



## **ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE**

### **Uncorrected Minutes of April 9, 2021**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held its regular monthly meeting in the Parker Ballroom of the Hunter Henry Center and via Webex at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 9, 2021.

Members absent and excused were: Rachel Allison, Beth Baker, Alexis Gregory, Lyndsey Miller, Sorina Popescu, Kathy Sherman-Morris, and Mary Love Tagert.

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Rebecca Robichaux-Davis.

President Robichaux-Davis asked for any corrections to the minutes of the March 12, 2021 meeting. Hearing no corrections, President Robichaux-Davis accepted the minutes as presented.

### **GUESTS**

#### **Dr. Brent Fountain, Faculty Athletic Representative**

Dr. Fountain began by saying he is always glad to be back in Senate. He said he appreciates the work the senators do.

Dr. Fountain said name, image, and likeness (NIL) of student athletes has been discussed for many years. NIL allows a student-athlete to be compensated for either their name, image, or likeness. Not every student-athlete will have the same opportunity or receive the same compensation, but NIL applies to all student-athletes.

The NCAA has tabled the issue of NIL pending the outcome of the Austin case which is currently before the Supreme Court. Federally, Senator Roger Wicker presented a bill in December to address NIL, but it did not pass. There are currently 6 bills at the federal level which need to be considered. States began passing legislation on NIL becoming effective on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Other states

had to follow suit to remain competitive and Mississippi has passed Senate Bill 2313, Mississippi Intercollegiate Athletics Compensation Rights Act. This legislation goes into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>. The bill allows student-athletes to be compensated for their name, image, or likeness. It also prevents secondary educational institutions and athletic associations from preventing student-athletes from earning compensation. It prevents athletic associations from prohibiting schools or athletes from participating due to NIL and allows student-athletes to obtain professional representation. The professional representatives must be registered with the state to perform services in the state. Compensation cannot cause financial aid for the student-athletes to be revoked. The bill also states that all contracts the student-athletes consider must be made known to the educational institution. This legislation does not allow for student-athletes to be compensated for their ability or play. It also does not allow for them to be considered employees of the institution or use the institution's registered trademark for activities in which they will be compensated. Any institution, booster, third-party licensee, or individual cannot provide compensation to a current or prospective student-athlete as an inducement to attend a specific institution.

Dr. Fountain said to help with NIL, MSU has contracted with a licensing agent to provide education on NIL to our student-athletes. Four modules have been developed which will inform student-athletes what NIL is and what it does from a Mississippi perspective. All our student-athletes will be required to complete the training whether they choose to participate in NIL or not. The activities of NIL will not affect academic endeavors in any way.

Dr. Fountain said NIL will increase the workload for Athletics and it will take some time to determine how this will evolve. There is the potential for the fifty different states to have fifty different NIL laws. It is expected that the NCAA will voice their opinion of NIL and a federal solution will be put in place.

Dr. Fountain said the Division I Council will meet next week and will be discussing the one-time transfer rule. This rule does not currently apply to all sports, but the discussion will be to open eligibility for the one-time transfer rule to all sports. If adopted, the new rule would not allow for an institution to object to a transfer. The student-athlete and the coach will have to attest that tampering was not involved. An educational module is made available to student-athletes prior to their entering the transfer portal which explains the process and how it will affect them. There are specific dates which restrict when a transfer can occur.

The transfer process at MSU begins with the compliance office who informs the student of the process. When a student-athlete enters the transfer portal, we encourage them to stay engaged with their coach. Those who enter the transfer portal continue to receive all of the support from the University that all student-athletes receive. Financial aid may be withdrawn at the end of the transfer period. When a student-athlete enters the transfer portal, it is always

a unique situation. There is no one way it is handled due to the unique circumstances surrounding each individual.

There is still a lack of clarity about what the one-time transfer rule will do to collegiate athletics. As of Tuesday, there were 13,376 student-athletes from all divisions in the portal. This includes 5,848 on athletic aid and 326 SEC student-athletes. Currently, the SEC dictates that a student-athlete must sit out a year after they transfer. There are proposals to change this to an immediate transfer or an immediate transfer with the penalty of using an additional scholarship on the roster. This will be discussed at SEC meetings in the spring.

Dr. Fountain said last year, when spring sports were cancelled, all spring sport student-athletes received a one-year extension of their financial aid eligibility. This was then extended to the fall sports as well. The requirements for this extension were that the student-athlete was in the final year of eligibility, they stayed enrolled at their institution, and had their eligibility extended by the waiver. There is a proposal on the floor to allow this to be extended for all spring sports for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. The SEC commissioner and the ACC are strong proponents of this, but it is not seen this way by some other conferences.

Dr. Fountain said since March 2020 all athletic tutoring services have been conducted online. As of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 4,764 tutoring sessions have been performed. All sessions are conducted through Webex and are recorded. This has shown to be an effective method of delivery, but they would like to return to face-to-face sessions. This is the plan moving forward. Dr. Fountain said conducting tutoring session virtually has given Athletic Academics a new tool to allow them to reach students who are traveling or are injured and cannot attend in person sessions.

Dr. Fountain said he was asked by a faculty member how Athletic Academics was monitoring student-athletes attendance with the online format. He said physical checking of attendance has been ceased, but this has increased support on progress grades, attendance tracking in BANNER, and contacting instructors about specific athletes. Dr. Fountain asked the senators to encourage their faculty to continue to report progress grades and count attendance. He said this is important for all MSU students, not just student-athletes.

Dr. Fountain said the National Association of Academic and Student Athletic Development will be on campus virtually to conduct a program review. They will review all athletic academics. Before Covid, the online portion of the review was completed. A full report is expected in 4 to 6 weeks.

Counseling and Sports Psychology has become even more necessary as a result of the pandemic. MSU currently has 3 full-time counselors for student-athletes. This was not the case a few years ago and demonstrates Athletics support of the students well-being and health. Dr.

Fountain said he wanted to thank Dr. Angel Brutus for her hard work in developing this program. He said she will be leaving MSU to work for US Olympic Committee. Dr. Aaron Goodson will be taking her place in the department.

### **Dr. Mark Keenum, University President**

Dr. Keenum said we are in a very exciting time of the year. We are nearing the conclusion of one of the most historic and memorable years in the 143-year history of this University. Dr. Keenum said it has been a very successful year and that would not have been possible without the Faculty Senate and the faculty they represent working with administration to get us through. Dr. Keenum said he was blessed to have a good partner in the Faculty Senate and the Senate leadership to help lead and direct this University during these trying times.

Dr. Keenum said the legislative session concluded the first week of April. It was a successful session and we received a great deal of what we requested. We received an increase in our FY 22 appropriations. We did not get all that we asked for, but we did not get a cut. Dr. Keenum said this is one of the few years that he has been here where we did not receive a cut. The legislature provided an increase for a 1% increase in salaries. Dr. Keenum said last year we received a 3% cut. He said each year our cost of operations increases by between 3% and 3.5%. The decision was made to not increase tuition last year due to the pandemic. Dr. Keenum said while we received a small increase in funding this year, we were in a pretty deep hole with regard to the budget. He will be meeting with the IHL Board of Trustees next week to discuss the budget as well as tuition for next year. Dr. Keenum said we will have a merit pay raise this year. He said the legislature has provided 1%, but he is hopeful we can do better than that.

Dr. Keenum said that he spent a great deal of time with our legislators trying to explain our needs to them. We received millions of dollars of federal money as a result of the multiple bills passed by congress for Covid-19 relief. Dr. Keenum said this would make it appear that we do not need additional state funding. The issue with this is that the Covid-19 money came with a lot of strings attached and represents one-time dollars. One-time dollars may not be used for operating expenses such as salaries. The only funds that can be used for this are appropriations from our state legislature and tuition dollars. Dr. Keenum said he tried to explain this to our state leadership, but he believes this may have had a lot to do with why we received such a small increase.

Dr. Keenum said the state legislature did appropriate \$4 million for R&R funding. These funds are one-time dollars we can use to perform repairs and maintenance across campus. Dr. Keenum said our needs for repairs and maintenance greatly outweigh what we have now and what the legislature can provide to us.

Dr. Keenum said we also received \$5 million for our new kinesiology building. Last year we received funding of \$30 million for the building. We secured a private gift of \$15 million. With the University contribution of \$5 million, this additional \$5million completes the funding of the \$55 million building. The building will be over 100,000 ft<sup>2</sup> and will be located on the corner of Bailey Howell and George Perry streets adjacent to the Sanderson Center. The building will house our Kinesiology department, will consolidate our student support services, and will house our autism program.

Dr. Keenum said the bond bill was very good this year. We are in year two of a four-year bond plan submitted to the legislature. We got everything we asked for which includes \$15 million for the College of Architecture, Art, and Design. Next year we will get another \$15 million which will complete our funding for a new College of Architecture, Art, and Design building. We also received \$8 million for renovations in Dorman Hall.

Dr. Keenum said Senate Bill 2313 was passed by the state legislature and deals with name, image, and likeness (NIL). This bill allows student-athletes to be compensated for their NIL. Senator Roger Wicker was chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee during the last congress. He has a bill before congress on NIL. Dr. Keenum said we are desperately hoping that Congress will pass a bill which creates a national standard for NIL for all collegiate athletics. Unfortunately, several states have passed NIL bills and Mississippi had to follow suit to remain competitive. We will see several other bills get passed by states in our SEC footprint and around the country. Dr. Keenum said he hopes that Congress will address this and we can get away from different state laws.

There were 3 appropriations bills passed by Congress. Dr. Keenum said we received a great deal of money but we spent a great deal of money too. We spent just under \$10 million on upgrades to our IT infrastructure. We spent a good deal on our wireless to strengthen our ability to provide for distance learning. The funds provided had to be tied to a Covid relate expense. We spent a great deal of money on new laptops for our faculty and students. We bought a lot of hotspots and put cameras in our classrooms. We also bought many microphones. We spent a lot of money on PPE. Covid testing is also one of our pandemic costs. When we were under the shelter in place order and had to send the students home, we had to refund the students their housing, meal plans, and parking passes. This amounted to roughly \$6 million. We also had to rent two hotels which served as quarantine facilities. All of these Covid related costs were funded with the federal money we received. Over \$40 million dollars were sent directly to students to help them defray their Covid related costs. Dr. Keenum said he spent a great deal of time communicating how these funds were spent to our state legislators. He said he would not be so upset about our appropriations for the year if the state revenues were not so good. The revenues for the month of March were \$92 million over

estimates. This number was not available when the budget was passed, but Dr. Keenum said he said to the legislators that we would have another good month and they agreed. Since July 1, 2020 our state revenues are roughly \$600 million over estimates. Dr. Keenum said the legislature will be carrying forward a large amount of this money into the next fiscal year. He said he hopes we will be able to receive more funding moving forward.

Dr. Keenum said he came to speak with the Senate last month to discuss the issues with sabbatical approvals. In January the IHL Commissioner instructed Dr. Keenum to not approve any sabbaticals until a legal issue could be resolved. The issue was a lawsuit involving one of our sister institutions regarding compensation for sabbatical leave time. Dr. Keenum said he spoke to the IHL Board on behalf of the other IEOs and reminded them of what sabbatical leave is and how it is for faculty development which enriches the University. The State Attorney General rendered an opinion which supported the way we have approached sabbatical leave for decades. At the March IHL Board meeting all pending sabbatical leave requests were approved. Dr. Keenum said the Attorney General's opinion was very strong and he hopes this resolves any issues with the sabbatical system. The statute governing sabbatical leave can be modified by the state legislature if necessary, but the opinion may be strong enough and that may not be necessary.

Dr. Keenum said with all that we have been through this year, this has been another remarkably good year for Mississippi State. This is shown by faculty output, grants and contracts, student enrollment, and our services and outreach. Dr. Keenum said faculty are stepping up to the plate during some of the most challenging times and meeting the needs. He said he cannot thank them enough.

Dr. Keenum said the recent University announcement said we are hoping to return to a more traditional environment on our campus in the fall. He said the parents, students, and overwhelming majority of our faculty and staff want this. Dr. Keenum said this is the hope but there is a lot that can happen between now and then. He said anything that does happen will be considered in an inclusive and informed manner to determine how we operate in the fall.

Dr. Keenum said he encourages everyone to get vaccinated. He said the Horse Park is phenomenal. It is managed by the National Guard and it is run with military precision. Dr. Keenum said he is glad we could help by providing the facility. The Student Health Center is also providing vaccination opportunities at the Humphrey Coliseum. This will soon be brought back to the Health Center to allow for our Commencement ceremonies. Dr. Keenum said the University will be aggressively promoting vaccinations. He said he met with the student leadership earlier today and urged them to use their influence to promote vaccination to the student body.

Dr. Keenum said there will be two commencement ceremonies on the 29<sup>th</sup> and two more on the 30<sup>th</sup>. He said the ceremonies last November went swimmingly well and he expects these will as well. The following week the Meridian ceremony will be held.

Dr. Keenum said we have the benefit of looking back at our actions and all of the things that evolved. He said the leadership would not have been able to work through the issues that were presented without the Faculty Senate. He said this is a true example of shared governance. Dr. Keenum said he knows that some of the decisions he had to make some people did not agree with. He said some decisions he will have to make in the future some will not agree with. Dr. Keenum said any decision he has or will make is based on the facts that he has. He said he welcomes and needs faculty input. He said any decision he makes he feels is in the best interest of this University that he loves and is proud and honored to serve just like each and every one of you. He said he values all of the advice, counsel, and criticism.

Senator Williams said he would like for employees of the University to feel free to express their political views. He said he encounters employees who feel they cannot express their views due to their employment with the University. President Keenum replied a statement is generally released by the University to remind employees what they can and can't do with regard to politics. He said if there is ever any doubt about a political activity, an employee can contact the General Counsel for clarity. He said employees may not use Mississippi State as an official endorsement of anyone running for office, but as an individual you can endorse a political candidate. Employees cannot use their title or position in their endorsement.

Senator Sebba thanked Dr. Keenum and Dr. Shaw for their leadership. She said the last year and a half to two years have been difficult for everyone, but especially upper administration. She said she can see that they made decisions for the good of the University and not for individual benefit. She thanked them for what they have done and all that they do.

President Robichaux-Davis presented Dr. Keenum and Dr. Shaw with a token of appreciation on behalf of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate for their leadership throughout the past year. She said they always brought a sense of calm and made it seem as normal as possible.

#### **Dr. David Shaw, Provost and Executive Vice President**

Dr. Shaw said that within three weeks we will hold our fourth and final graduation ceremony on the campus of Mississippi State. He said that is a great thing to be able to say. Dr. Shaw said he would like to take this opportunity to personally say thank you. It has been a year for the record books in so many ways which were not intended. He said he continues to be incredibly proud of our faculty, staff, and students for the perseverance they have shown to get us to this point. He said he hopes we can take the summer to regroup and plan for a fall semester that takes several steps back toward normalcy.

The announcement released earlier in the week regarding telework has raised several questions. Dr. Shaw said the announcement revoked the special accommodations regarding telework, but does not revoke telework. We have had a policy on telework for quite some time. If an employee and their supervisor previously had an agreement or have determined that the employee's position can be performed remotely, telework agreements can still be made. The announcement simply takes us a step back toward normalcy by removing the special accommodations due to the pandemic. He said this experience has taught us a lot about how we can work effectively. As a result, a task force will be formed in the fall to think about what our telework policy should look like moving forward. He said this is not an easy conversation to have due to the many different facets. He said he spoke to a group of department heads this morning and expressed his concern that even though there are many people who can effectively complete their work remotely, when it comes time for tenure, promotion, or advancement people skills become extremely important.

Dr. Shaw said the Faculty Evaluation Task Force is nearing the end of their deliberations and expect to provide a final report next week. He said this group has done a lot of work and have taken their charge very seriously. The final report will be posted on the Provost Office website as soon as it is received.

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Task Force is getting close to completing their charge. This report will be posted to the website when it is received as well. Dr. Shaw said the reports from the task forces are just the beginning of the conversation and not the end. Feedback will be requested on the reports from the Faculty Senate as well as the Associate Dean's Council and Dean's Council.

Dr. Shaw said administration is in the process of determining the next steps that we will be taking in our return to normal. He said administration fully realizes we are not out of the pandemic. He said it is really exhilarating to see the level of vaccination occurring on our campus. Dr. Shaw said he needs help with two things. First, get vaccinated and second, encourage those around you to get vaccinated. Student Affairs is developing a vaccination campaign right now which will involve free t-shirts for getting vaccinated. He said an educational campaign is being developed including the available science to promote vaccination. Vaccination is our way out of this. He said we also need to get past the fear that we have all had to deal with. Dr. Shaw said he has received both of his vaccine shots. His first shot was administered at the Horse Park and his second was administered by the Student Health Center at the Hump. He said the Horse Park was very efficiently run and so was the vaccine clinic at the Hump. He said as we think about things like shifting from a mask requirement to a mask optional policy, the science is being examined carefully in terms of



personal safety and the safety of those around us. The Covid Task Force began this discussion last week. He said on topics like this he would relish any feedback he could get.

Senator Pelaez asked if the rule will be to hold classes online in the event of weather-related campus closures. She said her students have had connectivity issues when this happens. Dr. Shaw replied that there has been conversation within the Crisis Action Team to look at our policies in light of what we have learned about remote learning through Covid and what challenges this delivery presents. He said we are in the beginning stages of this conversation, and we have a long way yet to go. Additional questions have been raised by the two tornado threat events we have had in terms of sheltering on campus. Dr. Shaw said the options for the closures were to either go to some Saturday classes or go to remote learning due to the condensed semester. Dr. Shaw said he will be working with Faculty Senate to make some adjustments to policy for these situations for the fall semester.

Senator Pelaez said some departments are interpreting the tenure extension to mean that faculty should have more work done in the 7 years than they would need for the normal 6 year tenure time period. She asked for clarification to be issued to colleges and departments on the tenure extension and how it affects the amount of work needed for tenure approval. Dr. Shaw said he had this conversation with the deans earlier this week. He asked three of the deans to craft some language to address this issue. He said the result of the conversation with them was that we do not need to look at the number of publications and simply divide by the number of years. We need to look at the level of achievement and make sure it meets the criteria of the departmental standards. The new language will be released in the near future. He said the impact that Covid has had on faculty is recognized and we want to make sure any faculty that have received a tenure extension are treated fairly and not penalized for having taken the extension. Senator Pelaez asked if this means that the one-year extension does not raise the bar. Dr. Shaw replied that the extension should not raise the bar for faculty. He said this is being viewed not as a clock stoppage, but as an extension meaning faculty cannot simply say I have an extension so I am not going to do anything for the year. However, the whole of the package needs to be examined and it is not simply a numerator/denominator situation.

Senator Winer said the state of Mississippi was on the cover of the New York Times because we have 73,000 unfilled vaccination slots. We also only have 27% of the state with a single shot. He said if we persist like this, we run the risk of becoming a petri dish for new variants. One thing that could be used to help motivate students to get vaccinated is that vaccination not only protects those around us, it lessens the chances for future strains which can be more contagious and more severe from negatively impacting age groups other than the ones that are most affected now. Senator Winer asked if there has been consideration for the message we are sending to be beyond altruistic and be a motivator at the individual level for students. Dr.

Shaw thanked Senator Winer for his comments and said the altruistic message is just one component of the messaging that is being released. He said he will make sure that Senator Winer's comments are incorporated in the educational campaign.

Senator Winer asked if the University vaccination campaign will include extension outreach to help the state of Mississippi reach the citizens who have limited access to the vaccines. Dr. Shaw replied that he, Dr. Ryan, and Dr. Jackson had conversations earlier in the week to discuss how the Extension Service could be a very integral part of the conversation. He said as a land grant institution with an office in every county, we need to take a leadership role in promoting vaccination and helping to reach those who cannot access the vaccine.

Senator Winer asked if there were any rewards being given for those on campus who get vaccinated. Dr. Shaw said Student Affairs is trying to be creative with their approach to this. He said they ordered a lot of t-shirts and stickers to give to those who get vaccinated. He said he is not sure of what else they are working on, but they are trying to be creative to incentivize vaccination. Dr. Shaw said there is ongoing conversation about what we can require vaccination for. We cannot require it to come to MSU for various reasons, but we may be able to require it for things like optional events and incentives to not have to be tested. Senator Winer asked if our inability to require the vaccine is due to a restriction at the state level. Dr. Shaw replied from a state and IHL standpoint there are two things that affect this. First, the vaccine only has emergency approval from the FDA and we cannot require a vaccine that has not been fully approved. Secondly, we still need to determine what the restraints are on the vaccine itself. As an example, is this going to be like the flu shot where you have to get it every year, or can you take it once and that is all.

Senator Yu said it was her understanding that there was a pilot for e-submission for P&T. She asked if this will be adopted for campus-wide use. Dr. Shaw replied e-submission of P&T documents and e-submission and signatures of all document are being looked at currently. He said he has asked ITS to examine the distribution and signature process on campus. For the P&T process this year, he had all of the deans submit the documentation to him through Teams. He said we will be moving this direction over the coming year.

## **REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT**

Happy April, Senators! I hope your spring 2021 semester has been successful and you are ready to finish the semester strong. I also hope you will be able to take a well-deserved break this summer and come back refreshed and rejuvenated.

As this is the last regular meeting of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate for the 2020-2021 academic year, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your service on the Faculty Senate this past year and for your commitment to excellence in all that

you do for Mississippi State University. While this was a difficult year that none of us could have ever imagined, we certainly could not have had the tremendous success that we realized this past year during a global pandemic without the perseverance and dedication of each of you.

I would like to extend a special thank you to those senators who are finishing their terms of service and rolling off of the senate. Thank you, Senators Jimmy Avery, Allison Eddy, Joel Paz, Angela Savage, Samuel Winer, and Chien Yu. Additionally, an extra special thank you to those senators who are finishing their second consecutive terms of service and also rolling off of the senate. Thank you, Senators Darrin Dodds, Jenny Du, Patty Lathan, Kent Marett, Fred Musser, and Kathy Sherman-Morris. Last, but certainly not least, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Vice-President Jason Barrett and Secretary Randy Follett who have helped and supported me in countless ways throughout the past year. They were never too busy to answer questions, give me their thoughts on anything and everything that I requested, monitor chats during WebEx meetings, or attend meetings on my behalf when I couldn't attend. Thank you, Jason and Randy, for your dedication to Faculty Senate and more importantly, for your friendship.

Next, I would like to welcome our newly elected senators who are joining us for the first time today. Welcome, Senators Todd Archer, Beth Baker, Iva Ballard, James Chamberlain, Mark Fincher, Yucheng Liu, Adrian Sescu, James Sobaskie, Te-Ming Paul Tseng, Andrea Varela-Stokes, Kelley Wamsley, and Kimberly Wood. I also want to give a warm welcome back to Senators Robert Banik, Jason Barrett, Charles Freeman, Lauren Priddy, and Mary Love Tagert who were re-elected by their colleges to serve an additional three-year term.

As I look back on this past year, I hope my bi-monthly email updates provided you with useful information. I appreciate the time that you took to participate in the "town hall" sessions over the summer of 2020, as well as the more recent town hall session for the Interstate Passport and the listening sessions for Student Success. I am also grateful for your responses whenever I sent out surveys or other requests for input. Although the year was one of a kind, I truly believe it was a successful year for the Faculty Senate as we addressed important issues and approved 14 AOPs and two Resolutions. We successfully launched a Twitter account with daily tweets that promote our great institution and the work of its faculty. We also are in the process of making recommendations concerning additional instructional faculty ranks and the faculty confidence survey.

Many of the university standing committees on which I serve met this past month, including the COVID-19 Task Force. Additionally, Senator Barrett, Jason Cory and I met with Provost Shaw, Vice President Keith Coble, Dr. Tracey Baham and Ms. Leslie Corey to discuss a more efficient way of accurately assigning faculty to their respective units. ITS is now working

on a program that will do this so that in the future, elections and reapportionment will be less demanding of time.

We are currently preparing to facilitate nominations and elections of faculty to serve on the search committees for the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Science and the Dean of the College of Forest Resources. We are also preparing to conduct the Faculty Confidence Survey during the last two weeks of April. Please participate in this and strongly encourage those who you represent to do the same. More information on this will be forthcoming via email correspondence.

This past Friday we featured Senator Lauren Priddy on Twitter. For the remaining Fridays of April, we will feature Senators Jimmy Avery, Darrin Dodds Jenny Du and Angela Savage. Our Twitter handle is @msstateRHFacSen and our tweets go out at either 8:00 am or at noon, Monday through Friday. We will continue to highlight the work of those senators who are rotating off of the senate during the months of May and June.

#### **Status of AOPs:**

The following AOPs are not under review to the best of my knowledge, but are past the four-year review cycle:

<b>AOP</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
10.05	Nepotism	12/5/2012
10.08	Classroom Regulations	4/26/2016
11.11	Auditing a Class	11/3/2016
12.02	Withdrawal from the University	3/23/2017
13.06	Sabbatical Leave for Faculty Members of State IHL	6/9/2014
31.02	Legal Resident Status	2/5/2013

#### **Reports from Committees on which I Serve:**

*Athletic Council* – This council met on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Torie Johnson, the SEC’s Associate Commissioner who is over Academic Relations was the guest speaker. She updated us on efforts of the SEC focused on racial equity and social justice. There is a document on the SEC website available to all athletic departments which details best practices for racial equity and social justice. There is also an equity page on Secsports.com. The new tagline is “Together, It Just Means More.” The Academic Relations program in the SEC is unique to the SEC. No other athletic conference has such a program. The Academic Relations program communicates the academic accomplishments of our student athletes, the collective impact of the 14 SEC institutions, and the unique work and accomplishments of each individual institution; i.e. the drone research here at MSU. Check out the SEC Website. You’re sure to see at least one familiar face. Maroon and White Night will be held online this year on April 19<sup>th</sup>. The football program

held “midnight maneuvers” which focused on strength and conditioning in preparation for spring practice. The Maroon and White spring game will be played on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> and is open to the public. Men’s basketball made it to the championship game of the NIT. Interviews are ongoing for the Director of Student Athlete Development. April 6<sup>th</sup> is National Student Athlete Day.

*COVID-19 Future Planning Task Force* – We have received a second supply of “first” vaccinations, as well as “second” vaccinations for those who have already gotten their first vaccinations. Appointments can be scheduled at <https://covidvaccine.msstate.edu/>. Beyond vaccinations, room capacities across campus for all users are at 50%. This is expected to increase as we move into the summer and fall. All summer camps have now been approved. We continue to discuss procedures and policies for the fall semester. Vaccinated students will not have to quarantine or isolate. If you have any feedback and/or thoughts regarding our summer and fall with regards to COVID-19 protocols, please send them my way or communicate them directly to Drs. Hyatt and Shaw.

*Executive Council* – The committee has not met since my last report.

*Executive Enrollment Management Committee* – This committee met on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Lew Sanborne of Ruffalo Noel Levitz shared with the committee the results of the work of our working groups. Those results indicated that our institution’s strengths include a sense of community and authenticity, affordable, program diversity, strong academics, Dr. Keenum’s leadership, diversity of student populations, brand strength, and our small college feel but at an R1. The results also indicated that our institution’s challenges and threats include our brand reach, decentralization, pricing complexity, graduate student compensation and benefits, external perceptions of Mississippi, competition and better funded competitors, and declining high school graduating class sizes. In terms of opportunities, the results yielded the themes of faculty engagement; increased centralization and improved coordination; diversification of instruction and delivery methods, modalities and terms; leveraging lessons learned during the pandemic; improved alignment of student funding resources; growing our brand and reach across the learner lifespan in Mississippi and beyond; and strengthening employer and alumni relationships. The next step is data informed situational qualitative and quantitative analyses which should then motivate specific actions. In the short term, as an institution, we need to bolster graduate student funding and our research agenda.

*Game Day and Special Events* – The committee has not met since my last report.

*Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council* – This council met on Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. We met in breakout groups to discuss our thoughts concerning “where we are” as an institution with regards to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We discussed where the biggest opportunities are to

ameliorate the equity gap and how we might pursue these opportunities across the university. We also discussed the role of this council in that work and how the council might build capacity to engage in that work. MSU has been selected as a 1<sup>st</sup>-Generation Institution. We are in the process of revising our Affirmative Action Plan documents. On April 16, Gender Studies will hold a panel discussion on the challenges facing working mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic resulting, in part, from a lack of childcare, the need for virtual schooling, and a deeply unequal division of domestic labor between men and women. The panelists include Drs. Kimberly Kelly, Courtney Thompson, Molly Zuckerman, and Arazais Oliveros, with Dr. Nicole Rader serving as moderator. A flyer was emailed to you about this event.

*Information Technology Council* – This committee has not met since my last report.

*Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee* – This committee met on March 11<sup>th</sup>. I was not able to attend, but Secretary Follett attended on my behalf. He reported back to me that representatives from Sasaki and a representative of Neel-Schaffer presented a preliminary report on their findings for our master plan update. One thing they are trying to convey with this plan is that “Change is taking place at MSU.” They are ending the analysis phase of their work for us and moving into the concept phase. Their results appear to be primarily based off data gathered from the registrar’s office concerning classroom space and usage, along with academic lab spaces. Interestingly, the College of Arts and Sciences uses 50.6% of all classroom spaces on campus. They also reviewed office space and usage. The “needs survey” was strictly based off data gathered from the deans of the colleges and seemed to reflect “common sense expectations.” They appeared to understand that there is a need for smaller classroom spaces with 25-35 seats so that larger classrooms aren’t used for smaller class sizes, which is currently often the case. They are also looking at other spaces and aspects of campus life, including the union, residential facilities, dining spaces, recreational spaces, and other spaces. They specifically indicated a need for an auditorium with a capacity of 2500-3500 seats. A more detailed report will be provided to the committee soon.

*Parking and Traffic Regulations Committee* – This committee met on March 25<sup>th</sup>. There is new parking that is being constructed with the new engineering and music buildings. The parking adjacent to the engineering building consists of 8 spaces which will be zoned “service” for MSU service vehicles and engineering departmental vehicles. The parking that is being built with the music building will be zoned “staff” for faculty and staff in both the engineering and music buildings. Daily parking permits will now cost \$5 per day and will be available for faculty, staff and students, not just visitors as has been the case previously. Fees for parking spots at “pay stations” have changed to \$1.50 for the first hour and \$2.50 for the second and third hours. Similarly, fees for garage parking have changed to \$1.50 for the first hour and \$2.50 for each additional hour with a \$25 daily maximum. Pay stations and garage parking are meant to be

transient parking locations with quick turn over so people have a convenient option throughout the day. The rate for the first two hours remains \$4 under this new fee structure, but the cost for each additional hour increases which will hopefully encourage higher turn over rates. Currently, pay station and garage parking fills up by 8:30 am or so and remains full until the middle or end of the afternoon.

*Sustainability Committee* – This committee met on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Paige reported that the new sustainability website is about 60% complete with new content. His office is working with ITS to complete this work. The goal of the “Think Before You Toss” Campaign is to reduce waste as well as our contamination rates. The campaign will encourage folks to dispose of recyclable materials properly. An additional 40 to 50 locations have been identified for new water bottle filler stations. These locations are primarily in high-traffic areas in residential and academic buildings. New recycling bins are being put into buildings that do not have any such bins. Earth Week activities were very successful. Many of these were held on the Drill Field: yoga, the student organizations fair, a scavenger hunt, and the showing of Wall-E. Other events were held via Zoom. Our Energy Performance metrics improved this past year due to the COVID-19 “shut down” and reductions in building use. The Humphrey Coliseum renovation is expected to start in March of 2022 and will take 18 months to complete. This is a much-needed major renovation. Our next meeting will be in June.

## **REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE VICE PRESIDENT**

### **Academic Deans Council –**

March 2021 meeting was held on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

- AOP 12.39: Policy on Undergraduate University Scholarship Programs and Procedures was introduced with edits.
- AOP 13.23: Faculty Workload was approved. One of the deans brought up that the current Student Success plan is not included in this policy for faculty workload. Deans Council decided to move the policy forward for Faculty Senate to discuss this issue.

### **Community Engagement Committee –**

No meeting held since last Faculty Senate meeting in March.

### **Committee on Campus Access –**

April 5<sup>th</sup> was the anticipated date of the next meeting. Due to a need for additional time to consider new developments, the next meeting will be held on May 3, 2021.

- Mr. Ramsey’s group is working on a list of priorities for the committee to review.

### **Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee –**

March 11, 2021 - Sasaki gave an update on Phase 1 of the Master Plan.

### **Textbook Committee –**

There was no meeting held in March.

### **Undergraduate Research and Creative Discovery Committee –**

There was no meeting held in March.

### **True Leadership –**

The website has been created and it is live. [www.trueleadership.msstate.edu](http://www.trueleadership.msstate.edu)

- We have seven (7) articles and six (6) video interviews available.
- I encourage faculty members to visit the website.

## **FACULTY DESIGNATES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

### **1. Report from Instructional Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC)**

- The Committee met on Thursday, consecutively, at 9:00 AM, chaired by Dr. Michael Seymour, Acting Director of Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Meeting Summary:
  - 1) The recommendation for the **‘routine’ classroom technology update** was sent to Dr. Shaw and he is reviewing now. The proposed classrooms include:
    - Mitchell Memorial Library Giles Room 1111 - Extron
    - Music Building B 112 - Extron
    - Stafford 100 - Extron
    - Howell 105 - Extron
    - Allen Hall 249 - old Crestron
    - Ag and Bio Engineering 131 - old Crestron
    - Cobb 201 - old Crestron
    - Hand 2231 - old Crestron
    - Swalm 105 - old Crestron
    - Swalm 110 - old Crestron
    - Research and Curriculum Unit Room 160 - old Crestron
  - 2) The **plagiarism software license** is about to expire.



- The ITS invited 3 vendors for presentations:
    - 3/16 for Turnitin,
    - 3/17 for Ouriginal, and
    - 3/18 for Copyleaks
  - The MSU Announcements email for the presentation recordings (<https://w.msstate.edu/its/plagiarism-presentations/>) was also sent out for feedback. The deadline for this general university-wide survey was 3/26, Friday.
  - The data was collected. The analysis and discussion are ongoing currently.
2. Senator Carskadon said the Teaching Award Program will be holding the awarding ceremony on Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. in the Grisham Room of Mitchell Memorial Library. This year they will be awarding more than one award thanks to the discovery that the initial agreement with the Grisham family stated that we award three awards annually. Dr. Shaw also discovered the Zacharias endowment which contributes funds to encourage and support outstanding teaching. The University Instructional Improvement Committee unanimously requested the Provost to award three Grisham awards, eliminating the Early Career Award from the Alumni Association and awarding four Early Career Awards from the Zacharias Endowment. The award provided by the Alumni Association for one graduate faculty will be expanded to two. Dr. Shaw approved the request. Senator Carskadon thanked Dr. Shaw for his hard work to help increase the number of faculty we can recognize. Senator Carskadon asked the senators to encourage and nominate their colleagues to apply for these awards.

## **BUSINESS TO BE SENT TO COMMITTEE**

1. **AOP 13.02 Selection of William L. Giles Distinguished Professors (Academic Affairs)**
2. **AOP 13.12 Summer School Teaching (Faculty Affairs)**

Hearing no objections, President Robichaux-Davis sent the policies to the indicated committees.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Academic Affairs**

**No Report**

**Ancillary Affairs**

1. **Update on Confidence Survey**

Senator Freeman, on behalf of the Ancillary Affairs Committee, said the Confidence Survey will be released for the last two weeks of April. This year's survey will include three open-ended questions. The questions ask for any additional comments or questions the respondent would like to see asked in the survey, how respondents would improve the survey, and how should

the results or feedback from the survey be disseminated. He asked that the senators complete the survey and encourage their peers to as well.

President Robichaux-Davis said a special email will be sent to all new faculty this year to make them aware of the survey.

## **Charter & Bylaws**

## **No Report**

## **Faculty Affairs**

### **1. Instructional Faculty**

Senator King, on behalf of the Faculty Affairs Committee, provided the committee report on Instructional Faculty.

Senator Banik asked if the addition of the ranks to the titles of the instructional positions would require that existing instructional faculty have their titles changed. He also asked if there was language in the recommendation which would, for instance, change the title of an instructor who has been here for 20 years to jump to a level III instructional position. Senator King said there is no language which would move current instructors to any level. She said there is a peer review process which would dictate the rank of the faculty member. Senator King said the committee felt the I, II, and III would help to clarify progress through the ranks, but the committee did not discuss the titling of existing instructors.

Senator Pelaez asked if the rankings would translate into different salaries. Senator King said it is her understanding that this is being discussed so there is a way to reward instructional faculty and give them the opportunity to be promoted in both rank and salary. Senator Pelaez asked who would determine the salary amounts for the different ranks. Senator King said she is not certain but she believes that it would follow a similar structure to tenure positions with set raise amounts.

Senator Pelaez asked if lecturer promotion would lead to more security. Senator King replied it would not since the lecturer positions are designed to be temporary. There is a requirement in the document which states lecturers can apply for promotion in rank after 10 full-time spring/fall semesters. She said this will be handled in the department and will not include a peer review process. Senator Pelaez asked if there was a mechanism in the document to promote a lecturer to an instructor after a certain period of time. Senator King replied the two positions are different budget lines and a lecturer can only become an instructor if hired into an open instructor position.

Senator Pelaez asked what the proportion of non-tenure-track faculty to tenure track faculty should be. Senator King replied this could be different for the different departments. She said

there is a statement in the document which says the Provost, deans, and department heads should have a conversation to determine what is appropriate for them. She said the departments that teach all of the College Algebra sections may look different in this regard than her own department which is only graduate students. She said they did not set a number due to the varying needs across campus.

Senator Musser said he does not believe the time-limited status of lecturers and the different budget lines are adequate to prevent a lecturer from becoming an instructional faculty if they have a terminal degree. Senator Sherman-Morris said she feels the committee did the best they could by giving the opportunity for promotion. She said there are limitations with some departments not being able to create instructor positions for any particular lecturer. Senator Musser said lecturers are not considered faculty or staff in the eyes of Human Resources. He said this means they do not have any representation. He said they never get raises and they need to have representation. President Robichaux-Davis said her department views lecturers as temporary positions. The pandemic has caused the lifting of test requirements for entry into her program and as a result they have been forced to hire lecturer positions to accommodate the increase in enrollment. She said when the pandemic is over, and the testing requirements are put back in place, they may not need these teaching positions anymore. Senator Musser said his concern is the departments who abuse this and hire the same person year after year to teach classes, basically using them as instructional faculty. He said there is no outside entity telling them they cannot do this. President Robichaux-Davis said at some point it would be good for the senate to be thinking of some recommendation which can be made to address the abuse of lecturer positions. She said senate will be getting this back after it is reviewed by deans and associate deans. Senator King said the results of the survey the committee conducted had several requests to reward those people who teach time after time without a process to reward them for it.

Senator Williams said his wife is a lecturer and teaches four classes per semester. He said after teaching classes for ten semesters, it is clear that the lecturer is needed. He said lecturer positions are benefits eligible and are part of the PERS system. He said it seems the only reason to not hire them as an instructor is the increased salary. Senator Williams said he believes upper administration needs to look at this and think about whether or not we are doing right by these people. He said as the Faculty Senate, we need to make sure that our teachers are not being abused by our system. He said this is not just a couple of cases, it is happening all over the University.

Senator Pelaez said there are lecturers in her department who have been teaching lower-level language classes for at least nine years. She said she believes it needs to be included that

lecturers should receive job security and be properly compensated at the same level as an instructor with the same number of classes after a certain period of time.

Senator King said this is not an issue that is unique to MSU. She said she sees the same issue in community colleges. She said this is a national conversation at this point.

The recommendations of the Faculty Affairs committee passed by a majority electronic vote.

**Student Affairs**                      **No Report**

**University Resources**              **No Report**

## **SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

President Robichaux-Davis announced that at this point of the meeting the newly elected senators are officially senators.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

### **1. President**

Senator Marett, as the Elections Officer, announced the nomination of Rebecca Robichaux-Davis for the office of President. He asked for any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Senator Marett allowed President Robichaux-Davis to give a short statement.

President Robichaux-Davis said it is with great pride and enthusiasm that she is running for the position of President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate. She said she is currently completing her ninth year on the Faculty Senate and was recently re-elected to serve her college for the next three years. She said she has thoroughly enjoyed serving as President for the past year, even during a pandemic. President Robichaux-Davis said she was committed first to the faculty's health and well-being. She said her second priority was to give the senators every opportunity to voice their thoughts and concerns that she could. In June she began sending monthly update emails to the senators and solicited feedback for the decisions that were having to be made. She said she sent all of the feedback she received to the appropriate administrators for their consideration. She said she would like to continue serving in this role and look at the Faculty Handbook over the coming year in addition to the instructional faculty positions which will be coming back to Senate.

President Robichaux-Davis said that she believes her service this past year demonstrates her commitment and dedication to the Robert Holland Faculty Senate and she wants to continue to serve as President.

Senator Marett asked the senators to place their electronic vote for the office of President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate.

Senator Marett announced that Senator Robichaux-Davis was elected to serve as President unanimously.

## **2. Vice President**

Senator Marett announced the nomination of Robert Banik and Missy Hopper for the office of Vice President. Senator Marett asked Senator Banik to give a short statement.

Senator Banik said he is from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. He said he primarily teaches differential equations, but teaches other subjects as well. He said as an instructional faculty member for the last 15 years he believes he would bring a unique role, particularly to the higher-level discussions such as in Deans Council. He said he is well versed in the policies and has served on the College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Senate. He said he is also the undergraduate advising coordinator for his department. Senator Banik said he is a Grisham Master Teacher Award recipient. He said this means that he is well versed in teaching and he believes he would bring a unique perspective to Faculty Senate leadership as, if not the only, one of the very few instructional faculty on the Faculty Senate.

Senator Marett asked Senator Hopper to give a short statement.

Senator Hopper said she is encouraged by the email saying that we would be moving back to normal next year. She said she values the importance of shared governance and because of that she values her place on the Faculty Senate. She would like to continue her service in a leadership position. She said she would like to be a part of what this campus looks like post-Covid. It is a rare opportunity to restructure and rethink based on everything we have learned about the alternative methods of working, teaching, researching, and service. Senator Hopper said she has been at MSU since 2005 and has previously served on the Faculty Senate. She believes institutional knowledge is important. She said in a post-Covid world on campus we can demonstrate excellent decision making based on this increased knowledge. She said she would like to be part of this through the Faculty Senate. Senator Hopper said she has served as the President of the Phi Kappa Phi chapter. She said she studied and passed the first-level test to become a Parliamentarian and she would bring this knowledge to the Senate as well. Senator Hopper said she also serves as Graduate Coordinator for her department. Senator Hopper said if elected, she will strive to be a true representative of the Senate who works for the greater good of the University and not just an individual actor. She said she would also be accessible as she feels she has been in the other committees she has played a leadership role in.

Senator Marett said since there are two candidates for this position, nominations from the floor will not be accepted. The vote for the office of Vice President was conducted electronically.

Senator Marett announced Senator Hopper was elected to serve as the Vice President by a vote of 21-20.

### **3. Secretary**

Senator Marett announced the nomination of Stephanie King for the office of Secretary. He asked for any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Senator Marett asked Senator King to give a short statement.

Senator King said she was just promoted to Full Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership. She said she is completing her 20<sup>th</sup> year at MSU. She is the Graduate Coordinator in her department and is known to be the policy and paperwork person in the department. She said she enjoys this and thinks that she will serve the Senate well in the role of Secretary.

Senator Marett asked the senators to place their electronic vote for the office of Secretary of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate.

Senator Marett announced that Senator King was elected to serve as Secretary unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Secretary Follett made a motion to adjourn. Vice President Barrett seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed by unanimous electronic vote at 5:01 p.m.

Submitted for correction and approval.

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Randy Follett, Secretary

Jason Cory, Administrative Assistant II