

Minutes for University of Mississippi Faculty Senate Meeting

October 9, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by the chair, John Williamson. The senate observed a moment of silence for Michael Harrington.

Williamson announced that on October 19th from 4-6:30 there would be a Wine and Cheese for the Senate hosted by Dr. Elizabeth Payne.

Williamson introduced University Chancellor Robert Khayat. The Chancellor, in a broad and informal address, spoke at length on a number of his concerns including:

- 1) The need to continue to foster the engagement and leadership of the faculty through the Senate and other organizations on campus
- 2) The continuing efforts of the administration to develop and strengthen the alcohol policy on campus.
- 3) The issue of enrollment as it relates to funding. The current formula for funding used by the IHL favors graduate students, seniors, and juniors in the sciences. The Chancellor proposed that considering graduate enrollment could be a task for this session of the Senate. One way of addressing this could involve departments integrating certificate programs into their offerings.
- 4) Internet access and online courses are becoming increasingly important. The University should consider expanding online course offerings and degrees.
- 5) Building programs are continuing. The new law school construction may be beginning as early as 2009. The old faculty housing is coming down. The administration is making efforts to save the old, large trees on campus.
- 6) The University is continuing to work with Toyota to find ways to make mutually beneficial collaborative connections as a result of the Toyota plant soon coming to North Mississippi. There are opportunities for graduates with a base in sciences, accounting, business, human resource, public relations, and management. There are opportunities for international and cooperative programs. Robotics could very well be an area of mutual interest. A recent development involves the University of Mississippi establishing a Saturday school program for the children of plant employees interested in continuing to educate their children in Japanese language and culture.
- 7) The faculty is doing very well – research activity is high on campus.
- 8) The University has established the new MomentUM campaign to support academic programming.
- 9) Provost Carolyn Staton will remain at the University of Mississippi through June 2009 at latest. Programs such as the Residential College, the Teaching and Learning Center, and the Law School are particularly important to her. The Chancellor promised to work with the faculty to find a Provost to succeed Dr. Staton.

After his talk, the Chancellor addressed a number of questions from the floor of the Senate. On occasion he turned to Larry Ridgeway and Sparky Reardon to assist with answers to questions. At times the

conversation was quite complex and it is difficult to represent the entire conversation here; however, some paraphrased highlights of the Q & A in the order in which they appeared in the conversation include:

When asked why we have gotten a smaller increase in budget than other Mississippi universities such as Mississippi State, the Chancellor replied that in 2000 a sustained increase in enrollment here at the University of Mississippi began. He pointed out that that increase lasted until 2006 and that during the same period funding from the state remained flat. He said that if a school increases enrollment during a cycle of flat-funding, the dollar-per-student ratio will go down. The Chancellor indicated that these numbers should change, but it will be hard because it is a political question.

When asked about recent changes in the general alcohol policy, measures for effectiveness for the alcohol policy, and the two recent incidents on campus, the Chancellor replied that during the next two months the administration will be initiating an assessment to establish benchmarks and data. He further indicated that the statistics from housing indicate a decrease in the number of incidents. He suggested that the recently initiated two strike policy will help -- two strikes and you are out is a new and forceful tool in the new policy. What followed was a discussion of issues in which a number of Senate members and the Chancellor participated. The discussion touched on issues such as alcoholism as a public health problem, the need to change the culture of the university through education rather than rules, and partnering with the local community to address the problem. The Chancellor and the other administrators present encouraged faculty to assist with student intervention, and assured the faculty that mechanisms for support and intervention, such as a Student Intervention Team, were in place.

When asked about the Judicial Council's oversight and the racial make-up of the council's membership before the Deke incident, the Chancellor asked Sparky Reardon to address the question. Reardon indicated that the body was student dominated with faculty representation and that unsuccessful efforts had been made to make the Council more diverse prior to the incident.

When asked about how faculty evaluations are weighted to include research, writing, teaching and service, a Senate member indicated that substantial blocks of service don't get performed, and that service often falls on women and older professors. Every faculty member should be doing some service and evaluation needs to be addressed as an issue. Williamson indicated that he agreed that meritorious faculty need to be involved in university service and suggested that there might be a Senate resolution on this

When asked about future plans with regard to responsible use of alcohol and ongoing plans for addressing issues of race, Vice-Chancellor Ridgeway suggested that a freshman seminar might be a good vehicle for this.

When asked about the possibility of raising standards here at the University of Mississippi, the Chancellor pointed out that the University was still bound by the Ayer's decision, but that the administration was open to considering how to do this.

The final question involved the Deke incident on campus, and asked whether behavior that involved race-based discrimination had an explicit policy in the M-Book. Reardon took this one as well. He indicated that explicit policies existed against disorderly conduct and assault (including verbal assault). Senators expressed concerns that incidents of this sort had been happening for some time and needed to be addressed head-on. The Chancellor responded by indicating that the administration has worked diligently to improve the climate of tolerance on the university during his tenure.

The Chancellor closed his part of the Q & A by praising the fine work of Dr. Elizabeth Payne's as the Head of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. He commended her for her key role in getting the college started, her work establishing it as a draw for superior students to the campus, and her efforts to shape it as an exemplary model of educational practice.

What followed was a discussion on a number of the issues raised in the Q&A in which a number of Senators and Administrators participated. In response to a remark that service might be coupled with changing the University's culture, Dean Reardon suggested that student organizations lacked faculty advisors, and pointed out the chapter of the Phi Eta Sigma honor society on campus had no faculty advisor and that the faculty senate might have a role in recruiting advisors for student organizations. Some senators were concerned that the University should provide clear policy guidance and coverage for faculty liability for such activities.

Williamson suggested a resolution regarding Greek organizations on campus in which the Senate proposes that they have a certain time to become integrated or leave campus. In the subsequent discussion the issue of how Greek organizations represent a kind of public/private tension within the university became a central issue. The debate was inconclusive but posed several questions. Should the Greek organizations be regarded as guests on campus? How can the Faculty Senate address the issues involved with integrating social organizations on campus?

Williamson closed out the discussion and turned to the next item on the agenda – Dr. Chris Mullen's report from the Academic Support Committee regarding the IHL Textbook taskforce. After some discussion that reiterated concerns expressed in the previous debate on the issue (before it was referred to committee), and a few friendly amendments the resolution was adopted on a vote of 20 for and 7 against and 1 abstention.

Williamson then turned to the resolution on tolerance, asking Dr. Jackson to present the resolution crafted by the Ad-Hoc committee charged at the last meeting. After some disordered debate, in which the question as to whether to adopt Jackson's resolution was never properly addressed, a resolution was brought to the floor indicating that the Chair of the Senate should bring a letter regarding this to the Chancellor. Before this resolution could be voted on, the meeting time expired. Williamson indicated that if the session were not extended he would call for a vote on ad-hoc-committee's tolerance resolution through e-mail. Williamson then called for a vote to extend the session, and the Senate voted by majority to close the session.

The session closed at 9:01.

Williamson, as indicated to the Senate in his closing remarks, then conducted an e-mail vote to adopt the Ad-Hoc Committee's resolution. It passed on a vote of 24 for with 1 abstention.