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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

12-8-2015

December 8, 2015

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Recommended Citation

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate, "December 8, 2015" (2015). *Meeting Minutes*. 153.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/facsen_minutes/153

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Faculty Senate Minutes

December 8, 2015

Meeting convened Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 7:00pm by Michael Barnett, Chair of the Faculty Senate.

Senators in attendance: Rachna Prakash, Kris Belden-Adams, Patrick Curtis, Brice Noonan, Robert Doerksen, Sasan Nouranian, Greg Tschumper, Ahmed Al-Ostaz, Brad Cook, Feng Wang, Tom Garrett, Richard Gordon, Ann Fisher-Worth, Dan Novak, Jay Watson, Andrew O-Reilly, Yang-Chieh Fu, Oliver Dinius, Darren Grem, Noell Wilson, Robert Magee, Antonia Eliason, Stacey Lantagne, Dennis Bunch, Ashley Dees, Savannah Kelly, Kristin Rogers, Dwight Frink, Milam AikenHeather Allen, Amy Fang-Yen Hsieh, Adam Estes, Mary Roseman, Michael Repka, Meagan Rosenthal, Travis King, James Bos, Breese Quinn, Ben Jones, Danielle Maack, Jody Holland, Amy Fisher, Minjoo Oh, Marcos Mendoza, Allan Bellman, Mark Ortwein, Joe Sumrall, Michael Barnett

Senators excused: Tossi Ikuta, Sasha Kocic

Senators absent: Charles Ross, Jim Lump, Lorri Williamson, Lifeng Yang, Tejas Pandya, Michael Gardiner

Approval of November 10, 2015 Minutes

Minutes of November 10, 2015 meeting were approved by the Faculty Senate as a whole without comment.

Senate Committee Reports

Executive Committee:

Executive Committee had a chance to meet with Chancellor Vitter, discussing the priorities largely based on the Faculty Excellent Task Force Report.

Executive Committee had a meeting with the Master Planning group for the second time this semester. The next meeting will be in February. It is still in the planning phases and there is nothing substantive to report. This is a 20 year plan with many exciting things in the pipeline.

General Academic Affairs: Nothing to report.

Academic Support Affairs:

Revision to E-mail storage capacity and security

Will be having a meeting to discuss this.

Finance: Nothing to report.

Governance: Nothing to report.

University Services: Nothing to report.

Old Business

Statement on Commitment to Freedom of Expression

Discussion of Statement on Commitment to Freedom of Expression was previously tabled. Motion to remove it from the table voted on and passed.

Breese Quinn: There have been incidents at Ole Miss relating to the freedom of expression. We handled the taking down of the state flag very well. Outside of the chambers, however, the behavior was not good. From one side, there was some pretty egregious online harassment of Senator Coon for his actions. From the other side, there was a petition to impeach the senator of the ASB who was leading the defense of the flag for the views he holds.

This incident and others like it that are happening across the country represents a pretty disturbing trend. The idea of impeaching officers of groups for holding disagreeable views is distasteful. Recall elections are the appropriate means of removing officers from these bodies. Impeachment is a charge of official misconduct or unlawful behavior. Impeaching students for holding disfavoured opinions is essential stating that holding such views is misconduct and essential criminal. These students would then be made to participate in a trial.

Impeachment by its definition is a government action, so impeaching someone for the views that they hold is one of the most direct and blatant and egregious forms of literal censorship one could possibly imagine. It is these types of incidents that I think we need to make a statement against – we need to do something to tell people that is not what the core values of the university are.

Now, from last month's meeting and other conversations, one of the concerns is that the statement as presented last month did not sufficiently encapsulate the context of our campus at Ole Miss – it did not put that issue in sufficient context coming from us. I have attempted to address that concern, to make the resolution more specific to our history.

Motion made to consider the first two "whereas" statements, which were worded in such a way that suggested we had an institutional history in which we had always embraced freedom of expression.

The second whereas discusses that "respect for the dignity of each person" and "freely examine and exchange diverse ideas" and how they cannot be separated from each other.

Question: How do these relate to each other?

Answer: They have to be taken together.

Comment: Not comfortable voting on this without seeing the context of the language quoted.

Question: What does "fully realized" mean?

Answer: We need to have both, otherwise neither will be complete.

Question: "University of Mississippi embraces a commitment to freedom of expression" seems clearer.

Answer: Friendly amendment accepted.

Comment: Don't like reference to Mississippi state flag – makes it look a bit more like a political knee-jerk reaction to what has happened, and I fear that this is how people will take it – that this was a result of the state flag, and I'm not sure that we want to send that message.

Comment: I agree. A flag is a symbol. Communication is a symbol. Speech is a symbol. We said we don't like this mode of communication, so we eliminated it. There is no alignment between these.

Comment: Broader point that we are concerned with is the issue of perception, which we are not going to be able to discuss it – we really should be concerned with the broader point rather than with the specific amendments.

Answer: Would be fine to remove the explicit reference to the Mississippi state flag and change to "Whereas the University's experience has shown that"

Comment: Pulled up relevant policy and creed.

Comment: We use the term "table" when we mean "postpone" – "postpone" is where you postpone to a subsequent meeting. "Table" means we table it until later in the meeting.

Vote to call the question approved.

Vote to include these amendments: 42 in favor. 5 abstentions. Amendments pass.

Motion to consider the next two amendments together.

Breese Quinn: The amendments are to reduce the focus on the Chicago Principles since substantive changes have been made to the statement to make it more Ole Miss specific.

Comment: Change the Whereas "earlier this year" to "January 2015" to make it more general.

Comment: Remove stray semi-colon.

Answer: Accepted.

Call the question – question called.

Vote to include amendments: 42 in favor. 4 abstentions. Amendments pass.

Motion to amend the title: "Adopting a Statement Reaffirming a Commitment to Freedom of Expression"

Call the question. Question called.

Vote to amend title passed unanimously.

Comment: Remove from last Whereas "a version of the Chicago Principles as"

Comment: Remove "its own official"

Comment: Friendly amendment accepted.

Comment: If we remove that, we end up making the previous Whereas redundant.

Comment: How is this on policy matters since we have been told this isn't about policy matters?

Answer: We can remove "policy" – leaves us with "a statement on matters related to freedom of expression".

Comment: Can we change that to match the title more?

Answer: Yes. Now it reads "a statement reaffirming a commitment to freedom of expression".

Question called.

Amendments passed. 44-2.

Breese Quinn: Motion to accept the amendments to the statement's first paragraphs.

Motion passed.

Breese Quinn: Language in first paragraph of statement changed to fit more with our University.

Comment: Motion to postpone discussion.

Breese Quinn: In light of the timing, some Faculty members have indicated that given the optics of the situation this might be viewed as reactionary. I respect these views but I differ. The very reasons why it might look reactionary are the reasons why it is important to do this now. I think that Ole Miss has a unique position to be able to help with healing in the fight that has broken out across the country with the issues across campuses. The national conversation over it has been pushed and cast and built up to be a fight between two sides: between the free expression side and the concerns over marginalized groups side, and the way the conversation has been pushed is that these two camps are against each other – if you are for freedom of expression, you are against marginalized groups; and vice-versa.

But, if you've looked at the materials that were sent out, there are multiple articles from different organizations pointing out that campuses in their efforts to deal with these issues of diversity and marginalized groups have got to do more to protect freedom of expression in their dealing with these issues. They have to go hand in hand – neither side can exist without the other and they have to be brought together – someone has to step up and lead institutions across the country and students to show that these core values have to go hand in hand. I personally feel that Ole Miss is in a better position to do that and to carry that message than any other institution in this nation, because of our history.

I think that if we put forward this resolution at this time that above anyone else in this country, it would be extremely hard for anyone to accuse us of making this commitment as a means of putting down marginalized groups. With our very recent experience with the flag, it would be really hard for someone to make that leap. Based on what we see around us and what we saw this semester, I don't think anyone in this country handles this better than we do – it's been a long time coming, and we're not done yet, and as such, we have a responsibility to serve our local and national communities, by giving them in a very explicit and public manner a model to follow in how to deal with these issues.

We could put this issue off until next semester, when a lot of these issues blow over and things are quieter, but if we do, I think that as a community we will be passing up on an important opportunity for us to lead this nation in an area where we are uniquely suited to do so. It would be a powerful teaching

moment to be able to come before our students and peer institution and hold up to them the dual resolutions of the flag resolution enshrining our commitment to a diverse community and our free expression resolution, simultaneously affirming that core foundational value of the university concept. And to have those two ideas merge together for teaching on this campus. For instance, in getting the ASB to come up with revised rules on recalls rather than using impeachment techniques. It would be a unique teaching moment and one that is unlikely to exist in 6 months when things blow over. We don't need to approach these things by keeping our heads down and flying under the radar. When unique opportunities present themselves for leadership, we need to accept them with confidence and boldness. Our peer institutions need us to as do our students.

Comment: One of our Faculty members made a comment and was generally supportive of the concept, but thought it was inappropriate to do it while there was an interim chancellor and thought it best to do once the new chancellor arrives.

Motion to call question on postponement.

Passed.

Postponement: 27 in favor. 19 against. 2 abstentions. Motion passed. Postponed to January meeting.

New Business

Exploration of Formalizing Dual-Career Support for Faculty

Following task force report, the Governance Committee is being asked to explore the issue of formalizing dual-career support for faculty further.

Exploration of the Relationship Between the University and the Local Metro Narcotics Unit

Concerns have been raised regarding the tactics employed by the local Metro Narcotics Unit. The issue is that the university contributes \$125K annually to the operation of this unit. The Faculty Senate email account has received some comments from the community about this issue.

The Finance Committee will be examining this issue, since our contribution is purely financial.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting is Tuesday, January 26, 2016 at 7:00pm.