



ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE

Uncorrected Minutes of October 19, 2018

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held its regular monthly meeting in the Templeton Room of Mitchell Memorial Library at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, October 19, 2018.

Members absent and excused were: Noel Addy, Jason Barrett, Randy Follett, Gregory Martin, Angela Savage, and Rosangela Sebba.

Members absent were: Gnaneswar Gude and Chinling Wang.

The meeting was called to order by Senate Vice President, Mary Ann Jones.

Vice President Jones asked for any corrections to the minutes of the September 14, 2018 meeting. Senator Carskadon said he believes on page 3 in the second to last paragraph should read "but only 2 to 10 percent are able to achieve..." He asked that Dr. Bonner be contacted to verify this. Senator Carskadon said on page 4 the committee named should be the Teaching Evaluation Committee and not the Instructional Improvement Committee. Secretary Coyne stated that related to the AOP section in the President's Report that a number of policies listed on the Provost's website have the same name. One relevant example pertains to OP 56.01 and OP 61.03 which have the same title and approval date. He added there are multiple policies that address that same topic and could potentially be merged such as the 3 policies related to drugs on campus, 2 policies related to alcohol, several on cost sharing, as well as several AOPs related to relationships and conduct. He said there are several instances where an important subject is split between OPs and AOPs. This could lead to an individual not finding all of the policy relating to a particular subject because in most instances they are not cross-referenced. Secretary Coyne said there are several AOPs that are not listed under the President's Report

which are listed as out of date on the Provost's website. Vice President Jones replied the list in the President's Report only includes those policies which are out of date and are not currently under review.

Senator Bora made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Senator Grace seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes as amended passed by unanimous voice vote.

GUESTS

REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT

Since our September meeting, there have been numerous meetings and conversations. One down-side of the decision to move the October meeting to not coincide with Fall Break is that I will unfortunately be out of town during the senate meeting. So, that will give Vice President Mary Ann Jones an opportunity to see how she likes being in charge of a senate meeting.

Status of AOPs:

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

AOP	Title	Date
11.04	Split Level Combined Undergraduate/Graduate Courses	3/19/2014
12.03	Awarding of Degrees Posthumously	6/9/2014
12.07	Student Honor Code	7/11/2014
12.12	Credit and Grades	8/12/2013
12.15	Academic Probation for Undergraduate Students	6/9/2014
12.23	Cooperative Education Program	6/9/2013
12.38	Undergraduate Academic Advisement	4/23/2012
13.06	Sabbatical Leave for Faculty Members of State IHL	6/9/2014
13.08	Travel by Faculty and Staff	5/6/2013
13.16	Establishment of Academic Centers and Institutes at Mississippi State University	6/9/2014
21.01	Graduate Admission Criteria	4/12/2012
31.02	Legal Resident Status	2/5/2013

Reports from committees on which I serve:

Athletic Council –

At this meeting, we received updates on student athlete academic majors, and a financial update, along with the normal Athletic Director's Report. John Cohen reported that our soccer team is up to #9 in the rankings, which is a dramatic improvement over the #137 ranking from just two years ago. Also, there was a brief description of the anti-trust case against the NCAA, which is based on student athletes owning the rights to their own image, and, subsequently the right to profit from that image. This is likely to be a long case, which will end up with appeals all the way to the Supreme Court, and possibly an appeal to Congress to change the law regarding this specific case. (Otherwise college football as we know it may disappear.) I'll report further on this in future months. In the financial update, it was noted that Athletics has completed four years of being self-sustaining (meaning no IHL funds or other state money was directed to Athletics) and that it looks like they are on track to provide over \$4M to campus during FY19.

Diversity Council – hasn't met yet

Executive Council –

The September meeting of the Executive Council was cancelled, but I was able to sign for senate on AOPs 11.06, 12.32, 12.36 and 31.10, each of which were approved by Faculty Senate last year.

Executive Enrollment Management Committee –

Reports were presented showing the record enrollment (over 22,000) this fall, along with a record ACT average (25) among incoming students. In the Distance Education area, there were also increases in a number of areas. There are 1870 students enrolled via distance, with an increase in enrollment by veterans of 22%, and an increase in minority enrollment of 10%, with Business, Engineering, and Education producing much of the increased enrollment, while there was decreased Arts & Sciences enrollment. Additional information regarding the Honors College was presented, including the record average ACT score of Honors Freshman admits of 31.73.

Game Day and Special Events –

The primary topic for the meetings of this committee since the September senate meeting has been trash and garbage. There was a tremendous problem with trash and garbage everywhere after the Florida game, with a large part of it being traceable to relatively recent graduates back in town for the game. Further pushes towards trying to get this under control

included handouts by the student Sustainability Committee for the Auburn game. It appeared to be at least somewhat successful from my point of view, although we haven't had a meeting since that game (due to the bye week). Additional concerns regarding inappropriate music being played at high volume were expressed, and procedures for addressing that issue were discussed.

Information Technology Council –

We met on October 2, and received updates on the primary projects that ITS has been dealing with over the last year or so. Some important things:

MissiON – We are now up and running on the two new border routers at full speed (redundant 100 Gbps connections) and able to access everything, including Internet2.

MSU1x – this wireless access system is no longer being advertised as existing, but still seems to carry about 70% of the wireless traffic for campus. Everyone needs to transition to EduRoam instead.

The VOIP installations have begun, and three “migrations” have been completed so far (approximately 500 phones). There is a schedule of installations that will address the remaining phones by next summer.

Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee –

Information was presented regarding the need to expand the parking to the east of where the new Civil Engineering and Science building will be constructed, with a groundbreaking ceremony to occur before the end of this semester. A rework of the existing Critz East parking lot was also described, with repairs to the existing lot and expansion to increase total capacity to 212 spaces. Information was also shown regarding a preplan for an improvements to Humphrey Coliseum. The Central Loop improvements (chilled water lines for central air for the main part of campus) are nearing completion, with the construction site between Bowen Hall and Patterson Engineering Labs almost ready to be returned to service. A brief description of the East Campus Road (perimeter road) was given, along with updates on the Partnership School and the College View P3 development. The new North Parking Garage had to be resubmitted due to increased construction costs, so it will be delayed slightly. The road improvements that are expected along Blackjack Road (in partnership with Oktibbeha County) are getting close to being started (waiting on the county).

Parking and Traffic Regulations Committee –

Did not meet, due to a lack of agenda items. However, I did submit a question about Park and Ride options. Back when the SMART system was started, there were numerous attempts to encourage participation in that, but it never seemed to catch on. The route that stops at the Sportsplex was specifically created with that idea in mind, so it is obviously still an

option. There are regular routes that come through the historic district in Starkville, as well as other areas, which would allow a large number of people to use the SMART system for commuting, but there aren't a large number of faculty and staff who currently use the system.

Sustainability Committee –

This meeting was primarily devoted to consideration of revisions to OP 01.27: Sustainability, Facilities Operation, Grounds, Materials, and Transportation. (Minor revisions, mostly based on clarification of certain terms, and changes in names of titles, somewhat like many of the AOP revisions that we see in Faculty Senate.) It was mentioned that there is still a significant amount of debt that was incurred with the lighting project, but that it should be paid off completely and start profiting the university by sometime in 2021. Another somewhat related topic was the statement that there will be a 26 kW PV (Photovoltaic) array near the new Civil Engineering building that will be available for charging vehicles.

REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE VICE PRESIDENT

Committee on Campus Access –

Canceled due to lack of attendance. On 9/30, Brett Harvey sent an email update on current projects. He mentioned that the improvements to the entrance to Hand Chemistry building have been started. It appears from sight that they are nearing completion. At the November meeting members will review potential projects for 2019.

Community Engagement Committee –

The committee will be working to complete the application for re-classification of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The application is due April 15, 2019.

MSU Excellence in Community Engagement Awards: The Center for Community Engaged Learning received 34 applications. The review of applications will begin soon.

Community Engagement Learning Series: Special program featuring Dr. Lorilee Sandmann (UGA) was held on October 9th and was followed by a workshop.

CE Fellows program: applications for 2019 class will be available in January. Classes are for 3 weeks in May. Last year, fifteen fellows participated and are now teaching with community engagement activities incorporated into their 2018-19 courses.

Deans Council –

Canceled due to lack of agenda items

President's Commission on the Status of Women –

It is early in the semester, so the Commission is planning for programs for the year. The annual Feminist Film Festival sponsored by Gender Studies will be held the week of November 12.

President's Committee on Planning –

Has not met since I have been in office.

FACULTY DESIGNATES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

BUSINESS TO BE SENT TO COMMITTEES

1. AOP 12.18 Academic Amnesty for Graduate Students (Academic Affairs)

Vice President Jones said the Executive Committee proposes AOP 12.18 Academic Amnesty for Graduate Students be assigned to the Academic Affairs Committee.

The motion to send AOP 12.18 Academic Amnesty for Graduate Students to the Academic Affairs Committee passed by unanimous voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs

1. **AOP 12.11 Degree Requirements**

Senator Eakin, on behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee, presented the report on AOP 12.11.

The motion to accept AOP 12.11 Degree Requirements as presented passed by unanimous voice vote.

Ancillary Affairs

1. AOP 10.15 Substantive Changes

Senator Bi, on behalf of the Ancillary Affairs Committee, presented the report on AOP 10.15.

Senator Spain asked if the changes were editorial in nature. Vice President Jones replied the changes were made to comply with SACSCOC accreditation requirements.

Secretary Coyne asked if the requested information when provided was simply deposited into an archive or was the information actually reviewed to determine if any administrative action is required. Vice President Jones replied she did not know how it worked through SACSCOC.

Senator Pelaez asked if the removal of “Expanding program offerings at off campus sites” was due to it not being required to be reported to SACSCOC. Vice President Jones replied all of the edits were made to align with SACSCOC requirements.

Senator Spain asked if the committee compared the proposed changes to the SACSCOC requirements. Senator Bi replied they did not.

The motion to accept AOP 10.15 Substantive Changes as presented passed by majority voice vote.

Charter & Bylaws

No Report

Faculty Affairs

1. AOP 13.07 Academic Promotion and Tenure

Senator Sherman-Morris, on behalf of the Faculty Affairs Committee, presented the report on AOP 13.07.

Senator Spain said she did not believe the proposed change is minor, but is a substantive, structural change to the policy. When policies contain portions of the handbook, changes in the handbook trigger the review of the policies which contain the sections of the handbook. She said she feels it is important to have the policies reflect the policy in the handbook.

Senator Denny said she feels the policy just references the handbook and does not contain anything that would have to be voted on for a substantive change if something changed in the handbook. Secretary Coyne said the Faculty Handbook is an academic operating policy for the University. He said the title of Section V is Promotion and Tenure Procedures and any changes must be voted on by the general faculty and not just the Faculty Senate. Secretary Coyne made a friendly amendment to have the link which is provided in the policy point directly to section V of the handbook. Senator Sherman-Morris accepted the friendly amendment on behalf of the

Faculty Affairs Committee. Senator Sherman-Morris said by having the procedures in only one location, it would prevent two versions from being published at the same time. Senator Spain said her point is when changes are made to the handbook policy, the AOP must be reviewed simultaneously. Senator Denny said the policy would not have to change if changes were made to the handbook since there is no policy actually contained in the AOP.

Senator Ridner said the AOP seems to quote the handbook and therefore it is not necessary to have the policy at all. She asked what the point of the AOP is. Senator Sherman-Morris replied the AOP may be necessary to direct individuals to the handbook since some may seek the information in the policies of the University first. Senator Ridner said if she had a question regarding promotion and tenure, she would go directly to the Faculty Handbook.

Senator Spain asked Secretary Coyne if the Faculty Handbook is an AOP itself. Secretary Coyne replied the Faculty Handbook is academic operating policy by default. He added there has been a concerted effort put forth to identify AOPs which contain no policy and rescind them. He said this particular AOP may be an exception since it is so important to faculty.

Senator Alley said the AOP states the purpose of the policy is to promote understanding. She added she just went up for promotion and tenure and did an exhaustive search to gather all the information that she needed. This AOP was first item identified through the search and was beneficial. Senator Miller said a search of promotion and tenure on the website produces a link to the Faculty Handbook and the AOP in question.

Senator Pelaez said she believes redundancy can be beneficial to strengthen ones argument if the need arises. Senator Williams said from hearing the current discussion, this same discussion may have occurred before and as a result this AOP may have been created. He said the Faculty Handbook is not identified as an AOP in the University listing, but this AOP makes Section V of the handbook policy.

Senator Spain said there is a timing issue for faculty based on when they are hired and what the P&T policy is when they go under review. It is documented in this AOP what the policy is at the moment in time of a faculty being hired. This would protect the faculty member if the P&T procedures have changed.

Senator Bora said the Faculty Handbook is more advisory to new faculty on how to be successful. The AOP outlines the policy and rules. He said there should be one document which is consulted for policy.

Senator Coyne made a friendly amendment to include the title of the section in the AOP. Senator Sherman-Morris accepted the friendly amendment on behalf of the Faculty Affairs Committee.

Senator Pelaez said there should be an archive of the Faculty Handbook to account for changes which are made between a faculty members hiring and when they go up for promotion and tenure. Senator Sherman-Morris said there is language in the promotion and tenure procedures which accounts for changes made as it relates to where faculty are in the promotion and tenure process. Senator Spain said the language regarding time in the procedures could be changed as well. She said she did not understand why it is a problem to have this section as a part of the AOP. Senator Musser said redundancy in an institution of this size can be bad. Inevitably there will be two different policies in two different places and no one will know which one is correct. If the section is reproduced in this AOP, changes to the handbook will have been completed and this AOP will have to undergo a separate approval process. He said having the link is more than adequate to direct people to the effective policy. Senator Alley said since the handbook must be approved by the entire faculty and this AOP only has to be approved by Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate could potentially be superseding the entire faculty.

Senator Ridner said she feels this is not policy, but just a pointer to policy. She said she does not feel it is necessary to include the actual section in this document. Senator Spain said including the section will allow faculty to use the AOP to support their case if the procedures in the handbook have changed prior to their going up for promotion and tenure. Senator Musser said the handbook already contains the rules based on timing for promotion and tenure. Senator Larson said when a faculty member was hired has no bearing on which set of P&T procedures are to be followed. She said it is not like a catalog year for the undergraduate students. Senator Sherman-Morris said if changes are made in one calendar year, they do not go into effect until the next calendar year.

Senator Williams said it would be nice if there was an archive of past P&T documents. Senator Spain said she thinks maintaining an archive is a good idea. She said she feels it is important for faculty to have access to past versions of the procedures in case it is needed to argue their position.

Senator Cook made a motion to call the previous question. The motion to call the previous question passed by unanimous voice vote.

The motion to accept AOP 13.07 Academic Promotion and Tenure as amended passed by majority hand vote.

Student Affairs

1. AOP 10.14 The Adoption and Sale of Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials

Senator Haynes, on behalf of the Student Affairs Committee, presented the report on AOP 10.14.

The motion to accept AOP 10.14 The Adoption and Sale of Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials passed as presented by unanimous voice vote.

2. AOP 12.21 Veteran's Academic Status

Senator Haynes, on behalf of the Student Affairs committee, presented the committee report on AOP 10.14.

Senator Larson asked who reports the changes. Senator Williams said the student is responsible for submitting the completed forms.

Senator Tagert said she knows of at least one instance that undergraduates, but probably more often graduate students while under the guidance of the Veteran's Affairs Office were released from having to utilize an advisor during the process of signing up for classes. Senator Grace replied she has experienced the same scenario. She had contacted the Veteran's Affairs Office and found that this process works better so such students do not fall a year behind.

The motion to accept AOP 12.21 Veteran's Academic Status as presented passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Plus/Minus Grading

Senator Haynes, on behalf of the Student Affairs Committee, presented the committee report on Plus/Minus Grading.

Senator Spain asked why 3.67 was proposed instead of rounding to 3.7. Senator Carskadon replied 3.67 is more precise, but the difference between 3.67 and 3.7 is statistically almost trivial. Senator Haynes said 3.67 seemed like a good starting point and can be changed once feedback is received. Senator Dodds said by rounding it helps students by going from a 3.67 to 3.7, but it hurts students when 3.33 is rounded to 3.3. Senator Lathan said 3.67 makes more sense to her since it is more precise.

Secretary Coyne asked if there are any predictions regarding how many students would be detrimentally affected (e.g. academic standing, scholarships) through the implementation of plus/minus grading. Senator Haynes replied she does not know of any, but she will look into it. Senator Lathan said the two year trial period will provide data for the final decision.

Senator Williams asked if during the two year trial period the student's transcripts will show plusses and minuses, but not show the proposed GPA. Senator Haynes replied the transcript will show the plusses and minuses, but GPA will be unaffected.

Senator Robichaux-Davis asked if the committee discussed how two of the schools listed only had a D and no D+ or D-. She said Ds don't count toward required program courses. Senator Haynes replied the committee did not go into the details too much at this point. Senator Haynes said Senator Robichaux-Davis has a valid point and the issue will be discussed in the future. Senator Larson said in some programs Ds do count toward graduation requirements.

Senator Ridner thanked the committee for removing the 4.33 GPA for an A+. She said she polled her department faculty and they were in favor of plus/minus grading, but were against awarding a 4.33 for an A+. Senator Williams said the majority of faculty in his department were against plus/minus grading. He said it will be interesting to see how the faculty as a whole feels about the subject.

Mayah Emerson, Student Association President, said a poll was conducted of students concerning plus/minus grading. She said they received more feedback than ever before with 7,651 students responding. This represents over a third of the entire student body. The question to students was "The plus/minus grading system will benefit me as a student." Of the respondents, 93% said the plus/minus grading system would not benefit them. Ms. Emerson said she has also received feedback against the plus/minus grading system through tweets and emails. Peer institutions that currently have plus/minus grading systems in place were contacted. The students at these institutions said they wish they did not have the plus/minus grading system.

Senator Pelaez asked if there is a mechanism that Senators can use to contact the constituents of their college. Senator Haynes replied she was thinking of involving Deans to help disseminate the information and receive feedback. She said she would look into what can be done to help Senators reach their constituents.

Senator Pelaez asked if the committee researched grade inflation. Senator Haynes replied she had not looked into grade inflation research. Senator Carskadon said the number of 4.0 students continually increases.

Senator Lathan asked Ms. Emerson if the student responses were academic in nature or if other reasons were given. Ms. Emerson replied the students specifically said academically.

Senator Alley said she has received feedback from faculty that indicates they did not participate in the original survey because the question asked was confusing in the sense that no one knew what it would look like. She said the information being presented now clarifies a lot of the prior concerns and a new poll of faculty with this information included could prompt a larger response.

Senator Bora said he likes the University of South Carolina's system which includes plusses, but not minuses. He suggested a system that does not include minuses could be a compromise which the students would accept. He added he does not see the point in a D- since the quality points associated with the grade are below a 1.0.

Secretary Coyne said the precision in the comparison of an A+ to an A+ between the MSU student body and another institution with either a higher or lower average ACT score is not equitable if students are graded on a curve because of how narrow the differences are between the three divisions within a given academic grade. Senator Musser said that is true with the current system as well.

Senator Williams said the senators should inform their faculty of the stance the students have taken when they solicit feedback.

Senator Eddy said she has been at multiple institutions that used the plus/minus grading system. She said, over the course of a student's tenure, it all evens out and does not negatively impact the outcome and gives students the opportunity to distinguish themselves.

Senator Spain asked for the resolution passed by the Student Association to be circulated to faculty with the rest of the materials. She also asked representative scales be included to determine the best scale if faculty is polled again. Senator Haynes replied, after feedback is received, the faculty can be polled to determine the best scale.

Senator Zuckerman said if the plus/minus system were adopted, a helpful tool which could go along with it that she has started using in the classroom is a rubric that outlines all of the points available. She said since she has started using them, student satisfaction has increased and the fairness of grading numbers on her evaluations has increased. Having a system like this would inform the student of why they got the grade they were assigned since a plus/minus system is a narrower scale than the traditional ten point scale. Senator Larson said with a narrower grading scale, the small details become more important. An example would be how absences affect grade outcomes.

Senator Carskadon said it does not surprise him that the students are not in favor of plus/minus grading. He said the purpose of the system is to keep students working hard even after they have met the minimum requirements. A plus/minus grading system will address grade inflation and getting the best out of each student, which also means the student learns the most. He said he would not be dissuaded just because students are against it.

Senator Williams made a friendly amendment to add an asterisk with a note stating that these are discussion points. Senator Haynes accepted the friendly amendment on behalf of the Student Affairs Committee.

Senator Winer said if the students are polled again about plus/minus grading, having them enter their GPA would present a clearer picture of the results. If there is no split between GPA and the response, it is a cleaner answer to the question. Senator Spain said a plus/minus system will most likely benefit B and C students and distinguish them.

Senator Ridner said when she has a borderline student she is unlikely to bump them up to the next grade. This can end up hurting the student. She said she is not going to give an A to a student with an 89.x. It also affects students which are on the borderline between B and C. Senator Zuckerman said having a plus/minus system would give faculty more flexibility to bump a borderline student to the next category without harming the top students. Ms. Emerson said it can also negatively affect students which have a 91 average since they would now receive an A- instead of an A.

Senator Yu said she polled the faculty in her department and found that of the 10 tenure track faculty and several instructors, only one person was in favor of plus/minus grading. She said with the opposition from the student body and the mixed response from faculty, it may not be the correct time to address this issue. Plus/Minus grading has been before Senate multiple times in the past and it has not passed. Introducing a plus/minus grading system will change the MSU culture and impact student behaviors.

Senator Alley asked what the Senators were voting on. Senator Haynes replied the recommendation of the Student Affairs Committee is for senators to take the proposal in the report to their constituents for discussion and provide feedback to the committee. She said an email will be sent from the Faculty Senate to all faculty containing the information provided in the report.

Senator Herd said she heard earlier comments that suggested a plus only system. She said a plus/minus system will ease grade inflation while a plus only system will exacerbate it. Senator Musser said the point of introducing the plus/minus system was to distinguish the really good from the pretty good. He said using a plus only system defeats that purpose since the highest standard under a plus system would not be raised to a 93 as intended.

Secretary Coyne said by encouraging students to work harder, you are encouraging grade inflation. To remedy the grade inflation issue, the academic difficulty of examinations should ideally be modified and not the conventionally implemented grading scale.

Senator Lathan said that the committee's intent is to establish how all faculty feel about the issue, not just Senators. Once that information is collected, a decision can be made to determine the path forward.

Senator Ridner suggested a systematic poll be created and distributed to all faculty to gather statistics. Senators and Deans can encourage faculty participation. Senator Robichaux-Davis said not all programs use a ten point scale. Some use a seven point scale. She said this should be distinguished in the poll.

Senator Bora said it should be distinguished as to when the new system would become effective. He said there would most likely be some backlash from students on teaching evaluations as a result of changing the grading scale and this needs to be accounted for.

Senator Carskadon said he wanted to reiterate the progression of the topic of plus/minus grading. First the faculty was polled to determine if in principle, they wanted a plus/minus grading system. Now there is a possible outline of how it would work. He said he did not believe that a yes or no should be asked at this point. Once the feedback is received, the proposed system can be modified to address concerns voiced in the feedback stage. The modified proposal should be what is voted on for acceptance or not.

Senator Haynes said the committee will send out another faculty poll once the feedback has been incorporated into the current proposal.

Senator Freeman made a motion to call the previous question. The motion to call the previous question passed by unanimous voice vote.

The motion to accept the committee report on plus/minus grading as amended passed by unanimous voice vote.

University Resources

No Report

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Senator Williams asked to have the Executive Committee look into a method of archiving past promotion and tenure documents and annotating which time period they were active.

Senator Lathan made a motion to adjourn. Senator Bora seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed by unanimous voice vote. Vice President Jones closed the October meeting of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate at 3:48 p.m.

Submitted for correction and approval.

Cody Coyne, Secretary

Jason Cory, Administrative Assistant II