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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

10-13-2020

October 13, 2020

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Faculty Senate Minutes– October 13, 2020

Zoom – @ 6:00 pm (details at end of Agenda)

Senators Present: Aaron Joy, Alex Lopez, Alex Watson, Angela Green, Brad Jones, Brian Boutwell, Brian Reithel, Carmen Sanchis-Sinisterra, Carolyn Higdon, Carrie McCormick, Carrie V. Smith, Charles Stotler, Chip Wade, Chris Mullen, Christy Nielson, Cole Stevens, Corina Petrescu, Christie Ellis, Daniel Durkin, David Golgor, Darren Grem, Donna Buckley, Fei Lan, Hyunwoo Joung, Jenny Bucksbarg, Jim Cizdziel, Joel Mobley, John Lobur, Jon-Michael Wimberly, Jordan Ballou, Joseph Carlisle, Julia Bussade, Kathleen Fuller/Robert Van Ness, Kenya Wolff, KoFan Lee, Kyle Fritz, Lance Yarbrough, Lauren Cardenas, Mandy Perryman, Mary Hayes/Shari Holt, Meagan Rosenthal, Michael Repka, Mikaela Adams, Phillis George, Randy Dale, Richard Gordon, Stuart Schafer, Sue Ann Skipworth, Tom Brady, Whitney Sarver, Willa Johnson, Zenebe Beyene, Beth Ann Fennelly

Senators Absent (Excused): NONE

Senators Absent (Unexcused): NONE

- **Call Meeting to Order**
- **Approve minutes from the September 8, 2020 meeting**
 - Motion
 - Second
 - Vote – ALL IN FAVOR
- **Greeting and updates - Chancellor Glenn Boyce**
 - Will discuss enrollment at next month's meeting. Thanked everyone for their work, noting he's fully aware it's not an easy time and faculty are working harder than ever. Discussions with parent groups reveal concerns that their children are not receiving the quality education they would in the classroom. You are delivering a great education despite the ever-changing circumstances, the pace of curriculum, and other challenges. We are proud of the work you are doing.
 - Over 700 parents showed up for last night's town hall. Some demands are not realistic. The state's numbers are up a bit, but I hope it's just a one-day surge. Keep in mind that students are struggling too, and they are not necessarily having the semester they had hoped for. We're trying to figure that out.
 - The budget has been approved for the year and does not require any further cuts. If we have strong retention, we should be able to avoid cuts the rest of the year.

- Larry Sparks is retiring, and Mark Wilder is heading the search for his replacement. By the first of January we should have a final candidate.
- To boost and expand the university's research efforts, the Chancellor will be providing seed money to create small interdisciplinary groups and partnerships.
- Private giving of 127 million, 26 increase for the year.
- UM again named among the top 100 public universities, one of the great colleges to work for, and our athletic programs set a record nationally for academic achievement.
- UM's Stamps Scholars program is the second largest in the country.
- The Chancellor attended the ribbon cutting for the UMMC children's hospital, which will have one of the best NICUs in the region with private rooms available for parents.
- People are getting weary of the virus and people can forget it's still out there. We are proud that our university is moving through this virus and we've done an amazing job, and it took every one of us to make this happen. Any adjustments that need to be made, we are always talking about putting our safety first. I don't anticipate that we'll be free of the virus anytime soon. We've got to continue to make adjustments as we move forward. We have not changed our thought processes even as we have changes some of the parameters. Whatever decisions need to be made we will be very cognizant of our health, safety, the data, and anything else that could be provided to help us make those decision. Thank you for participating in asymptomatic testing. The more participation, the better we will be able to make good decisions.

- **State of the University updates – Provost Noel Wilkin**

- Thanked faculty for their work and noted we are all trying to figure out how this virus affects our classes and other work and our lives in general.
- Reviewed data on retention and graduation, both at strong levels. Reminder that this Thursday's forum will be held at 2 PM and will look at salary disparities and the results of the climate study.
- The QEP, ThinkForward, still needs our focus for our SACS accreditation. Our goal is to increase critical thinking. Josh Eyler is making good progress despite having to help faculty adjust to teaching during COVID.
- Showed the percentage of classes in various formats:

F2F 1,074 or 27.3% of classes

Hybrid 1,111 or 28.3%

Remote 1,395 or 35.5%

Online 349 or 8.8%

The rest were always going to be online or in other formats.

- Parents expressed frustration about class formats at the town hall meeting, There is a lot of misinformation, so it's best to counter it with accurate information.
- Department chairs are doing mid-semester check in with instructors and asking faculty to consider adding more F2F and hybrid, because the risk of contagion is lessened in that setting. Faculty are being asked to check in with students.
- We expanded our Keep Learning site, Academic Programs and Experiences have helped us shape and manage expectations, enhancing activities to help faculty

- Enrollment trends: The November 1 census date means firm numbers won't be available until next month's meeting, but shared the following:

Overall and undergrad enrollments are down but grad and professional enrollments are up. Application trends are increasing in response to our aggressive efforts and scholarship strategies

Why students choose UM is "a good program in my major" as the first item.

Attractive campus second, academic reputation is third

About 30% of our freshman reported a family connection to the university a bit higher than in past years.

New freshman perceptions:

78.4% of freshmen said UM was their first choice, 93.4 said UM was their second choice. How challenging was it to learn online versus F2F in high school? Some reported much more challenging, some less. 34% said they learned less than they had in person in high school.

- Shared retention and graduation trends showing ours at 86.8 retention, 65, slightly lower than the SUG cohort average, but creeping toward the middle of the pack. Some of these schools are extremely selective so with our admissions standards, we look pretty impressive.
- Degrees granted: senior class is a little smaller this year than last.
- Most common degrees: IMC, Accountancy, GS, Managerial Finance, Psychology
- Diversity data: #2 in SEC for African American enrollment based on fall 2018, but Mississippi State is number one in the SEC. How are they able to do that better than us? This is an important metric for our chancellor. Minority enrollment overall, we haven't hit SEC average, which we need to address.
- Faculty data and other trends will be available in November.

Q: Anticipated transfer of funds from athletics to university budget?

Provost Wilkin: We will present this at the November meeting.

Q: Can we share the data you just shared?

A. Yes.

Q. What were the takeaways from the parent town hall?

Provost Wilkin: Lots of questions. My perceptions are that a lot of people are upset over things that cannot possibly happen, like returning to regular classes in the spring or getting a tuition discount for online classes that otherwise would have met in person. I did receive one letter of appreciation today. But most are complaining about not being face to face when, for example, restaurants are open. Inflamed FB groups are not helping.

Chancellor Boyce: Everything Noel said I think was exactly right. But different states have different rules to live by and we tried to make it clear what rules we were having to live by here in Mississippi. There has been a dramatic reduction in what we can do. We made that clear, but the message was not well received. How can high schools do it but you can't, they ask?

Another thing that resonated is that students have miscommunicated sometimes with their parents. But that's very complicated because we often have incomplete information to work from. We're trying to communicate with every single parent. We did the town hall after trying to reach each parent individually who had contacted us or registered a complaint.

People are just weary and as parents see their children struggle. They want the F2F experience but unfortunately, it's just not possible. This is a very student-centered campus and we have communicated that to parents.

Q: Clarity on whether social events will increase or decrease.

Provost Wilkin: Structured events have increased, and people have followed protocols. Unstructured events have the potential to spread the virus among asymptomatic people, so we encourage people to get sentinel testing and also keep events between 10 or 25 attendees.

Q. What can be done about the fact that only 11% of students have participated? Are these things being made explicit to parents and students about the role of testing in containing the virus. How is this being messaged?

Chancellor Boyce: We've been very explicit. We have told group after group that any new protocols for more social interaction will need greater participation in sentinel testing. We have great incentives in place.

Q: The message may have been misunderstood. The wording of the email says to "complete this quick 2-minute survey" which might confuse students into thinking they need to show symptoms before agreeing to test.

Provost Wilkin: Thank you for the design suggestion. We are looking into it. The testing system interface has not been flexible. It's a private event so they need to know who has been invited. The Qualtrics questions were added to help with that, but we will work on clarifying the message.

Q: Are Z-P grades likely this semester?

A: Undergraduate and Graduate Councils will both discuss that question and make recommendations to the Chancellor. The conversation is already started and students themselves are bringing it up. These types of grades won't work for some grad and professional programs and students are being made aware of that. No SEC schools seems to be moving to PZ grades or Pass/Fail.

- **Updates on Campus Climate Survey feedback to date and Division of Diversity and Community Engagement – Interim Vice Chancellor Shawnboda Mead**

Interim Vice Chancellor Mead shared a link in the chat box with the full Campus Climate and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

- The report runs to about 600 pages, and a copy will be available in the university library for viewing later this week. It will also be available in a Box folder using UM credentials.
- This is the first time we have taken a census approach to climate study. It is only data at this point and starting in March will be available in IREP.
- Key findings for faculty:
 - A majority felt valued by their departments (79%), though the numbers break down differently by faculty type.
 - 60% have considered leaving the university within the past year.
- There was some confusion regarding campus initiatives that faculty thought were available that would positively influence climate: fair process to resolve conflicts, access to counseling, affordable childcare, partner/spouse support.
- We encourage you to engage with the full report. An online action feedback form is also available for sharing your thoughts. We are committed to transparency and taking action on input.

Q: The library is a source for printed copy of report, at main circulation desk, but do contact the library ahead of time because of staffing issues. Same for the red salary book. Also, graduate respondents report low pay and long hours. Are any actions being addressed for either of those?

Vice-Chancellor Mead: We are adding graduate students to our priority list when it comes to pay disparities. Pay was the number one reason faculty and staff cited.

Interim Vice Chancellor Mead then shared information about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan: Pathways to Equity.

- Laid out the process and timeline for the 5-year plan, starting in fall 2018 by convening university liaisons from every unit. Official launch in January 2021.
- Shared diversity liaisons for each unit.
- Three overarching goals: 1) advance institution capacity for equity, 2) cultivate a diverse and equitable community, and 3) foster an inclusive campus climate
- Three plans and their respective Action Items: Institutional, Division of Diversity & Community Engagement, and each academic unit
- Guiding principles: Equity mindedness, institutional accountability, transparency, innovation, alignment of critical resources

Q: How did this plan come together without faculty input, especially from faculty of color and women faculty? The plan seems top-heavy.

A: Many of these questions are addressed in the report. We charged liaisons with establishing committees. But this plan is still in draft form, so help us fill in the gaps and provide feedback. Individual academic units have not finalized plans and we have encouraged them to hold forums like this one to include your input.

Q: What funding will be available for research?

A: The chancellor has committed to diversity research funds, but other funds may come from the foundation or other sources. Incentive fund will help programmatic efforts. Fellowships will also be available to faculty.

Q: Is the body strictly advisory or is all discretion vested in the chancellor?

A: Everything is still in the proposal stage so these could be part of the conversation. Regular updates will happen through annual reporting of the plan and its status. Asked faculty to take the report and share it with colleagues and seek out their feedback. Ask your liaison where things are, and the 3-5 robust actions items identified for improvement.

- **Committee Updates**

- Academic Instructional Affairs (chair: Corina Petrescu)
- Academic Conduct (chair: Kenya Wolff)
- Finance & Benefits (chair: Joseph Carlisle)
- Development & Planning (chair: Jon-Michael Wimberly)

- Governance (chair: Daniel Durkin)
- Research & Creative Achievement (chair: Donna Buckley)
- University Services (chair: Carrie McCormick)

- **Old Business**
- **New Business**

Motion was made to go into executive session to close the meeting to discuss a sensitive matter. Poll taken and passed to discuss going into executive sessions and all guests were asked to take leave of the call. Discussion and withdrawal of motion to go into executive session.

- **Adjournment at 8:35 PM.**
 - Motion
 - Second
 - Vote – ALL IN FAVOR

NEXT MEETING: November 10, 2020 @ 6:00 via ZOOM

Meagen Rosenthal is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91930047263?pwd=WFVVVHFSejhZMDNpTDNRbE82cDg0UT09>

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