

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, shared governance is the hallmark of the American university system and is essential to the institution's success in achieving the highest level of distinction in academics;

WHEREAS, shared governance rests on principles of mutuality and collaboration, transparency, representative participation, mutual accountability, and clearly defined boundaries and roles between, among, and across all levels of university life, from the department to the college to the university to its governing board;

WHEREAS, the IHL Board, the Chancellor, and the Faculty Senate are all committed to the principles of shared governance at all levels of university administration;

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate is committed to instituting a robust system of shared governance at all levels of the University of Mississippi, in a partnership based on mutual respect and collaboration, in accordance with the 1966 Statement on Governance of Colleges and Universities jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges;

MOREOVER, WHEREAS, the IHL Board process of selecting and appointing university Chancellors is too often closed and secretive and makes inadequate allowance for significant participation and input by university faculty, in the spirit of joint endeavor;

WHEREAS, the faculty more generally lacks an independent channel of communication with the IHL Board through which it can share its views and concerns directly;

WHEREAS, irregularities and inconsistencies in the creation of administrative positions and in the hiring, appointment, and evaluation of university administrators—arguably in violation of the university's agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor concerning interim administrative appointments—have worked to deny faculty appropriate representation and influence in these procedures;

WHEREAS, university faculty continue to be underrepresented on the principal decision-making bodies involved in institutional budgeting, resource allocation, and strategic planning;

WHEREAS, the de-professionalization of faculty reflected in the growing number of part-time or otherwise contingent positions, relative to budgeted tenure-track or tenured positions, has a deleterious effect on principles of sound governance by creating ever larger numbers of academic personnel with little perceived stake or sense of investment in university decision-making;

WHEREAS, a lack of timely, transparent, and reciprocal communication between the Division of Outreach and Continuing Education and the primary academic departments and units of the university (on matters such as online course offerings, study abroad, distance learning, nontraditional academic sessions and intersessions, and so on) has the effect of undermining faculty primacy in decision-making on matters concerning the academic curriculum of the university;

WHEREAS, faculty input into other forms of institutional decision-making is often rushed, reactive, under-informed, or altogether after-the-fact due to a lack of timely, reciprocal exchange of information and views between administrators and academic departments, the Faculty Senate, faculty committees, and other representative bodies;

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Faculty at the University of Mississippi, as representatives of the faculty, we urge the Chancellor to:

a. in consultation with the Provost, university faculty and their representatives and, where appropriate, with the IHL Board in Jackson, to take speedy and specific steps to correct these matters and to address other problems that have a chilling effect on principles of sound, shared governance at the University of Mississippi; and

b. to appoint, and to provide administrative support for, a special Task Force on University Governance, and to charge this Task Force with preparing a comprehensive report on the state and soundness of shared governance at the University of Mississippi. This report should include (1) an inventory of existing structures and best practices of shared governance at all levels of the University, (2) a set of recommendations identifying and implementing further structures, policies, procedures, and mechanisms for the promotion of shared governance on this campus, (3) a specific timeline for the implementation of these goals, and (4) specific procedures and mechanisms for the continuing assessment and evaluation of shared governance at all levels of the University.

RESOLVED, this the 4th day of March 2008.

THE SENATE OF THE FACULTY



CHAIR, University of Mississippi Senate of the Faculty