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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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3-21-2023

**March 21, 2023**

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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# The University of Mississippi Faculty Senate

Meeting  
Minutes March  
21, 2023

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The following members were present:

Heather Allen, Louise Arizzoli, Robert Barnard, Melissa Bass, John Berns, William Berry, Kerry Bowers, Joseph Carlisle, Annalise Caudle, Melissa Cinelli, James Cizdziel, Enrique Cotelo, Randy Dale, Matteo D'Alessio, Simone Delerme, Dan Durkin, Gabriel Garrido, Angela Green, Erin Holmes (for Sujith Ramachadran), Burhanettin Keskin, Brad Jones, John Lobur, Scott MacKenzie, George McClellan, Joel Mobley, Elisa Modolo, R.J. Morgan, Christy Nielson, Sasan Nouranian, Peter Reed, Chad Russell, Hans Sinha, Carrie Smith, Cole Stevens, Joe Sweeney, Robert Van Ness, Jamie Wagner, Alex Watson, Jon-Michael Wimberly, Wen Wu, Lance Yarbrough

➤ Welcome

- Meeting called to order.
- Because there was no Zoom recording of the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, Dan suggested tabling the minutes pending further review by Senate members. A motion was made, and seconded, and the minutes were tabled. Dan instructed members to review the minutes and to send any changes to the Secretary.

➤ Guest Speakers

- Rich Forgette – 1. Rich first discussed phasing out the Covid 19 Tenure Extension process, implemented in the Spring of 2020. Faculty could opt out of going through the tenure process, effectively adding a year to the five-year tenure and promotion timeline. This has been in place for the past two years. This year's incoming faculty would not be able to opt out of the five-year tenure cycle. In Spring 2027, you would have to specifically request the Covid-19 extension; it will no longer be automatic. There would be one year of transition in which the Covid-19 Tenure Extension would not be offered but could be requested. Thereafter, the extension would be phased out entirely. Alex Watson asked which group was considering this change. Rich indicated that it was proposed by the Provost's Office, and would need to go through the Undergraduate Council, the Graduate Council, and then the Council of Administrators. Alex asked if it would also be coming before the Senate for a vote, and Rich said while he welcomes feedback, he didn't think that it would need to come up for a vote. Robert Barnard asked what the timeline for the Senate's feedback would need to be. Rich said he would like to have the matter resolved before the end of the academic year so that incoming faculty would be informed clearly when they arrived as to the tenure and promotion cycle. Chad Russell asked if the policy would sunset; Rich said the phase out would effectively end the policy following the transitional year in 2027-2028. There are and would still be personal extensions as allowed by the tenure policy; this

would just eliminate an extension specifically tied to Covid.

- 2. The ASB has requested that the University provide a bank of faculty syllabi, saying it would help students choose their courses and understand their degree programs better. Rich indicated that the University already has, through MyOleMiss, an application that effectively draws learning outcomes from faculty syllabi for SACS purposes. The University is required to demonstrate that it has learning outcomes associated with its courses. He further stated that the University also extracts the syllabi uploaded by faculty each semester. Syllabi can also be extracted from Blackboard, though this is currently not done. Only the learning outcomes are extracted. The University has something like a bank already; it is an application that is about half complete; at present, it is not available to students. George McClellan said it was one thing to opt in as faculty. Many faculty consider their syllabi to be intellectual property, and would resent having it made compulsory. John Lobur agreed with George, adding that it would be difficult to keep track of different versions of the syllabus, as courses and their calendars change rapidly. It would open faculty up to charges of misinformation, if any part of the syllabus was revised, changed, or updated. It would also require syllabi to be posted too far in advance to be accurate. In chat: Enrique Cotelo asked if the syllabi would be visible on the web at large, and Rich said that no, it would only be available to those with an OleMiss login. Alex Watson asked if the bank would be retroactive; some departments already bank syllabi. Rich agreed that a bank would be redundant in this case. He further agreed to facilitate discussion between the ASB and those faculty who have questions and concerns about the viability of such a bank. Jamie Wagner asked about the application, called Syllabi, it extracts outcomes but not descriptions. Rich asked if individuals from the Senate would like to bring their concerns directly to the ASB. Sasan Nouranian pointed out that there are many statements and policies in syllabi that may be specific to a department or a college or an instructor. Rich pointed out that most faculty do not upload their syllabi to MyOleMiss at the beginning of the semester. There is about a quarter compliance. When SACs comes around again, the syllabi will be solicited from faculty more actively. Annalise Caudle suggested that interested students could always contact a professor directly and ask for a syllabus if they were interested in the course. Having a large bank of every syllabus from every professor might create bias, as some professors provide pronouns and guidelines for open discussion that might open them up to criticism. Further, it may cause students to select a course based on their perception that one professor or iteration of a given course is less rigorous than another.
- Castel Sweet – Director of Community-Engaged Leadership Minor. Castel dropped a document in the chat in the interest of time, and briefly outlined the nature of the new Community-Engaged Leadership Minor. It will be launched in the fall. Working with the college of liberal arts to get an approved minor is an transdisciplinary minor, meaning any student can take it, regardless of their academic home across campus. The minor has a governing body of affiliate faculty that work with us that represent each of the schools and colleges and they have been helping identify the courses and processes to build out a really robust interdisciplinary minor. They are looking for academic courses to qualify for addition to the minor; the document she shared has language that describes the kinds of courses they are looking to include. She also said she would send out descriptions of the courses they have so far.
- Jim Zook – Website Updates from University Marketing & Communications – They are updating and streamlining the entire University Web site, moving from

WordPress to Cascade8, which will make the site more secure. At present, Jim indicated, the site is unmanageable and hard to navigate. Every page is set up differently. The goal is to create a web site that is intuitive and centralized; any content that is extraneous will be archived or discarded. Each department will have a dedicated IT person to manage that department's web content. There is also a Web Governance Council that will oversee the conversion of the entire site. It will be most active during the transition, but it will be a standing committee. Dan suggested that a member of the Senate be represented on this Council. The colleges and departments will be the first segments of the web site to be launched, followed by labs and research centers. Dennis Irwin indicated that for consistency, all faculty will be required to take new pictures with a blue background. He showed a sample of what the new faculty profiles would look like; it is far more detailed and interactive. Another page that will be recreated is a faculty experts page for the media, where a list of content experts will appear so that media can quickly contact knowledgeable faculty for a quick interview to increase faculty and University visibility.

- Will Berry – AI policy from Academic Discipline Committee – Will began by discussing Academic Discipline cases in general. This 11-member committee consists of three students and seven faculty, including John Lobur. There are around 170 academic discipline cases per year on average; around 70 of these are appealed. The newest issue has to do with AI. The committee is trying to come up with new language to add to the M Book to address the emerging issue of AI such as ChatGPT and the potential plagiarism issues it raises. It is a work in progress. It is entitled “Improper Use of AI Assistance” and it specifies that any student who uses AI to construct an assignment 1. without attributing content to the AI assistant AND 2. without the express permission of the instructor is engaging in academic misconduct. In the absence of a policy on the syllabus, AI use is assumed to be academic misconduct. Many questions were raised about the issue; many felt that the policy was unenforceable, since there is no reliable way to detect AI use. Another issue that was raised concerned the language; it was suggested that the policy should address the inheritability of fault: Students should be held responsible for incorrect content that is AI-generated. There is a task force on this issue; Marc Watkins, who is on the task force, indicated that they have received funding for one round of paid instructor training to provide training and strategies for engaging with and understanding AI.
- Josh Gladden – ORSP Updates – Josh was not present.

#### ➤ Updates

- Teaching Awards – Still in Committee.
- Faculty Senate Social – This will be held at the Chancellor's House on the last Senate Meeting of the year in May.

#### ➤ Committee Updates

- Ad Hoc Committee Update (Chair: John Lobur) - The first town hall regarding the Grievance Policy was held on Feb 21<sup>st</sup>. 16 people attended. The small turnout was attributed to the information not being widely shared across departments. To avoid this in the future, town halls will be announced via UM today. However, John indicated that they will not have another town hall until they come up with a complete draft of the Grievance Policy. They hope to have one by the end of the Spring Semester or, at the very latest, by fall of 2023.

- Academic Conduct (Chair: John Lobur) - Nothing to report.
  - Academic Instructional Affairs (Chair: Alex Watson) – This committee came up with a statement about the Hood Award. The Executive Committee decided that this statement needed further discussion, so it was sent back to committee. Since then, the Arnaud Award has gone live, so this may be a moot point.
  - Development & Planning (Chair: Angela Green) - The Chancellor signed the resolution regarding the Office of Sustainability. The committee also met with the parking department regarding future plans to accommodate electric cars. Will have more information at the next meeting.
  - Finance & Benefits (Chair: Joseph Carlisle) - Nothing to report.
  - Governance (Chair: Carrie Smith) Her committee is meeting on Thursday to take up a resolution regarding the language used to refer to research faculty.
  - Research & Creative Achievement (Chair: Matteo D’Alessio) - Nothing to report.
  - University Services (Chair: Heather Allen) – Nothing to report.
- Old Business – Dan met with the Chancellor about the “Where We Are Lean” initiative and gave him a report; they are still working through this and he will have more information by the next meeting.
  - New Business –George McClelland asked about the country and western singer coming to the University. Dan indicated that there isn’t currently a policy governing the vetting of such events. There is such a policy for The Ford Center; he suggested that we borrow its language and draft a resolution suggesting that it be used to vet acts in the future.
  - Meeting was adjourned at 7:44PM.

Daniel Durkin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Faculty Senate Meeting March 21, 2023

Time: Mar 21, 2023 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

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