

Fall 2001 ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

The third Senate Roundtable was held Saturday, 27 October at Plymouth Bluff. The topic was the future direction of the university. The following people participated:

Bob Altenkirch, Research VP
Leslie Bauman, Physics
Daniel Bryant, Chief Financial Officer
Tom Carskadon, Psychology
Jan Chambers, Veterinary Medicine
Ren Crowell, History
David Cole, Provost
Virgil Culver, Food and Fiber
Sandy Devlin, Curriculum and Instruction
Walter Diehl, Biological Sciences
Dan Embree, English
Randy Follett, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Sam Foster, College of Forest Resources
Lynn Holt, Philosophy
Charles Lee, Agriculture VP
Doug Marshall, Food Science and Technology
David Morse, Educational Psychology
Mack Portera, President
Linda Pote, Veterinary Medicine
Lynn Reinschmiedt, Agricultural Economics
Joe Thompson, Aerospace Engineering
Don Trotter, ERC
Alan Wood, Biotechnology

The roundtable began with a review of SSRC demographic projections for Mississippi over the next 25 years. These projections suggested that the college-age population of the state will remain stable over this period, so that population pressure will not be a significant factor in university growth or a significant deterrent to enrollment caps.

There followed a discussion of the nature of MSU's educational mission to its students and, through the Extension Service, to the citizens of the state. Some emphasized the importance of teaching modern technological skills in order to prepare students for productive roles in the economy, others the importance of developing character skills and general problem-solving abilities.

The president outlined his plan to cap enrollment of the freshman class at 1600 and of the entering junior-college transfer class at 1700 and to raise the mean ACT for entering freshmen to 25 over the next four or five years. There was general assent to these goals. It was also generally agreed that higher retention rates would be a natural result of higher admission standards – but that higher retention rates were

not an end in themselves.

The focus of the meeting was the president's draft plan to restructure the university by focusing resources on computational science and engineering and the biosciences. The president provided lists of programs and departments that he and the provost had selected for growth in graduate education and in research, based on their assessments of 1) measures of quality (e.g., research funding, entries in citation indexes, numbers of proposals submitted, publications), 2) critical mass of faculty, and 3) potential for success.

Potential Graduate Enrollment Growth

Accounting
Aerospace Engineering
American History
Biomedical Engineering
Business Information Systems
Computational Science & Engineering
 Bioinformatics
 Cognitive science
 Computational engineering
 Computational mathematics
 Computational physics
 Computational chemistry
 Computer science
 Electronic visualization
Chemical Engineering
Community College Leadership
Counselor Education
Environmental Science & Engineering
Landscape Architecture
Materials Science
Molecular Biology
Sociology
Technology and Education
Veterinary medicine

Potential Research Growth

Aerospace Engineering
Agricultural Economics
Agricultural & Biological Engineering
Biological Science
Chemistry
Chemical Engineering
Cognitive Science
Counselor Education
Curriculum and Instruction
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Engineering Research Center
Forest and Wildlife Research center
Life Sciences & Biotechnology Institute
MAFES
Mechanical Engineering
Physics
Raspert Flight Laboratory
Remote Sensing Technologies Center
Social Science Research Center
 Psychology
 Sociology
Veterinary Medicine
Water Resources Research Institute

The president justified this refocusing as concentrating on our strengths (a position which drew little criticism) and not being "a mile wide and an inch deep" (a position which seemed to some substantially more problematic). Some participants wondered if this meant we were abandoning Goal A.1. of the president's Priorities and Goals: that "Every academic program at the university will be the best in

Mississippi.” Strong support was voiced by some for maintaining all academic programs at least at current levels.

The final topic of the roundtable was the process by which the university would decide whether to adopt the president’s plan. Some participants emphasized the importance of broad faculty support for such a plan to succeed, alluding to the disruption caused a decade ago by the P&P plan. The president agreed that it would be necessary to explain the plan to the faculty and to invite its comments.

Relevant to the question of a department’s “critical mass” of faculty are the losses in faculty positions sustained this year. The provost had provided the attached lists of losses and authorized searches. Asked whether vacant positions were temporary or permanent losses, the president said they were permanent.

COLLEGE	DEPARTMENT	NUMBER OF POSITIONS
FROZEN POSITIONS		
		8/17/01
Ag & LS	Ag & Bio. Eng.	1
	Ag. Econ	3
	Ag. Info Sci. & Ed.	1
	Plant & Soil Sci.	3
	Animal & Dairy Science	2
	Entomology & Plant Path.	2
	Landscape Arch.	1
Architecture		1
Arts & Sciences	Biological Sciences	4
	Chemistry	1
	English	4
	Foreign Languages	2
	History	1
	Math & Stats.	1
	Physics & Astronomy	1
	Political Sciences	1
	Psychology	1
	Soc., Anthr. & Soc. Work	2
Business & Industry	Fin. & Econ.	1
	MIS	3
	MQABL	1
	Sch. Of Accountancy	1
Education	Dean	1
	The Learning Center	1
	C&I	2
	HPERS	4
	Music Ed.	2
	Couns. Ed./Ed. Psych.	5
Engineering	Dean	1
	Aerospace Eng.	1
	Civil Eng.	1
	ECE	3
	Industrial Eng.	4
	Computer Sci.	1
Forest Resources	Forestry	1
	Wildlife and Fisheries	1

TOTAL

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