

Summary of  
Mississippi State University  
**Faculty Senate Spring Roundtable**

Conducted on April 4, 2014

May 6, 2014

This report summarizes the results of the April 4, 2014 Faculty Senate Roundtable. Participants included eight members each of the executive team, general faculty and faculty senate. This roundtable was conducted to examine the decision making process. Context is provided through the roundtable's agenda, participants list and the course of action. The report reviews the roundtable's products by describing the two work groups' results developed by the participants in the structured brainstorming of the work session.

## **Roundtable Agenda**

April 4, 2014

- Welcome—President Keenum
- Overview of Process—Randy Follett
- Teams' Brainstorming Sessions on Current Decision-Making Characteristics
- Break
- Teams' Brainstorming Sessions on Ideas for Improving the Decision-Making Environment
- Report & Discussion of Teams' Findings
- Wrap-up—President Keenum

### **Overview of the Process**

Dr. Keenum explained the context for the roundtable, and then Randy Follett explained the process of structured brainstorming and multi-voting. The full group then broke into the two groups identified on page 3 of this report. In each small group, the facilitator moderated the brainstorming process and recorded the ideas. Each group then reviewed the ideas for potential consolidation of similar concepts. For the multi-voting process, each participant had five votes (colored dots) and put them beside items that they viewed as most valuable. Each participant could put up to three dots on any one item. The votes were then tallied, and the results were discussed. At the end of the day, the two groups reported out their high-vote-receiving items to the full group.

## **FACULTY SENATE-EXECUTIVE TEAM ROUNDTABLE**

*April 4, 2014*

<b>Maroon Team</b>	
David Shaw	Vice President, Research and Economic Development
Matthew Boggan	Associate Professor, Meridian Division of Education
Meghan Millea	Professor, Finance and Economics
George Hopper	Dean, College of Forest Resources
Bonnie O'Neill	Assistant Professor, English
Matt Ross	Associate Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine, Basic Sciences
Sid Salter	Chief Communications Officer
Rebecca Robichaux	Associate Professor, Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education
Judy Ridner	Associate Professor, History
Don Zant	Vice President, Budget and Planning
Steve Turner	Professor, Head, Agricultural Economics
Facilitator: Randy Follett	Assistant Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering

<b>White Team</b>	
Jerry Gilbert	Provost and Executive Vice President
Anastasia Elder	Associate Professor, Counseling and Educational Psychology
Stephen Grado	Professor, Forestry
Greg Bohach	Vice President, Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine
Noel Addy	Associate Professor, Adkerson School of Accountancy
Oliver Myers	Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering
Judy Spencer	Chief Human Resources Officer
Cody Coyne	Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine, Basic Sciences
Dan Petrolia	Associate Professor, Agricultural Economics
Bill Kibler	Vice President, Student Affairs
April Heiselt	Associate Professor, Counseling and Educational Psychology
Facilitator: Jerry Emison	Professor, Political Science and Public Administration

## **Roundtable Course of Action for Brainstorming**

### **Brainstorming Process**

1. Participants identified candidate answers to each of two questions and responses were recorded.
2. Duplicates and overlaps were identified and consolidated.
3. Participants multi-voted on answers.
4. Results were analyzed & discussed.

### **Brainstorming Rules**

1. No such thing as a bad idea.
2. Offer 1 idea at a time.
3. It's ok to pass.
4. No judging ideas while brainstorming.
5. Las Vegas Rules are in effect: What's said here stays here.

## *Roundtable Results*

### Question 1: What are the characteristics of the decision making process currently?

<u>MAROON TEAM</u>	<u>VOTES</u>		<u>WHITE TEAM</u>	<u>VOTES</u>
Resistant to change	8		Openness of input/feedback	7
Decisions are based on funding realities	7		Decisions are made without regard to common good	6
Inconsistent across university	7		Lack of decision process consistency across campus	5
Shared governance is not representative but political	7		Decisions are made without consideration of thoughtful analysis	5
Personality based "male ego"	7		Integrity characterizes many decisions at MSU	5
Non-transparent (secretive, access to process is obscure)	7		Avoidance of responsibility in decision making chain	4
Heavily siloed (territorial, disconnect between right and left hands)	6		Lack of value-added recommendation/approval process: redundancy	3
Deliberate by choice	4		There is real broad based involvement in major decisions	3
Complicated /constrained in scope and scale	3		Cultural and political considerations influence decisions	3
Process is incomplete (lack of communication)	2		Revisiting a decision is possible but not routine	3
Lack of diversity	2		There is an increasing decentralization of decisions where possible/appropriate	2
			Inconsistent decision making for consequences of bad behavior	2
			Students have substantive input to decisions	1
			Lack of openness without reprisals in decision making and discussion	1
			Decision making that lacks wide input	1
			Process invites a culture of engagement	1
			Consistent with university strategic plan	1

**Question 2: What could be done to improve this current environment?**

<b><u>MAROON TEAM</u></b>	<b><u>VOTES</u></b>		<b><u>WHITE TEAM</u></b>	<b><u>VOTES</u></b>
Act like adults	Unanimous agreement		Provide professional development opportunities for decision making and leadership	9
Develop culture of trust (equity, fairness, cross-pollination)	13		Foster environment that focuses on greater good	8
Culture of coordinated communication (efficient information dissemination, open dialogue on decision drivers, share information through channels)	10		Adopt common set of decision practices	7
Train good decision makers (Department head leadership training)	10		Foster an environment of empowerment and trust	7
Process for systematic feedback (clarity, address inconsistencies, ombudsman, checks and balances)	9		Use town-hall meetings to vet cross-university issues	7
Hold people accountable for process and communication (honest employee evaluations, let people do their jobs, deal with problems)	9		Be open to new ideas – value creativity and innovation with integrity	4
Hire good decision makers	4		Decentralize decision making	3
Empower faculty through delegation	2		Evaluate the decision's outcome	3
Put resources where they can be used in implementing decisions	1		Don't impose uniformity	3
Diversify leadership team	1		Share diverse decision methodologies across university	2
Unified vision	1		Minimize black box decisions	1
			Communicate effectively with counsel to resolve purchasing/contract issues	1