

ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE April 13, 2007

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, April 13, 2007.

Members absent and excused were:

Michael Berk, Michael E. Brown, Tim Chamblee, Dave Dampier, Homes Hogue, Randy Little, Jason Lueg, Noel Polk, Rich Raymond, Dan Reynolds, and Rebecca Toghiani

Members absent and unexcused was Shu Wu

The meeting was 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>.

President Robert Wolverton called the meeting to order.

SUPPLEMENTAL

President Wolverton welcomed and introduced new and re-elected senators, each of whom will serve for 3 years.

President Wolverton referred to the minutes of the March 9, 2007, regular meeting as distributed. Senator Bridges moved, Senator Walter Diehl seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve the minutes as corrected. Corrections included change in the announcement of dean searches. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

GUESTS

President Wolverton introduced Dr. Peter Rabideau, Provost.

PETER RABIDEAU, PROVOST

Provost Rabideau provided the following information:

- At the most recent IHL meeting, MSU set forth its budget comprising three tiers of priorities:
 - Tier I -- Merit-based pay raise for faculty and staff
 - Tier II -- new faculty positions in areas of critical need (e.g., Kinesiology, Communication, freshman introductory courses in many colleges –predominantly in Arts and Sciences).
 - Other budget areas mentioned include: (a) additional faculty and start-up funds, (b) library resources, (c) recruiting and retention, (d) faculty development, (e) repairs and renovations, (f) art on campus and landscape, and (g) marketing.
 - Rabideau stated there will be a tuition increase (amount to be determined).

- Following the IHL Board meeting next week, the Provosts' will meet to consider new programs. New procedures for program will include a preliminary review by provosts and presidents before a proposal goes before IHL.
- Referring to dean searches, Rabideau made the following announcements:
 - Meridian - interviews with finalists will be arranged in the next 2 to 3 weeks.
 - Graduate Studies – most interviews are complete and input from various entities across campus will be solicited before the search committee meets with Rabideau.
 - Arts and Sciences – Dean Phil Oldham has accepted the Provost position at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. This is off-season for searches, so the search will begin in the fall. A starting date of January 1 has been set forth for the new dean.
- Questions posed to Rabideau:
 - Senator Walter Diehl asked if there was anything that should have been in the budget that is not there (e.g., adequate funding for separately funded units such as MAFES). Rabideau responded that he is happy to see items for Academic Affairs within the budget and those other units “did well”. He stated that in the past we have seen a cut in faculty positions due to vacant positions when budgets are decided.
 - Referring to the search for the Vice President for Research and Economic Development and the two candidates; Senator D'Abramo asked how many applications had been submitted. Rabideau replied there had been nine.
 - President Wolverton asked if Rabideau and other Vice Presidents have met together with President Foglesong to examine the entire budget and requests. Rabideau replied that he believed his proposals were “in good shape”.
- Rabideau referred to the Confidence Survey, stating that anonymous comments have attracted attention and may impact various searches and other campus activities (e.g., Phi Beta Kappa). He would like the Senate to consider another approach to the anonymous comments. He suggested that we have a group look for issues rather than release individual comments, thereby avoiding harm to the University.
 - Senator Walter Diehl asked about the anonymity of the other survey recently administered. Rabideau stated it was anonymous but will not be published. Senator Adebisi compared student evaluations and the surveys and stated that administrators' comments about the Confidence Survey should be applied to students' Teaching Evaluations. Rabideau stated he does not ask for the comments within teaching evaluations, just summaries of the numbers for Promotion and Tenure consideration.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Wolverton gave the following report:

- Regarding responses to the MSU Confidence Survey report, Wolverton said the survey had 481 participants and that the Columbus Dispatch had an article about the Survey. The Starkville Daily News and the Jackson newspaper has contacted him regarding the Survey. He stated that he and past Senate Presidents, Diehl and Goodman, had revised the 2007 Survey. Other comments:

- The open-ended comments on the survey yielded three or four major themes; among them was the relationship between the central administration and faculty. Wolverton stated that there have been suggestions presented about the approach to releasing the comments in the future: (a) that comments not be released; (b) that the comments be released, but edited; and (c) that the comments section of the Confidence Survey be eliminated. Wolverton stated that he believes that the practice of soliciting comments should be continued, and that similar results to such surveys are likely to be found at other universities. He stated that he believed the purpose of the Survey was to provide a snapshot of the issues on campus, and that the current results may be due to a clash between the academic and military cultures which will take time to resolve. The basic issue about the comments is “are we free to criticize or not, and what form should the criticism take?”
- Faculty discussion included: The differences, usefulness, and science of the two recent surveys. The Confidence Survey illustrates an apparent perceived disconnect between the 6th floor and the faculty and the need for the administration to: (a) realize the importance of the MSU faculty, and (b) open a dialog with the faculty. Senator Diehl stated that this was not a “no confidence” vote, rather a measure to be used over time to alert the university community of the important issues for faculty. Senator Goodman stated that the survey should be used to set dialog between faculty and administrators and also could set an agenda for discussions within the Senate. He stated the pattern of comments is more meaningful than individual comments. The positives noted in the survey results included respect for students and faculty/colleagues.
- Wolverton stated that the results of the survey may have opened communication in that President Foglesong recently invited a conversation with the Executive Committee about the budget. Within that meeting a suggestion was made that Foglesong should make continued concentrated efforts to communicate with the faculty. Within a few days President Foglesong posted an email message, the State-gram, to communicate issues and actions on campus.
- Following a discussion with the Executive Committee, Wolverton reported he had sent a letter to President Foglesong inquiring about the status of the Campus Planning and Development Committee urging that it be reinstated, if it had been dissolved, adding that faculty have much to offer on issues related to planning. No response has been received to date.
- Wolverton reported that there was a report of some lost teaching evaluations between at least one department and the Office of Institutional Research. There appears that other problems have occurred with the teaching evaluations, and that there is inquiry into these difficulties. Related, he asked for an update from Senator Goodman on the progress of the new teaching evaluations.
 - Goodman reported that the committee assigned to address faculty evaluations has selected two classes in every college except CVM and the Library. He stated there had been some problems within two colleges; but those will be resolved next week, and the results should be ready soon. He stated the revised teaching evaluations should be ready for fall semester. There will be an advanced request sent out to determine which form faculty desire for their classes.

- The Senate Executive Committee provided the Provost with a ranking for the Dean of Graduate Studies, at his request. Wolverton stated that many believe President Foglesong will make the decision; the Provost will make the appointment.
- Wolverton asked for additions and comments from those present at the President's meeting with the Executive Committee. The following is a summary:
 - The message was similar to what President Foglesong had put in his address to the faculty. However, there were some differences in the funding for MAFES and other similar units' raises for personnel.
 - Foglesong had pulled the Reach for Excellence fund out of the three tiers.
 - There has been a renegotiation of the TVA contract; the target of 14% savings on energy (which is currently at 11%) would have been achieved except for a stretch of bad weather during the year. Such a savings would prevent taxation of departments and other budgets.
 - The taxation of discretionary funds was left open as an option. Senator Wood stated that the Senate may want to actively discourage this taxation which is in addition to the initial tax on overhead.
 - Lloyd Ricks, Harned, Middleton, and Lee Halls are targeted for renovations as funds become available within the budget.
 - Enrollment for fall 2007 is projected to be up slightly.
 - In past IHL funding, universities have received reimbursement for past inequities. Foglesong asked about the strategy but was not given details.
 - President Foglesong shared information about additional funding that is generated for campus activities (e.g., cellular tower land rent is used for landscaping).
 - Foglesong also communicated concern that information disseminated by him to deans and department heads may not be getting to the faculty.
 - A retirement incentive package cannot be extended to one unit independent of other units. Foglesong also stated his concern that any retirement incentive could result in a reduction in faculty numbers.
 - A questions was posed about an increase in parking fees to fund a parking garage. President Foglesong did link his discussion of a conference center to a parking garage. Wolverton stated this might be an area for future dialog.
- Wolverton announced the formation of a new ad hoc committee composed of six deans, two faculty, and chaired by Butch Stokes to address classroom scheduling and allocation.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Two nominations for President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate for the 2007-2008 term were received by the designated date, Senators Mark Goodman and Bob Wolverton. It was noted that it would take 26 votes (a majority of the Senate) for a win even though some senators were not in attendance.
 - Following five rounds of votes, nominations were taken from the floor, as allowed in the by-laws. Senator Goodman stepped aside and Senator Nagel was nominated from the floor.

- Following an additional two rounds of votes, Senator Wolverton was elected by a 29 - 10 vote.
- Two nominations for Vice-President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate were received by the designated date: Senators Jacque Deeds and Walter Diehl.
 - Following two rounds of votes, Senator Diehl was elected by a vote of 27 - 12.
- One nomination for Secretary of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate for the 2007-2008 term was received by the designated date, Senator Henington. President Wolverton opened the floor for nominations. Senator Walter Diehl moved, Senator Bridges seconded, that nominations be closed; the motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.
 - Senator D'Abramo moved, Senator Nagel seconded, that Senator Henington be elected as Secretary by acclamation; this motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

- Vice President Swafford was not present and Wolverton stated that she had reported to him that there had only been one meeting which she had attended so there was nothing new to report.

REPORT FROM FACULTY SENATE DESIGNATES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Employees' Benefits Committee – No report

Info-Technology Committee – No report

Faculty Research Advisory Committee – No report

Instructional Improvement – No report

Calendar Committee – No report

Facilities Use Committee – No report

Campus Planning and Development Committee – No report

BUSINESS SENT TO COMMITTEES

None

BUSINESS TO BE SENT TO COMMITTEES

Letter from Mark Goodman regarding OP 60.121 and OP 60.122– Senator Walter Diehl moved, Senator Wood seconded, to refer these issues to committee. Goodman provided a

background on OP 60.121 (drug/alcohol policy) and OP 60.122 (criminal background policy). Senator Bridges stated that the policies had come up in the Associate Deans' Council where Ruth Prescott reported that the policies were being considered. Senator Diehl stated that, when faculty may be covered in a policy, it is typically brought before Faculty Senate or the Executive Committee for review. The motion to refer these two policy statements to committee was unanimously approved. President Wolverton assigned them to the Executive Committee for review during the summer, with possible referral to another committee during the academic year.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

No report.

ANCILLARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Senator Walter Diehl, Chair of the Ancillary Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report on AOP 10.2.1 – University Use of Social Security Numbers following a letter to the Senate from Patrick Smith. Senator Walter Diehl moved, Senator D'Abramo seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the recommendations of the committee to support efforts to address security issues in the matter.

In the discussion, President Wolverton announced the formation of a University Committee for Security of Protected Information, which will have oversight and coordination of issues related to data security.

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

CHARTER AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE

No report.

FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Senator Goodman, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, referred to this Committee's report on AOP 10.4.1 – Grievance Policy. Senator Goodman moved, Senator Little seconded, that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate accept the recommendations of the committee that the Office of Academic Affairs use the draft AOP on this policy to develop a new AOP.

In the discussion, Senator D'Abramo stated that the recommendation of the Committee should be voiced in a more declarative manner and that the Faculty Senate requests the administration to use our draft of the Grievance Policy. Senator Henington reported on four recommendations: (a) when grievances are often faculty to faculty, the grievance may not

be within the same department, therefore the grievance needs to go to the administrator above both faculty and, when outside the department, the grievance should go to the Dean or above; (b) punitive action against the grievor is prohibited (e.g., counter grievance; harassment; decisions such as merit raises, promotion and tenure, sabbatical, demotion, annual review/post tenure); (c) there should be a mechanism to ensure the panel's decision is carried out and done so in a timely manner; and (d) pressure should not be placed on the grievor to drop the grievance (e.g., the administrator should not send a lawyer on behalf of the University). Senator Goodman moved, Senator Walter Diehl seconded, an amendment that the Office of Academic Affairs use the Senate's draft policy; the amendment passed on a unanimous voice vote.

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

STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

No report.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

No report.

OLD BUSINESS

Wolverton reported that Delores Hudson will be graduating and going on a missionary trip to Romania in the near future. He wished Ms. Hudson well on her trip.

Senator D'Abramo asked that written reports from the Senate President and Vice President to be included as part of the agenda.

Senator Deeds asked about the OP on security. It was clarified that it was a supplement to the Agenda. She asked about the Chief of Staff's ability to sign OPs. It was determined that there is no policy covering this issue.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Wolverton adjourned the meeting.

Submitted for correction and approval.

Carlen Henington, Secretary