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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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3-22-2022

**March 22, 2022**

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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## **Faculty Senate Minutes –March 22, 2022**

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

**Senators Present:** Kenya Wolff, KoFan Lee, R.J. Morgan, Melissa Cinelli, Shari Holt, Kerry Bowers, Joseph Carlisle, Joe Sweeney, Melissa Bass, Lance Yarbrough, Robert Barnard, Angela Green, Dan Durkin, Carrie McCormick, Matteo D’Alessio, Lauren Cardenas, Sasan Nouranian, Elliott Hutchcraft, Carmen Sanchis-Sinisterra, Donna Buckley, John Berns, John Lobur, Cole Stevens, Carolyn Higdon, Whitney Sarver, Christy Nielson, Hans Sinha, Joel Mobley, Carrie Smith, Brian Reithel, Heather Allen, Gabriel Garrido, Brad Jones, Sujith Ramachandran, Jesse Cromwell, Joshua First, SueAnn Skipworth, Simone Delerme, George McClellan, Zenebe Beyene

**Senators absent (excused):** Scott Mackenzie, Alex Watson

**Senators absent (unexcused):**

- **Meeting called to order**
- **Minutes approved from the February 22, 2022 meeting**
  - Motion
    - Second
      - Vote
- Update by Provost Noel Wilkin
  - Census data has just been finalized and can now present it
  - Retained our R1 Carnegie classification
  - Numbers of graduates
  - Record high 6-year graduation rate of 68.4%; we were around 59% when I came on board.
  - Record high 88.3 % retention rate for freshmen. Academic units working with students get a lot of credit, as well as cohort programs
  - April 9 is our first Mississippi Day, an academic open house, and we will have 70 units participating
    - Junior Preview Day is the same day, 1000+ registered
    - Baseball game the same day but we will not be competing at the same time.
    - Dolly Parton at the Ford Center and spring concert same evening

- Planning to commemorate James Meredith's 60<sup>th</sup>
  - May 6 at 11:00 is spring commencement.
- UMMC is a division of UM so are included in the numbers.
- Hit our peak enrollment in 2016 with plateau and declining enrollments since.
- Doing a number of things to analyze our scholarship strategy, recruiting earlier and earlier in high school years, marketing and communications to understand personality of university and develop marketing around it. Deans really pitched in to create yield campaigns to meaningfully engage students.
- Fruits of these labors are starting to show with some turnaround in enrollment numbers.
- Fall trends for undergraduates have not been responsible for much of the change; most of this is due to increasing graduate enrollment.
- We did see an increase in freshman class.
- Predominately a resident student population at 51.1%
- Enrollments by college
- Oxford and regional (but not UMMC) actually saw decrease in undergraduate enrollment, especially on regional campuses
- Liberal Arts and Business drove undergraduate enrollment.
- Still second smallest SEC university.
- Graduate enrollment growth led largely by School of Education, followed by Liberal Arts and then Applied Sciences.
- School of Accountancy had a slight decrease but seeing higher applications this year.
- Decrease in sophomore, junior, and senior years, so freshman class helped offset a lot.
- Pharmacy is going through a national decline in student interest, similar to what Law experienced several years ago.
- Overall mix of undergraduate to graduate to professional enrollments.
- Applications are also trending up, which is good to see, especially freshmen.
- Large increase in applicants began after dramatic drop-off from peak in 2016. Deans are making a difference by talking to students interested in possibly studying in their fields; the number one factor in their decision to attend UM is program fit. Athletic success is something students actually list much lower on the list of reasons they choose to come here. Academic experience is primary.

- Reasons for transfer students coming are very similar to those of incoming freshmen. Reputation of faculty has gained in importance to transfer students.
- Only 29% of incoming freshmen report a family connection to the university.
- Overall enrollment on Oxford and regionals dropped a bit but was offset by gains in freshmen.
- ACT scores are skewed a bit by becoming optional under Covid. Our average score declined a bit but it's hard to say how important this will be until we know how many institutions end up dropping this requirement.
- Also saw slight decline in GPA of incoming freshmen but still strong.
- Student perceptions of online versus in class show mixed results: best GPAs but students report less learning.
- Success coaches are working with students to step in when finances turn out to be factors, though roughly 74% of students report having sufficient funding.
- Trend for retention continues to rise to a record high of 88.3% last year with corresponding increase in 6-year graduation rate. Predictive analytics show that retention from the first year is crucial to long-term retention and persisting to graduation.
- We lose about 12% of students in the first year.
- 2019 cohort (the latest we have access to) shows that we are climbing within the SUG comparison group in terms of retention (climbing to the middle, even among selective institutions); getting closer to the 74% average despite our wider range of academic readiness compared to many of our peers.
- Which programs produce the most graduates? Bachelors in IMC, Accountancy, Psychology
- Masters in Accountancy and Data Analytics; MBA program are strong
- Doctorates in Education continue to lead
- Large percentage of students from underrepresented minorities come from Mississippi; among the largest numbers of African American students enrolled in SEC and compared to places like UCLA.
- Pathways to Excellence will help us make even more strides in terms of minority enrollment.
- Resident and non-resident enrollment of African American students.
- Faculty trends show that faculty numbers have remained relatively stable, despite some hits in enrollment, with slight increases in NTT faculty and slight decrease in TT faculty.
- 63% of faculty are tenure track (TT), an anomaly compared to other places.

- Increases in faculty salaries last year with plans and strategies for next year.
- Construction update: finally broke ground on the STEM building, which has survived 5 chancellors, including interims. Two wings, one facing Hume Hall and the other facing the stadium side of the street.
- Q&A – no questions

**Ali Newcomb, Assistant Director of Strategic Planning Council on new institutional framework for strategic planning (see attached)**

- Came on board last July under Katie Busbee in IREP to bring to life a new strategic plan to replace or revive what began as Flagship Forward.
- Planning process and timeline, contents of framework
- Planning is a circular endeavor so the plan should never actually end but morph into something better, more ambitious.
- Untraditional process because of Covid.
- Started with Chancellor's priorities in January, then met with the Strategic Planning Council and have worked for past 6 months in working groups around strategic goals, many of which include members of faculty senate.
- Now looking for faculty feedback.
- Four focus areas each with their own strategic goals.
- Pathways to Equity is foundational.
- Institutional and unit plans are interdependent but institutional plans do not exist without unit plans.
- Will send to Dan to share out to faculty for feedback.
- Q&A – no questions

**Senator Josh First (History) asked about interest in bringing in visiting scholars from Ukraine**

- Can connect with at-risk scholars in Ukraine but it will require some funding
- Can also provide a support network to help them find housing, etc.
- Most men in Ukraine are obligated to serve in the war, so visiting scholars would be women
- Joined by Francis Kneuper, in History, who spoke of her work with Ukrainian scholars, helping match scholars and institutions and help them find funding:
  - <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/>
  - <https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/>
  - <https://scienceforukraine.eu/>

- <https://www.aseees.org/resources/help-displaced-scholars-ukraine> (great webinar at this site as well)
- Q&A
- Q: What should we take back to our departments?
- First: We're at the very beginning stage of seeing if departments are interested in hosting Ukrainian scholars, giving some space and time, if not funding, to them.
- Q: Do departments come up with matching funds?
- First: We would love to have a conversation with Noel about where to find additional funds.

**Blair McElroy, Senior International Officer, presented on How We Can Help (document attached)**

- Matching is not limited to Ukrainian scholars but to others around the world under similar threats, like Ethiopia.
- Good news is that we have been accepted by Scholars at Risk as a partner.
- If you have connections to any scholars at risk, please do go ahead and connect with them.
- We can post positions for students, post-docs, and other scholars.
- Do connect with Human Resources to be mindful of citizenship and other considerations before posting.
- We have nominated our Ukrainian students for funding scholarships.
- We want to prepare for these events rather than just react to them.
- Q&A – no questions

**Rich Forgette, Associate Provost, on Review of Existing Policies (see attached)**

- Biennial review of policies
  - Revising an existing policy on Class Schedules and Registration to maximize retention.
  - Collected a lot of data to inform the policy and will go to various councils.
  - Withdrawal policies are being revisited in particular.
  - Asking you to bring back to your departments for feedback, though final copy is being edited.
- **Drop date is currently on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of semester, making us outliers among other universities. We are on the low end and are considering moving it to the 35<sup>th</sup> day of the semester to maximize retention, allowing more time between progress reports and drop dates. This would give students a bit more time to decide. We ask your approval of this change.**

**Chair Durkin provided a brief update of statewide faculty senate group**

- Critical Race Theory bill did indeed pass into law, but the group is drafting a statement that would pass all faculty senates in the state, largely focused on academic freedom.
- Won't move forward on anything without your approval first.

**Update on “Where We Are Lean” Requests for the Chancellor**

- Sending Chancellor a few examples of where we might be running lean as an institution to see if that is what he's looking for then will come back to Senate to update and create a Qualtrix survey.

○ **Committee Updates**

- Academic Conduct (chair: Kenya Wolff) – nothing to report
- Academic Instructional Affairs (chair: Alex Watson, in absentia) – nothing to report
- Development & Planning (chair: Jon-Michael Wimberly) – nothing to report
- Finance & Benefits (chair: Joseph Carlisle) – nothing to report
- Governance (chair: Carrie Smith) – nothing to report
- Research & Creative Achievement (chair: Donna Buckley) – Met with Josh Gladden and planning to meet with him quarterly to find ways to be more “consumer friendly” in how their office can help faculty. Meeting with him in April, perhaps at Faculty Senate. Chair Durkin reminded everyone that ORSP Town Hall has been rescheduled for next Thursday at 3:30.
- University Services (chair: Heather Allen) – nothing to report

○ Old Business

○ New Business

○ Adjournment

○ Motion:

▪ Second:

- Vote adjourned at 7:17 PM.

**NEXT MEETING: April 19, 2022 @ 6:00 via ZOOM**

Daniel Durkin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Faculty Senate Meeting

Time: April 19, 2022 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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