



ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE

Uncorrected Minutes of January 21, 2022

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held its regular monthly meeting in Bettersworth Auditorium at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 21, 2022.

Members absent and excused were Mike Breazeale, Thu Dinh, Charles Freeman, Derek Marshall, and Amanda Stone.

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Rebecca Robichaux-Davis. President Robichaux-Davis asked for any corrections to the minutes of the November 12, 2021, meeting. Hearing no corrections, President Robichaux-Davis accepted the minutes as presented.

GUESTS

Dr. Rick Travis, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Travis said prior to becoming dean, he was a faculty member in the Political Sciences Department. One of his focus areas was democracy, democratization, democratic failure, and institutional structures including legislatures and their role. While a faculty member, he was also the Director of the Model United Nations Program on campus for 17 years. He said in this role he saw a lot of high school and college students engage in debate and deliberation over multiple days. Dr. Travis said he has also previously served two terms on the Robert Holland Faculty Senate from 1997 to 2001 and from 2004 to 2007. He said he was asked to speak to the Senate about representation, deliberation, and policy outcomes.

Dr. Travis gave a PowerPoint presentation which can be viewed at the end of these minutes.

Senator Pelaez said, while considering that we are living in a pandemic, some senators want to be part of this spirit of mutual respect and critical conversation without fear of honesty and sheer regard but have a medical condition that recommends they are not here with us. She asked Dr. Travis what he recommends for this situation. Dr. Travis replied there is a difference

between temporary measures, even if these temporary measures last another 9, 12, or 36 months, and permanent decisions. He said he does not disapprove of what is happening today. He said it is his opinion that hybrid meetings such as this, in the long-run, will lead to a lesser sense of cohesiveness among the senators and a lesser sense of consideration of policy positions that will be taken. Dr. Travis said in the short-term it is a different thing. He said he understands the cautions needed now. He said the cautions needed now are not things that need to be codified in the rules of order.

Dr. David Shaw, Provost and Executive Vice President

Dr. Shaw began by wishing the senators a happy new year. He said the decision to delay the start of the spring semester to allow for the Winter Intersession has worked to our advantage in many ways. He asked the senators to provide him with feedback to help determine next year's calendar.

Dr. Shaw said today marks the end of the first week of the semester and we are still standing. He said we have faced many challenges this week, but he could not be prouder of how the faculty and students are handling the new spike in Covid cases. The IHL institutions spent over an hour talking with Dr. Thomas Dobbs, seeking his advice on how to approach the new semester. Dr. Shaw said Dr. Dobbs encouraged the schools to do just as we are doing. Dr. Dobbs recognized this variant as a milder variant. Due to this, and our vaccination rates, Dr. Dobbs recommended we hold in-person classes and maintain the mask requirement. Dr. Shaw said administration is aware that with the inevitable spikes a certain amount of grace will have to be shown with the faculty and staff. The resiliency of our institution, which has been enhanced over the past two years, is really paying off in terms of the experiences faculty have had on how to adapt. He said he understands if someone is sick and needs to stay home or if extracurricular assignments need to be assigned to continue the student learning experience. Dr. Shaw said all the deans have reported that they are proud of the way faculty have responded. Dr. Shaw said he recognizes that this is a stressful time, and he thanked the faculty for doing what is best for our students and their success.

Dr. Shaw said another survey is being conducted of students and employees to determine current vaccination status. After the first day of the survey the numbers are basically the same as the last survey results with over 80% of employees and over 50% of students reporting that they are vaccinated. Vaccinations are still being strongly promoted. A number of the mobile testing sites will be operated over the next few days and weeks. Dr. Shaw said the administration is staying in close contact with Dr. Dobbs and the local hospitals to make sure we are best prepared for any contingency that may arise.

Dr. Shaw said three task forces were created to look at three different topical areas of multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary academic program development. The three areas are data science, health sciences, and autonomy. All three of these committees have made significant progress recently. Last fall, after going through the normal processes, we approved the new program in data science. This was initially a partnership between the Mathematics and Statistics Department and the Computer Science and Engineering department. This has grown to include involvement from five colleges. The Introduction to Data Literacy course was taught last fall and will be taught again this spring. In just the second semester since its inception, there are already 107 students enrolled in the course. We are currently in conversation with the community college system to think of ways we can partner with them to help prepare their students to continue their education at Mississippi State. With regard to the health sciences initiative, a consultant has been hired to identify new opportunities in academic and professional programs. Dr. Shaw said he met with the consultant yesterday afternoon and he seemed to be very excited about some of the opportunities we could pursue. Dr. Shaw said we are not yet at the point where we are talking about specifics, but he is excited about some of the opportunities we have to have an impact on health services in Mississippi. Mississippi generally ranks between 49th and 50th in health outcomes in our country. This is a way that a land grant institution can make a true difference for the state. Dr. Shaw said, with regard to the autonomy effort, MSU was recognized by the FAA as a sanctioned and recognized institution for the teaching and training for unmanned aerial systems last fall. He said it is exciting to see the developments coming on that front.

Dr. Shaw said the Teaching Evaluation and Faculty Evaluation reports have come together in a way that has spurred a lot of additional conversation in both his office and across campus about what we can do, in a positive way, to make sure we are doing the best job we can to prepare, equip, and train our faculty. Dr. Shaw said he finished his PhD program at Oklahoma State University on a research assistantship while having taught only one guest lecture. He said he was then hired by Mississippi State University in May and was teaching in a classroom in August. Dr. Shaw said we can do better than that for our faculty. He said he has asked Dr. Jim Dunne who previously led the Center for Teaching and Learning to lead an effort to determine what other institutions are doing to train their faculty to be the most effective they can be.

Dr. Shaw said one of the recommendations that came out of our strategic plan was to address the impending decline in the number of college aged citizens in the state. He said it is unrealistic to expect that budgets would not be affected by a decline in tuition funds. As part of our Strategic Enrollment Management, Ruffalo Noel Levitz, the national leader in enrollment projection and planning, was hired. They are in the preliminary stages of producing a final report so more information will be shared on this in the near future. Dr. Shaw said he is excited

about how they are helping us to identify ways that we can not only maintain enrollment but grow enrollment moving forward.

Dr. Shaw said Dr. Regina Hyatt chaired a task force on Student Success. The task force provided several hard-hitting recommendations on things we need to be thinking about and doing. Dr. Thomas Bourgeois has been serving as a liaison between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in his dual role as Associate Vice President for Student Success and Dean of Students. Dr. Shaw said this role has proven to be a huge asset to him due to the fact that student success is not solely a Student Affairs or Academic Affairs issue. He said Dr. Bourgeois is really helping the Office of the Provost to understand the things outside of the classroom that directly impact student success as well as taking the conversations from the Academic Affairs side back to Student Affairs. Dr. Bourgeois is leading the effort to develop a strategic plan for student success and more information on this will be shared later this semester or at latest by the beginning of the fall semester.

The Evaluation of Teaching Task Force put a great deal of effort into developing a new instrument which Dr. Shaw feels is a more effective tool to get the feedback faculty need. Last semester was the first time the new instrument was used and the survey will continue to be monitored for changes that may need to be made.

Dr. Shaw said he just received two subcommittee reports from the Associate Deans Council on the Instructional faculty initiative on which Senate made recommendations. He said he just received these reports and has not yet had the time to review them. He said he recently met with President Robichaux-Davis and Vice President Hopper and discussed the things that will need to be thought about to be able to get this initiative implemented. He said he has not talked to anyone that did not think Senate recommendation number one discussing the new ranks was a good idea. Dr. Shaw said when he was in his faculty role he was in the Division of Agriculture with a split appointment between CALS and MAFES. When the decision was made in the 1980's to bring Extension in and have unified departments that included extension, research, and teaching, the first thing that was set up was promotion and tenure committees. He said this was prior to tenure for Extension faculty. Extension needed to have representation on the P&T Committees to ensure they were being evaluated fairly for promotion. Dr. Shaw said there were some ugly conversations that were difficult to go through to grasp if an Extension faculty could sit in on the evaluation of a research and teaching faculty member and vice versa. There were a lot of strong opinions on both sides. Dr. Shaw said we will have to have some of these same conversations as we think about professorial ranks within departments and colleges that are not tenure-track positions. Dr. Shaw said he is fully confident that we can get there, but he is also confident that if we do not have these conversations up-front, we may lose the objective in the general faculty vote. There will most

likely be some Town Hall discussions to provide the opportunity to understand, pose questions, present ideas, and express concerns prior to a faculty vote. Dr. Shaw said that he would love to get this done this spring semester so we can begin thinking about the structure of the committees, but he said we need to make sure that we get this right rather than quickly. He said we will take the time to ensure that all concerns and ideas are vetted.

Dr. Shaw said he is very excited about the quality product Sasaki Associates is developing for our master plan. He said there is a great deal of input they received from the campus community. The quality of the plan being delivered will be better than anything that we have seen in the past and casts a great vision for where we are going. More will be shared on this as the plan is finalized in the next month or so.

Dr. Shaw said over the last several months we have been engaged with Prophet Corporation based out of Atlanta to help us think through how we can tell the story of Mississippi State University more effectively. The firm does branding and marketing work nationally and has several large clients such as Chick-Fil-A. Dr. Shaw said he thinks this meshes very well with what we are doing with strategic enrollment planning, the campus master plan, and the transformational plan for change.

Senator Gregory said she believed it would be appropriate for someone who sees the positives of online meetings to address the Senate. She said she spoke to Rasheda Bodie Forbes when she had concerns about her colleagues not being able to attend and she may be a good guest to invite.

Senator Gregory said one of her colleagues in the College of Architecture, Art, and Design and some faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences have been trying to get a civil rights activist to speak on campus. She said there was a request by the University to have an alternative viewpoint to their civil rights views. She asked what the status of this request was and what the University views as an alternative view to civil rights. Dr. Shaw said he will follow up on Senator Gregory's question. He said he did not believe he was part of all of the conversations relating to her question.

Senator Williams said the Communications Department just started a new master's degree program. He said part of the conversation when preparing the degree program involved the GRE. He asked what Dr. Shaw saw as the future of standardized tests such as the ACT and the GRE. He also asked how this would affect merit-based aid. Dr. Shaw said there is a huge debate nationally about standardized testing. He said, with respect to the GRE, it can be used very effectively for the students who are right on the margin and may not qualify without the test score. The GRE can actually help make the case for the inclusion of the student. He said he has also seen in a lot of the available information that it may not be the best single tool to be

using. Dr. Shaw said the administration's guidance to the deans is to use the test to evaluate students on the margin, but not to use it as a hard cutoff. With the dropping of the GRE requirements in some departments recently we did not see a drop in the average GPAs for the programs. Dr. Shaw said a lot of what he said about the GRE also applies to the ACT and SAT. He said the conversation about these tests in the state of Mississippi has to be driven by the fact that IHL and the state legislature require these tests for state aid. This is not something that we can make a decision on by ourselves. This was a topic of conversation during the last meeting of the IHL Chief Academic Officers. Dr. Shaw said our experiences with this during the pandemic needs to stem the conversations nationally and locally on the future of standardized tests.

Senator Pelaez asked what the current plans are for the Omicron variant. She said last semester there was a threshold at which masks requirements would be changed. Dr. Shaw replied the mask requirement will follow the CDC guidance which requires masks when the county is in a substantial or high rate of spread. The guidance from the State Health Officer was to monitor the county status on a one or two week rolling average. Dr. Shaw said the vaccine mandate is on hold pending the decision of the Supreme Court. He said the University is doubling down on promotion of the vaccine. Dr. Shaw said guidance from Dr. Dobbs and the CDC encourages face-to-face classes due to the mildness of the variant and the vaccination rate of the most susceptible population. There will be high numbers, but we will not see the same situation we had with the Delta variant. Dr. Shaw said Dr. Dobbs is very hopeful that we are at the peak right now and the numbers should be going down sharply in the next two or three weeks.

Senator Kelly said she wanted to follow up on Senator Gregory's question about alternative points of view. She said this past fall the Gender Studies Department in conjunction with another department set up a panel discussion with a well-established scholar and a prominent attorney to speak about the potential implications of the Supreme Court case Dobbs vs the State of Mississippi. She said this case could make abortion illegal or very restrictive. She said this case has critical implications which should be discussed in a university setting. The attempt to organize an alternative point of view prevented the publicizing of the original event. She said she has concerns about the alternative viewpoint policy and said, with her experience and Senator Gregory's experience, she gets the impression this policy only applies to topics and speakers that are unpopular in a conservative political climate. She said if restrictions are only put on these topics, it violates academic freedom. Dr. Shaw replied that for a number of consecutive years now Mississippi State University has been recognized as a free speech campus. Dr. Shaw said the administration is very proud and very respectful of this. He said he suspects that questions were raised for these events given they are hot topics. Dr. Shaw said he wants to see topics like this discussed on a college campus. He said in the case that Senator

Kelly is referring to, the question of will we provide the opportunity for our students to hear about the Mississippi case that is being made. The answer was why would we not bring in someone like the attorney pleading the case. Dr. Shaw said this was not a one-to-one matchup, but to take advantage of something that is putting Mississippi in the national spotlight and to be sure that our students fully understand the ramifications of the case. Dr. Shaw said he does not think that there is a requirement every time to have alternative viewpoints and it is not always a conservative versus liberal philosophy. He said we must make sure that our students have the opportunity to hear from different viewpoints. He said he was in a conversation just this week asking if there are lectureships we should be exploring to bring in nationally and internationally recognized speakers on topics just like these. He said he is very supportive of this and wants to make sure that the students, the faculty, and the citizens of Mississippi are given the exposure that is necessary to see this accomplished.

Senator Zuckerman asked what the latest university vaccination data shows. Dr. Shaw said as of this morning, when the survey had been available for one day, 81% of employees had reported being fully vaccinated. When we stopped the vaccine mandate the number of employees who were either vaccinated or reported an exemption was between 92% and 93%.

Senator Priddy said the questions in the new student survey were much more geared toward evaluating student learning. She said she has heard from a couple of colleagues in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Engineering that they would like some guidance on how to tie the results of the new survey in with the older evaluation data. Dr. Shaw said this is not the first time he has heard this, and we will need to work collectively to address it. He said the task force recommendation was to not include the averages. He said we need to think about what we can do to provide information without it being used in a punitive way which it was not intended. Dr. Shaw said he is not sure what the answer is on this, and we need to continue having this conversation.

Senator Wood said she has heard some concerns about the timing of when the student surveys become available. She said faculty would like more advanced notice so they can encourage their students to take it in class. She asked what conversations have been held about how we can encourage our students to complete the surveys. Dr. Shaw said he would have liked to have everything finalized a bit earlier last semester to provide more advanced notice. He said administering the survey during the Thanksgiving week was also not ideal. Dr. Shaw said there are discussions about the timing of the survey and the window it is open. He said he welcomes any feedback or suggestions on this.

Senator Kelly said she would like to see alternative funding opportunities for departments to be able to facilitate hosting alternative points of view. She said smaller departments with smaller budgets may not be able to fund multiple events and the alternative point of view may

not line up with the departments mission or priorities. She said it also may be beneficial to see if there is organic interest in an alternative point of view. In 2018 an abortion provider who speaks strictly from a Christian perspective came to speak on campus. She said there were many who were in strong disagreement who organized their own events. Dr. Shaw said conversations are ongoing about what we can do with regard to lectureships. He said it is too early at this point to say we have something, but administration is very interested in seeing what can be done to be sure that a lot of different viewpoints, not just pro and con, can be presented.

REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year, Senators! Welcome to 2022! I hope you had a restful and relaxing holiday break and your Spring semester is off to a good start! For those of you who taught a Winter Session course, thank you for providing that opportunity to our students. I hope you were still able to find a little time for rest and relaxation. As we begin, I wish you a successful and healthy semester as we continue to face challenges brought on by variants of COVID-19.

Since my last report, several of the university standing committees on which I serve did not meet, but some did along with other standing monthly meetings that I have in my role as President of the Faculty Senate; thus, it was still a busy month. On Dec 3rd, 6th and 7th, I attended the virtual SACSCOC Annual Conference as part of MSU's team of Dr. Keenum, Dr. Shaw, Dr. Tracey Baham and Vice-President for Finance and Administration, Mr. Don Zant. We attended required sessions for those going through reaffirmation in 2024. I also attended sessions specifically focused on faculty governance and the accreditation process.

Since our last meeting, I met with Dr. Jim Dunne (one of my regular monthly meetings) and we discussed the formation of a committee to replace the "Committee on Committees". This new committee will review the work of each University Standing Committee and determine if any changes to the committee's charge, purpose, and composition need to be changed. The President of the Faculty Senate will serve on this new committee. We expect for this committee to begin its work at some point during this semester.

Also in December, I attended a meeting of the Committee on Inclusive Excellence Statements during which time we reviewed the inclusive excellence statements of some units on campus as well as many of our peer institutions and discussed what we thought should be included in such statements for MSU. We are in the process of constructing such statements for our university, building off of what some units on campus already have.

In response to a concern about the vagueness of the policy for excused absences for medical reasons, I met with Dean Thomas Bourgeois to discuss this concern. He noted this policy is purposefully vague and is aligned with that of our peer institutions. He did share that he and

personnel from our Title 9 office and General Counsel are currently reviewing and updating various parts of the policy and asked if I would like to appoint a senator to represent us in those discussions prior to any changes in the policy coming before the senate through the usual review cycle. I have asked Senator Lindsey Miller to do this, and she has graciously agreed. Dr. Bourgeois also volunteered to come speak to us about this. He reiterated that his office provides support to faculty in determining whether or not absences due to medical reasons are excused or not. He said all the faculty member has to do is contact his office, explain the situation, provide any documents that they may have, and his personnel will take over after that. He said not many faculty take advantage of this service, but encouraged us to do so. After discussing this with the Executive Committee, I have invited Dean Bourgeois to speak to us at our February meeting.

I have continued to attend weekly COVID-19 meetings during which time I voiced any concerns that were sent to me during the week prior to the meeting. You should notice that the COVID-19 website has been updated to reflect new guidance about quarantining with or without being fully vaccinated along with other updated information.

I have also been recently appointed to the Experiential Learning Task Force and attended one meeting of that group during which time we discussed how best to capture what is currently being done on campus as it pertains to Experiential Learning. A survey will be going out to all faculty at some point this semester and I urge you to complete that survey, as well as to urge those who you represent to also complete the survey.

With regards to the new Student Course Survey that we approved during our October meeting, which was implemented at the end of last semester, I have only received feedback from a few faculty members after its implementation. This feedback included that they liked the items much better than the previous ones, but that the response rates were still very low. Please send me any other feedback that you may have received, along with any ideas you may have for increasing the response rates.

Reports from Committees on which I Serve:

Athletic Council – This committee met on January 12, 2022. Ann Carr shared that a Leadership Academy will be held for student athletes this semester. Fourteen student athletes will be chosen to participate. The interview process for identifying the next cohort of BELI Interns for this semester is underway. Christine Jackson shared that Athletic Academics is fully staffed now, but they are still looking for more academic tutors. If you know of anyone interested in tutoring student athletes have them contact Christine. For the ninth straight semester, our Athletic Department had an overall departmental GPA over 3.0. The departmental GPA for Fall 2021 was 3.1. Next week, John Cohen, Bracky Brett and Brent Fountain will be attending the

NCAA Annual Convention at the NCAA Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. They will be voting on a new constitution for the NCAA. They will also participate in meetings of the D1 Transformation Committee which is being led by Co-Chair SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey. The D1 Transformation Committee will work to make significant changes in the way Division 1 Athletics operates. Their main focus will be the student athlete experience.

COVID-19 Task Force – The COVID-19 Task Force continues to meet weekly. Information from these meetings has been provided primarily through emailed updates as well as through the updated COVID-19 website. To start the semester, our current mask requirement is masks must be worn inside all buildings on campus. Individual employees do not have to wear masks in their own office spaces. The COVID-19 Vaccine remains available at the Health Center. See www.msstate.edu/covid19 for more information.

Design Review Committee – This committee met on December 2. We approved of the installation of concrete pads on campus for outdoor public sculptures that will be part of an “Art Trail” from downtown Starkville to campus. We also approved the plans for the Humphrey Coliseum Renovation and the Lakeview Drive Relocation project. Lakeview Drive will be “pushed” closer to the Sanderson Center.

Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council – This council has not met since my last report.

Executive Council – This council has not met since my last report.

Executive Enrollment Management Committee – The committee met on November 29th during which time our Ruffalo Noel Levitz representative shared with us the 13 strategic enrollment planning strategies that we will be adopting as we move forward. Those strategies are:

- (1) Comprehensive, University-Wide Marketing Plan
- (2) University-Wide Undergraduate Recruitment Communications Plan
- (3) Coordinated Graduate Student Recruitment Communications Plan
- (4) Expanded & Increased Market Reach
- (5) Comprehensive University-Wide International Recruitment
- (6) Comprehensive and Holistic Review of Under-Graduate Financial Aid Awarding
- (7) Graduate Assistant-Funding Strategy
- (8) University-Wide Expansion of Non-Traditional Terms
- (9) Graduate Stackable and Micro-Credential Development

(10) Enhance and Execute an Incoming Student Onboarding Experience

(11) Develop Broad Academic Support Strategies

(12) Further Develop Student Success Strategies for Campuses 2 & 5

(13) Streamline and Improve Processes for Graduate Admissions

Fall Convocation Group – This committee has not met since my last report.

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

Information Technology Council – This committee met on December 7, 2021. ITS has implemented a new project scheduling and prioritization process as part of the overall IT Transformation. Prioritization will be based on alignment to MSU's project objectives which are (1) enhance student experience, (2) grow/lead life-changing research, (3) improve operational efficiency, (4) pursue healthy, sustainable growth, and (5) address security risks. The Vice-Presidents will review project requests each month to determine priority,

Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee – This committee has not met since my last report.

Parking and Traffic Regulations Committee – This committee has not met since my last report.

Sustainability Committee – This committee met on December 8. I was unable to attend this meeting, but asked Senator Follett to attend in my place. Senator Follett attended the meeting and subsequently provided me with notes from the meeting. Green Week is being planned for the Spring 2022 Earth Week. Considerable updates have been made to the Sustainability Website (www.sustainability.msstate.edu), but they welcome any comments or suggestions on potential improvements. They are actively working to include more details of ongoing projects on their website. WastePro was the winner of the recent RFP for a recycling vendor. They are the current vendor so there won't be any transition issues. The Climate Action Plan, created in 2012, is being reviewed in terms of either updating it or generating a completely new version. Campus Landscaping is working to re-introduce native grasses and flowers to different areas around campus. We have moved to slow-release fertilizers to get more sustainable benefits. We currently have about 1,200 acres of turf being mowed on a roughly 10-Day cycle across campus. In the next three to five years, we will get to a "complete" status on the conversion of certain areas to the native plant materials. It will sometimes appear that some areas of campus are "dead" or not kept up during this transition time. Signage is being installed in those areas to inform people who notice it and have questions. The upcoming solar farm that will be constructed near GTRA is part of the TVA Green Investment Program and is planned to produce 200 MW of power, of which Starkville (with MSU) will get about 30 MW. This will help in making

progress towards the goal of MSU being carbon neutral by 2042. The MSU Ice Plant on campus is being upgraded. The ice plant is an energy storage facility used to help provide the chilled water for those campus buildings on the steam and chilled-water air conditioning loop. The storage area of the plant will double from 12,000 ton-hours to 24,000 ton-hours of capacity. Currently, there are over 3.5 million square feet of building space on this system.

REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE VICE PRESIDENT

Academic Deans Council

The December Academic Deans Council meeting was cancelled. The January meeting is scheduled for January 19th.

Committee on Campus Access

The Committee on Campus Access meeting was held on December 6 in virtual format. There was one agenda item and that was to address funding of projects. The committee voted to appropriate \$20,000.00 to initiate a survey of campus architectural requirements including ADA barriers that need to be addressed for the purpose of identifying greatest needs and creating a priority list to plan for funding. The survey will take approximately 3 weeks and will focus on percent of higher use buildings and then phase in other buildings. The committee voted not to exceed \$20,000.00 for this survey with a future vote to approve the actual amount when set.

The January meeting was cancelled.

Community Engagement Committee

No meetings were held since the last Vice President's report, and no meetings are scheduled to date.

Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee

The Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee (MPDAC) had three Consent Agenda items this month which were (1) Humphrey Coliseum Renovations, (2) the associated realignment of Lakeview Drive project to the east, and (3) two locations for future display of public outdoor art pending further administrative discussion and approval. In the absence of other new business or an objection, the MPDAC requested a yea or nay vote on the consent agenda via email by December 9th. The consent agenda was approved.

The January meeting was cancelled.

Undergraduate Research and Creative Discovery Committee

No meetings were held since the last Vice President's report, and no meetings are scheduled to date.

Sustainability Committee

No meetings were held since the last Vice President's report, and no meetings are scheduled to date.

Updated on January 17, 2022

Respectfully submitted, Missy Hopper

FACULTY DESIGNATES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

BUSINESS TO BE SENT TO COMMITTEE

- 1. AOP 12.12 Credit & Grades** (Academic Affairs)
- 2. AOP 13.06 Sabbatical Leave for Faculty Members of State Institutions of Higher Learning** (Faculty Affairs)

President Robichaux-Davis asked for any discussion on sending the policies to their respective committees. The motion to send the policies to their indicated committee passed by unanimous hand vote.

Senator Follett said during the last meeting he had made a recommendation to send further consideration of changes to the bylaws back to committee. He said this recommendation was based on the motion made by Senator Carskadon. Senator Follett said, given the workaround of the bylaws employed today to allow for remote attendance by the senators with medical concerns, he would like to withdraw his prior recommendation.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs **No Report**

Ancillary Affairs **No Report**

Charter & Bylaws

- 1. AOP 12.39 Policy on Undergraduate University Scholarship**

Senator Barrett, on behalf of the Ancillary Affairs Committee, shared the committee report on AOP 12.39 Policy on Undergraduate University Scholarship.

Senator Welch asked why the Presidential Scholars and Provost Scholars were stricken from the policy. Senator Barrett replied that he was not certain why the scholarships were stricken and withdrew the motion of the Ancillary Affairs Committee to accept the report on AOP 12.39 in order to get further clarification.

Faculty Affairs **No Report**

Student Affairs **No Report**

University Resources **No Report**

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Senator Follett made a motion to adjourn. Senator Pelaez seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed by unanimous hand vote at 3:43 p.m.

Submitted for correction and approval.

Stephanie King, Secretary

Jason Cory, Administrative Assistant II

Representation, Deliberation, and Policy Outcomes

Dr. Rick Travis, Dean,
College of Arts & Sciences



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1

Three Research Strands

- **Legislative Behavior**
 - focus on longer-term coalition building, issue position shifts, unlikely alliances
- **Communication Theory & Rhetoric**
 - focus on characteristics of discussions, attentiveness, tone and specific content of language used, representativeness of participation,
- **Deliberative Democracy**



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2

Three Research Strands

- Deliberative Democracy
 - informed discussion between individuals about issues which concern them, leading to some form of consensus and collective decision. To come to a collective decision, minds must be changed as a consequence of deliberation. Preferences are not just aggregated but revised in the light of a preceding debate.



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3

Basic Research Question

- With Regard to Issue Understanding, Position Shifts, and / or Quality of Outcomes, does the forum matter?
- Do asynchronous online, synchronous online, or face-two-face forums matter?



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4

The Most Important Things

- Quality of Shared Information
 - are actors stating, sharing their positions with completeness and clarity?
- Quality of Engagement with Shared Information
 - are recipients absorbing information?



Online Characteristics to Consider

- More Deliberate Steps to Ensure Quality Engagement
- More Power in Hands of Moderator
- Dominant Talkers about the Same
- Fewer Side Conversations



Discourse Outcomes

- Online Produces
 - greater ability to ‘scale out’ participation
 - saves travel resources, less likelihood of disease spread
 - less clarity of points being made
 - less understanding of information being shared
 - more frequent disagreements
 - fewer bold disagreements



Discourse Outcomes

- Online Produces
 - fewer changes in initial stances on issues
 - less likelihood of substantially revised policy recommendations, decisions etc.
 - greater likelihood of simple majoritarian outcome instead of consensual outcome



8

Discourse Outcomes

- Face-to-Face Produces
 - more bold disagreements coupled with more non-verbal cues to soften disagreements
 - greater likelihood that complex issues will be more deeply queried, new variants of policy proposals produced
 - greater ability to ‘scale up’



9

Research Limitation

- Deliberative Democracy and Rhetoric & Communication Theory
 - focus on broader publics
- diversity of background and opinions
 - one shot or limited shot research designs
- Legislative Decision-Making
 - outcomes based on on-going interactions over longer periods of time

Presentation by Dr. Rick Travis



10

Face to Face Peculiarities

- cross-talk as a positive
 - serial diachronic conversations often to lead more ‘sounding out’ opinions leading to better understanding of issue and more ideas for modifications
- unexpected issue alliances emerge
- proximity matters
- longer-term alliances open doors to repeated gains in understanding



11

Robert Holland Faculty Senate

- D. The Bylaws of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate
 - The Robert Holland Faculty Senate, having been brought into being by the Charter of Organization of the Faculty of Mississippi State University, conscious of its role as an agency for stimulating, ascertaining, and appropriately articulating considered views and opinions of and for the general faculty will assist in the continued improvement of the university.



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Robert Holland Faculty Senate

- “Democracy begins in human conversation. A democratic conversation does not require elaborate rules of procedure or utopian notions of perfect consensus. What it does require is a spirit of mutual respect-people conversing critically with one another in an atmosphere of honesty and shared regard.”
- — John Dewey, William Greider



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