The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Minutes
Friday, November 3, 2017, 2:00 p.m.
Union B; Hardy Hall 316 (IVN); Caylor 103 (IVN)

Absent: Daniel Capper, Will Johnson, Deborah Booth, Charles McCormick

1.0 Organizational Items
   1.1 Call to Order – 2:00 p.m.
   1.2 Roll Call
   1.3 Recognition of Quorum
   1.4 Recognition of ⅔ membership for voting on Bylaws and Resolutions

2.0 Adoption of Agenda

3.0 Program
   3.1 None

4.0 Approval of Minutes
   4.1 October 2017 – Corrections submitted to secretary. Will be re-sent before December
   meeting for approval

5.0 Officer Reports
   5.1 President –

   Accomplishments
   Continued arguing for faculty spots at football games to the Athletic Director; follow-up
   from Stephen Pugh, who had other suggestions (faculty recognition day); with coordination
   from VPR Gordon Cannon and Layla Essary, one 30 second clip will be played at the Nov 18
   game.
   Bulleted (or similarly adapted) USM Mailouts will be in place soon.
   Sent list of potential budget issues to the Provost and VPFA.
   Met with Donavan Johnson (CoAL, Staff Council) about organizing a Legislative Forum, a
   day probably Dec. 12–20 in the afternoon for our regional State legislators.

   Information (primarily from President’s Cabinet and Academic Leadership Council meetings)
   Methods to deal with budget shortfall have mostly been decided: layoffs of staff (20, with 12
coming from Academic Affairs), notified Thursday, Nov. 2, termination to be Dec. 31; also 52 faculty lines have been deleted, 30 of which are currently filled with visiting professors. Programs will be eliminated over the next five years, and the Provost wants Schools and Colleges to lead in these decisions (e.g., Ph.D. programs, degree programs). With the cuts also come 78 approved hires, mostly tenure-stream, as the Provost and President want to keep our Carnegie Higher Research standing.

No net loss of canopy policy, loss of trees on Ross Boulevard, also loss of trees near Payne Center with new Pride Field; others will be planted.

E-mail defaults—how to set “reply” as the default.

Joining staff and faculty awards ceremonies in the spring, per Provost.

Fee structure for intersessions 2018–2019 to remain the same (about $300/credit hour); no policy on load yet, whether it counts or not.

Questions:
David Holt: Would like to know why a three-week class calls for a $300 fee when a four-week class doesn’t need one; what is the logical argument. Students should pay for the hours they are taking, instead of adding fees to them.

5.2 President-Elect – No Report
5.3 Secretary – No Report
5.4 Secretary-Elect – No Report

6.0 Decision / Action Items
6.1 None

7.0 Standing Committee Reports
7.1 Academics – Lee Follett: Last week the online steering committee held a listening session (Catharine will provide a report later in meeting). One of the primary concerns is that we don’t really have a plan in place for students on campus who are also taking online courses (focus seems to be on fully online). There should be some focus on students on campus who are taking online classes.

7.2 Administrative Evaluations – No Report
7.3 Awards – No Report
7.4 Bylaws – No Report
7.5 Elections – No Report
7.6 Finance – Ken Zantow: Met with Allyson Easterwood and discussed issues. There are more questions to ask and it’s too preliminary for me to go into detail. Please provide any input you have about financial situation and let me know if you have questions.

Sharon Rouse: Can Ken provide a synopsis to the Senate so that we don’t repeat anything or questions we may have?

Ken will provide report with recommendations at next meeting.
Mac Alford: There are no secrets. We just don’t have some of the answers yet (examples: leasing university airplane, looking at budget book and the confusion there without associated revenue stream).

Ken: In most organizations the financials involve more than just a list of expenditures. Usually you have revenue and expenditures; without that, I think it’s difficult for managers to make decisions. We currently don’t do that on a monthly or quarterly basis, just annually. At that point, it’s kind of late. I will make a recommendation to do that. It’s going to be increasingly important for us to have that kind of information going forward.

7.7 Governance – No Report

7.8 Gulf Coast – Ken Zantow: Casey Maugh Funderburk is in the process of figuring out how students will be advised with a centralized advisement.

Gulf Coast Faculty Council – David Holt: There is a general frustration about reorganization in relation to how the Gulf Coast fits into it.

Ken Zantow: I’ve taken it on as my responsibility to keep pushing that button. It’s a consistent concern for us.

7.9 Handbook – David Holt: We had a conversation with Sam Bruton (voice of contact with the committee). We’re trying to keep that line of communication open. The heavy work we have won’t be until December, unfortunately. It’s a very short turn around to get things done.

Mac Alford: Tried to provide some guidance to push that along; I would encourage the committee to be careful about things that might be moved out of the handbook. If they move, they are no longer under faculty control.

David: Handbook should have all of our policies and should not be directed to another location.

7.10 University Relations and Communication – Meeting set up with Jim Coll. Some items have already been resolved; we will invite VP for External Affairs (Chad Driskell) to December meeting to talk about what’s going on with the university, alumni, foundation, and legislature.

7.11 Welfare and Environment –

1. Diversity- Committee member Charkarra Anderson reports that the University Diversity committee is working with the Office of Institutional Research to look at what diversity data is already being collected and how this data is collected. Dr. Julie Reed is heading up an effort to develop a Diversity and Inclusion web site link for the University.

2. Recycling/Environment. Committee member David Holt reports that the Coast is adding reusable takeout in the spring. Also, we got rid of plastic straws. Recycling is rolling on the coast. Hattiesburg – a new center for sustainability that will be working with the office of sustainability soon.

3. Faculty Morale:

a. Pay equity – The Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate President seek a commitment from the Administration to develop a specific plan to narrow/close the gap and implement that plan as financial circumstances allow.
b. Social. The Committee recommends that President Bennett be asked to consider a holiday faculty party but without using University funding at a time when layoffs of staff have begun.

c. Related issue: The Committee recommends that a letter be sent by the Faculty Senate President to the Staff Council to express appreciation for the work of the staff at USM and empathy with those who have been notified that their jobs are being eliminated.

4. Retention and quality of instruction. While the need for retention is obvious, the committee suggests that there is a need for the Administration to stress to faculty that this does not mean reducing the quality of instruction. At the same time, the committee encourages all faculty to make full use of the Student Success initiatives available for those students who are failing to meet quality requirements in their courses.

Questions:

Elizabeth Tinnon: How do they propose to pay for holiday party? As far as student success, students don’t have a clue about getting to Student Success Center and just getting to stuff. It could be that they are first generation. It distresses me to see students at 15, 16 ACT scores not able to get to the help that they need. How are we supposed to help students?

Bob Press: There is a limit to what we can do, but a brief conversation with students would help. We need to find ways to connect students to the things they need from the Student Success Center. We can quickly refer students to these resources.

Ann Marie Kinnell: We may want Amy Miller to come and talk about the Advisement Center. That is one of the things she’s trying to address with this issue. University 101 is supposed to address those issues, and it got moved to Interdisciplinary Studies. Those classes are not being taken because a lot of programs are not leaving room for that type of class (in their curriculum). The JUMP program in summer puts students through those classes and has made a huge differences with students.

Elizabeth Tinnon: Is it mandatory for students with low ACTs to take that course?

Ann Marie Kinnell: UNIV 101 yes, UIV 110, no; the incoming freshmen take the classes, but most of the transfer students do not.

Mac Alford: Amy Miller was invited to this meeting, but couldn’t make it; she will be here in December.

Bob Press: What evidence do we have that students are enrolling in these student success initiatives and what is the success rate? Is the JUMP program a requirement for all students?

Ann Marie Kinnell: It’s offered to freshmen who have been admitted to USM already. It does cost them tuition (can use financial aid). They’re trying to find ways to subsidize housing and food. Amy Miller is tracking students who go through the program.

Bob Press: Students in upper level courses can’t do research; how broadly is the university looking at getting students ready for that?

Sharon Rouse: On the Student Affairs website there is a link to Student Success and a link for faculty, and you’ll get follow up there.

Bradley Green: We started an advisement center in College of Psychology and it’s been successful. Students have been directed to faculty if they need to; it was a huge benefit for us and the satisfaction rate is high. The lower ACT transfer students are falling through the cracks with most of the focus on freshmen. If it’s working for freshmen, it would work well for transfers. Last year we started a program for students who don’t have good regulation abilities (time management). We had one to enroll initially, but more have enrolled now.
We’re catching them early and getting them through and making it more available. The rollout and effort has to be sustained and get people to come to and invest in those services. Bob Press: Wondering if Academic Committee would be interested in collecting/highlighting what we have from top down, from departments, about what is working/what is not and share to see if there are things we can do. We need to concentrate on things that work and take a fresh look at retention and student success.

Mac Alford: Academics Committee may want to meet with Amy Miller before next meeting to talk about those things.

Bradley Green: Texas A&M enculturates people with their FISH camp (6 weeks of indoctrination about becoming an Aggie; shows them where resources are and how to become part of this very socialized network).

8.0 Outside Committee Reports

8.1 Academic Reorganization Steering Committee (Mac Alford, Ken Zantow) – Committees moving along and we’re on schedule. It’s premature to say what results are going to be.

8.2 Academic Reorganization Faculty Governance and Representation Committee (Susan Hrostowski, Scott Milroy, Stacy Reischman-Fletcher) – Susan: working on pushing out proposals to make the full proposals. We’re coordinating any overlap.

Scott Milroy: Our work so far has been focused largely on the efforts to make governance documents consistent across schools, colleges, and departments. The proposals are trying to bring consistency throughout the different levels of the organization. These proposals are going to be presented to steering committee. When all is said and done, a lot of what we’re talking about in governance is basically dealing with issues not already in the Faculty Handbook. I would emphasize to the Handbook Committee, that when those proposals come forward for review that we go through with a fine tooth comb and make sure that we are all clear on what is going forward.

Questions:

Bob Press: Are there three different committees here? The Faculty Senate Handbook Committee, University Committee, and Reorganization Committee?

Mac Alford: The Faculty Handbook Committee makes final recommendations for Handbook. The reorganization committee makes recommendations, but they have to be approved by University Handbook committee (Faculty).

Bob Press: It is important that the four members appointed by Faculty Senate come back and brief the faculty about what is going on.

Mac Alford: That committee is waiting on reorganization, and probably the February and March meeting will be inundated with discussions about it.

Sharon Rouse: The chair of that committee is doing a good job and standing in the gap for faculty.

8.3 Academic Reorganization Academic Structure and Evaluation Committee (Joshua Hill, Ann Marie Kinnell) – Ann Marie: We are all faculty on this committee and we have hashed over these things. I don’t think anyone is trying to throw faculty under the bus. We have pre-proposals out there that the steering committee gave us back. We’re working on full
proposals. We are now meeting three times a week. We are really concerned about moving the university in a great direction.

Josh Hill: Everyone that I have worked with on the committee is doing so in good faith that support the faculty; additionally, we are cognizant of the fact that we are not entirely representative of the entire university.

Josh Hill: Anything that is contentious, we also put in an explanation for why we did what we did. The goal is to be transparent.

8.4 Academic Reorganization Staff Committee (Mac Alford, ex officio; Kelly James-Penot)

– Mac: The staff are able to be creative because a lot of things are not already in place. They are coming up with ways to equip schools adequately throughout the university (cross training). They have prepared five pre-proposals and appreciate the opportunity that has come from reorganization to think about ways to do things for our students and the university.

8.5 Online Learning Steering Committee (Catharine Bomhold) – Committee meets Monday; did have listening session (6 people participated). Online Policy is online at the Institutional Research site and is out of date. We need to define the SRI that is required from the Department of Education. The question is as much about online students and if they know how to be online students. There are students taking classes with the idea that it’s easier. Should there be a differential about who gets to take online classes? There was a suggestion to provide information about “how to be an online student.” We’re looking from the student side in order to make sure they do what they need to do to be successful. The question about where fees are going: we signed a 5-year contract with YuJa. Individual departments are coming up with their own solutions. There are questions about how things are working in Office of Online Learning. We want to work on bylaws of the committee. There are 22 members, which include a lot of staff. This decreases the amount of input that the faculty would have. At the moment, we’re only meeting when 22 people can meet. Those are the kinds of things I will be taking up to the chair.

Questions:

Ann Marie: This discussion came up at Council of Chairs. We were concerned about a few things with online students (like access, medical care, mental health). These things we’re putting in place, a lot are predicated on students being here on campus. How do we deal with off-campus, online students?

Catharine: Why are students in Maine or Alaska paying health fees? We’ve brought up those types of things.

Bob: Is there a real game plan about how much of an online university we want to become?

Catharine: I folded that in with re-writing the policy.

Scott: Is it on committee’s radar to take a look at the lawsuit that was at Western Governors? Have we thought about how we might be exposed to that concern?

Catharine: There should be substantial and regular interaction with students and defining what all of these issues mean. That was in response to the incident at Western Governors.

Ann Marie: It has to be instructor of record who has interaction with students.

Melinda: Are you looking at at cap for online courses? Would be nice to have a policy on that.

Catharine: That will fall under SRI, probably.
Senator: To what office or entity does the committee report? What authority does committee have?  
Catharine: We report to Amy Miller. We are a steering committee under the Provost’s office. We make recommendations.

David: Could you request a written charge to the committee?  
Melinda: Evaluating online teachers vs. face-to-face teachers will need to be brought up.  
Catharine: Spoke with Michelle Arrington (she’s on the committee as rep for Institutional Research) and asked that question. We can’t have two different evaluations per IHL. If you want more information from students you can do that. Everything on their (evaluation) has been vetted for online.

Cindy: I’m on a subcommittee of the online steering committee for training. We have been talking about more pedagogical training. A lot of things are being held off until reorganization.

Tinnon: Who vetted the evaluation form?  
Catharine: Maybe IHL? Michelle said we dealt with this previously.

Bob: Will faculty burnout and being overloaded with online students be looked at by committee?  
Catharine: I cannot control what we’re looking at, but I would like to see that brought up. There is definitely a feeling that we are not steering the ship.

Ann Marie: The committee (reorganization) Josh and I are on is dealing with workload, so I’m taking notes.

8.6 University Assessment (Mandi Schlegel – ask to e-mail) – Mandi: 2017 program assessment reports due to Katherine Lowrey; will give more details as they become available.

9.0 Consent Items  
9.1 None

10.0 Unfinished Business

10.1 Further Input on Committee Charges with regard to Senate Representation (cf. §8.2) – Mac: As you may know/understand, you are elected to serve your college and there are so many per college per FTE. This is our current system of representation.

10.2 New Academic Calendar –  
(Schedule) Susan: Scheduling of classes is changing in regards to semesters and intersessions (formerly mini-sessions). Two things have happened: semesters will be much shorter (classes will be longer), then there will be intersession. Second, blocking out of class period (when you have shorter number of weeks together with longer seat time, there are multiple problems for faculty and students). There may be times where students would not have time for lunch, for example; upset because there was no faculty input.  
Mac: There were some faculty on that committee. There were also some listening sessions earlier in the semester. I expressed some issues, as well as the Dance Department (in relation to studio).  
Nicolle: May be some problems about contracts (9-month faculty contracts)?  
Tinnon: What was the need for change?
Mac: Mini-sessions weren’t meeting time requirements. The intersessions were created to deal with that. They give students another opportunity to finish on time. Longer classes may be better for teaching. They wanted standard beginning times, more Monday/Wednesday classes. The new calendar schedule is on the Provost’s website. On Monday, departments will get an Excel spreadsheet with a schedule adapted to their particular course offerings. Doug: Students like the set up with a longer Monday/Wednesday/Friday schedule. The longer mini-sessions were in violation of the Faculty Handbook.

Ann Marie: (In the past) students who want to take classes in other departments can’t because of the way other departments schedule their classes/labs. So, the standardized schedule may be good. I think the university is willing to work with us if we have unique problems.

Miles: How much time is being added to Tuesday/Thursday?

Mac: Hour and a half. Our schedule and Coast schedule is being linked. Debbie Hill is willing to work with different departments who have problems.

Tim: For us, we do cohorts and they are in blocks. For students (graduate and nontraditional students) who get their education in large blocks, that is a problem. There is no room for the “human” things that need to happen to happen (e.g., eating).

Mac: Debbie said that there may be special cases where they can work with departments.

Tim: My sense is that it’s a done deal, but we can for sure ask.

Bob: We should make a recommendation quickly?

David: The president has approved it, so there’s very little we can do.

Ann Marie: There is always a work around. We did so with previous schedule.

Bonnie: The undertone that I pick up on all of this is that it is all geared towards undergraduates. We have to make some allowances. There’s not enough time to put people in two 8-hour clinics a week. A lot of it is just the whole undergraduate snowball that’s coming down pretty fast.

Ann Marie: I agree that the focus has been on the undergraduate. Maybe something will come from the graduate side eventually.

Bonnie: Graduate student enrollment is declining. There are some issues in graduate education that we are going to have to address.

Bob: I would like to know faculty input about changing schedule.

David: Onus was how to deal with the intersession. When they started doing that they changed summer schedule and that affected intersession. They looked at sister institutions and noted that they all didn’t have to function under the 16 ½ week schedule.

Bob: This raises issues of shared governance. If we have concerns as a faculty and don’t take a vote on those things, then that’s a problem.

David: It was brought to senate, and listening sessions brought it to the faculty. I think this ship has sailed. I don’t see anything changing.

Mac: I agree that the ship has sailed. It was approved by the President in October, and there were listening sessions. When it came to President’s Cabinet, I pointed out all of these issues.

Melinda: Every College was represented, and there is a list of those representatives provided.

Bonnie: Scheduling Task Force information started coming back in the summer.

Nicolle: It seems like a tumultuous time to do a new schedule when reorganization is coming up.

Mac: Comes down to finances and what they think would be best for the students.
Bonnie: They are trying to work financial problems from several angles.
Tim: I think the train has left the station on this one and there’s really very little we can do about it. It comes as an administrative recommendation, rather than something that comes from governance side.
Mac: We’ve had this discussion with reorganization steering committee. Input may be good early to get feedback from faculty that would shape the proposals; others feel that we should get something done and get to governance later.

10.3 Reorganization: Department Splits and Current Staffing Decisions –
Some Departments are being split across Schools, but staffing decisions are being made differently, in relation to who currently has the numerical power. Smaller departments being merged may not have a voice.

11.0 New Business

11.1 Joint Legislative Forum with Staff Council – Send ideas to Mac Alford.

11.2 Budget Concerns / Layoffs – Are there ideas that would be useful that will help these 20 people being laid off?
Bob: Suggestion for a resolution
Motion to suspend Roberts Rules to vote on resolution today – Approved
Resolution (Approved): The Faculty Senate would like to express its deep appreciation for the dedicated work of staff at the University of Southern Mississippi without which the university could not continue, and we express our special appreciation for those whose jobs are being terminated due to workforce reduction.

Discussion:
Miles Doleac: I suggest we use the word “terminated” instead of “ended” (agreed and added to resolution above)
Tinnon: Add “due to workforce reduction” (agreed and added to resolution above)

Motion to return to Roberts Rule – Approved

Alan Thompson (AAUP, guest): AAUP represents the campus community and not just faculty. The spirit of the resolution is important, but I propose that we actually do something. I sent a letter proposing an idea to create a relief fund to which people can contribute financially. I’m bothered that our valued staff colleagues after December 31 will have financial burdens. I haven’t worked through all the details yet, but I’m asking the Senate to join AAUP and hopefully Staff Council to explore possibilities that individuals can make contributions to a fund (payroll deduction sent directly to that fund).
Ann Marie: They get up to 240 hours of vacation, that gets paid out; could be possible to donate some of your vacation to a fund?
Kelly: We’ve been looking into donations. IHL may not allow the donation of vacation time; has to be medical emergency.
Sharon: The pantry could be restocked to help? (Tim Rehner: If there is money to fund it.)
Tinnon: Tuition may be waived for (terminated) employees who have children who are students (Alan: there is an accommodation for that).
Alan: If each person in the Senate can make a 1% donation, that would help.
Mac: Alan and I talked to Provost about some of the sensitivities that came out in the email. The President has asserted that he wanted to do this in the most sensitive way possible. We should probably brainstorm longer and come up with other ideas.
Tinnon: What’s going to prevent this from happening next year? Who’s next? In a year, it could be 40 next time.
Mac: The Provost sees it as we as a university have to decide what programs need to go. He’s confident in the Admissions Office (and what they’re doing to help increase enrollment), and if we continue the trend (of increased enrollment) then that will make up on the revenue side. If the State continues cuts, we will suffer more (cuts may be necessary).
David: Some programs will be cut, so we need to be thinking about that. When that happens there will be more staff cuts. How do we survive when critical people leave; when we reduce the number of people we have how; is this not a concern?
Tim: What will be the process of eliminating programs? We have to stay on that. Cuts have been non-strategic and leaves a college in jeopardy. You may have reduced the budget, but it leaves issues. How many positions have been lost down to the department level? What’s the cumulative number? What are the end dates for these terminations? We were told December 31, but there are letters with different dates in November. We need something cumulative about cuts (is it even across departments, schools); we should see the data (no names, just if it’s a faculty or staff line).
Melinda: It should be historical as well. We lost a lot four years ago and never got them back.
Karen: iTech lost four people. They were told December 31 (as termination date). I will bring this up (discrepancies of date of termination).
Mac: I will bring this up in Cabinet on Tuesday.
Bob: Faculty should have active voice in these decisions.
Mac: Any ideas for the 20 people who were affected by the layoffs?
Stacy: Once we hear back from HR about options for donating, we can move forward.
Sharon: There is also an option on the Foundation website where we can create a donation option.
Alan: I am sensitive to the fact that this may happen in the future, but we want to do something for these individuals. We may want to establish a relief fund so that it can be more long term. I have the names of some people who were affected. If you have additional names, you can send to me or Mac.
Josh: SGA may be able to get students on board with collecting funds as well.
Tim: We shouldn’t have to try to discover who is affected by these layoffs. It shouldn’t be a secret. These are real people.
Susan Howell: May want to appeal to alumni and community as well (for donations).

11.3 Latin Distinction –
Mac: Think and talk about this issue with your colleagues. The proposal is that the Latin distinctions be available to students by GPA and not by Honors College only. There are mixed feelings around campus. In preparation, Dean of Honors College and SGA will want our feedback.

Questions/Comments:
Wesley Follett (Comment from history colleague Doug Bristol): Request that there not be a change in the Latin distinction requirements. There may be some general unawareness among students and faculty about this distinction.

11.4 Energy Conservation – Chris Crenshaw will join us in December or February to talk about saving energy on campus (conservation).
Ann Marie: Ask Chris how staff cuts are going to affect physical plant. Is there a plan or impact of that reduction of staff in physical plant?

11.5 Consolidation of Academic Advisement – Moving advisement to more centralized advisement

Questions/Comments:
Tim: Have you received an announcement about centralized advisement as of yesterday (Coast)? Heard that it was effective as of yesterday.
Tom Rishel (Computer Science): We’re talking about two events whose timelines correspond: The student services person resigned and there was already work being done to move towards centralized advising.
Tim: Announcements that are effective today run counter to shared governance. My guess is that it is being piloted there (Coast) and it’s coming here.
Ken: This will be brought to council meeting on Thursday.
Mac: We need to find out with the Provost if there will be an “opt out” option for the centralized advising. There are those who may have a problem with it.
Bob: This is the third issue where senate faculty voice has not been considered. When there is something that affectively touches the faculty we should be involved.

12.0 Good of the Order
12.1 Next Staff Council meeting: December 14, 9:30–11:00 a.m., Trent Lott 207
12.2 Next Student Government Association meeting: November 9, 5:15–6:30 p.m., Scianna Hall 1046
12.3 Next AAUP meeting: November 21, 12:15 p.m., Fritzsche-Gibbs 114
12.4 Books dispersed by Library at Homecoming
Sharon: Catharine Bomhold had a trailer full of books that they gave away during homecoming
Catharine: March 3 is Read Across America Day; we will be in Chain Park.

13.0 Announcements
13.1 Next Senate Meeting: December 1, 2:00 p.m., Union Room B and IVN
13.2 Next Senate Executive Meeting: November 21, 2:30 p.m., Trent Lott Center 315
13.3 Next Senate Administration Meeting: November 21, 3:00 p.m., President’s Office
13.4 Next Senate Finance Committee Meeting: November 17, 9:30 a.m., VPFA’s Office
13.5 Next Senate University Relations & Communication Committee Meeting: November 21, 4:00 p.m., Jones Hall First Floor Conference Room (with Jim Coll)

14.0 Adjourn