

1-18-2022

January 18, 2022

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Minutes – January 18, 2022

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

Senators Present: Kenya Wolff, KoFan Lee, Shari Holt, Kerry Bowers, Alex Watson, Joseph Carlisle, Joe Sweeney, Melissa Bass, Lance Yarbrough, Robert Barnard, Angela Green, Dan Durkin, Carrie McCormick, Matteo D’Alessio, Lauren Cardenas, Sasan Nouranian, James Cizdziel, Mike Cinelli, Donna Buckley, John Berns, John Lobur, Cole Stevens, R.J. Morgan, Carolyn Higdon, Whitney Sarver, Christy Nielson, Hans Sinha, Andre Liebenberg, Joel Mobley, Brian Boutwell, Carrie Smith, Brian Reithel, Heather Allen, Gabriel Garrido, Brad Jones, Sujith Ramachandran, Yunhee Chang, Jennie Lightweis-Goff, Scott Mackenzie, Randy Dale, Michael Repka, SueAnn Skipworth, Simone Delerme, George McClellan

Senators absent (unexcused): Joseph Carlisle

- **Meeting called to order**
- **Minutes approved from the December 7, 2021 meeting**
 - Motion -
 - Second
 - Vote
- Update from Provost Noel Wilkin on COVID-19 was unavailable because he was teaching class.
- Update from Bob Baker – Student-Athlete Academics Report
 - Oversees Fed Ex Athletic Center and works with student-athletes, on a dual reporting line, reporting both to Shannon Singletary and Noel Wilkin.
 - Focus is on the student-athlete and not the reverse.
 - Our APR, the NCAA’s Academic Progress Rate, measures how institutions rate at keeping athletes eligible for competition and retaining them. The APR started in 2003, and a perfect score is 1000.
 - Each athlete accrues 2 points per semester earned per semester based on remaining eligible and being retained.
 - Scores below 930 on multi-year average can lead to lots of consequences (public reprimands, loss of scholarships, etc.)

- We submit every November and sometimes release information in June, but I want to release our numbers now because I am proud of them.
 - UM lost zero academic points for not remaining eligible.
 - 8 lost retention points for student athletes, across 5 sports
 - 12 out of 16 teams with a perfect score last year, the most in history
 - This year we got 996/1000, the highest recorded in our history.
 - 426 athletes, 57 different majors across many disciplines.
 - Send out progress reports twice a semester through RETAIN. These are approved FERPA-compliant link. Averaging about 50% return rate, which we would like to improve.
 - If you take attendance, please include updates.
 - Let us know about any academic concerns and especially any successes.
 - I have to bear bad news sometimes, so having good news from you about our student-athletes is always good to take into coaches' meetings.
 - We do a lot of tutoring so send your bright students to us who need a side job. We pay well and support and train our tutors across many majors. Accountancy, business, and math are the most requested.
 - 88% fill rate, 3200 sessions, 29 different education/training sessions for our tutors to make sure they are providing the right kind of assistance.
 - Have your students email me directly if they wish to become tutors. Also visit our social media links. We show some love to our tutors as well as our student-athletes there.
-
- Q: I've greatly enjoyed our student-athletes over the years. I do have a question about APR and student athletes. How do they track the graduate assistants? Is there something like an APR for grad assistants?
 - A: Most of the rules apply to undergraduates, but the GAs are monitored differently, so that would be me. I track these GAs and I'm happy to do all I can to ensure our GAs are academically prepared.

- Update on Joint UM Governing Bodies and the Metro Narcotics Unit by Chair Durkin
 - Student organizations are working on it with Hans Sinha, who is the university liaison for this.
 - Sinha: Our hope is to get something from each group (faculty, staff, undergrad, graduate) to put together a committee or group to pursue education, not confrontation, to determine what's happening and what we might do. There's a consensus that it's worth looking into.

- Update on Mississippi Legislative Session by Chair Durkin
 - Executive Committee has been busy in the past month or so looking at whether to craft a resolution in anticipation of "anti-Critical Race Theory" laws.
 - The Chancellor, Provost, and the university's legislative liaison met with EC to see what we might expect, walking us through what is likely to happen in the legislature. We decided the best move for now is to 1) research how this is playing out in other states, 2) stay in touch with the liaison, and 3) watch for legislation that is introduced later and react only to those not likely to die before coming to a vote. See what language is in the bill and go from there. We expect something to respond to by late February/early March.
 - Also working with senates across the state to coordinate a single message to lawmakers from all state bodies under the IHL and will allow us greater flexibility in meeting with the IHL in the future on issues all state universities are facing together. Anyone from the EC want to add to what I have said?
 - Watson: The legislative liaison also said something about "neutering bills" that with the right amount of maneuvering can become essentially empty rhetoric without much affecting the university.
 - Buckley: He thought in our current political climate some sort of bill is likely to pass and we need to prepare for it.
 - Wimberly: He also said it was highly unlikely the current bill would pass.
 - Lobur: Our committee has been drafting a potential resolution but we are concerned especially about our colleagues in other departments who may feel less able to speak out against such legislation.

 - Question: Can you just tell us briefly what is at stake here?

 - Durkin: We see this as an academic freedom issue, as today's CRT can be something else tomorrow that others don't want us to teach. We will frame the issue as such. We are glad to have the full support of our administration and our colleagues across the country. But there is a ton of misinformation about what CRT actually is and isn't. I will find an article to send out to everyone.

- Lobur: will post a link to an excellent article about it showing all present efforts across different states.
- Watson: As I recall, one key point was to not be too adversarial but allow our allies at the capitol to do their quiet work behind closed doors. Our silence was pitched as helping us not to attract too much attention while this happens.
- Q: Is it clear what consequences are being threatened for teaching CRT? Would punishments be for individual teachers or the university as a whole?
- Durkin: Only a few states have passed something so far. Some have threatened to take funding away. But we will see what happens and respond accordingly.
- Q: Do we anticipate any anti-tenure bills?
- Durkin: Yes, and we are following these too, but the liaison said to not worry too much about the bill currently floating. We are watching this closely, especially across the southeast.
- Watson: The liaison seemed even more dismissive of this bill passing in present form, even more than the other bills discussed.
- Wimberly: One bill stipulates a 6 year maximum on contracts.
- Smith: We also discussed working with the ASB, as lawmakers are likely to be more receptive to students on this issue than they are to faculty.

- Chair Durkin on ad hoc committee to examine Faculty Senate Sub-committees
 - Just started this discussion in EC last week, so we are just introducing the topic here but will revisit in EC.
 - Many senate committees have lots of work to do and others have very little that falls into their purview. Other things comes up that don't seem to correspond to the work assigned any given committee. So we want to take a look at all committees and study them to see if we want to stick with them or modify them in any way.
 - Q: Is committee structure part of the bylaws or the constitution?
 - Durkin: The bylaws, so we will have to change them if changes are warranted. But it's a good thing to look at every few years. We will discuss at EC and get back to you, but do feel free to share suggestions.

- **Committee Updates**
 - Academic Conduct (chair: Kenya Wolff) – nothing to report
 - Academic Instructional Affairs (chair: Alex Watson) – We've been discussing what's been going on in the legislature and will collate very good comments people have put together and forward to the EC. Thanks to everyone on the committee for their hard work. We do want to get the perspective of African American faculty members on matters related to CRT.

- Smith: There was a Critical Race Study Group led by Kirk Johnson that might not still meet because of Covid.
 - Watson: I know Kirk and will reach out to him, thanks.
 - Development & Planning (chair: Jon-Michael Wimberly) – nothing to report
 - Finance & Benefits (chair: Joseph Carlisle) – nothing to report
 - Governance (chair: Carrie Smith) – Announced in December that Dan, Angela, and Carrie met with GC and Provost and we have the new proposed policy from them. We will be meeting to discuss these and bring them to the senate. The committee will also work this semester with the Chancellor’s Standing Committee on Academic Freedom to work on policies.
 - Research & Creative Achievement (chair: Donna Buckley) – nothing to report
 - University Services (chair: Heather Allen) – nothing to report
- Old Business
- New Business: Covid protocols. Associate Provost Rich Forgette stepped in to answer questions in the absence of the Provost, who was teaching at this time.
- Q: Is there a finish line or standard for when we will move to a lower tier of risk mitigation, like lifting the mask mandate?
- Forgette: The Provost’s most recent message provides current guidance. Any changes in protocol have to be approved by the protocols task force, and there is a process by which that will occur.
- Q: Is this a process that could happen very quickly or would we get a notification seeking feedback from various stakeholders before making changes?
- Forgette: Yes, I would expect some consultation but based on what we see right now, there does not seem to be moving in that direction anything at this time.
- Charlotte Fant Pegues (Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs): There is a category we have never reached but that we would have to reach prior to any discussions of lifting the mask mandate. MSU was able to do so last semester because they had reached that threshold because of reduced case counts, but we did not and so we could not remove our mask mandate.
- Watson: Before we lift the mandate, we might go to an intermediate step of relaxing the mask mandate, but that was before Omicron, so I don’t know if there is anything formal to allow us to make changes.
- Adjournment
 - Motion
 - Second

- Vote

NEXT MEETING: February 22, 2022 @ 6:00 via ZOOM

Daniel Durkin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Faculty Senate Meeting

Time: February 22, 2022 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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