

## **ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE March 7, 2008 and March 18, 2008**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held its regular meeting in the Coskrey Auditorium of Memorial Hall at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7, 2008. Due to a Maroon Alert issued at 3:00, the meeting was suspended at 3:05 p.m. and reconvened on Wednesday, March 18, 2008.

### **3/7/08 Attendance**

Members absent and excused were Mary Kathryn Barbier, Greg Bently, Dave Dampier, Jacque Deeds, Eric Dibble, Denny Eshee, June Garner, Holly Johnson, Randy Little, Jerry Mathews, Vince McGrath, Noel Polk, Rudy Rogers,

No members were absent and unexcused.

The meetings were broadcast real-time over the World Wide Web. The file will be left active for a few weeks and can be reviewed by clicking on the Senate homepage at <http://www.facultysenate.msstate.edu>.

### **March 07, 2008 Meeting**

President Robert Wolverton called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. Wolverton announced those Senators re-elected for another term, and those whose terms were ending and thanked them for their service.

President Wolverton referred to the minutes of the February 8, 2008, Regular Meeting as distributed. Senator Bridges moved, Senator Chamblee seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve the minutes as corrected. Changes included a spelling correction. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

### **GUESTS**

President Wolverton introduced guests: Dr. Peter Rabideau, Provost; and Dr. Stephen Middleton, Director of African-American Studies.

### **ROBERT FOGLESONG, PRESIDENT**

President Wolverton stated that Dr. Foglesong was scheduled to attend the Senate meeting, but had cancelled due to a meeting with IHL Commissioner, Dr. Tom Meredith.

### **PETER RABIDEAU, PROVOST**

Provost Rabideau provided the following information:

- An update on Dean searches:
  - Engineering has four top candidates acceptable to the search committee. Invitations for an interview have been offered to two candidates: (a) Dr. Sarah Rajala, Department Head of the Electrical and Computer Engineering

- Department at MSU and (b) Dr. Jim Petersen, Vice Provost for Research from Washington State University.
- Rabideau has met with the Arts and Sciences search committee and added that all the finalists were felt to be strong. He is still looking over the materials and looks to move forward in the next week.
  - Referring to a provided handout, Rabideau highlighted activities in the First Year Experience activities.
    - Highlights included: the freshman threshold courses; course redesign (similar to the Math Domain); first year seminars intended to be fun and present information about exciting aspects of various disciplines; learning communities (goal is to make them sustainable with a reasonable cost); and intervention programs (summer development program and the at-risk student program); and the First Year Experience Program activities sponsored by IHL through the Center for Teaching and Learning.
  - The Promotion and Tenure procedures have been completed for the year. Rabideau indicated that he believes the system is working well.
  - Sabbatical leave applications have been approved at the University level and will next go before the IHL at the March meeting.
  - Questions/comments posed to Rabideau:
    - Barriers to student success and the need to address “gate keeping” and introductory courses.
    - If the Promotion and Tenure policy before the Senate today were to be voted down, would he (Rabideau) be willing to meet over the summer? The response was affirmative.
    - Over time, the semester terms have been shortened (from 2400 to 2250 hours); some programs (e.g., Vet Medicine) need longer sessions than the IHL mandated (three classes a week for 50 minutes across the semester) and have been told they cannot “teach through” the end of the semester and have no viable alternative for the situation (e.g., load up at the front end of the semester). Rabideau responded that the University Curriculum and Courses Committee (UCCC) should examine these issues. He stated that faculty should also examine the appropriateness of additional hours in a course. Additionally, he stated it is unlikely there are constraints on this under the IHL policy because they have changed their policy regarding mandated semester start and end dates. Therefore,. Additional discussion included the effect of Banner on the issue.
    - Related to the recent Art and Architecture situation, there was a need for problem-solving and guidelines for facilities use. Has the University provided some alternatives to the unit about their need. Rabideau stated that Dr. Foglesong has met with that unit’s faculty to address the issue.
    - It was reported that students were having difficulty adhering to the University’s formatting requirements for thesis and dissertations. A suggestion was made to provide a formatted template to assist in the student. It was noted that a thesis and dissertation seminar is offered each semester and that the thesis department will work with students to assist in the process.
  - Concern was expressed for the difficulty graduate student have when they change their program across or within or departments (e.g., change in concentration). It was noted that the process is more difficult for graduate students than

undergraduates (e.g., application, fee, paperwork). Rabideau stated the Graduate Council is working on similar issues and he will bring this issue to them. He stated one important difference is that undergraduates are admitted to the university, whereas graduate students are admitted to a program. Difficulty in changing concentrations is another matter.

- An audience member (a student reporter from the Reflector) was recognized by Dr. Rabideau. Noting the confirmation of Dr. Foglesong's resignation, he asked for a timeline for the search for a President. Dr. Rabideau stated the resignation was to take effect no later than June 30, 2008.

### **STEPHEN MIDDLETON, DIRECTOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

Dr. Middleton provided a PowerPoint covering the following information:

- The program is an interdisciplinary program across the University.
  - There are three categories of faculty work with AAS (core, affiliated, and partners).
  - Programs include an undergraduate minor and an online certificate at the graduate level. Middleton stated he is working to have independence in development of courses in AAS; at the current time all course are cross-listed courses.
  - Future plans include a major at the undergraduate level (dual major), a graduate concentration, a Scholar in Residence Program with a research center and research associates/post doc opportunities, and interdisciplinary financial aid/support.
- Questions/discussion:
  - Will this program expand choices for students? Middleton responded the program will certainly make this possible.
  - Why is autonomy in course creation necessary for sufficiency? Middleton stated he is committed to creation of the best possible program; and, without autonomy, this will not be possible.

### **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

President Wolverton provided an update from a press release handed to him during the meeting. He read the release and indicated that President Foglesong had tendered his resignation for no later than June 30, 2008.

In response to the announcement, Senator Goodman moved, seconded by Senator Silva, to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to assist in the transition and provide Senate input into Presidential searches.

- Discussion included:
  - The necessity to avoid secrecy in the search process.
  - The importance of the request for the Senate/faculty's active participation in the Presidential search process. It was suggested that the Senate President request a meeting with IHL to emphasize the importance of an open, "above-board" search appropriate to the university environment.

- Concern was expressed for the impact of this and past resolutions/efforts and the importance of placing the Senate members' wishes on the record.
- Appreciation was expressed for Dr. Foglesong's service to Mississippi State University.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Another message provided to President Wolverton indicated that a Maroon Alert had been issued with a University closure scheduled for 3:30 due to a winter storm warning.

### **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

President Wolverton gave the following report:

- The Executive Committee had met with the Architecture faculty representatives concerning their issue with facilities use and academic freedom.
- An update on the Textbook Taskforce meeting held on the previous day was provided.

The Senate meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

## **March 18, 2008 Meeting**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held a supplementary meeting in the Coskrey Auditorium of Memorial Hall at 2:08 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18, 2008. Due to a Maroon Alert issued on March 7, 2008, the regular meeting was suspended and reconvened on Wednesday, March 18, 2008.

### **3/18/08 Attendance**

Members absent and excused were Mary Kathryn Barbier, Mike Brown, Tim Chamblee, Eric Dibble, Pat Donohoe, June Garner, Mark Goodman, Terry Hanson, Holly Johnson, Randy Little, Jason Lueg, Jerry Mathews, Joe Massey, Tom Matney, Julia Porter, Noel Polk, Rich Raymond, Rudy Rogers, Juan Silva, Shu-hui Wu, Subhra Chakrabarty-proxy for Meghan Millea on sabbatical.

No members were absent and unexcused.

A quorum was not present. Following consultation with the Senate Parliamentarian, Senator Deeds, Senator Bridges moved, seconded by Senator Coyne, to suspend the rules to address the issues on the agenda. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

President Wolverton called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m.

### **GUESTS**

President Wolverton introduced guests: Judy Spencer from Human Resource Management.

### **BUSINESS SENT TO COMMITTEES**

#### **AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

Senator Wood, Chair of this committee, referred to the committee's report on this issue. He reviewed the constituencies who were represented on the committee the recommendations. Wood stated the number of cases that are brought forward are 3 to 4 cases per year out of 6000 MSU employees and usually concerns alcohol. Wood also cited the cost of the testing. Wood reviewed three of the recommended changes: (a) eliminate the random testing of employees unless required by DOT/DOD, (b) no new employees will be tested unless required by DOT/DOD, and (c) an oversight committee will be added to the policy. Wood stated the committee would provide oversight and guidance (e.g., address the reasonable suspension policy applicable to individual cases) and provide an annual report. The committee would have representatives from Human Resource management, staff, health care industry (e.g., from the Student Health Center), faculty, and administration.

A quorum of 26 Senate members was achieved.

Senator Woods moved, seconded by Senator Deeds, to accept the recommendations of this committee.

➤ Discussion included:

- Inclusion of statements specific to DOT policy.
- Who/what was driving this policy. Wood responded that there was a need for a uniform policy and that the policy was needed in order to test employees and to have consistency across incidents.
- Senator Adebisi moved, seconded by Senator Bridges, to include a friendly amendment to strike the following phrase [“. . . respond in the following manner, and it retains the right, in its sole discretion, to . . .”] from the *Consequences of a Positive Test* section. The recommended section will read as follows:

*An employee who tests positive with respect to an unlawful drug or alcohol may be temporarily suspended or transferred to another position. Once the test is confirmed according to the Act, the University may take appropriate corrective or disciplinary actions up to and including termination.*

The motion for the friendly amendment passed on a unanimous voice vote.

The original motion to accept the recommendations of this committee passed on a unanimous voice vote.

## STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

### FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

#### *Leave Policies*

Senator Michael Brashier, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report on **AOP 13.13 – Leave Policies**. Senator D'Abramo moved, Senator Burk seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the recommendation of the Faculty Affairs Committee on this issue.

Senator Brashier noted past requests as the Senate had initially been represented the report and also highlighted aspects of his report: (a) this would cover any approved extended leave, (b) the policy does not require modification of an individual's workload upon return, and (c) any denial at the department level would automatically move the request to the dean's office. Brashier stated that Donna Reese, Chair of the Parental Leave Taskforce, had communicated a request from the taskforce that the policy (AOP 13.13) be tabled pending revisions. Brashier stated his belief that there was a need to have a policy in place and to bring to completion of 3 years' work. He suggested that the taskforce continue their work to fine tune the policy and propose further changes to the policy in the future.

Discussion included:

- The request from the taskforce to table the policy pending refinement of the policy.
- Issues surrounding the stoppage of the tenure clock.
- Alignment/synchrony of this policy with other University policies.

The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

### *Faculty Annual Review*

Senator Brashier referred to this Committee's report on **Faculty Annual Review**. Senator Brashier moved, Senator D'Abramo seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the recommendations of this committee on this issue.

Brashier highlighted the following aspects of his committee's report: (a) the variability across campus with regard to annual reviews and the impact on merit pay; (b) components examined in the review (e.g., aspects of service); (c) removal of numerical ratings such that they are replaced with descriptive statements (excellence, satisfactory, unsatisfactory) tied to annual goals and promotion and tenure requirements; and (d) the reinstatement of an appeals process.

Discussion included:

- The numerical assignment related to performance evaluation to allow comparison across time. Related to the descriptive statements, concerns were expressed for the need for an additional level (outstanding) between satisfactory and excellence. The need for a narrative to accompany the review to outline the individual's goals to remove/minimize subjectivity in the evaluation.
- The need to address capricious judgments on the part of the department head and the blind endorsement of the evaluation by deans. Brashier stated that due to the reported arbitrary decisions, the committee has kept the appeals process in which the candidate can indicate agreement/disagreement with a recommendation. Additionally, the need to have a review process for the contested review was also discussed.
- Aspects of transparency with regard to score/evaluation distribution of all faculty within a department.
- Whether all materials (including an appealed review) would be included in promotion and tenure materials.
- The need for training of individuals (e.g., department heads, deans) who conduct evaluations.

The motion passed on a 20 – 4 – 0 vote of the Senate.

### *Faculty Salaries*

Senator Brashier referred to this Committee's report on **Faculty Salaries**. Senator Henington moved, Senator D'Abramo seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate to accept this committee's report on this issue.

Brashier highlighted the following aspects of his report: (a) the discrepancy in salaries within the state, (b) the fact that the numbers are based on information from the AAUP and are considered accurate, (c) additional data is presented on all universities in Mississippi, and (d) SUG averages were also presented by rank and college.

The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Senator David Bridges, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report on the Promotion and Tenure Policy and Procedures. Each individual recommendation was presented independently.

### *Recommendation One*

Senator Bridges moved, Senator Brashier seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt **Recommendation One** of this committee to revise Section 4.8.3 (delete the departmental Promotion and Tenure committee in the process of granting extension, and add that the committee is notified of the extension).

The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

### *Recommendation Two*

Senator Bridges moved, Senator Ryan seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt the **Recommendation Two** of this committee concerning Sections 9.1.3, 9.1.4, and 9.1.5 (candidate's opportunity to respond in writing to recommendations made at each level).

Bridges provided clarification about the provided handout intended to amend Section 9.1.5 and moved, seconded by Senator Coyne, to accept the change to restrict the candidate's response to the department head and dean level.

Discussion included:

- Whether this change addressed the Provost's concern about this recommendation. Bridges responded that it met the Provost half way – Dr. Rabideau wanted no response and this modified recommendation changed the response to just two levels. Vice President Nagel noted that the Deans' Council had expressed opposition to the original recommendation of response at four levels, but would agree to a response at one level.

The motion to accept the amendment to section 9.1.5 passed on a 22 – 1 – 1 vote.

The motion to accept *Recommendation Two* passed on a 22 – 2 – 1 vote of the Senate.

### **Recommendation Three**

Senator Bridges moved, Senator Coyne seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt the **Recommendation Three** of this committee concerning Sections 10.3 and 10.4 (in the appeal process) such that the recommendation of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee (UPTC) goes straight to the MSU President versus to the Provost for the final decision).

Bridges clarified that if the appeal goes back to the Provost after the UPTC's recommendation, the Provost will have a second vote. He stated that research into other universities' practice is consistent with the revision. Bridges noted that the Provost is opposed to this item.

The motion to accept *Recommendation Three* was defeated on a 9 – 14 – 3 vote of the Senate.

*Recommendation Four*

Senator Bridges moved, Senator Ryan seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate adopt the **Recommendation Four** of this committee concerning Section 3 (requirement for time in rank as typically 5 years, with exceptions considered extraordinary).

Bridges stated that the time in rank of 5 years was recommended by the taskforce and rejected by the university committee. His committee had decided to bring the issue before the Senate for a vote.

Discussion included:

- A decision should be about evidence of the individual's ability to perform at the next level.
- The clarification that an individual's ability to use past work from another university should be clarified in their hire letter.

The motion passed on a 19 – 5 – 1 vote of the Senate.

Clarification was requested regarding three votes (on teaching, research, and service) versus one (up or down) vote. Senator Bridges stated that the issue was not brought forward. The committee's vote will be three (one on each area).

**STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Senator Gary Bradshaw, member of the Student Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report on **Banner and ITS**. Senator Bradshaw moved, Senator Wood seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept this committee's recommendation to encourage training and dialog on this issue (e.g., CAPP).

The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

**UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

No report.

**ANCILLARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

No report.

**CHARTER AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE**

No report.

## OLD BUSINESS

None

## NEW BUSINESS

### RESOLUTION REGARDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Senator Michael Burk and Robert McCann referred to the submitted resolution on Academic Freedom. Senator Burk related the events of the issue and stated that the questioned installation has been returned to its original position and the Architecture faculty have request guidance in the resolution.

Discussion included:

- Whether the statement and resolution are relevant under the current circumstances (i.e., Dr. Foglesong's announced resignation).
- The need for academic freedom, as requested in the statement, to be put forward.

Senator D'Abramo moved, Senator Gootee seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate offer a statement regarding issues related to academic freedom be made in the form of a resolution. Following much discussion, the resolution was amended and is to read as follows:

*Academic Freedom is the liberty to pursue and teach relevant knowledge and to discuss it freely without restriction from university or public officials or from any other sources of influence. It shall be recognized that these are essential tenets of an academic culture and environment; without these tenets, we are NOT a university.*

*In this spirit, we, the senators of the MSU Robert Holland Faculty Senate respectfully request that all administration not engage in giving directives that compromise Academic Freedom (inside and outside of the classroom) and the general teaching environment on this esteemed campus.*

The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate.

### THE CONFIDENCE SURVEY

President Wolverton provided an update on the recent Senate administrated Confidence Survey. He stated he had reviewed the results and an advanced copy of the results has been hand deliver to the President and Vice Presidents before anyone has the information. Wolverton stated that more faculty than in previous years (55%) had responded to the survey.

Wolverton stated he had asked for Senators' input regarding the release of comments on the survey. Choices were: (a) all comments released, (b) all comments except those

related to President Foglesong released, or (c) comments would be available in packets that could be picked up from the Faculty Senate office. The responses were not many with a mix of responses for each of the areas. Wolverton indicated the vote as follows: 13 for releasing all information, 9 release all comment except those related to the President, and 8 indicated it is not a problem.

Wolverton summarized the general types of comments on the survey and summarized emails he had received from the public.

Following much discussion regarding the release of the information, Senator D'Abramo moved, Senator Wood seconded, to leave the survey as originally stated in the survey (i.e., results would be posted on the Senate website).

The motion passed on a 20 – 0 – 3 vote by the senate.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Vice President Nagel reported that at the most recent Deans' Council, the deans had a discussion about retention of tuition remission money in their office rather than sending it to the departments.

President Wolverton reminded senators that elections will be held at the next meeting. Nominations should be made to the Senate Office and that then those nominees will need to send a one-page resume of their activities at the University to the Senate Office by April 4.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Adebisi moved, Senator Brashier seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote of the Senate. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Submitted for correction and approval.

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Carlen Henington, Secretary