

## Fall 2001 ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

The third Senate Roundtable was held Saturday, 27 October at Plymouth Bluff. The topic was the future direction of the university. The following people participated:

Bob Altenkirch, Research VP  
Leslie Bauman, Physics  
Daniel Bryant, Chief Financial Officer  
Tom Carskadon, Psychology  
Jan Chambers, Veterinary Medicine  
Ren Crowell, History  
David Cole, Provost  
Virgil Culver, Food and Fiber  
Sandy Devlin, Curriculum and Instruction  
Walter Diehl, Biological Sciences  
Dan Embree, English  
Randy Follett, Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Sam Foster, College of Forest Resources  
Lynn Holt, Philosophy  
Charles Lee, Agriculture VP  
Doug Marshall, Food Science and Technology  
David Morse, Educational Psychology  
Mack Portera, President  
Linda Pote, Veterinary Medicine  
Lynn Reinschmiedt, Agricultural Economics  
Joe Thompson, Aerospace Engineering  
Don Trotter, ERC  
Alan Wood, Biotechnology

The roundtable began with a review of SSRC demographic projections for Mississippi over the next 25 years. These projections suggested that the college-age population of the state will remain stable over this period, so that population pressure will not be a significant factor in university growth or a significant deterrent to enrollment caps.

There followed a discussion of the nature of MSU's educational mission to its students and, through the Extension Service, to the citizens of the state. Some emphasized the importance of teaching modern technological skills in order to prepare students for productive roles in the economy, others the importance of developing character skills and general problem-solving abilities.

The president outlined his plan to cap enrollment of the freshman class at 1600 and of the entering junior-college transfer class at 1700 and to raise the mean ACT for entering freshmen to 25 over the next four or five years. There was general assent to these goals. It was also generally agreed that higher retention rates would be a natural result of higher admission standards – but that higher retention rates were

not an end in themselves.

The focus of the meeting was the president's draft plan to restructure the university by focusing resources on computational science and engineering and the biosciences. The president provided lists of programs and departments that he and the provost had selected for growth in graduate education and in research, based on their assessments of 1) measures of quality (e.g., research funding, entries in citation indexes, numbers of proposals submitted, publications), 2) critical mass of faculty, and 3) potential for success.

### **Potential Graduate Enrollment Growth**

Accounting  
Aerospace Engineering  
American History  
Biomedical Engineering  
Business Information Systems  
Computational Science & Engineering  
    Bioinformatics  
    Cognitive science  
    Computational engineering  
    Computational mathematics  
    Computational physics  
    Computational chemistry  
    Computer science  
    Electronic visualization  
Chemical Engineering  
Community College Leadership  
Counselor Education  
Environmental Science & Engineering  
Landscape Architecture  
Materials Science  
Molecular Biology  
Sociology  
Technology and Education  
Veterinary medicine

### **Potential Research Growth**

Aerospace Engineering  
Agricultural Economics  
Agricultural & Biological Engineering  
Biological Science  
Chemistry  
Chemical Engineering  
Cognitive Science  
Counselor Education  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Engineering Research Center  
Forest and Wildlife Research center  
Life Sciences & Biotechnology Institute  
MAFES  
Mechanical Engineering  
Physics  
Raspert Flight Laboratory  
Remote Sensing Technologies Center  
Social Science Research Center  
    Psychology  
    Sociology  
Veterinary Medicine  
Water Resources Research Institute

The president justified this refocusing as concentrating on our strengths (a position which drew little criticism) and not being "a mile wide and an inch deep" (a position which seemed to some substantially more problematic). Some participants wondered if this meant we were abandoning Goal A.1. of the president's Priorities and Goals: that "Every academic program at the university will be the best in

Mississippi.” Strong support was voiced by some for maintaining all academic programs at least at current levels.

The final topic of the roundtable was the process by which the university would decide whether to adopt the president’s plan. Some participants emphasized the importance of broad faculty support for such a plan to succeed, alluding to the disruption caused a decade ago by the P&P plan. The president agreed that it would be necessary to explain the plan to the faculty and to invite its comments.

Relevant to the question of a department’s “critical mass” of faculty are the losses in faculty positions sustained this year. The provost had provided the attached lists of losses and authorized searches. Asked whether vacant positions were temporary or permanent losses, the president said they were permanent.

COLLEGE	DEPARTMENT	NUMBER OF POSITIONS
<b>FROZEN POSITIONS</b>		
		8/17/01
Ag & LS	Ag & Bio. Eng.	1
	Ag. Econ	3
	Ag. Info Sci. & Ed.	1
	Plant & Soil Sci.	3
	Animal & Dairy Science	2
	Entomology & Plant Path.	2
	Landscape Arch.	1
Architecture		1
Arts & Sciences	Biological Sciences	4
	Chemistry	1
	English	4
	Foreign Languages	2
	History	1
	Math & Stats.	1
	Physics & Astronomy	1
	Political Sciences	1
	Psychology	1
	Soc., Anthr. & Soc. Work	2
Business & Industry	Fin. & Econ.	1
	MIS	3
	MQABL	1
	Sch. Of Accountancy	1
Education	Dean	1
	The Learning Center	1
	C&I	2
	HPERS	4
	Music Ed.	2
	Couns. Ed./Ed. Psych.	5
Engineering	Dean	1
	Aerospace Eng.	1
	Civil Eng.	1
	ECE	3
	Industrial Eng.	4
	Computer Sci.	1
Forest Resources	Forestry	1
	Wildlife and Fisheries	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>66</b>