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University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Minutes

February 9, 2016

Meeting convened Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 7:00pm by Michael Barnett, Chair of the Faculty Senate.

Senators in attendance: Charles Ross, Kris Belden-Adams, Patrick Curtis, Brice Noonan, Robert Doerksen, Sasan Nouranian, Greg Tschumper, Ahmed Al-Ostaz, Brad Cook, Feng Wang, Tom Garrett, Ann Fisher-Worth, Mary Hayes, Jay Watson, Andrew O-Reilly, Yang-Chieh Fu, Oliver Dinius, Darren Grem, Noell Wilson, Jim Lump, Antonia Eliason, Robert Magee, Dennis Bunch, Lorri Williamson, Ashley Dees, Savannah Kelly, Kristin Rogers, Milam Aiken, Lifeng Yang, Sasha Kocic, Heather Allen, Amy Fang-Yen Hsieh, Michael Gardiner, Mary Roseman, Michael Repka, Meagan Rosenthal, Travis King, James Bos, Breese Quinn, Ben Jones, Danielle Maack, Jody Holland, Amy Fisher, Marcos Mendoza, Minjoo Oh, Allan Bellman, Mark Ortwein, Joe Sumrall, Michael Barnett

Senators excused: Rachna Prakash, Tossi Ikuta, Richard Gordon, Stacey Lantagne, Tejas Pandya, Adam Estes

Senators absent: Dwight Frink

Approval of January 26, 2016 Minutes

Minutes of January 26, 2016 meeting were approved by the Faculty Senate as a whole without comment.

Presentation by Whitney Greer Regarding the University of Mississippi Undergraduate Research Journal

University of Mississippi Undergraduate Journal is a new endeavor. It is peer-reviewed. There is a staff with editors for different areas. The student submissions will be reviewed and if they are determine to be of a high quality or promising they will be passed on to faculty editors for review. Not every submission will be sent to faculty editors for time reasons. Faculty editors review the papers and send them back with recommendations to publish or not to publish.

Editorial board then makes a decision as to whether they want to publish or not.

There will be a rolling electronic publication – it will be published online; there will only be a print edition once a year, every April. Faculty will have at least 2 months to review a submission.

UMURJ was founded by Ms. Greer to recognize achievement above and beyond the classroom – the goal is to encourage them to keep working on their work and to take ownership over their work.

There is a companion journal. NEWS is a creative writing and fine arts journal, which is the companion journal and will be set up in the same format, to allow photography and other types of media in the online publication.

If you would like to be involved as a faculty editor or in any other capacity, the journal would be delighted to have your contribution – please contact Whitney Greer. There will be posters coming soon.

Question: What is the length on papers that you are looking for?

Answer: 3-18 pages at the moment. We are flexible – if there is something larger that merits the publication space we will print it.

Question: Can an honors thesis or a scaled down version be submitted?

Answer: Yes – we are doing chapters or excerpts.

Question: What about natural sciences – what about pharmacy, nutrition, etc.?

Answer: Yes, we have tried to make it reflective of all the disciplines at the university.

Presentation by Chancellor Jeffrey Vitter Followed by a Question and Answer Session

Chairman Barnett introduced Chancellor Vitter. Following the presentation there will be an opportunity for questions and answers.

Chancellor Vitter: I would like to keep it short. I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to come here today and to dialogue about the University. We are calling it the Flagship Forum where I am reaching out across campus, medical standard, faculty, staff and students and alumni to both learn about the University and to ultimately address the question of how we move the University forward. This is what this semester is all about.

Started January 1 – we won the Sugar Bowl. It was a good day.

6 days later we opened the Pavilion. It is not just a sports arena – it is also a place that during the day will be a place to converse and meet people.

As a Southerner growing up in NOLA and coming back to the South was really a dream job for me – having such a stellar institution and the opportunity to engage in the dialogues that all great universities go through to make it even better. This is a great university. Alumni are incredibly passionate.

Strong tradition of economic excellence and an economic driver of the state.

I've spent a lot of time learning about your creative work and have been very impressed. It is difficult work and you should be gratified to see the results of students who come out with degrees who succeed and become leaders in the world. This university creates opportunities. You play an incredible role in that.

I am very fortunate to be here reaping the benefit of a framework put forward by our previous leaders. Happy Morris Stocks is continuing. Khayat, Jones and Stocks – all three have contributed immensely to this organization.

How can we build in the areas of learning, discovery, engagement, entrepreneurship? All of these will contribute to bringing us to that next level.

First and foremost, the beginning goal – the main goal – is to help me learn about the University and to help us learn about one another. Like all good Southerners, we want to find out about each other's stories.

I grew up in Louisiana and had the opportunity to learn about this university through sports. I believe in the power of athletics and how it can open up opportunities and bring people to this university.

Start with mentioning my wife Sharon – she is so important to everything I do. She is incredibly friendly. If you see us walking our dogs Mario and Luigi, stop and chat with her. Our three kids – our oldest is the chief resident in anesthesiologist in Colorado, our son is a second year PhD student at Texas who was in the military; our youngest works for GE and travels a lot for work.

I'm in academic leadership because I am passionate about the transformative power of higher education. Nothing is more important to the future of this country than higher education. It is literally our seed corn for the future by which we create a brighter future. Talking about higher education from liberal arts as heart and soul along with the added dimensions of the professional schools.

I spend my entire career at academic institutions. Grew up as a faculty member at Brown, was chair at Duke, then at Purdue. And then KU and to here.

This is a great American public research university. This is a flagship university. It has that special role in changing people's lives and creating leaders.

We have the responsibility to build on the momentum that has been created over the years – tremendous growth – we have the ability to look to the future, to ever greater success.

Momentum includes academic reputation; enrollment and student success; service and community engagement; culture and climate; private support; facilities expansion; athletics excellence.

Academic excellence is the foundation. We have a committed faculty who sign on for the long haul. You are dedicated teachers and also scholars. Just last week, for the first time ever the University was moved to the highest category R-1 Carnegie Classification – the top 2.5% of higher education institutions in research. There are many other great accomplishments. School of accountancy is no. 7; our forensic chemistry degree is in the top 5 in the country. There are always spurs to do better.

We can see how the demand has increased – from 1996, the size of the university has almost doubled. We are making efforts to be one university and to report together with the medical center – this helps our research rating. We are continuing to grow – that has caused some stresses but on the whole it has given a great financial boost to the university.

We are growing because we give opportunities to all Mississippi students who qualify as well as reaching around the world and nation. Our faculty and staff work hard to help every student succeed. Our increase in graduation has increased and our retention has – we have a way to go – but the trajectory is there.

When you look at the SEC, we have grown a lot – the SEC is also composed of big universities that have also grown a lot – we are the second smallest public university in the SEC – we can make the university feel small for our students so they can make connections and not feel lost.

Helping those that are not as prepared to also succeed is something not all universities can do and we can.

Service, healthcare and community engagement are things we do well – turning when relevant into entrepreneurial opportunities. That is a real contribution to society. Comes from all over the university, not just in technical fields. A company recently started out of the business school that just got sold for upwards of \$400 million. This is a chance for us to help the state and help the nation and be entrepreneurial in bringing in resources. We want to be both affordable and accessible but also excellent. We have to be imaginative to do those things.

Another hallmark of momentum has been our legacy of service – we will continue with that.

In terms of culture and climate, everything is based on the UM creed. First and foremost, we respect the dignity of each person. We have gone through some important discussions. Some of the most important themes that came through was a strong statement from the UM community was that maintaining forward progress in maintaining inclusiveness and multiculturalism is very important. Twitter case at U Kansas resulted in Board of Regents passing a social media policy which made things worse. You can't algorithmically figure out academic freedom. I initiated a process working closely with the university senate to develop collaborate process so that even though we had this policy and did modify it significantly, we now had a process that everyone understood was first of all protecting academic freedom and first amendment rights so people would know that the University would never act in capricious ways. It is that shared governance that I very strongly believe in.

Here, last semester it culminated in the decision to lower the state flag – it was led by the student ASB and faculty senate. Fully support the decision and the collaborative way it was made in accordance with the UM Creed. I am committed to continuing the progress you all made and continue with the Action Plan, will continue to monitor our climate and will continue to work on areas that need work. The search of Chief Diversity Officer is resuming. I will work to work with and encourage our state to change the state flag, including with the IHL board. It is absolutely important for us to do.

Culture and climate has many other aspects as well. Last week our medical campus was voted as best place to work in Jackson. Culture has a lot of aspects. I just came from being the guest lecturer at the chancellor's leadership class – I asked how many were from a foreign country and no one was. We are not preparing students with everything they absolutely need if we don't give them a sense of international understanding and global cultures. We need to get students abroad, and we need to have more international students at the university. We have ways to do that with programs that help the international students to hit the ground running to expose students to a diversity of cultures. Diversity is important ethnically, different backgrounds, but also from foreign lands. This helps people to learn to work together more than anything. This is the chief problem facing the university today. I hope that we can talk about those kinds of opportunities in the flagship forum as we go forward.

Private support: our endowment is at \$600m – we need to get to \$1 billion to get to where we want to be. Last year we raised over \$133 million dollars – important to continue to build on – that kind of support plays a big role in supporting faculty and academic programs and doing really innovative things.

Looking ahead – when we look ahead, everything I do I fall back on my core values to help guide me – and as I was preparing to become chancellor – how best to approach leading this great university – to

start the conversation about what are some of the issues to start discussing as part of the flagship forum. We need to continue to advance the value of a University of Mississippi degree. We need to increase our graduate studies. We have to work on research. We have to keep that next level with the Carnegie Foundation that we just got. Can't keep the designation for granted. Have to serve Mississippi and be a leader to help our state, nation and world. We need to foster a rich multicultural climate. We need to extend our reach and become a great international research university located in America. Theme of collaboration and innovation: we need to be able to reach across campuses and collaborate so that our work can inform others. In the long term I would like us to be a great flagship university – to work on the path of being a top university.

Fortunate that I had some great advice from the Chancellor's Transition Advisory Committee who are helping recommend goals for this semester; key milestones for accomplishing the transitions and how to engage as effectively as possible to learn what I need. 100 day listening and learning tour.

There are three subcommittees: First Fives + some; Communications subcommittee; and culture and context subcommittee.

Starting tonight with this component – what do you want me to do? What do I need to do right now? What should I avoid at all costs doing? What makes this university the great university it is? What should we be aspiring to? Want to come up with strategies and milestones to move this university forwards.

Question: Can you give concrete examples of diversity initiatives you led or want to do?

Answer: My career has overwhelmingly focused on academic excellence. Perhaps what I am most happy in what I've worked on is in areas of diversity. When I was at Purdue, I chaired my Dean's leadership council to help us zero in on a bunch of important problems. We hosted journalists who write about science. I rolled out a program called Hiring for Excellence – at KU I brought it out for the whole university. The program is a very principled approach for how you go through a hiring process.

Compare to a typical process: for junior faculty position you get 50-300 applications – go through the paper and pick 4 finalists. Bring them to campus and within 5 minutes you realize that 3 of them you never should have invited in the first place. If you realize it then the people you should have invited you are never going to actually see.

So there is a methodology that zeroes in on basic traits that are important for whatever person you are trying to hire. Depends on the search. Different modes of interacting; motivations – 25 traits are divided into those categories and based on the particular search you are doing, once you get to maybe candidates that meet the basic criteria, beyond that point you have to go through a process to determine what are the traits that separate to truly stellar candidate from the not so stellar ones. It's amazing if you ask the right questions for those 4 traits that you want, in 45 minutes to an hour you will get an amazing glimpse on how these people act and what separate the great from the good – then you can bring the top 4 to campus.

The group of 20 is a pretty inclusive group – therefore it's pretty diverse; you're not biased based on looking at paper and trying to find the pedigree just like yours and not surprisingly the people that shine are going to be much more diverse than the people you would have come up with otherwise.

In the last 3 years at KU, our percentage among the entire faculty of minorities went up by 16%, women by 9% - these were hired because they were the very best. This is the best way, since people are hired for being the very best.

At a senior level, we did target minority faculty members because when you are looking at a full professor you already know their track record because you are looking at their record from another university. Senior faculty can help mentor junior faculty. Can really make a difference in a long-lasting way – hiring minority faculty in a way that they are the very best.

Question: With respect to new initiatives, whether it is in promoting multi-disciplinary research or efforts at internationalization, how can we free up the time of faculty to start such initiatives when much of our time and energy goes into managing the fast growth, often fitting more students into the old ways of doing things. What ideas do you have to free up the necessary creative energy?

Answer: Some students have brought up advising, because it is so important. We have great advisors in general – we may need to beef up our advising corps and that may offer an opportunity to take off some advising burden from faculty. Resource-wise we have to be more entrepreneurial – think of ways to bring in resources other than just tuition and state funding. There is a performance formula at the state level that if it were actually implemented, our budget would go up by something like 20%.

There is a commitment to move in that direction – we may get resources from the state.

What can we do entrepreneurially? Can always try to be as efficient as possible but we are pretty lean. Some things we have to do and we can't just be lean. Maybe there are opportunities to economize though.

There are online programs. There are new ways of bringing in resources – like reaching adult learners around the country. A win-win of having international students is that this brings in substantial tuition since they pay out of state rates. There are opportunities if we are creative. Internationally, master's programs are very popular – can often subsidize PhD programs. If we are creative there, we can grow our graduate programs. We are living in a world than a traditional world, and if we want to be the leaders in the future we want to be in the group of universities that does things different to lead things in the future.

Q: One of the strengths has been the capacity of fostering research while creating a relatively nurturing environment for faculty research – without becoming cut-throat?

A: I would hate to be a junior faculty member at Harvard or Yale – it is cutthroat. My whole philosophy, when I was department chair at Duke, we involved the whole department in recruiting so the grad students interviewed the candidates because we wanted the very best people. Our philosophy was we will go to extraordinary lengths to get the best people and get them excited about coming to the university. We want the very best and then help them succeed. We don't want the Roman gladiator approach. If you do things the right way you can really engage a unit which will make the candidate want to attend the university.

Q: How do you contribute to that from a higher level leadership position and not department chair?

A: You have to advance and advocate that culture. Hiring practices program is very complementary and interconnected with that kind of engaging approach. We want people excited because they know they will have a nurturing environment. That's really important and if you let people know that you will turn some heads.

Q: You mentioned that we are lean. You also know that our faculty salaries lag behind our peers. We have been fortunate to have cost of living increases in recent years. Can you commit to this this year?

A: We just got a midyear budget cut so I don't know enough to commit. The good news is that our enrollment looks strong. We just have to see how it all shakes up. If at all possible I would like to continue that. This is a loyal and dedicated faculty but we must make sure we are competitive in terms of compensation.

Morris Stocks: We have experienced a budget cut in the last few weeks, but we have been able to absorb it. Hope we are able to continue it – but some things are outside our control.

Q: What about entrepreneurship initiatives? Are you going to have concrete plans to help faculty?

A: I had entrepreneurship bootcamps – what does it mean to start a new company; to have a business model; to start a company and eventually get a license. Those kinds of models can help people start in the right direction because otherwise they might be paralyzed from the start. Another thing that is helpful would be helping to connect to the medical center – there are people at the medical center who know what they need – so that is a powerful way forward. It isn't just scientific things – business world like FNC is a big arena. Big entrepreneurial effort at KU was a company that was like eHarmony for foster care – when you help families that way the contribution is really immeasurable.

Q: Interdisciplinary cooperation is key. What are you going to do to make this happen more?

A: Everything we deal with these days is multidisciplinary – better choice of words than interdisciplinary. If you look at funding agencies, they figured out a while back that the big problems they are interested in require these collaborations. I think encouraging these kinds of collaborations is a really important thing. If this involves the college and engineering and the business school in some collaborative project, you can take credit in any one school for the entire thing which raises its visibility. The more we can do to foster it the better. There is not enough – there need to be more opportunities – need to remove the barriers.

Senate Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Nothing to report.

General Academic Affairs: Nothing to report, although we will be revisiting the GradeBuddy.com and similar sites issue – proper use does not violate IP rights, but improper use of it does. Found scores of examples of copyright violations and it is something that we need to deal with.

Academic Support:

Revision to E-mail storage capacity and security

Will be having a meeting to discuss this with Kathy Gates tomorrow morning. Nothing to report at the moment.

Finance:

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

Nothing new – we have a meeting coming up in late February (February 23) on further exploring what this relationship looks like. Many of you may have seen the MPB segment. If you hear comments from Faculty, please forward these to the Committee.

Governance:

Exploration of Formalizing Dual-Career Support for Faculty

Had a meeting regarding the report – were supposed to be looking at an issue relating to spousal hires, as per the Task Force on Faculty Excellent Report. We investigated policies in place at other similar universities to ours as well as those recommended by particular organizations to focus. Committee unanimously is planning on recommending to the Executive Committee of the Senate to recommend to the Provost to set up an ad hoc committee to set up a policy on the idea of formalizing dual-career support – and the idea of having hiring available for a faculty member at the time of hiring or later during their career.

Will write up a detailed description. This is responding to a document that was already through the Senate – this is an urgent concern to develop a policy for the University. This would be good for the well-being of the Faculty – many peer institutions have similar policies – would be particularly valuable in an environment like ours where there aren't many job opportunities in the area.

We also want to look to see if there is a policy on counter offers – Committee is planning to look into this in the next few week.

University Services:

Resolution Regarding a Transparent Leave Policy

Met with Pam Johnson in HR regarding this Leave Policy. One of the documents was to rewrite leave policy to make it more transparent. We have decided to move forward in the short term to put up on a FAQ that will make more transparent what the policy actually is, so instead of attempting to rewrite tomes of policy, we will clarify and avoid that and simply have a list of commonly asked question and explanations of what needs to be done and what the policy is.

We will be meeting with Pam Johnson in a week and are expected to bring a list of questions – if you have any issues regarding the leave policy, let us know so we can make sure that this is something that is addressed.

There is a fair component to the leave policy – why couples that are married can't both take 12 weeks – that is something that is not up to us – state policy. We cannot do anything about. But if you want to petition your Congressman, that is how the change will be made. The Resolution talked about the Chancellor petitioning the IHL board.

One other thing: expectations regarding teaching classes. That is going to remain on a department-to-department basis – HR has no control over that. HR does not determine this and it happens within the academic unit.

Q: Is there any kind of education for Deans/chairs on policy?

A: This is communicated, but it is not formal training.

A: Would be a good idea to have recommendation or guidance regarding if you feel like you have undue pressure, where should you go – like the Ombudsman.

A: Should probably go first to the Dean if the issue is the Chair, and then to the Provost. If serious enough could lodge grievance with Ombudsperson.

Old Business

Nothing to report.

New Business

Proposal to Address Issues Related to University Students Involved in University Sponsored Extracurricular Activities

Here to discuss an issue that has come up before. Have heard horror stories from student athletes about what are excused absences and what happens when they miss a number of classes.

Proposal for this to go to Academic Affairs.

Want a policy procedure where individual faculty can consider whether student athletes can come into their class. Perhaps there are some classes where extensive excused absences won't work, like student teaching.

Proposal is for a better line of communication where Faculty teaching specific courses could let it be known that if you are going to be absent a lot you may have to think about taking it another semester.

Examples of anecdotal evidence of failure to accommodate.

This isn't about making a decision on whether the professor is fair or not but something regarding an approach to improve communication before the course ever starts.

Proposal should be written for any student in extracurricular activities – that’s basically the purpose of this.

Q: Proposing that there be a system in which students involved in activities would be able to understand the attendance policies of the courses before they register, particularly in relation to excused absences.

A: Yes.

Q: Don’t see how department chair has control over attendance policies.

A: This is just for a record-keeping purposes – so maybe should change wording from approval.

Referred to Academic Affairs Committee for further exploration.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at 7:00pm.