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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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**February 8, 2011**

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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**Senators in Attendance:**

Susan Allen, Aileen Ajootian, , Melissa Bass, Michael Barnett, Sarah Blackwell, Will Berry, Mark Bing, David Case, Judith Cassidy, Bill Chappell, Jason Dewland, Robert Doerksen, Mark Dole, Anne Leigh Duck, Daneel Ferreira, Les Field, John Garner, Carol Gohm, Amanda Johnston, Jason Kovari, Soumyajit Majumdar, Mustafa Matalgah, Erwin Mina-Diaz., Ann Monroe, Mike Mossing, Stephanie Noble, Brice Noonan, Brian Reithel, Philip Rhodes, Jeff Roux, Bashir Salau, Chris Sapp, Ronald Schroeder, Paul Scovazzo, Zia Shariat-Madar, Justin Sherman, Steven Skultety, Jason Solinger, Chung Song, Cristiane Queiroz Surbeck, Durant Thompson, Lollie Vaughan, Mark Walker, Alex Watson, Donna West-Strum, Lorri Williamson, Ahmet Yukleyen

**Senators absent with prior notification:**

Debra Spurgeon

**Senators absent with replacements:**

Yunghee Chang, replaced by Kathy Knight

**Senators absent without notification:**

Adnan Aydin, Douglas Davis, Charles Ross, Don Summers, Ethel Young Minor

## Agenda

- Senator Albritton opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- **First order of business:** Approve minutes of lat mtg.
  - Moved by Sen. Skultety
    - Seconded
    - Approved unanimously with no abstentions
- **Second order of business:** Tabled discussion from last meeting regarding excused absences at behest of UM Athletics
  - Motion to pass resolution as worded
    - Sen. Walker: Motion to refer to committee
      - Motion made on behalf of Sen. Reithel
    - Sen. Field: "Massive" opposition in his dept.
      - On their behalf, will not vote for "intrusion into department affairs"
    - Sen. Noonan: The extended period of time for makeup work has problems
      - A one week period has been proposed
        - Often there is less than one week before work or exams are graded and returned
      - Lack of prior notice also a concern
        - Sen. Noonan recognizes the need for exceptions for tournament extended play
    - Athletics Guest: The resolution's language about "advance notice when possible" is warranted
      - In tennis and golf, points must be scored to advance
        - This cannot be known in advance, nor can the length of time it will take to do so
      - "2<sup>nd</sup> string" athletes may fill in for traveling team members at short notice due to illness or injury
      - Games may be postponed due to weather
      - There are often travel issues (e. g. planes being delayed)
      - 48 hour notice before or after events is reasonable in light of the above
        - Student athletes only want "equal and fair" opportunity to make up work
        - Resolution is intended to "create consistency"
        - It remains the student's responsibility to bring notification
    - Sen. Knight: clarification is needed for what events and university business would be covered
      - A "tightening up" of what falls under policy is especially necessary
    - Sen. Johnson: Music leads to many excused absences as well
      - Music is not in the resolution's list, which concerns representatives from that department
    - Comment: friendly amendment to replace "i.e." with "e.g."
      - "i.e." implies list is exclusive, while "e.g." would not

- Sen. Albritton: list is not exclusive
- Sen. Barnett: There is unanimous Theatre support for proposal
  - There is worry about theatre omission from list as above
- Sen. Walker: mixed support from department
  - Question: What happens if professors do not comply?
  - Sen. Albritton: academic council would implement and determine enforcement
- Sen. Mataglah: why wait 48 hours in the age of instant messaging? Post-absence time period is too long in light of modern technology
  - Athletics Guest: the time period is less important than the opportunity to make up work
    - Technology not always available, as well
- Question: what's wrong with current policy?
  - Athletics Guest: "fair and consistent" wording is "nebulous"
    - Policy needs consistency
  - Comment: could wording be less restrictive to academic freedom?
    - Athletics Guest: Wording can be tweaked, but Senate should pass something to say that something ought to be done.
- Sen Albritton: Item should either be rewritten by committee of the whole or referred to a specific committee
- Sen. Knight: other methods sometimes called for
  - Are we trying too hard to be fair and consistent?
  - Isn't the thrust of the proposal "don't be a jerk?"
- Sen. Bing: isn't existing appeal process sufficient because these events of unfair treatment are, assumedly, very rare, and thus the appeals process takes care of these anomalies?
  - The issue is not one of sufficiency but of fairness
    - Is it unfair to force athletes and others to appeal and not allow them to make up work
- Sen. Williamson: most people are doing things right
  - Discussion only pertains to small number of "jerks"
  - It is also occupying an excessive amount of time
- Sen Surbeck: we are now relying on students' word
  - Athletes have pieces of paper; others might not have such documentation
    - Such a system could be abused
- Sen. Field: who decides what is fair?
  - Does "excused absence" need to be (re)defined?
- Sen. Barnett: what concerns did Sen. Field's people have?
  - Sen. Field: they are concerned that excuses could be manufactured after the fact with a 48 hour timeframe, for example
    - The 48 hours could simply become 48 hours to concoct an excuse
- Question: must policy be changed?

- Could students use it to gain unfair advantage?
    - Couldn't some other mechanism take care of "jerky" teachers?
  - Sen. Albritton: onus could be put on supervising department (i.e. Athletics)
  - Friendly amendment: change "students" to "supervising department" for providing notice, and change "48 hours" to "2 business days"
    - Comments: documentation should be provided by supervising department and delivered to instructor
  - Sen. Bing: could wording be reworked in committee?
    - Sen. Albritton: possible, but a motion is needed
  - Sen. Walker: move that item be referred to academic affairs committee
    - Seconded
    - Sen. Noble: such referral could just be an unnecessary delay in face of pressing student needs
    - 23 aye
    - 20 opposed
    - 0 abstentions
    - Motion passes
      - Academic affairs committee will present revised policy wording by next meeting.
  - Athletics Guest volunteers to provide sample policies
- **Third order of business:** Chancellor Dan Jones to speak on faculty compensation and take questions
  - Comments will be off the record via a vis media recording and reporting
    - Minutes will therefore be a record of informal remarks and not indicate any real or implied UM policies, policy changes, or goals
  - Issue 1: are resources available for better compensation?
    - Based on current year, resources are "reasonable" for the future
    - State budget cuts will be offset by increased enrollment
      - State funds increasingly small percentage of UM operating expenses
  - Issue 2: political environment is "delicate"
    - Legislature will not allocate pay raises from state funds in lean times
      - Talk of raises for some state employees (UM faculty) when others (K-12 teachers) will not be eligible is politically "tricky"
    - Support and approval must be carefully managed
  - Possible "roads" to increased faculty compensation
    - Raise tuition and enrollment to generate revenue
      - This is already being done
    - Shift alumni fundraising from capital (building) to other funds
      - UM alumni giving is strong despite economy
      - Predicted 5-15% drop did not occur
    - Continue enrollment growth at slower, more managed pace
      - Not at breakneck 2009-2010 speed
  - Question: why is SUG comparison group, and not SEC?

- Provost Stocks: we inherited numbers from previous administration
    - Chancellor Jones: SUG and SEC are relatively equal
      - Using athletic conferences in academic contexts is a relatively new phenomenon
    - Comment: we are lower in SEC than SUG
      - Chancellor: those facts not available to him; will be checked
  - Question: if SEC becomes a consortium like Big 10 or Pac 10, can we begin to use resources at other SEC universities?
    - CIC has been model thus far
    - Some initiatives in that area are underway
  - Sen. Noonan: could compensation be part of a two-pronged attack with compensation and benefits at the same time?
    - Chancellor Jones: benefits are part of state package with all state employees in same risk pool
      - Pool is a poor one for that reason
      - Higher cost is part of higher risk pool shared with other state employees
      - There has been discussion about changing this, but is not politically likely at this time
        - Risk pool becomes even worse without UM faculty, leading to increases for everyone else
  - Sen. Albritton reads letter from Sen. Noonan to Chancellor Jones
    - Recent candidate turned down position due to poor benefits
    - SUG schools have \$3914 average cost for cost/year for health benefits compared to \$8217 average cost at UM
      - So approximately \$5580 is "tacked on" to pay gap which already exists
    - Chancellor Jones: will pass along a request along those lines to use in advocating for increased benefits
      - Perhaps we could share a risk pool with other educational institutions
  - Sen. Albritton: any objections to preparing items thru executive committee to facilitate what chancellor suggested?
    - None
  - Chancellor Jones: please limit discussion about this issue to prevent public discussion during this legislative session
- **Fifth order of business:** committee reports
  - Executive committee
    - No report
  - Academic affairs
    - Passed out policy on "dead week" proposal
      - Will be available for consideration at next meeting
  - Finance
    - No report
  - Academic support
    - No report

- University services
  - No report
- Governance
  - No report
- **Sixth order of business:** old business
  - None
- **Seventh order of business:** new business
  - Executive committee will draft health care language
  - Relay for life team solicited by local committee
    - Sen. Albritton read letter on behalf of local RFL committee
    - Organizer solicited from faculty senators for a team
      - \$1000 would be goal
    - Membership on multiple teams is possible for those already participating in their departments
  - Item for academic affairs or finance committee:
    - Concerns over lack of transparency in funds derived from intersession courses, online courses, and off campus courses
      - All of which have little to no direct academic supervision
      - Deans may not have oversight
    - Use of said funds is not currently clear
    - Sen. Albritton calls for a motion to commit the finance committee to an investigation of that nature
      - Sen. Noonan: money just covers cost
      - Sen. Walker: finance might not be best avenue
        - Sen. Albritton: appropriate committee would ask appropriate people appropriate questions
      - Sen. Knight: isn't there a policy?
        - Sen Albritton: others have asked and been denied information
      - Moved
      - Seconded
      - Approved unanimously with no abstentions
  - Question: will dead week policy be forwarded to senators before the meeting?
    - Yes
      - It has already been sent
- Senator Albritton closed the meeting at 8:05 p.m.