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Meeting of the Faculty of the Senate

December 8, 1995

Chair, T. J. Ray, called the Faculty Senate to order at 2:05 p.m, December 8, 1995, in Old Chemistry Auditorium, Room 107.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR: Chair Ray introduced Dr. Thomas Layzell, Mississippi Commissioner for Higher Education

PRESENTATION BY DR. LAYZELL: (A member of his office, Ms. Pat Meyer was also present.) Dr. Layzell opened with a brief statement of major issues and concerns for the coming year:

"We face real challenges with technological changes, large maintenance needs, \$600,000,000 + renovation and repair backlog, and possible appeals to the Ayers decision." The Board is moving ahead to meet the ruling. State revenue projections are up 4+%. There are big demands such as prisons. "This year won't look so good to those of us in higher education. We'll do the best we can. There are a couple of initiatives. Pat is working for an advocacy campaign to get our message out and develop a positive view of what we do. We are taking a systematic approach to reviewing the budget, looking at the formula, looking at how to set up budgets. If we have a strategic/systematic approach we will do better."

Questions: Senator Ray: Fall break concepts came up at the last Presidents Council meeting. We were asked for campus input for the December meeting so it can be addressed at the Board. The Board will want to see that there's no reduction in class time. We need faculty input to the calendar and to this decision. Similar changes have come up only once in the past five years, with only one calendar change in the past twenty-five years. Senator Klein: might take Monday and Tuesday off near Columbus Day. Mississippi puts more faculty time in than the national average. Dr Layzell: referring to a question he took in Tupelo about the perception that faculty do not work enough. He answered that studies had shown that: 1 faculty work 55-60 hours per week; 2. Faculty put about 74% of their time here into instruction, versus about 65% for the national average. It was pointed out that we get instructional credit for lectures, but not advising masters students, despite the important generation of new knowledge. Senator Gorove: generally this "credit" is worked out at the departmental level. No one is aware of a formula. Senator Taylor: thesis dissertation hours is all we get The formula affects this at the board level Dr Layzell: there is a problem sorting out lower and upper level course credits. Regarding national research council ranking of Ph.D-granting institutions, Layzell says this hasn't come up. He doesn't know if there are any plans to consider it. He is not sure how valid the study is. "To me rankings like this raise questions, but do not provide answers. One has to dig in to what it means. The people at each university should look at this. I don't think we should have budget processes driven by rankings such as this. It is more important to look at the mission, what's going on at each school." Senator Malone: what about ranking and statistics for undergraduates, percent of national merit scholars Dr Layzell: can't ignore, but take this with a big grain of salt; we should not distort the mission or resource allocation to look good in a magazine. The folks who should deal with the first are here; at this level push answers that look fair and reasonable. Senator Taylor: it appeared in the past that the Board listened to the presidents (top echelon). Do you have a better plan to learn what is going on at the institutions? Dr. Layzell: yes, there are some strategies for this. In his former work he visited faculty and staff when there were events on campus. He met with the statewide faculty senate council. "Board members are aware of the need to get information on the campuses. I'll meet with you any time you want." Dr. Layzell then left, and the meeting continued.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS BY COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Committee on Faculty Governance: Senator Sisson - "the committee moves creation of a standing

committee for review of administrators."

Questions were raised about who is academic and who is not, for instance, at the NCPA or externally-funded service organizations. We should not put these people on the same list of review as department chairs. Senator Haws: what about review of Physical Plant directors? Not included because this might lead to their review of academic personnel. Senator Alexander how consistent is this review with other procedures? What this proposes is that a committee looks at reviews of other administrators to see if the process is consistent. The original intent of the Tenure and Promotion Committee was substantive. The committee was moved by the administration to be procedural. That process "stinks." A committee outside departments will not be able to tell if the chair is doing a good job. Senator Alexander: the committee should make sure that guidelines are being applied consistently. Senator Taylor: the Tenure and Promotions Committee has sometimes voted unanimously that someone should be given promotion or tenure that had been denied earlier by administrators. Senator Malone: what is proposed is better than what we have - nothing. Senator Sisson: we need criteria. The committee cannot develop all criteria: Senator Ray: at least now when faculty have a serious complaint, someone will review the complaint versus in the past - no action. Senator Taylor other than some externally-funded positions, all the rest support the research and instruction missions. They should fall under the purview of the committee. Senator Alexander: no one is against this philosophically, but I guess I feel someone should fill in the details. Senator Eftink: what about confidentiality of the information used in the reviews? Senator Ray: the details are confidential, but the results can be made public, for example "the committee agrees with the following reviews." Senator Malone: can endorse the concept and have the committee gather feedback to work out the details. Senator Taylor it seems appropriate that some kind of report similar the report from the Vice Chancellors's office to the Appeals Committee is needed here. Senator Gilbert called the question and the resolution was approved by hand vote.

Committee on General Academic Affairs: Senator Landon presented two resolutions, the first concerning super drops, and the second requiring return of tests within a week. (Resolutions attached below.) The general discussion was against the super drop concept, but there was a feeling that we should show that the students do participate in the process and that we might find some compromise. The question (Super Drop Resolution) was called and passed on a voice vote. Regarding the second resolution, the consensus was that tests should be returned promptly, that we should not deliberately delay, but that we should not involve them (students) to the extent of making them assistant teachers. Senator Johnson: returning the tests and test results differ. Sometimes it is important not to release the test questions. Senator Alexander: we should advocate prompt return of tests. I don't think we should attach "fair or unfair" to return of tests. Senator Malone: should give flexibility that we agree with prompt return, but not as a rule. Following amendment to the form below, the question was called and passed by voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS: The Faculty Senate minutes for June, September, and October were approved

NEW BUSINESS: Senator Alexander, consultants have reviewed union usage. We need recommendations and ideas to the committee. Senator Ray: there is interest in a faculty club and funds still available with a site at the old Honors Center.

Chair T. J. Ray adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:15 p.m.

Resolutions from the Executive Committee:

1. With regard to ASB Senate Resolution No. 96-6 ("A Resolution To Add Three "Super Drops" To The Drop Policy At The University of Mississippi), moved that the Senate advises the Chancellor that—because, with regard to cases where such a policy has been adopted by other institutions of higher learning in this country, its adoption has been widely criticized by both the professional academic and the public press as contributing to a widely-perceived national problem of "grade inflation," and also because, at a time when our University is endeavoring to further enhance its academic reputation in order to qualify for a Phi Beta Kappa chapter on this campus and generally achieve greater national

recognition and respect, such a policy change by seeming to suggest a lowering of academic standards, could only be detrimental to reaching those goals-he should not approve the proposed policy change.

2. With regard to ASB Senate Resolution No. 96-7 ("A Resolution To Have Tests Given Back To Students within One Week Of The Day The Test Was Given") moved that the Senate recommends that as a general policy, test results and review should be provided to students within a week after tests are given in class, and that notification of this motion be provided to the Chancellor.