Faculty Senate

November 4, 2011

Resolution on Teaching, Service, and Travel

Gulf Coast and Hattiesburg faculty teach courses, serve on University committees, and advise students on both campuses and, as a result, often have to travel between campuses. Since these contributions are an essential part of our service and teaching obligations, are evaluated annually, and are considered for tenure and promotion, faculty must be given an equal and fair opportunity to participate in all aspects of academic life and to provide students on both campuses with the support they need. The University must do a better job of providing resources for faculty who teach and perform service on both campuses, whether they are traveling from Hattiesburg to Gulf Park or from Gulf Park to Hattiesburg.

1. All meetings of University standing committees and all departmental meetings on the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses should allow for participants to attend using long-distance technology. Full implementation of this policy, to be orchestrated by iTech and the Learning Enhancement Center using both campus-to-campus (such as IVN and Tandberg) and personal computing solutions (such as Skype), should take place within one year. Much of this could be accomplished with the inexpensive purchase of conferencing software licenses, computer cameras, and training. Flexible, decentralized approaches that allow faculty to meet electronically using office computers or laptops (rather than specially equipped rooms with trained personnel) are especially encouraged.

2. Faculty who attend department and standing committee meetings where long-distance technology has not been provided or are required to attend in person due to the nature of the meeting, as well as those whose teaching and advising responsibilities extend to both campuses, should be compensated for travel at the rate stipulated by the University’s travel office, the state, and the federal government. Currently, this is the rate paid to University administrators and faculty when they travel for conferences and other campus business and it is the rate state law mandates for all state officers and employees traveling on official business (Section 25-3-41 of the Mississippi Code of 1972). Presently, many faculty traveling between the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses are compensated at a lower rate.

3. Recognizing that campus-to-campus travel is a regular part of some faculty’s academic life, the University should make every effort to simplify and streamline
the system by which faculty are compensated for travel. This might be accomplished by processing requests through the college, coast, and library deans’ offices.
The Senate resolved unanimously at its December 2 meeting that the Interim Provost should establish a small “reconciliation” committee with appropriate representation from the Council of Chairs and Coast faculty to reconcile the two position statements related to the Coast Guidelines. It was recommended that the issue be brought to an end without delay. This committee will not be an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate.