

10-22-2015

October 22, 2015

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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Recommended Citation

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate, "October 22, 2015" (2015). *Meeting Minutes*. 151.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/facsen_minutes/151

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Faculty Senate Minutes for the Extraordinary Meeting

October 22, 2015

Meeting convened Thursday, October 22, 2015 at 7:05pm by Michael Barnett, Chair of the Faculty Senate.

Senators in attendance: Rachna Prakash, Chuck Ross, Kris Belden-Adams, Patrick Curtis, Brice Noonan, Robert Doerksen, Greg Tschumper, Ahmed Al-Ostaz, Brad Cook, Feng Wang, Ann Fisher-Wirth, Dan Novak, Jay Watson, Andrew O'Reilly, Yang-Chieh Fu, Oliver Dinius, Darren Grem, Noell Wilson, Jim Lump, Robert Magee, Antonia Eliason, Stacey Lantagne, Ashley Dees, Savannah Kelly, Kristin Rogers, Milam Aiken, Sasha Kocic, Heather Allen, Amy Fang-Yen Hsieh, Mary Roseman, Michael Repka, Meagen Rosenthal, Travis King, James Bos, Breese Quinn, Ben Jones, Jody Holland, Amy Fisher, Marcos Mendoza, Minjoo Oh, Joe Sumrall, Michael Barnett

Senators excused: Tom Garrett, Lorri Williamson, Allan Bellman

Senators absent: Sasan Nouranian, Tossi Ikuta, Richard Gordon, Stephen Fier, Dennis Bunch, Dwight Frink, Lifeng Yang, Tejas Pandya, Adam Estes, Michael Gardiner, Danielle Maack, Mark Ortwein

Introduction

Michael Barnett, Chair of the Faculty Senate, welcomed everyone. Thanked John Brahan and Allen Coon, authors of the proposed resolution and the many other members of the student body there. Thanked the many groups who were there. Thanked Chief of Police Tim Potts and his officers who were here to ensure there are no disruptions to the proceedings. Thanked the Senators for representing their constituents.

The Chair clarified the role of the Faculty Senate as being to advise, and make recommendations. He noted that we are not a decision-making body for the administration.

The Chair also noted that this is not an open forum. Guests may not speak without the invitation of the Senate. The Chair reminded the Senate that we are to conduct our discussion as Senators through civil discourse.

Chair Barnett stated that we were here to discuss a resolution calling on the University of Mississippi to cease flying the flag of the state over the university. The resolution was passed 2 days ago by the ASB with a vote of 33-15-1.

John Brahan and Allen Coon were invited to give some context.

Allen Coon: Today Governor Phil Bryant said "I think college students react a lot emotionally." We have only opted to act where you have remained silent. One of the reasons for this discussion are the tragic events that occurred this summer in Charleston, South Carolina. But this is a conversation we should have had many years ago. Tonight we have a chance to uphold the tenets of our creed. Together, we can make our university a safer space for all students – create an academic environment that creates an atmosphere of inclusion. To make the university what it should be.

John Brahan: Mentioned an email the ASB received today from a former student in the 1980s, telling a story about the first black student to be elected a cheerleader at the University – he refused to run across the field with the confederate flag. The last time this issue was up, in 2001, we were in kindergarten and couldn't spell government. This is our chance to push for something. The Graduate Student Council also made a statement – take down the flag as a promise that we will work to become better than our ancestors. Here on behalf of ASB asking for our help – we ask that you pass this resolution with us and ask the University to take down this flag.

Chair Barnett read the staff council resolution that was passed on October 21, 2015.

The resolution has also received support from the Critical Race Studies group, the Sarah Isom Center and others. With this perspective in mind, moved to propose the resolution.

Moved and seconded.

Chair Barnett noted two small friendly amendments that Brahan and Coon had agreed to that brought the wording in line with the broader scope of this resolution: Where it said students only, it now says students, faculty and staff, and where it said students, it now says campus community. Additionally, in the resolved statement, it states that the Senate of the Faculty of the University of Mississippi joins with the Associated Student Body and Staff Council. These are minor amendments.

Request for discussion. No discussion.

If there is no discussion, motion to call the question. So moved.

Vote in favor: 41

Opposed: 1

Abstentions: 0

Resolution passes.

Chair Barnett thanked the associated student body. Proud of the Faculty Senate to speak as one on this matter.

Our University has made great strides in the area of diversity and inclusion however we still have work to do. This is not about disrespecting our state or our heritage, but respecting everyone. Chancellor Jones stated in his inauguration speech that the University of Mississippi has to move beyond the transformation of individual lives. Over the last week, the ASB, the Staff Council and now the Faculty Senate have taken steps in this direction. We now call on the senior administration to take steps in this direction.

Motion to adjourn.