Chancellor Jones had committed UM to adhering to AAUP guidelines
 - Representative Currie has introduced a bill in the state legislature to abolish tenure. Representative Currie introduces this bill every year and to date it has never passed. Since Representative Currie is now a committee chair, the bill has drawn more attention this year than in the past and it may pass the committee. While there is a slim chance it may pass in the House, in all likelihood the bill will die in the Senate
- Standing Committee Appointments and Elections
 - Senator Sufka reported on the ongoing problem of filling the three year terms for representatives on university committees. After discussions with involved parties, Senator Sufka proposed a tripartite approach to filling committee vacancies:

- The Dean of each college or school will hold an election for the college or school representatives (in lieu of Deans simply naming faculty members to fill positions)
 - The Chancellor's office will propose a slate of candidates for at-large positions and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will vote on the slate of candidates
 - The Chair of Faculty Senate will coordinate the election of Senate committee representatives and the Senate's Executive Committee will approve the results
 - The Chancellor's office has agreed to coordinate the elections and keep records
 - On a voice vote, the Senate voted in favor of the tripartite approach, with no opposing votes and no abstentions
- Senate Committee Reports
 - The committee chairs presented no reports
- Items from the floor
 - Administrative Searches
 - Chancellor Jones has decided not to fill the Vice Chancellor for Development position at this time. Wendell Weakley will assume the responsibilities of Vice Chancellor for Development without additional compensation. By not filling the position, UM will save \$200,000 annually
 - The Vice Chancellor for Development position will be placed on hold, but not abolished, and the Chancellor will revisit the possibility of filling the position in 2 to 3 years
 - The searches for the Law Dean and the Education Dean are moving forward. The search committees expect to fill these position by the beginning of the next academic year
 - Teaching Evaluations
 - Senator Noble reported on a loophole in the Degree Audit program (an advising tool for viewing a student's progress toward fulfillment of degree requirements) through which students may access their final grade before completing a course evaluation. This grade preview may negatively influence students' responses on the course evaluation form. Therefore Senator Noble proposed moving course evaluations earlier by one week
 - Senator Reithel confirmed that there is a backdoor in the Degree Audit that allows students to see their final grade without first completing a course evaluation
 - Provost Stocks reported that this loophole was discovered in Spring 2009 and continued through Fall 2009. The Provost has been promised that through a future software patch the problem will not occur again
 - Senator Ritchie agreed to coordinate an effort to investigate if there is a correlation between when a student completes a course evaluation (e.g. before or after the final exam period) and the content of the evaluation

- Senator Majumbar commented that if evaluations were moved forward one week, a potential problem would be the different semester endpoints, such as the Law School calendar
 - Senator Barker recommended including a metric of asking students to speculate what grade they had earned in a course in order to better gauge their course evaluations
- Senate Survey Distribution
 - Senator Sufka reported on Amber Stegelin-Falluca, a doctoral candidate at the University of South Carolina, who is writing a dissertation titled “Faculty Senate Knowledge and Perceptions of Intercollegiate Athletics: A Conference-Level Perspective.” Stegelin-Falluca is surveying faculty senators across the twelve SEC institutions to understand faculty senate knowledge and perceptions of athletics among SEC institutions
 - The Southeastern Conference Association of Faculty Leaders has endorsed the study and senators’ participation in the survey
 - Senators will receive a link to the study via email
- Plus/Minus Grading Update
 - Senators Shariat-Madar and Lobur have volunteered to serve on the plus/minus grading taskforce
- The Senate’s next meeting will be Tuesday February 9, 2010
- The meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm