

The University of Southern Mississippi

Approved Staff Council Minutes

April 3, 2001

Dr. Horace Fleming was the guest speaker. The budget process has begun and the President's Cabinet will be hearing from various colleges. There are representatives from staff, faculty and students at the hearings. We lost \$2.8 million from the budget for fiscal year 2000-01', and we cut an additional \$5.2 million in January. This fiscal year we are looking at another cut of \$12.2 million. Southern Miss has a "hold back" fund that we will be putting \$3.7 million in for next fiscal year. Since 1998 the tuition has been different at the three comprehensive universities. Southern Miss receives \$91 less per student than State and Ole Miss, and with the moratorium on tuition increases we have not been able to change this situation. This year we are asking the IHL board to increase Southern Miss's tuition by \$91.00 and put us where the other two universities are. There will also be a possible 10% tuition increase. For a Southern Miss student that will amount to about \$490 per year.

There are two sources of money. The educational and general money and the bond bill money. The bond bill money pays for projects such as buildings, renovations, etc.

Dr. Fleming then opened the floor for questions.

If we hold back money, what won't be funded? With the tuition increase we will still have problems. We are the only university that held back any money this year, so we weren't hit quite as hard with student cuts. We will have to reallocate money that we have and may still have to cut some programs. We are looking at trying to push for a different formula, but that will have to wait until next year.

How can staff ask for better benefits, especially better insurance? Take it to the state level, write your legislators. Spring break was a cost-saving measure. Administration is looking at classes ending five to ten minutes later and shortening the semester by one week.

The workday perhaps would begin earlier during the summer. Other suggestions are to wear casual clothing, turn up the thermostat, and turn off the lights. In years to come we may have two-three days off for spring break.

One Staff Council member expressed concern for low-level employees. They do not need an across the board raise, there may some that need more. Can we find a way to give these employees a raise? With insurance costs rising and the cost of living going up, these individuals need help. Raises are based on merit, not across the board. We are very understaffed compared to other universities.

One question Dr. Fleming has asked is where is the plan for Southern Miss and higher education in Mississippi. Compression is a severe problem. Dr. Fleming has asked the board to look at this problem.

When are you going to have another Brown Bag lunch on the Gulf Coast? Very soon. Dr. Fleming expressed that he strongly believes in being open and have sharing governance.

Dr. Fleming has a different car. The car is leased with a dealer who has a long-term relationship with the University and that dealer donates half of the lease.

Susan Bordland from the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Scholars Achievement Program spoke with Staff Council members. They are recruiting nine students who want an opportunity to receive a doctoral degree. The students must have a 3.0 or better, have completed 60 hours of course work, be a minority, have low income, and be the first generation to attend college. The students will work with a research faculty mentor. This is a prestigious program and represents Southern Miss well. The first class will be selected April 20, 2001.

1.0 Call to Order

President Townsend called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m.

The following members were present: Rusty Anderson, Cindy Burnett, Joan Brashears, Bradley Bridges, Kim Busche, Kalin Butirich, Melissa Carpenter, Carol Dunaway, Mike Giles, John Green, Lin

Harper, John Hayman, Mary Ann Iverson, Faye Mallette, Larry McMickle, Connie Morgan, Polly Odom, Jessie Person, Pam Posey, Jan Roberts, Susan Sanders, Veda Spencer, Mary Sumrall, Tracy Townsend, Dick Vogel, Ruby Waits, Sam Williams, and Ronnie Williamson.

2.0 Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Jessie Person for Veda Spencer, Cindy Burnett for Janeal McKee, Polly Odom for Charlene McMillin, and Virginia Kittrell for Shannon Davis.

The following members were absent without representation: Victoria Adams, Terry Bethea, and David Kinsey.

4.0 Approval of Minutes

Changes in the minutes were the following:

7.4 Concerning the University Relations and the Cultural Diversity Committee, the last sentence should read, "She was already on the committee and agreed to chair upon Jennifer's resignation."

7.5 The following changes were made to the report of the Technology & Training Committee: "Lin mentioned that at last month's meeting she had stated that the Web page would be up by the 15th, but the project met some unavoidable delays." "After the proofreader approves it, it will be taken to the Web Presence Council next week." "The plan is to have the Web site up the following week."

The March minutes were approved as corrected.

5.0 Officers' Reports

5.1 President's Report

No report. President Townsend has been attending budget meetings. She read a thank-you note from Connie Morgan for the plant Staff Council sent to her while she was in the hospital. She also informed Staff Council members that a thank-you note was sent to Dr. Fleming for the spring break holiday.

5.2 President Elect's Report

Tuesday, March 20, 2001, Meeting with President Fleming. Tracy and I met with Dr. Fleming, the vice presidents, and representatives from the Faculty Senate, Graduate Student Association, and the Student Government Association to get an update on our budget situation. Much of what was discussed was a repeat of the information given at the President's Brown Bag Luncheon earlier that day. The governor and legislature are at odds about the budget for fiscal year 2002. The governor wants a budget based on one percent (1%) growth rate in the state, and the legislature is basing its budget on 3.7% growth rate. It is important that the Institutions of Higher Learning do not take sides in the debate. Dr. Fleming continues to communicate that (1) we can't take any more cuts and (2) we will need bridge money to phase-in budget cuts should we have further cuts. UMS's budget cut could be close to \$11.5 million. If so, USM would request as much as ten percent tuition increase. If the Institutions of Higher Learning declare financial exigency, it will be a no-win situation for everyone. Budget hearings will begin the last week of March. Deans will be asked to determine how they would handle a five percent and ten percent budget cut.

Friday, March 23, 2001, Faculty Senate. Senator Ron Farris spoke to the Faculty Senate regarding the budget debate between the governor and the legislature. Senator Farris said that in the state our revenues are usually good during the last quarter of the fiscal year (April-June), and he hopes that the revenue shortfall will not be as bad as expected. He stated that he is committed to working for USM to get fair representation in appointments to the Board of Trustees and also to get our fair share of the appropriation from the Institutions of Higher Learning. He is not in favor of a tax increase to provide additional revenue to support higher education. There will be changes in the retirement laws, but there will be no early retirement incentives. Senator Farris also indicated he wrote a paper on how to settle the Ayers Case a few years ago that he has given to the governor for review. One faculty member proposed that a blue

ribbon committee be set up by the legislature to study higher education in the state and make recommendations about closings of institutions and programs. All parties agree to abide by the recommendations made by the blue ribbon committee. This was done in New York several years ago and has been very successful. Even though I left before the meeting was over at 5:30, I later learned that the Faculty Senate, by secret ballot, voted to endorse the new state flag.

5.3 Assignment of Action Items

No action items.

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Staff Council Award

Any Staff Council member can nominate a staff member from any campus for the Staff Council Award. President Townsend will receive nominations next month.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Constitution and Bylaws — Pam Posey, Chair

No report.

7.2— Legislative — Charlene McMillin, Chair

No report. President Townsend reported that she and Charlene had been discussing a legislative appreciation day in the spring.

3. Salaries and Benefits — Rusty Anderson, Chair

A budget book is kept in the library but is being updated only once a year. Human Resources reported that it is too time-consuming to keep it updated. IHL requires a form to be filed every month with any personnel changes, and a copy of those changes can be put in the budget book in the library. Dana Keith should also have an updated budget book at all times. Can people go to that office to look at the budget book since it is public knowledge?

4. University Relations — Kim Busche, Chair

No report. Kim reported that they had one action item to consider and requested her committee stay after this meeting to discuss it.

5. Technology and Training — Lin Harper, Chair

The Web site is still at the proofreader's. There needs to be a meeting on how to handle information given by committee chairs to the recording secretary so that it can be put on the Web page.

6. Other Committee Reports

Student Life Committee — Charlene McMillin, Chair

No report.

Master Plan Committee — Rusty Anderson, Chair

No report.

Parking Appeals — David Kinsey, Chair

No report.

Parking Task Force — Polly Odom, Chair

No report.

Election Committee — Rusty Anderson, Chair

There are a good number of returned ballots in the clerical, professional, service maintenance, and Gulf Coast areas. The committee will count ballots on April 16 in Rusty's office, McLemore Hall, Room 201, at 10:00 a.m. Any Staff Council member who can come help would be appreciated.

7. New Business

8.1 Nominations Committee

The floor was opened for nominations for a committee to prepare a ballot for next year's officers. The committee usually

consists of members that are going off. A motion was made by Mary Sumrall to elect Ruby Waits, Tracy Townsend, and Larry McMickle to be on the nomination committee. Pam Posey seconded the motion, and the motion passed. Tracy appointed Ruby to chair the committee. This committee will have ballots ready for the Staff Council members to vote on in July.

8. Announcements

Carol Dunaway has replaced Jennifer Blalock, and we are very grateful. There is updated information in the back of the room. President Townsend reminded the committee chairs to have a year-end report by June meeting. The transportation department has changed hands, and President Townsend will investigate and report at the next meeting. Kim Busche wanted to remind us to remind our coworkers to turn off the lights to save electricity.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Connie Morgan

Recording Secretary

4-8-01