

**ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE  
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING ON JANUARY 19, 2001**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held its regular meeting in Coskrey Auditorium of Memorial Hall at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 19, 2001.

Members absent and excused were Marita Gootee, David H. Huddleston, Sue S. Minchew, Paul Thaxton, and James Thomas.

Members absent and unexcused were Thomas Cathcart, Jackie Courson, and Kathy Dooley.

The meeting was broadcast real-time over the World Wide Web. The file will be left active for a few weeks and can be reviewed by clicking on the Senate homepage at [http://www.msstate.edu/Org/FS/faculty\\_senate.html](http://www.msstate.edu/Org/FS/faculty_senate.html).

Chair Dan Embree called the meeting to order.

Chair Embree referred to the minutes of the December 8, 2000, Regular Meeting as distributed. Senator Crowell moved, Senator Schoenholtz seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve the minutes of December 8, 2000. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

**GUESTS**

Chair Embree introduced guests of the Senate: President Malcolm Portera and Dr. David Cole, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**MALCOLM PORTERA, PRESIDENT**

Dr. Portera provided the following information:

- < The budget situation is serious. Portera believes that the legislature will cut this year's budget (2000-2001).
- < Energy costs have escalated. The price of natural gas has increased by about one-third over anticipated figures and the cold snap has played a part in increased usage. At this rate, the increased cost in natural gas will exceed the budgeted amount by \$1.4 million.

- < The proposed budget cut for 2001-2002 is 15.5%. MSU may or may not get some relief from this cut and Portera says that this figure is not yet set in stone. If the economy continues in its current downward spiral, the budget cuts could be worse.
- < The IHL Presidents agreed to meet with the leadership of the Legislature and begin discussion on phasing any cuts that have to come to IHL over a three year period to allow time to prepare and put measures into place to effectively accomplish the cuts.
- < The IHL Presidents also agreed to seek an IHL Board tuition increase.
- < Plans are to reorganize/merge/eliminate vacant positions and to look at issues such as work loads within the institution.
- < Plans are to request legislative permission for the implementation of an early retirement program at the institution.
- < Portera has asked the Vice Presidents to give him some proposed ways that the university can accommodate the \$1.4 million energy cost increase.
- < Portera continues to try and minimize the negative effect of these budget cuts on faculty and staff. MSU is better prepared for whatever cuts happen due to its early planning than other institutions in the state.
- < Senator Crowell applauded President Portera for taking a stand on the issue of the State of Mississippi's flag.
- < Senator Crowell asked if the university leadership had considered tackling the energy costs by simply asking personnel to turn down the thermostats by ten degrees. Portera responded that they are looking at several possibilities. The report on interruptible power is due next week from the consultant.
- < Senator Crowell also asked about the status of the Vice President for Business Affairs' position. Portera responded that he is not going to hire a Vice President for Business Affairs but instead hire a Budget Officer, Daniel Bryant. Senator Crowell followed this by asking if hiring a Budget Officer would save money over hiring a Vice President for Business Affairs and Portera responded yes.
- < Senator Diehl referred to Portera's comment about pro-rating the excess energy expenditure among the university's various units and asked how that corresponded to the energy usage by these various units. Portera responded that the individual units on campus are not individually metered. He asked the business affairs personnel to

take a look at those entities which are separately metered and are paying their energy costs directly because they are already experiencing their increase.

- < Senator McCann asked if the Athletic Department contributed money to the MSU budget. Portera responded that revenues associated with the sale of t-shirts, etc. are given to the university and, for this fiscal year, all of these dollars have gone into the departmental operating budgets. Senator McCann asked if the money contributed to the MSU budget by the Athletic Department could be renegotiated to a larger sum. Portera responded by saying the MSU Athletic Department's budget is the smallest in this conference at approximately \$18-19 million. He has called on them to 'come to the table and do their part' and he feels confident that they will.
- < Senator Carskadon asked Portera what he anticipates will happen on this campus with respect to refilling faculty positions if someone leaves, retires, etc. Portera responded that the university might have to freeze positions depending on how bad the budget situation gets.
- < Senator Embree asked about the faculty positions which the university is already recruiting and Portera responded that the university will go forward with these positions and get them filled.
- < Senator Byrd asked about the administrative positions which are currently vacant and again Portera responded that the university will go forward with these positions and get them filled.
- < Senator D'Abramo asked with the potential faculty positions freeze, would there also be a corresponding reduction in enrollment. Portera reminded Senators about the consent decree which was signed in the Ayers case and that there is a single standard for all of higher education in the state of Mississippi. At this moment, the IHL Board says that we cannot put a freeze on enrollment but discussion is taking place pertaining to this issue.
- < Senator Embree asked about the recent secret session held by the Board pertaining to the Ayers case. Portera responded that we don't yet know anything that has resulted from that meeting.
- < Senator Byrd asked if differential tuition increase for separate programs is still being considered. Portera responded that it is.
- < Senator Morse asked about the status of the building program and revitalization of buildings on campus. Portera responded that these are still ongoing and will not be stopped or frozen because the dollars are already approved and funded.

- < Senator Crowell asked about the state's projected increase of income which has been over projected and why are the projections so high? Portera responded that the state of Mississippi seems to be four to five months ahead of the national economy as it pertains to the slowdown of incoming funds.
- < Senator Duncan asked if the IHL Board was going to declare financial exigency. Portera says that they are going to but, in his opinion, not until the Governor orders another budget cut.
- < Senator Duncan then asked if Portera knew anything about the President of the University of Southern Mississippi having already begun a RIF. Portera was not sure but other Senators commented that this was true.
- < Senator Pote asked what avenues the faculty would have to participate in solving these budgetary cuts. Portera responded that he would bring these matters before the Faculty Senate and its Executive Council.

#### **DAVID COLE, PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

Provost Cole had no additional remarks. Senator Williams asked about the criminal justice program at the Meridian branch. Portera responded that this is a University of Southern Mississippi program being offered at the Mississippi State University facility.

#### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Embree began his Robert Holland Faculty Senate Chair's Report by sharing the following remarks:

- < The next roundtable is scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup> and it is time to start assembling the participants. Senators were asked to start submitting volunteers. Portera has asked if an additional topic could be added to the agenda: promotion and tenure standards. The current topic is admission standards. Senators voiced their pros and cons pertaining to both topics and Chair Embree ended the discussion saying he would give the issue more thought and discuss it with Portera as to whether to leave the topic as is or make a change.
- < On Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, Bill Crawford, IHL Board of Trustees member, will be on campus. The Robert Holland Faculty Senate Executive Council is scheduled to have a working lunch with him and then Mr. Crawford will be involved in one or two other activities which will promote MSU and its faculty.

- < Embree has formed the ad hoc committee on grade inflation which comprises himself as chair, Lou D'Abramo, Chris Duncan, Pat Donahoe (all representing the Senate), Brad Carter (representing the Provost Office), Dr. Thomas Hosie (representing department heads), and Dr. Frank Saal (representing deans).
- < The next MSU General Faculty Meeting is January 29<sup>th</sup>. Senators were asked to attend and to encourage others to attend as well.
- < Embree remarked about the December meeting and the Senate's contentious discussion pertaining to whether the administration had learned its lesson about talking to the faculty. Embree feels they are learning because the very next week, the President asked to meet with the Faculty Senate Executive Council and proposed to them a new position in the administration and asked for their concurrence in this decision. The Executive Council approved.
- < Embree mentioned a complaint brought to him by an untenured assistant professor in December about an administrator outside the academic chain of command, who acting on behalf of a complaining student, had already placed a letter in the assistant professor's personnel file without a hearing. This letter was scolding the assistant professor for presumed mistakes or maltreatment and was done with the concurrence of the professor's dean. Embree took these facts to Portera (which then ended Embree's involvement) and Portera followed through seeing that the letter was removed from the assistant professor's file, the officials were told of their indiscretions and informed of the proper channels to use in future similar situations. This specific example enforces the good working relationship being built among the faculty, Faculty Senate and President Portera.
- < Embree reported that Portera is interested in reviving the Graduate School and that he has asked the Faculty Senate Executive Council for the proper method of going about studying this. The Council responded that this is primarily a faculty business so faculty involvement is expected by elected members to a small taskforce with the President appointing some members.
- < Embree reported that Portera has ordered the auxiliary units on campus to become self-supporting while still remaining competitive with local competition.
- < Embree also reported that the Athletic budget is \$16.5 million this fiscal year which is up from \$15 million during the last fiscal year. The money given to the university from the t-shirt sales is not in this increase (about \$60,000). This \$1.5 million profit could, for example, "buy a lot of library books." The Athletic Department receives no E&G funds. Senator Crowell asked if the Athletic Department's utilities were separately metered and were their janitorial expenses paid by them both after specific events and

on a routine basis. Chair Embree responded that he knew for sure that the cleanup after football games was paid for by the Athletic Department but he was not sure about the rest and would check to find out and report back. Senator Light added that it would also be useful to know the number of sports MSU has and the number of athletes MSU has in proportion to other similar universities. If it is shown that we have a small number in comparison, this could help explain why MSU has such a small Athletic budget when compared to these same institutions. Chair Embree suggested that someone bring this issue to the Senate through official channels (i.e., submitting a letter which could be referred to a Senate committee for investigation).

### **REPORT OF THE VICE CHAIR**

Vice Chair D'Abramo referred to the Robert Holland Faculty Senate Vice Chair's Report as distributed. He commented on parking during football games and faculty having access to their offices up to two hours before the games begins. This particular parking problem, as well as parking in general, is an issue that will be discussed in the Traffic Committee with hopes of resolution.

Senator Williams referred to the December 11<sup>th</sup> Deans Council meeting when Provost Cole distributed a review of potential strategies for the upcoming 2001-2002 budget and one of the suggestions was "conversion of a single tenure track position into two instructor positions when possible." Senator Williams question was did any deans present at this meeting raise any questions pertaining to this issue and, secondly, did they point out the relationship between wanting more research dollars coming into the university but yet removing tenure track positions and replacing them with instructor positions which seems to undermine the very idea of trying to increase research. D'Abramo responded that there is not much input by the deans at any of these meetings and, no, no dean questioned this decision.

Senator Crowell referred to the December 11<sup>th</sup> Deans Council meeting when Dr. Rent passed out a proposal for revision in the Annual Planning Process. Crowell remarked that this process assumes a stability that doesn't exist where plans can be laid to paper one semester and carried out the next, meanwhile resources change dramatically causing the mountain of paperwork to now have nothing to do with reality. "Are we just going to stand it?" D'Abramo responded that this is a question to which he does not have the answer. His opinion is that the planning process is important and trying to have a mechanism in place to best utilize the university's resources is needed. Whether this particular mechanism is the right one or not must be answered by others.

Senator Crowell then asked about the AOPs that were presented at this same meeting and would they be coming before the Senate. D'Abramo responded that they would.

Senator Williams asked how many of the AOPs did Ruth Prescott participate in their development. He reminded the Senate of being told that she would not have anything to do with academic matters and it seems that many of these AOPs have very clear academic implications. D'Abramo responded that he does not know the official answer to this question but from his what he sees on the Deans Council, she does have quite a bit of input on all AOPs.

Senator D'Abramo reminded Senators that he serves on this and other committees as their representative and if they have any questions to please let him know and he will follow through. D'Abramo again stated that he has been astonished by the lack of interchange between the President or Provost and the Deans or Directors. Senator Duncan asked why do the deans not speak out.....is it because they don't think they will be listened to or received or is it because they don't think these issues really matter or what.

## **REPORT FROM FACULTY SENATE DESIGNATES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

**Employee Benefits Committee** -- Senator Tom Fisher reported on a proposal which is soon to be voted on pertaining to the health care plan -- the employer will start taking out an additional percentage for PERS and put into a pool of money so that retirees will then get a 2% a year for their years of service up to a maximum of 60% reduction in their health care premiums which they pay.

Senator Light asked about employees that don't participate in PERS and would they be receiving a similar benefit. Senator Fisher responded that he meant to ask that very question but did not.

Senator Marshall asked if Senator Fisher could give him an idea of how active the MSU Benefits Office is on actively seeking better benefits for the faculty and staff of this campus. Senator Fisher responded that the Employee Benefits Committee is not a decision-making body but tries to serve as a recommending authority. Ann Bell is the most informed person that he is aware of who is working on our behalf.

## **BUSINESS TO BE SENT TO COMMITTEES**

**Letter from Dr. Crowell re: Memo to Deans-Assessing faculty workloads** -- Senator Marshall moved, Senator McLaurin seconded, to refer this issue to committee. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate. Chair Embree assigned this issue to the Academic Affairs Committee.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

No report.

## **ANCILLARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

No report.

## **CHARTER AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE**

Senator Diehl moved, Senator Crowell seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the report from the Charter and Bylaws Committee. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Diehl, Chair of the Charter and Bylaws Committee, referred to this Committee's report pertaining to the letter from Dr. David Laughlin dated September 1, 2000 regarding the Agribusiness Institute. No recommendations made since the Committee concludes that this matter has been settled. No action required by the Senate.

## **FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Senator Williams moved, Senator Duncan seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the report from the Faculty Affairs Committee. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Williams, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report pertaining to Professor Lorenzo Crowell's letter dated August 30, 2000, regarding a "Memorandum of Understanding," whose principal stated subject was "Promotion, Tenure and Related Employment Policies for Full-Time University Faculty Assigned to the Meridian Campus of Mississippi State University." Senator Williams moved, Senator Crowell seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt the proposed recommendation:

Because the "Memorandum of Understanding" mixes policy matters and procedures and because its focuses on promotion, tenure, and curricular matters appear to violate the Governance document's principles concerning faculty roles and responsibility in these matters, the Senate urges the administration to cancel the existing memorandum. Any replacement should clearly separate policy elements from procedures and should engage full faculty participation in those areas delegated to faculty through the Governance document.



The motion passed on a Senate vote of 39-0-0.

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Senator Williams moved, Senator Heitz seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate remove this report from the table. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Williams, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report pertaining to proposed HRM Policy #60-117. Senator Williams moved, Senator Hood seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt the proposed recommendation:

The Senate authorizes the Committee, together with the Senate chair, to write a letter to Dr. Portera expressing the Senate's concerns about the Board's Outside Employment Policy, particularly in the areas of equitability, citizenship and privacy rights, and reporting requirements. This letter should further ask Dr. Portera to bring the Senate's concerns to the IHL Board's attention. The Senate also directs its chair to discuss this issue with his counterparts at other IHL institutions.

The motion passed on a Senate vote of 39-0-0.

## **STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Senator Duncan moved, Senator Travis seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the report from the Student Affairs Committee. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Duncan, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report pertaining to AOP 12.01: Academic Drop/Add Policy. Senator Duncan moved, Senator McLaurin seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve AOP 12.01 with the suggested changes.

Senator D'Abramo offered a friendly amendment changing I.A. Add/Drop without penalty to read "A student has up through the fifth class day into the semester to decide to add a course. A student has up through the tenth class day to drop a course without being assessed a fee or academic penalty." The Committee accepted this amendment.

Senator Williams moved, Senator D'Abramo seconded, to allow Brad Reeves, substitute for Jenny Reeves, to speak. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Cinnella moved, Senator Lestrade seconded, a proposed amendment changing I.A. Add/Drop without penalty to read "A student has up through the tenth class day into the

semester to decide to add a course and up to the tenth class day to drop a course without being assessed a fee or academic penalty.”

The proposed motion failed on a Senate vote of 4-33-0.

Senator Crowell offered a friendly amendment to changing I.A. Add/Drop without penalty to read “A student has up through the fifth class day into the semester to decide to add a course and up to the fifth class day to drop a course without being assessed a fee or academic penalty.” The Committee did not accept this amendment.

Senator Crowell moved, Senator Cinnella seconded, a proposed amendment changing I.A. Add/Drop without penalty to read “A student has up through the fifth class day into the semester to decide to add a course and up to the fifth class day to drop a course without being assessed a fee or academic penalty.”

The proposed motion failed on a Senate vote of 19-20-0.

The original motion as friendly amended by Senator D’Abramo passed on a Senate vote of 32-4-2.

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Senator Duncan, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee’s report pertaining to AOP 12.07: Academic Misconduct. Senator Duncan moved, Senator D’Abramo seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve AOP 12.07.

The motion passed on a Senate vote of 38-0-0.

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Senator Duncan moved, Senator Crowell seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the report from the Student Affairs Committee. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Duncan, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee’s report pertaining to AOP 12.09: Class Attendance. Senator Duncan moved, Senator D’Abramo seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve AOP 12.09 as changed with the deletion of the word “unexcused” from the first sentence of the second to last paragraph of the AOP. The new sentence would then read:

Because absence from class is detrimental to the learning process, faculty may choose to penalize the student for excessive absences, which may result in a lower grade.

Senator Bryant offered a friendly amendment adding the following sentence to the committee's recommendation "When exercising an absence policy, faculty should be aware of the prohibition against interfering with jury service contained in Mississippi Code § 15-5-23." This was not accepted by the Committee.

Senator Bryant moved, Senator Williams seconded, a proposed amendment adding the following sentence to the committee's recommendation "When exercising an absence policy, faculty should be aware of the prohibition against interfering with jury service contained in Mississippi Code § 15-5-23."

Senator Culver called for question, seconded by Senator Hood. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

The proposed motion failed on a Senate vote of 12-25-0.

Senator Cinnella offered a friendly amendment that the recommendation simply read "The Committee recommends that the Senate vote to accept AOP 12.09 as changed." This was not accepted by the Committee.

Senator Cinnella moved a proposed amendment, seconded by Senator Carskadon, that the recommendation simply read "The Committee recommends that the Senate vote to accept AOP 12.09 as changed."

The proposed amendment failed by a Senate vote of 4-31-1.

The original motion passed on a Senate vote of 32-3-1.

## **UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

Senator Pote moved, Senator Light seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the report from the University Resources Committee. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

Senator Pote, Chair of the University Resources Committee, referred to this Committee's report pertaining to Dr. Lorenzo Crowell's letter dated August 30, 2000, on the lack of adequate financial assistance in support of scholarly activities from some faculty members and possible inequities pertaining to the allocation of these funds. Senator Pote moved, Senator Schoenholtz seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt the recommendation that the MSU administration should immediately investigate this problem and accordingly seek and develop mechanisms whereby funds are available for scholarly activities.

The motion passed on a Senate vote of 35-0-0.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Crowell moved, Senator Follett seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

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LaDonne Delgado, Secretary