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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

9-10-2019

September 10, 2019

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Agenda – September 10, 2019 MINUTES

Senators Present: Jeff Pickerd, Lauren Cardenas, Brice Noonan, Brad Jones, Cole Stevens, Brenda Prager, Chris Mullen, Carolyn Higdon, Joseph Carlisle, Richard Gordon, Beth Ann Fennelly, Mary Hayes, Kathleen Fuller, Jennifer Gifford, KoFan Lee, Phillis George, Zachary Kagan Guthrie, Vivian Ibrahim, Evangeline Ivy, Chip Wade, Charles Stotler, Dennis Bunch, Brian Boutwell, Kristin Rogers, Bob Robinson, Sumali Conlon, David Gligor, Jon-Michael Wimberly, Tejas Pandya, Corina Petrescu, Whitney Sarver, Julia Bussade, Thomas Peattie, Hyunwoo Joung, Chalet Tan, Meagen Rosenthal, Jordan Ballou, Fei Lan, Breese Quinn, Sue Ann Skipworth, Marilyn Mendolia, Kyle Fritz, Daniel Durkin, Ana Velitchkova, Donna Buckley, Michael Barnett, Carrie McCormick, Jenny Bucksbarg, Angela Green

Senators Absent (Excused): Carmen Sanchis-Sinisterra

Senators Absent (Substitued): Jim Cizdziel (sub – Randy Watkins)

Senators Absent (Unexcused): Aileen Ajootian, Cristie Ellis, Roy Thurston, Andy Cheng,

- **Call Meeting to Order**
 - 6:01 pm
- **Approval of May 2019 Minutes**
 - Moved: Corina Petrescu
 - Second: Bob Robinson
 - Discussion: none
 - Vote: All in favor
- **Update from Stuart Haines on Retirement & Benefits**
 - Increase in premium for health insurance benefits starting 1 Jan. '19 (3%)
 - Will likely be an increase in dental benefits
 - Prime Therapeutics made changes to their formulary and a number of drugs are no longer covered (effective 1 April '19). PT reported that any beneficiary that would have been affected had been contacted.
 - Retirement benefit contributions increased from 15.75% to 17.4% (PERS) or 13.1175% 14.751 ??% (ORP).
 - Clay Jones (AVC for Admin & Finance) formed a subcommittee to explore alternative vendors that can offer 403(b) plans to reduce costs. Might be a smaller

number of vendors (1 or 2 vendors), but the idea is that they would focus on reduced fees.

- Questions:
 - Q: Will there be a cost associated with transitioning funds from past to new vendor?
 - A: Likely not
 - Q: Will the narrowing of vendors focus on fees at the expense of investment opportunities/offerings?
 - A: No
- Discussion of changes to Distinguished Professor Policy (Forgette)
 - Changes boil down to:
 - Clarify that this is an award, not a promotion step
 - Changed timeline to not coincide with T&P timeline (which contributes to the confusion of award vs. promotion)
 - Q: Why is the number set to 2, rather than 5%
 - A: (Wilkin) The fact that the DP award was not being awarded to as many faculty as possible each year led to a demoralizing denial to many high-performing faculty. In this way, failing to approve the maximum number would not be seen as a decision against any faculty member.
 - Q: What do our peer institutions do with respect to the # of awards given each year?
 - A: (Wilkin) This varies widely.
 - Q: There is mention of both Tenured, Untenured, and Non-Tenure Track faculty with respect to eligibility throughout the document. Is this intentional?
 - A: (Forgette) Verbiage will need to be revised. The intention is that all would be eligible.
 - Q: The draft policy indicates letters must come from graduate Dean. This is unfair to units that do not have a graduate program
 - A: (Forgette) We will have to revisit this.
 - Comment: Recommend that Chair need not write a letter as they may have a contentious relationship with distinguished faculty in their departments.

- Comment: Consider situations where the Chair themselves may be the candidate (writing a letter for themselves).
- Discussion of changes to Emeritus Policy
 - Changes focus on the ability to remove or fail to grant this status to faculty whose conduct would reflect poorly on the university
 - Comment: Paragraph 5 suggests that individuals may "request consideration", though it is intended to be automatic. This should be clarified.
 - Comment: Senators should spread the word that the honorific Emeritus should be automatically conferred to those eligible, as many Dept. Chairs are unaware of this.
 - Q: Who would rescind this title?
 - A: (Wilkin) It would be the Provost.
 - Issue for the future: There has been an expression of interest in whether this honorific should be merit based or automatic. This would necessitate a committee to review and also one to handle appeals.
 - Chair Rosenthal assigned this issue to the Governance committee to explore whether our peer institutions automatically confer this title or not.
- Committee Reports
 - Academic Instructional Affairs:
 - Book store back-orders: Chair Rosenthal assigned this issue to AIA to further explore this issue.
 - Academic Conduct
 - Finance & Benefits
 - Development & Planning
 - Governance
 - Research & Creative Achievement
 - University Services
- Old Business
 - Issue of lost seats on the Senate. Who decides who loses their seat?

- Assign to Governance committee.

- New Business
 - None

- Move to adjourn: Corina Petrescu
 - Second: Thomas Peattie
 - Discussion: none
 - Vote: All in favor

Retirement and Benefits Report



FACULTY SENATE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

Health Insurance Update



- 1) There was a premium increase (3%) for health insurance benefits starting Jan 1, 2019. This was first increase in 8 years.
- 2) There will likely be a premium increase this coming January for the dental benefits. HR is actively comparing alternative insurers to see who can provide the best value (not necessarily the cheapest premium)

Drug Benefit Plan



Prime Therapeutics made changes to their formulary and a number of drugs are no longer covered. These changes went into effect April 1, 2019.

It is unknown what drugs were dropped from the formulary or how many employees/dependents are impacted.

I asked that this be reported to me (# of drugs and % of beneficiaries). Pam Johnson (Assistant Director of Benefits) was not able to obtain any information from either the State or Prime Therapeutics. Supposedly any beneficiary who was impacted was notified in writing.

Retirement Benefits



Good News! All faculty (indeed, all employees) received (effective July 1, 2019) an increase in the employer contribution to their retirement plan. For those in the PERS, the employer contribution was increased from 15.75% to 17.40% (a 1.65% “raise”) and for those in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) the employer contribution was increased from 13.1175% to 14.751% (a 1.65% “raise”).

Retirement Plan Costs



Clay Jones (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Admin & Finance) formed a subcommittee to explore alternative vendors who can offer 403(b) retirement plans for lower fees. This could potentially save employees who invest in a 403(b) plan 1-1.5% per year ... and substantially increase their long-term returns.

Al Ling – Director of Business Applications and ERP Support for Information Technology

Dr. Andrew Lynch – Assistant Professor of Finance – School of Business

Dr. Stuart Haines – Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Pam Johnson – Assistant Director of Benefits