

Faculty Senate Minutes

September 15, 2015

Meeting convened Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at 7:00pm by Michael Barnett, Chair of the Faculty Senate.

Senators in attendance: Rachna Prakash, Charles Ross, Kris Belden-Adams, Patrick Curtis, Brice Noonan, Robert Doerksen, Greg Tschumper, Ahmed Al-Ostaz, Brad Cook, Tossi Ikuta, Feng Wang, Tom Garrett, Richard Gordon, Adetayo Alabi, Ann Fisher-Worth, Dan Novak, Jay Watson, Andrew O-Reilly, Yang-Chieh Fu, Oliver Dinius, Darren Grem, Noell Wilson, Antonia Eliason, Stacey Lantagne, Dennis Bunch, Lorri Williamson, Ashley Dees, Savannah Kelly, Kristin Rogers, Milam Aiken, Lifeng Yang, Sasha Kocic, Amy Fang-Yen Hsieh, Adam Estes, Michael Gardiner, Mary Roseman, Michael Repka, Meagan Rosenthal, Travis King, James Bos, Breese Quinn, Ben Jones, Danielle Maack, Jody Holland, Amy Fisher, Marcos Mendoza, Minjoo Oh, Allan Bellman, Joe Sumrall, Michael Barnett

Senators excused: Noell Wilson

Senators absent: Sasan Nouranian, Jim Lumpp, Robert Magee, Tejas Pandya, Heather Allen, Mark Ortwein

Chairman introduced members of Executive Committee for the year.

Chairman also introduced administrative assistant for the year.

Approval of September 1, 2015 Minutes

Minutes of September 1, 2015 meeting were approved by the Faculty Senate as a whole without comment.

Presentation by Brett Harris, University Ombudsperson, Regarding the New Office of the Ombuds

Ombudsperson is a new program at the university. The University created this position, which is exciting since only about 10% of institutions like this have any kind of ombuds program at all. Ms. Harris suggested encouraging colleagues to use this office so that we continue to have it.

An ombudsperson is a designated dispute resolution practitioner for an organization. This is a frontline of a place to go before looking into more formal options, or a place to go if you have tried formal options and you don't think they worked for you. The role is impartial: this is a neutral party and will not take sides in a dispute. The Ombudsperson will not advocate for any party but advocates for fairness. The role is independent: the office operates independently from

other office on campus and is not part of any other department, office, or grievance channel. The role is informal: the office is a place to explore options and work towards resolution in an informal way, without participation in any other grievance procedure. Finally, the role is confidential: identities of visitors and communications with the Ombudsperson are kept confidential, except as required by law or University policy. Confidentiality policy and exceptions are online. The suggestion is not to contact her by email, since that leaves a trail that isn't required as part of the office.

She follows the International Ombudsman Association principles, which can be found at www.ombudsassociation.org. Our office is in compliance with these guidelines.

The Ombuds Office can be helpful as a referral resource, to help generate options and possible solutions, or to provide assistance in interpreting and understanding University policies, as a mediator for disputes, as an information gatherer, as a listener, and to help intervene and de-escalate a conflict.

The Ombudsperson gathers data on the complaints they receive and reports these to the administration. This allows notification that a lot of people are having problems with a certain policy or person or issue. This is something that allows for the role of the office as data gatherer.

Ms. Harris is a licensed attorney from Idaho with professional experience as a mediator. More information about this program is available on the website for the office. The office is located at 318 Trent Lott Institute. Email is beharris@olemiss.edu. Ms. Harris requests that we spread the word about this organization. Website is www.ombuds.olemiss.edu.

Q: What does it mean confidentiality “except as required by University policy”?

A: This has to do with Title IX. I am a confidential resource unless there is information that leads me to believe there is imminent risk of harm for the university.

Q: When you report upwards on trends, who do you report to?

A: I report to the Chancellor. Formal reporting is in a written report – in most campuses it is made available.

Presentation by Provost Noel Wilkin

Provost Wilkin provided an update on the state of the University and what is happening at the University.

Chancellor search is ongoing – the Campus Search Advisory Committee has made its recommendations to the IHL. The IHL is telling us that they will present a preferred candidate before the end of the calendar year.

The Office of the Ombuds has been created, as we just heard. Ms. Harris is also looking for opportunities for prevention.

Several search committees have been formed, including search for Dean of the Libraries, Director for the Ford Center for Performing Arts, Director for Center of Manufacturing Excellence and Director for Center for Excellent in Teaching and Learning.

The Task Force on Faculty Titles is working on Distinguished Professor title recommendations. Dr. Maurice Eftink has presented a preliminary recommendation and this is upcoming for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

There are 3 follow-up items to the SACS 5-year report that we submitted: they want to see all of the audit data rather than just a summary; they have a question concerning student outcome data relating to professional programs which is being clarified; they also had some QEP outcome assessment questions.

We are still making progress in our UM 2020 initiatives. There are 60 in progress and there are 28 completed. There are 95 initiatives total, so a few need to be initiated.

Enrollment trends are exciting, as we are receiving national accolades and attention as a result. We have 23,838 students, which includes the medical center and regional campuses; we have 19,996 in Oxford alone. Our undergraduate enrollment is 17,318 for Oxford only, while graduate enrollment is 1,962 in Oxford only, showing a slight downward trend. We are still largely a resident enrollment university with 56% resident and 44% non-resident. This trend is changing, however, with the percentage of residents decreasing compared to non-residents. We do want to be the flagship institution for residents.

Biggest growth at the undergraduate level has been in journalism and accountancy.

In comparison with other SEC universities, we are third from the bottom in size. All of the SEC schools are growing in enrollment. Our closest rival in size, Auburn University has grown 9.7% since 2013, remaining ahead of us (University of Mississippi grew 6.9%).

The key is putting resources in place to accommodate this growth.

Education has the largest number of graduate students enrolled. We are still predominantly an undergraduate institution and there is some progress to be made in growing our graduate school enrollment. Last year we graduated 98 doctoral degrees. To increase this number we will have to grow the enrollment in the graduate school. Law has experienced some decline in enrollment, which is a nationwide trend. Pharmacy has grown. We are making large investments in graduate expenditures. From 2009-2014 we put an additional \$8.2 million in graduate education. In 2015, there was \$1.2 million carryforward in graduate stipend lines, which is concerning. Graduate enrollment speaks directly to our academic mission and so this is our concern.

In terms of new freshmen trends and data, we received 18,000 application this year. Preliminary evidence shows that applications coming in this year for next year's enrollment are going up again. The number one reason students came was academic reputation followed by good program for a major. For 2015, it was social climate, good program for major and academic

reputation. For transfer students, academic reputation is the primary reason they come here. Only 28% of our 2015 freshmen reported a family connection with the University of Mississippi. The Honors College has more students reporting a connection than students in general. There are 3,969 new freshmen this year. Despite the growth, we are seeing a rise in ACT scores, with an average of 24.7 (rounds to 25), as well as high school GPA.

We have a threshold for review for non-residents, and raised the number to a 21 ACT and the 2.5 GPA, and for the coming year it will be a 22 ACT and a 2.75 GPA. Last year, 1,700 students did not gain fall admission. We have a strong retention rate with non-resident students. We have an informal goal of 50% of the freshman class with a 26 or higher on the ACT – we have made progress towards this. Non-residents have a slightly higher ACT average than residents, but over about a 25-26, they start to move together.

Our graduation and retention rate are improving – retention is directly linked to graduation rates. In 1st year retention rate, we are heading towards the middle of the pack. Our goal is to move up on this metric. We grant the largest number of degrees in the Mississippi higher educational system, with General Studies, Elementary Education, Marketing, Accountancy and Psychology being the top 5 undergrad degrees.

We follow the admission standards that the IHL sets. We have a program called StudentsFirst which is designed to help students be successful. We also have a scholarship program called the Ole Miss Opportunity program to fill the gap for remaining cost of attendance after grants and scholarships are applied. This is helping to attract Mississippians to our university. Our freshman absence-based initiative is working to contact students and try to help them be successful.

Our undergrad African American enrollment in 2013 was 15.6%, which put us at 2nd in the SEC. Our number this year is 13.4%. In terms of undergrad minority enrollment, we are middle in the SEC, with 23.0%. Our growth is outpacing our minority enrollment, particularly with regards to African American students, where the numbers are declining. Fewer non-resident people who fall in the minority ethnicities fill out the supplement so they can actually be reviewed. We are encouraging more to do so. We also do not get a very large number of minority applicants who are non-resident – most of this is coming from in-state. In terms of retention of African American students, we are outpacing the other universities in the state.

Faculty is 1,021, with 823 full-time faculty. 546 are tenure-track of those 823. This is unusual for very large academic institutions where there are often more non-tenure-track faculty. Here it is around 2/3 to 1/3 tenure-track to non-tenure-track. We have offered increases in salaries every year for the past few years.

Class size has increased with 15% of sections have 50+ students. Most classes have fewer than 30 students. Faculty to student ratio is at 19:1 (for 2014).

Looking at finance, tuition and fees is the largest chunk of revenues at 45.3%. All auxiliary enterprises is 17.4% which includes athletics. Overall operating expenses shows 46% going to salaries and wages. Tuition and fees has greatly increased in revenues as state funding has dropped significantly.

In construction projects, we have \$150 million in recently completed projects, around \$225,000,000 in construction, and projects out for bid, projects in design and projects in planning, which amounts to a total of \$702,000,000. The big projects include the Student Union, the Whirlpool Property, the Arena (Steak and Shake is coming!), Northgate Housing, New Ridge Housing, Garland-Hedleston-Mayes which will be the future home of the School of Applied Sciences, the Honors College, Coulter Hall (completed), Natural Products Center (phase II is completed, built largely with funds from the government), New Science Building. A lot of the construction will be happening between now and 2018.

On transportation and parking, our ridership on the O.U.T. was 1.1 million rides last year. The use of the bus system is increasing.

Our momentum is building and growing academic reputation. We need to build outstanding academic programs, to foster research and creative achievement. We need to continue to grow the graduate program and enrollment. We will get regional, national and international accolades as a result of these measures. We are fostering a culture of intellectualism, and continue to push for student success by improving retention, graduation rates and entering credentials. To help keep momentum, we are planning for improvements and growth and building ahead of growth, while investing in research and creative achievement. We have worked in improving start-up support to attract outstanding scientists. We are renovating classrooms that are nominated by academic units.

We are a strong university with an incredible academic reputation which we need to continue to work on. None of this happens without people, however.

Q: In terms of salaries, are there things being done to address salary compression between associate and assistant professorship particularly?

A: Yes, we have been funding it, but the Deans make the decisions on allocating the money. We may need more from central funds.

Q: Why are graduate student numbers down? Also, how is MSU beating us in terms of minority enrollment, particularly African American students?

A: On the first question, this is being looked into. Our culture has largely been one where graduate program coordinators are reporting to the deans who aren't reporting to the person in charge of fostering graduate student enrollment. There also needs to be more investigation into the money being carried forward as it is in all of the different accounts across the university.

On the second question, MSU is out recruiting hard and is saying things that resonate with students. Our recruiters are getting to the bottom of that.

Q: On the graduate student enrollment, we have prioritized salaries for grad students, but don't have enough funding for recruitment.

Q: It would help to have the focus on graduate recruitment the way we do it for undergrad recruitment, particularly for minority students.

Q: Engineering are losing students where they are paying very low stipends for graduate students (\$10K instead of \$30K). We also don't push graduate students to really succeed in research, including not requiring publication, particularly not publishing in high impact journals.

Q: Data shows we are not lacking number of applications but that faculty are shying away from taking the students, maybe because of growth of undergrad, which puts more pressure on faculty. Growth in number of faculty compared to growth of undergrad affects growth of graduate program. There is also a reduction in terms of external funds available, which makes faculty shy away from accepting graduate students.

Q: Concerned about the environmental impact of all the buildings, the cut down trees, the greater number of bodies around. There is less ground for water to soak in as there is more concrete. We should have a full discussion on what is being done to mitigate the environmental impact.

A: There is an energy committee that is looking for opportunities to change energy consumption. This will help us implement energy savings in a way that doesn't completely turn this around. We have signed the President's Climate Commitment and we are looking at what it would take to get to carbon neutrality. We have received grants to implement innovative strategies to decrease energy consumption. We also have an energy manager who looks to implement projects to decrease our energy consumption.

Q: In coping with more undergrad students, we can have more graduate students teaching undergraduate students, which would help expand facilities to teach undergrads, while increasing graduate students.

A: This is up to the departments.

Q: What kind of investments is the university making in new faculty to offset the increase in undergraduate enrollment?

A: There is a legitimate balance between new faculty and space for new faculty. We are trying to shift faculty recruitment to the Fall so that we can commit to hiring new faculty in Fall. Every year we ask Deans to make an operational plan in January/February, and to list where they would grow. Trying to work out the timing so there isn't a year gap.

Q: We have a lot of faculty who don't have as many graduate students as they might like and can't take more because of the higher teaching load which is much higher than at peer institutions. This cycle prevents new faculty from taking in the grad students they need to get their research down. This is all tied to how many faculty we have.

Q: Mentioned informal approach to faculty ratios is 2/3 to 1/3 tenure-track to non-tenure track – do you want to formalize that?

A: This is something that would engage a larger group in discussion, and this wouldn't be the case in every department, since it is dependent on the school. We also have to inform that with trends in higher education.

Q: Follow-up question – has the leadership team had discussions regarding contingent faculty and their role in the governance of the university.

A: Everyone has their own opinion. There have been discussions – issue was voted down by faculty senate to allow non-tenure-track faculty to be a part of the senate. Other institutions have facilitated the creation of a separate entity to represent the voices of non-tenure track faculty and research faculty. People who are not tenure track are coming to our campus and are valuable to our academic institution. Dr. Eftink is forming a sub-task force of the title committee to convene a task force to debate these issues.

Q: How do you nominate a classroom for renovation?

A: There is a form that will be sent out to allow you to fill it out to request a renovation.

Q: How many full, associate and assistant professors do we have?

A: Census date is on November 1 – last year's numbers are available but would be better to base it on this year's numbers.

Guidelines for Distinguished Professor Appointments

Due to the time, Chairman suggests a motion to table it until next meeting. Motion was made and passed.

Discussion of Guidelines is tabled until the next meeting when it will be voted on.

Senate Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Campus search advisory committee met last Friday and the ballots were submitted today to the search firm.

General Academic Affairs: Nothing to report.

Academic Support Affairs: Nothing to report.

Finance: Nothing to report.

Governance: Nothing to report.

University Services: See new business discussion.

Old Business

Resolution Regarding a Transparent Leave Policy

Human resources suggested Faculty Senate appoint a subcommittee to work with them on rewriting the Leave Policy. University Services should appoint a subcommittee among itself.

New Business

Aid in Transporting Individuals with Handicaps Around Campus

There is no mechanism in place currently to assist those with handicaps, including accidents, getting around campus after they have parked in a handicap space.

The person in charge of parking services had previously in his old job set up such a system. There will be a meeting on this issue. University Services is looking at this issue.

Evaluation of the Efficacy of the Subcommittee Structure within the Faculty Senate

Bylaws don't make too much sense in relation to some of the subcommittees, since it doesn't correspond to how the university works these days. The Executive Committee would like to revisit the Bylaws, particularly with regards of the committees, but perhaps also beyond. For instance since 2010, the Finance Committee has reported on 3 things, there have been issues where none of the committees are formally responsible.

Representative Needed for the Faculty/Staff Appeals Committee

Committee meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 9:00am. This schedule conflicts with our representative. Stacey Lantagne volunteered.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting is Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 7:00pm.