

# ROBERT HOLLAND FACULTY SENATE AGENDA

September 13, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. [Adoption of Minutes, August 23, 2024](#) ..... (p.2)
3. Introduction of Guests
  - a. Mr. Sid Salter, Vice President for Strategic Communications
  - b. Ms. Nicole Thomas, Manager of Communications, Campus Services
  - c. Ms. Lauren Geiger, Digital Archivist, MSU Libraries
4. [Report of the Faculty Senate President](#)..... (p.16)
5. [Report of the Faculty Senate Vice President](#)..... (p.18)
6. Reports from Faculty Senate Designates on University Committees
7. Business sent to Committee
  - 7.1. [AOP 12.04 Final Examination \(Academic Affairs\)](#)..... (p.19)
8. Business to be sent to Committee
9. Standing Committee Reports
  - 9.1. Academic Affairs
  - 9.2. Ancillary Affairs
  - 9.3. Charter & Bylaws
  - 9.4. Faculty Affairs
    - 9.4.1. [AOP 12.03 Awarding of Degrees Posthumously \(Faculty Affairs\)](#)..... (p.23)
  - 9.5. Student Affairs
  - 9.6. University Resources
10. Old Business
  - 10.1. [JSU Letter of Support](#)..... (p.27)
11. New Business
  - 11.1. [Contact Hours Letter of Support](#)..... (p.29)
12. Adjourn



## Robert Holland Faculty Senate

### **Uncorrected Minutes of August 23, 2024**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate of Mississippi State University held its regular monthly meeting in the Grisham Room of the Library at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, August 23, 2024.

Members absent and excused were Whitney Crow, Michael Jaffe, Caroline Kobia, Kris Krishnan, and John Wyatt.

Members absent were Rocky Lemus.

Members on Sabbatical: Peter Messer and Tara Sutton

Faculty Senate President Robert Banik called the meeting to order. President Banik requested approval for the April 12, 2024 Faculty Senate meeting. Hearing no corrections, President Banik requested a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Senator Lemley made a motion to approve the April 12, 2024 minutes. Senator Stokes seconded the motion.

### Guests

#### **Dr. Reuben Burch, Associate Vice-President, ORED**

Dr. Burch shared PowerPoint presentations which can be found in Appendix A of the online version of these minutes.

Dr. Burch spoke about PTIE (i.e., Promotion & Tenure in Innovation and Entrepreneurship). He stated that language has started to bubble up from NSF program directors about the importance of PTIE. He said they want to see an awareness of how including an innovation and entrepreneurship piece plays into the ecosystem.

Dr. Burch stated Oregon State won an NSF award for developing PTIE, and Jackson State was the primary sub-awardee. JSU offered a workshop to tech transfer offices in the state to go through a promotion & and tenure innovation & entrepreneurship workshop.

Dr. Burch requests the faculty senate investigate if there is interest by faculty to include or standardize Innovation and Entrepreneurship into the Promotion and Tenure process at any level: campus, college, or department. He said he went through the workbook that came with the JSU workshop with all of the Associate Deans of Research so they could help him understand the questions and challenges across campus. In engineering, patents, startup companies, and such are fairly understood, but for others, it would look different, and they want to make sure that it fits well with each group of faculty.

Senator Kelly asked if innovation and entrepreneurship would be a purely internal effort that stays in-house. Dr. Burch said the scope doesn't matter, but it matters that you created something, even if it stays in your specific area to your classes, no matter how small. He said you want to be able to record it so that external reviewers can recognize that you did invent something.

Senator Kelly asked if innovation and entrepreneurship could only cost money and not make any and still be valid under this model. Dr. Burch stated invention is still invention regardless of who your audience would be. He added that there have been many startups that did nothing but cost money and that education in general is giving back.

Senator Kelly stated the definition of excellence in teaching was expanded a few years ago, with an emphasis that student surveys should not be the only metric and in some cases should not be a metric at all. She said the definition of what we can use to make an argument for excellence in teaching when we go up for P&T was expanded and very broad. She added if this were going to remain flexible and one way to demonstrate excellence, not mandatory, it could be valuable. Dr. Burch said it would not be a successful program if it were mandatory and would diminish the whole trifecta of research, teaching, and service.

Senator Rai stated we should be careful that we don't start substituting a lot of other things but adding to the criteria to be certain it's another metric for evaluating success and progress.

Senator Adams asked if this would be another certification or another accreditation the university is going to have to get at some point in the future. Dr. Burch stated there were a lot of universities expected to track innovation and entrepreneurship output. He said he does not think it's looking to create new certifications or tracking mechanisms, but that the universities that have included PTIE, are starting to track it at a high level and that it is another metric that these large NSF hubs and other agency hubs are going to have a column in there that want to know how you are doing in these areas.

### **Mr. Jeremiah Dumas Executive Director of Transportation**

Mr. Dumas shared a PowerPoint presentation which can be found in Appendix B of the online version of these minutes.

Mr. Dumas gave an update on parking services and transportation and discussed the numerous projects being planned across the campus.

Mr. Dumas said a road was added connecting Collegeview and Bost. Collegeview parallel parking was introduced into the road corridor and was important as it narrows the lane width and naturally causes people to slow down. It also gives a hard buffer between the drive lane and bike path and increases pedestrian access. Those same standards will be used on different projects over the next couple of years.

Mr. Dumas stated they have a strong and growing relationship with the City of Starkville and just finished Phase One of the Spring Street Corridor Transportation Alternative Project. He stated it's one of the busiest intersections in North Mississippi.

Mr. Dumas discussed parking permits and said they were pleased with the way they have changed over the years. He said last year the number of commuter permits allocated per zone was limited so this year the first two days of classes were more manageable than 5-6 years ago when there was nowhere to park. They knew the lots based on their monitoring to show where there were parking places. He said through the waiting list process, they immediately start letting individuals off the

waiting list to allow the appropriate numbers of people into the lots instead of front-loading those in the beginning. Mr. Dumas said when the gated process was changed this summer it was because we needed to better manage occupancy in those lots.

Senator Chamberlain stated he appreciated the bike lanes that have been put in and the other things being done to improve the campus. He asked about sidewalks from the housing developments on Old Mayhew as it is very dangerous. Mr. Dumas stated that was not on campus and there were no planned sidewalks as the road would not allow it.

Senator Chamberlain stated the gates are very big and that when riding a bike, you sometimes have to dismount or go onto the sidewalk to get past them. Mr. Dumas stated some of the gates are different sized because when they are hit they have to find another gate quickly and have several different sized ones on standby.

Senator Chamberlain raised concerns about areas where pedestrians cross as it seems precedence is given to parking lots in certain areas.

Senator Chamberlain wondered if they had considered putting solar panels on the roof of the parking garages. Mr. Dumas said they had talked at length about doing that as well as other options, however, they do have them on top of the north garage.

Senator Gregory said she recently had an issue finding parking at the Sanderson Center and the small lot that was closer to Chadwick Lake was now metered parking. She asked what the metered parking is at Sanderson. Mr. Dumas stated that the small lot is a commuter lot and staff can park in any commuter lot, but is also a ParkMobile lot. He said they have multiple lots that are dual use lots because if there is not significant demand, anyone can pay by the day to park there.

Senator Gregory stated she parked by the bookstore last year and received a ticket thinking it was a commuter lot. Mr. Dumas stated they had made changes around the bookstore and it is ok to now park there if you have a permit.

Senator Taebi stated that he is a biker and likes the plans where the bike route is separated from the street as it is safer.

Senator Tschume stated the entrance and exit of gated vehicles being limited each day is causing issues, especially at 5:00 p.m. as people are leaving for the day. He said if you scan someone in front of you out, then the gate reads that you have already left so you cannot then get out. Mr. Dumas said it is something that occurs especially at the beginning of a semester when people find their way into a gate but cannot get back out. He said the vehicle should move back even though it would cause congestion until the attendant could be called or the police could get there but it will get better as the semester progresses.

Senator Rai stated he had an issue with being unable to exit the gate last week to go off campus for a meeting and had to call parking services. Mr. Dumas said they reviewed the instance and that a campus service vehicle was exiting at the same time he was entering and for some reason in the loop, it picked up Senator Rai entering and then immediately exiting so it closed that session. He said they had never had that issue before.

Senator Kelly asked why people need permits to get out. Mr. Dumas said they close your parking session as you exit because people were triggering the gate and had figured out ways to get it to open and close with no credentials so it's a failsafe. He said a \$50 ticket is not a deterrent for students and those spaces have to be reserved for the ones who purchased them. He stated people will enter through the exit gates and jump the curbs to get in.

Senator Kelly asked how the proportions of gated and regular parking were allocated. Mr. Dumas said gated lots are counted 1 to 1. Allen Hall and the two spaces around McCarthy Gym are at capacity. Hand gated and Rula are both highly underutilized so they have put 200% more people in those gated lots than they have but faculty and staff don't buy them so it's a demand issue.

Senator Beckham asked what happens if you enter or leave when the gates are open. Mr. Dumas said the gating sessions are set to neutral at 6:30 am each morning. If you come in at that point you should be able to exit because you're in a neutral session. He said there is a task that resets each permit so that you are not caught in one or the other.

Senator Williams asked if Parking Services was monitoring those in the summer who wanted the Hand lot to be their priority lot. Mr. Dumas said they were, and most everyone who wanted a priority lot in the summer received it. He said they had been selling into Hand for the last 3-4 weeks and have probably 500 on the waiting list. He said every week they add another 50-60 people but they have to give those people 4-5 days to come in so it takes time to work through that number of people.

Senator Williams asked if there had been any discussion on lowering the price on a lot if it is underutilized or sold out. Mr. Dumas stated the Student Association and Disability Support Services have approached them with detailed efforts to add students into gated and since Rula and Hand are both underutilized they will open that for students and see how it goes this year then look at how to maximize occupancy.

Senator Williams asked if there had even been discussions about restricting freshmen and residential people to park elsewhere or on the outer part of campus. He said the dorm students who have to move their cars on gameday are still paying for their spots. Mr. Dumas said it was about 100 students and they still are able to park in their zone.

Senator Williams asked if parking receives money from athletics events on campus using their spots. Mr. Dumas stated they are in a contract to manage those spaces and athletics compensates for those spaces.

Senator Williams asked if athletics control the deck next to the Hump. Mr. Dumas said they buy those passes from Parking Services and then sell them as certain types of Bulldog Club passes. They also use it for media and possibly some of the athletic staff.

### **Dr. David Shaw, Provost & Executive Vice-President**

Dr. Shaw stated he would be getting feedback on Dr. Burch's talking points and looking at what is best for each department. He said there was a lot to be considered and worth having a conversation about innovation and entrepreneurship in the context of how it fits within the discipline, how it fits within a department, how it fits within the college, and how it fits across the entire university.

Dr. Shaw said he was excited about the conversation on rethinking our general education curriculum which is beginning to pick up momentum. He said Mike Breazeale, Faculty Senate Vice President, is taking a 25% administrative internship to think about how we can have a faculty led effort that is rethinking General Education and about how we can go about and maximize specific, disciplinary areas in branding and marketing.

Dr. Shaw said student evaluations of teaching, will be coming up again quickly. He said it is on us to get the uptake of students doing those the way we should and it is on us how to change that. He said there are some great recommendations in the task force report. Dr. Shaw put forward a challenge that Senate, as faculty, give him recommendations on what we need to do this fall to begin to change that narrative.

Dr. Shaw discussed faculty evaluations. He said he reported earlier that he had a good conversation with the deans and department heads back in the spring semester about needing to better train our department heads on how to be more effective in doing those evaluations.

Dr. Shaw said he had a phenomenal department head when he came in 1985 who would spend two hours or more talking through not only what Dr. Shaw had done the previous year, but his goals and career path. Dr. Shaw said it was always a wonderful session but the more he is in the provost office, the more he is seeing that is not always the case.

Dr. Shaw said we need to double down on expecting our department heads to be more effective in evaluations, and for things like teaching, not continuing to just rely on the student evaluations. Instead, we should expect that each other and our department heads are actively engaged in conversation about what metrics are we going to be using. He stated the easy button is to take those numbers and include them in your annual performance review, and then in your P&T document, but that is a terrible approach to take. He said we universally agreed that is not the right thing to do, but we have not done an effective job in being able to recognize what it takes to be able to do something different. Dr. Shaw said this needs to be a faculty led and faculty driven process.

Dr. Shaw stated the Dean of Engineering search committee has been established and has met. He has seen a draft of the position description. Dr. Shaw said he told the committee members that this was a search committee and not a screening committee. He said we all need to participate to be sure that we get a great pool of candidates to evaluate.

Dr. Shaw said he has had good conversations with the president, legal counsel, Human Resources (H.R.), and Title IX about the Ombudsman position. He has drafted an announcement to put out on campus this fall to solicit someone who would be interested in stepping into that role.

He said to be able to do that effectively, it takes a very special individual and that Hart Bailey did a really good job when he was in the position. The individual must have the right character from a standpoint of understanding confidentiality as well as neutrality. He said this position is going to require a training period as there are so many H.R., legal, and Title IX facets with the position, that we will need to be sure we not only identify the right person but invest in them to be able to do that effectively.

Dr. Shaw said there had been many conversations over the last nine months or more about the software we are using or could be using from a plagiarism standpoint. He said it's a new world, especially with the advent of AI and the improvements that we're seeing in that regard. The software that we use currently more than doubled their price in one fell swoop. He said he stepped back with the Deans and had a hard conversation because of some of the controversies nationally that have been out there with software packages like this and the reliability of them and some of the legal liability that we have assuming where we're going in the future. He said they did renew the contract with Turnitin for this coming year, while we grapple with that issue. He said he is going

to need a lot of consultation with the senate as representatives of our faculty about where we're going with this because, in too many cases, we have proven examples where there are false positives and false negatives with a lot of the software packages that are out there right now. He said what he is seeing at national conversations with provost groups, around the country, is there is a lot more emphasis on possibly moving away from those kinds of packages and moving towards rethinking how we're approaching the ways that we test students and ask questions of students to be able to better defeat the plagiarism that none of us want to be seeing.

Senator Williams stated when speaking about innovation and entrepreneurship and praising people for coming up with new things to remember that if the P&T document allows for it, academic freedom dictates that professors should be allowed to pursue whatever the P&T document allows them to pursue. He stated administrators should give up whatever bias they have and evaluate them on the work they're doing, and creative achievement is considered just as important as research. He added that even in Arts & Sciences people do not understand that creative achievement is part of the discipline. Dr. Shaw agreed and said we all need to challenge each other that the university P&T document does allow that. He said Dr. Jim Dunne has been collecting departmental and college P&T documents and they are seeing it is not embraced. Dr. Shaw said the challenge should be taken back to the departmental P&T committees to double down on that academic freedom.

Senator Gregory asked about the student evaluations and stated she taught a summer course and received data back that was completely different from what the Senate approved several years ago. She also received 4 emails in 3 days making it seem like it was her responsibility to make sure that the students did the evaluations. She asked why that change happened and why the Faculty Senate was not part of that change. Dr. Shaw said this was the first he had heard of it, but as far as the changes go, nothing should have changed in terms of the questions that were asked in comparison to what was passed from the Senate. Senator Gregory stated she would forward the emails so Dr. Shaw could see the data as the colors and graphics were different.

Senator Tschume stated the online portal of the summer evaluations was a little was confusing at first but he liked it because the summary immediately had the College of Arts & Sciences average and the university averages so they were built in versus him needing to email OIRE for the data.

### Report of the Faculty Senate President

Welcome back, senators! I hope everyone had a relaxing and productive summer, whether you were leading a group on a study abroad, working outside at home, finishing up that grant proposal, or entertaining a six-year-old for several weeks like I was. Over the summer, many of the University Committees on which I serve met. I also met with Provost Shaw and will continue to meet regularly with him during this next academic year. I am looking forward to continuing to foster my collaborative working relationship with both President Keenum and Provost Shaw throughout the coming year. They both remain committed to working closely with the Robert Holland Faculty Senate.

I was informed after the spring semester ended of three senators from the College of Arts & Sciences who were awarded sabbaticals for either the fall, spring, or full academic year. These

sabbaticals include Senator Tara Sutton for this Fall 2024 semester, Senator Kimberly Kelly for the Spring 2025 semester, and Senator Peter Messer for the full academic year. I have asked Evan Kaplan and Amber Robinson to join us at our first official meeting as potential replacements for these senators based on previous methods of sabbatical replacements. The Faculty Senate will discuss this at length at the end of the meeting. Senator Derek Marshall received a promotion within the Mitchell Memorial Library, so an election was held to replace Senator Marshall. Senator Kathryn (K.C.) New is joining the Faculty Senate to finish out his two-year term.

To give an update on the University Syllabus, a Deans subcommittee was formed to add and adjust the language to the Generative AI section and Academic Integrity section of the University Syllabus. The updated syllabus can be found at <https://www.provost.msstate.edu/faculty-student-resources/university-syllabus>. Dr. Peter Ryan sent a copy of the suggested changes to me and Vice President Breazeale on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. I consulted with the Executive Committee of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate. We proposed some changes, and Vice President Breazeale and I met with Dr. Ryan and Dr. Tommy Anderson on July 26<sup>th</sup>. The Deans Council wanted to enact the proposed changes before the start of the Fall 2024 semester. Members of the Executive Committee felt that the Faculty Senate should review and approve any changes to the University Syllabus, but the Faculty Senate was not consulted on previous changes, thus we did not stop these changes from occurring. I have requested that AOP 13.03 Responsibilities in Instruction and Curriculum and Attendance at Class be reviewed by Faculty Senate to incorporate language concerning the University Syllabus and the process of how edits should be made to the University Syllabus.

With the start of a new academic year, one of my first responsibilities as President was to assign senators to the various university committees for which we have a designated seat. Several committees are represented are specifically identified senators, which is true of those that I and Vice-President Mike Breazeale currently serve. I sent out emails asking for volunteers for certain committees. Thanks to you all willing to serve. I worked with Dr. Jim Dunne and the rest of the Standing Committee Review Board to identify standing committees that were no longer needed. In doing so, the following list are committees that are still listed as needing representation.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
Academic Accommodations Committee	Kim Walters
Academic Deans Council	Robert Banik & Mike Breazeale
Academic Review Board	Neeraj Rai
Additional Course Fees Committee	Neeraj Rai
Associate Deans Council	Andy Perkins
Athletic Council	Robert Banik
Calendar Committee	Mike Breazeale
Commencement Committee	Robert Banik
Committee on Campus Access	Mike Breazeale
Committee on Courses and Curricula	Jacob Tschume
Design Review Committee	Robert Banik
Dining Advisory Committee	Barry Stewart & Fred Musser
Employee Benefits Committee	Kim Walters



Executive Council	Robert Banik
Faculty Research Advisory Committee	Beth Stokes
Faculty/Staff Housing Appeals Committee	Robert Banik
Galleries and Museums Committee	Alexis Gregory
Gerontology Committee	-----
Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council	Robert Banik
Institutional Effectiveness Committee	Kevin Williams
Instructional Technology Advisory Committee	James Sobaskie
Library Committee	Krish Krishnan
Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee	Robert Banik & Mike Breazeale
Parking and Traffic Regulation Committee	Robert Banik
President's Committee on Planning	Robert Banik
Registration and Scheduling Committee	Jacob Tschume
Special Events and Game Day Operations	Robert Banik
Sustainability Committee	Robert Banik
Teaching Evaluation Committee	Alexis Gregory
Textbook Committee	Paul Spurlin
Undergraduate Research and Creative Discovery Committee	Mike Breazeale
Health and Wellness Committee	Lauren Priddy
Work-Life Balance Committee	Christine Coker

Some committees are being paused/removed from being standing committees. I may have more to share than these, but for now, these include:

- IT Council
- Instructional Improvement Committee

I have also asked Senator Beth Stokes to serve as our parliamentarian for this academic year. She did state that if anyone else was willing, she would allow another to be parliamentarian as her term expires this year.

Again, thank you to each of the senators who volunteered to represent the Senate on the above-standing university committees. I appreciate your time and commitment.

**Reports from Committees on which I Serve:**

**Athletic Council** – This committee has not met since our last meeting in April, but I met with Dr. Brent Fountain, the chair, on July 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss meeting times and dates, as well as the potential faculty members who could replace faculty who have rolled off the council. New members of the council include Mark Fincher, Beth Baker, and Morgan Green. Our first monthly meeting will be September 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Dean’s Council** – This committee met on May 13<sup>th</sup> and July 8<sup>th</sup>. On May 13<sup>th</sup>, AOP 12.21 Veteran’s Academic Status was approved from the changes that were done by Faculty Senate in the Spring. As it did not need to be seen again by Faculty Senate due to no additional changes by the Associate Deans or Deans, it was sent directly to Executive Council on July 22<sup>nd</sup> for approval. AOP 12.04 Final

Examination was also discussed with changes from Faculty Senate and Associate Deans Council. At the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, it was tabled giving the deans time to discuss with their perspective colleges.

On July 8<sup>th</sup>, AOP 12.03 Awarding Degrees Posthumously, AOP 12.04 Final Examination, AOP 12.12 Credit and Grades, and AOP 12.22 Undergraduate Courseload were all discussed. AOP 12.03 was passed with little discussion and change and will be coming to Faculty Senate. AOP 12.12 was passed contingent and will also be with Faculty Senate. AOP 12.04 was sent back to Associate Deans Council for additional revisions about timing for shortened formats with final exams. AOP 12.22 was to receive slight edits before being sent to Faculty Senate.

Dean's Council did not meet in person in August, but an email vote concerning rescinding AOP 11.05 Requirements for Shortened-Format courses was held. Much of the language in AOP 11.05 is now included in AOP 12.12. As of this report, I do not know the outcome of that vote.

**Design Review Committee** – Did not meet in May, June, or July. The committee met on August 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss two agenda items. First, the committee discussed the design of National Pan-Hellenic Council Plaza to be located at the corner of George Perry Street and Barr Avenue, across from Old Main Academic Center. This is an adjacent site to the new dormitory. The second agenda item concerned the Kappa Delta Sorority House renovation. The renovation would take approximately 14 months to complete, beginning next summer. The front house would be demolished and rebuilt entirely. Both projects were approved, and work would begin when finances become available.

**Executive Council** – This committee met on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. AOP 12.21 Veterans Academic Status was the only AOP on the agenda, and it was approved as edited by the Faculty Senate. OP 03.07 Clery Act Compliance, OP 70.09 Financial Conflict of Interest in Sponsored Activities, OP 91.304 Free Speech and Assembly, and OP 91.305 Domestic Travel by Students were also passed at Executive Council. OP 91.300 Blood Procurement had minor changes to modify personnel and system titles and to clarify language about responsibility for debts. OP 91.301 Use of Tobacco on Campus was expanded to all university locations, as opposed to only Starkville and Meridian. One technical change was to OP 95.501 Traffic and Parking Rules and Regulations which updated grammar to reflect the new name of the office responsible, which is the Office of Transportation.

**Fall Convocation Group** – This committee met on June 7<sup>th</sup> with a follow-up meeting held on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Fall Convocation will be held on August 27<sup>th</sup> @ 6 pm in Humphrey Coliseum. Whitney Lipscomb from the Attorney General of Mississippi's Office will be the highlighted speaker. The meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup> was to clear up logistics with flow of students into Humphrey Coliseum and placement of the choir, band, and stage. I would ask that, if possible, please come out to this event and represent the faculty to the new freshman and transfer students at this university. Faculty will be seated on the first few rows in the stands behind the floor seats. Regalia is not required.

**Game Day and Special Events** – This committee met on July 18<sup>th</sup>. There were some changes discussed concerning the entrance to campus from the Highway 12/Russell Street intersection. This entrance will close 4 hours before game time to allow pedestrians to come onto campus without traffic trying to come down Stone Blvd to Bost Drive. Vehicles will be allowed to come onto campus at College View and move south along the new Bost Extended by the MSU Soccer field. There will also be a greater distance between tailgating and the sidewalks throughout the Junction. The tents

will be marked off at 12 feet from the sidewalk. More space will also be marked between the tents. Otherwise, much of the gameday experience will be similar to what was last year.

This committee also met on August 13<sup>th</sup>. The agenda included setting up a tailgate for former players for the Florida (1974 and 1999 teams), Texas A&M (2014 team), and UMass games. Also discussed was having Lot 32 (lot north of the Chapel of Memories) be set up as a tailgate for coaches' families provided by Southern Tradition Tailgate. A third item was the route for the Alumni Association Fun Run on Friday before Homecoming. The route will begin near Memorial Hall and go downtown near City Hall, progress back down Main Street/University Drive/Barr Avenue, and end by going through Davis Wade Stadium and finish outside the stadium at the southeast plaza. All three items were passed at the meeting.

**Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council** – This committee met on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Barber from the National Science Foundation shared a document on legislative tracking regarding DEI legislation. A discussion was held concerning college-level practices for the upcoming academic year and beyond.

**Information Technology Council** – Earlier this year, an IT governance advisory audit was conducted, identifying several areas for improvement in IT governance at MSU. Considering these findings, Provost Shaw has decided to pause the Information Technology Council for reevaluation of its charter and role within the university. To my knowledge, this will be my last report concerning the IT Council.

**Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee** – This committee did not meet in May, June, July, or August.

**Parking and Traffic Regulations Committee** – This committee met on June 27<sup>th</sup>. The agenda included a proposed \$30 fine for any vehicle caught charging on campus without the correct permit or a vehicle parked in a garage charging station. This item was passed unanimously. A second item was the rezoning of certain parking spaces for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences due to the loss of Dorman Hall parking during renovations. These changes were also approved. A third item was a request from the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. The request to create reserved parking for each dean of each college. This action item was tabled pending further investigation.

**Sustainability Committee** – This committee met on July 25<sup>th</sup>. There are two new undergraduate interns and one returning undergraduate intern. The interns have been hosting Sustainable Saturdays in June and July at Fire Station Park discussing native plants and composting. The coffee composting is continuing this fall with Fresh Foods Market and Starbucks. MSU Sustainability won the Glass Recycling Egg Bowl against the University of Mississippi by collecting over 8000 pounds of glass. There was so much glass that some could not be taken to recycle, so the undergraduate interns are planning to use some of the glass in other projects around campus.

Check out the MSU Green Fund. You can find it under your myState Banner page under Personal Information. As of this writing, the fund has just over \$700 total in it, and the vast majority of that was given in April/May 2024.

The committee voted to approve the energy savings percentage for the Perry Cafeteria renovation. The campus strives to be a minimum of 30% over the national standard when renovating a

structure. This 30% mark is a self-imposed standard. Perry will be 15% over the national standard, so a vote was needed and was approved.

Chadwick Lake will now move to point-based treatments to prevent runoff from fertilizers into the lake. Bigger fish have been added and wood duck boxes are also installed. The lake even had swimmers in it this summer (which is not illegal). There are also pollinating areas and plants installed around the Sonny Montgomery statue near McCool Hall and an area for native plants at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Two new autonomous transit vehicles will begin running on the north side of campus on September 1<sup>st</sup> and run through November 30<sup>th</sup>. These will loop from Old Main Academic Center to the Sanderson Center to College View and down to Giles Architecture and back to Old Main. MSU will be the first in the Southeastern Conference to implement these vehicles.

**United Faculty Senate Association of Mississippi (UFSAM)** – This committee met on April 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Family Leave response from Dr. Al Rankins that I shared last spring. We also discussed whether we should form a committee to contact IHL about faculty salaries. I mentioned that our senate just discussed faculty salaries at our April meeting, and the motion failed to pass. Discussion was held to not use data on how far behind salary averages are compared to other schools, but to tell stories and use testimonials to convey these are people they are making decisions about. There was also a discussion of a retreat/meeting to talk in person about the group. This retreat did not happen.

This committee also met on August 13<sup>th</sup>. The main topic was a discussion concerning an article in *Mississippi Today* about Professor Dawn McLin, the faculty senate president at Jackson State University. Dr. McLin was placed on leave August 1<sup>st</sup> pending termination for allegedly abusing the power of the position. On Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>, she received a letter of recommendation of termination based on interfering with accreditation, harassment, and bullying. Members of the Executive Committee for JSU asked to meet with the JSU President, but they stated that he has not made himself available. Dr. McLin's attorney advised her to not join in with the meeting. There was an AAUP letter sent to their provost, president, IHL, and faculty senate. Members of the executive committee from JSU would like the UFSAM to support Dr. McLin by including a letter of support. A letter was discussed to support the idea of her position as faculty senate president and the fact she is a tenured professor, not necessarily her personally. At this time, no letter has been drawn up, and I will consult with the Robert Holland Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Senate when and if a letter is drawn up.

The only other business discussed was to elect a new chair for this committee. Dr. Joshua Bernstein (University of Southern Mississippi) was elected as the new chair of the body.

Senator Gregory asked about the location of the senate meetings being moved from Bost. She said in looking back at old meeting minutes, in April 2022, the University Resources Committee did a report and investigation of spaces as Grisham Room was deemed inadequate for the Senate and it was also not listed on the list of spaces. She asked if any of the other spaces were considered and why the Grisham Room was reconsidered.

President Banik stated Bost was unavailable for the complete year due to having scheduled classes and other meetings and the Grisham Room was available for each meeting. He said the Library made their space available at no charge and wanted to host the meetings. He said the other spaces on the report were considered but there were different issues depending on what the spaces were.

President Banik said he thought the space worked well, but was open to other suggestions, spaces or layouts.

## Report of the Faculty Senate Vice President

### **Committee on Campus Access**

This committee is tasked with spending the \$800K budget to retrofit facilities that do not have other monies accessible for ADA updates and to make repairs that impact accessibility on campus. A report has been commissioned to locate campus spots where ADA access is limited and signage is insufficient. The report due later this fall will be assessed to determine where our budget should be spent.

### **Calendar Committee**

No meetings have been held since the last Vice President's report, but there is one scheduled for next month.

### **Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee**

No meetings were held since the last Vice President's report. Meetings will resume in September.

### **Undergraduate Research and Creative Discovery Committee**

No meetings were held since the last Vice President's report. Meetings will resume in September.

### **Task Force on Student Evaluation of Courses**

The goal of the Provost's Task Force on Student Evaluation of Courses was to develop a plan to increase response rates to student course surveys. The Task Force found that students: (1) are unclear about the benefits of completing student course surveys, (2) share several misconceptions about when their feedback is released to faculty and how the information is used, and (3) have concerns about how they receive information about student course surveys and about the procedures for completing them.

The Task Force recommended a two-pronged approach to increasing response rates. The first prong is student-focused and includes both an education component and a social media component. The education component should communicate to students that their feedback matters and cannot be used against them. It should involve a coordinated series of messages explaining what student course surveys are and how students' ratings are used. It could also involve creating a Canvas course/training module about student course surveys. The social media component should include social media posts and printed materials reminding students that it is time for their voices to be heard. The dates of availability should be posted with messaging highlighting the importance we place on students' anonymity. The campaign could end with a "Thank You" event to acknowledge we appreciate their feedback.

The second prong is faculty-focused. Messaging about student course surveys (e.g., best practices for achieving high response rates, the value of students having a voice) should be included in communications faculty already receive from other offices. Faculty should also be encouraged to tailor the optional student course survey questions toward their unique course experiences. Taken

together, these recommendations for students and faculty should lead to a shift in how students and faculty view student course surveys.

Senator Herrmann commented on training department heads on the course evaluations. She said years ago, the surveys used to include that global average, and her impression was that was done away with to move the department head away from just relying on those teaching evaluations. She said some department heads are recreating the global average and also disregarding the optional questions that instructors have added in, in their consideration of them, as well as in this global average that they're moving back to and could be included in the training. Vice President Breazeale stated that they also talked about making sure we encourage faculty to use those additional, optional questions to dig into the things they care about and that matter to them.

Senator Gregory if Vice President Breazeale could provide any information on the difference in the summer evaluation changes she referenced with Dr. Shaw. She said it seemed like the emails she received were part of this task force. Vice President Breazeale stated that there should not have been any changes implemented in the actual administration of the evaluations that went out. He said he taught some online courses as well this summer and noticed that the report was very different but the questions were not recognized as being any different. He asked Senator Gregory to forward him those summer emails she received.

## Reports from Faculty Senate Designates on University Committees

### Business Sent to Committee

### Business to be Sent to Committee

### Standing Committee Reports

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS – No Report**  
**ANCILLARY AFFAIRS – No Report**  
**CHARTER & BYLAWS – No Report**  
**FACULTY AFFAIRS – No Report**  
**STUDENT AFFAIRS – No Report**  
**UNIVERSITY RESOURCES – No Report**

### Old Business

## New Business

### 1. Sabbatical Replacements

President Banik gave a history of the senator replacements when a senator takes a sabbatical leave. Before 2020 each college ran its own senate and committee elections. This changed to the Faculty Senate running those elections in 2020. Dean Travis from the College of Arts & Sciences said if they needed a replacement senator or committee member they would have gone back to the last election and selected the next nomination that had been voted on. If there were none they would have had an election. When this changed to the Faculty Senate holding the elections, the By-laws were not changed.

President Banik asked for a motion to accept Amber Robinson as the replacement for Peter Messer while he is on sabbatical leave for the year and Evan Kaplan as the replacement for Senator Sutton while she is on fall sabbatical and Senator Kelly while she is on spring sabbatical.

Senator Lemley gave the motion to accept. Senator Tschume gave the second. The motion passed by majority hand vote.

President Banik asked for a motion to allow Charter & Bylaws to consider edits to the faculty handbook to address the replacement of senators within the Bylaws of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate.

Senator Williams gave the motion. Senator Haynes gave the second. The motion passed by majority hand vote.

Senator Lemley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Nunnery seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:41 pm.

Submitted for correction and approval.

---

Stacy Haynes, Secretary

Dinah Jenkins, Administrative Assistant

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Side Salter, Vice President for Strategic Communications  
Ms. Nicole Thomas, Manager of Communications, Campus Services  
Ms. Lauren Geiger, Digital Archivist, MSU Libraries

## REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT

It has been a short time since our last meeting on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Hopefully, everyone is settling into the routine of the semester now. Fall Convocation was held on August 27<sup>th</sup> at Humphrey Coliseum. Thanks to you all who were able to attend to represent the faculty at that event as we welcomed new freshman and transfer students to the university.

The Fall 2024 General Faculty meeting was held on September 4<sup>th</sup> in Bettersworth Auditorium. Dr. Mark Keenum addressed the faculty, giving updates from Jackson, on construction projects, and pertinent issues. Thanks to Dr. Keenum for these updates.

I would like to thank Senator Kimberly Kelly who volunteered to serve on the Gerontology Committee after the August 2024 meeting.

Along those lines, seven university standing committees have been recommended to disband. The relevant vice president must decide to disband these before they are officially disbanded. These include:

- Gerontology Committee
- Registration and Scheduling Committee
- Research and Technology Advisory Committee
- Teaching Evaluation Committee
- Textbook Committee
- University Instructional Improvement Committee
- Work-Life Balance Committee

I have also asked that the library provide an alternative to the basic metal chairs from the previous meeting, and the layout of the meeting will be slightly different this week. Come early and grab a seat in the Grisham Room.

Last month, Dr. Reuben Burch presented on Promotion & Tenure Innovation & Entrepreneurship (PTIE). Dr. Shaw and I discussed creating a joint taskforce to explore how PTIE principles could be implemented at MSU. Vice President Mike Breazeale has been asked to chair this taskforce. The membership includes:

- Mike Breazeale (Chair) – College of Business
- Reuben Burch – Associate Vice President of Research
- Stephanie Lemley – College of Education
- Todd Mlsna – College of Arts & Sciences
- Nick Pashos – Center for Entrepreneurship & Outreach Director
- Amirtaha Taebi – Bagley College of Engineering
- John Walters – Office of Technology Management Director
- Amelia Wollums – College of Veterinary Medicine



Dr. Tracey Baham also sent me the upcoming schedule for deployment of the course surveys over the next several terms. I have them listed below. These dates are based on Faculty Senate guidelines given to OIRE.

	<b>Survey start date</b>	<b>Survey end date</b>
2024 Fall	11/15/2024	12/4/2024
2024 Fall Mini Term One	10/3/2024	10/8/2024
2024 Fall Mini Term Two	11/21/2024	12/2/2024
2024 Winter Session	1/6/2025	1/10/2025
2025 Spring	4/23/2025	5/6/2025
2025 Spring Mini Term One	2/28/2025	3/5/2025
2025 Spring Mini Term Two	4/29/2025	5/4/2025
2025 Maymester	5/28/2025	5/30/2025
2025 Summer First Term	6/24/2025	6/30/2025
2025 Summer Second Term	7/25/2025	7/31/2025
2025 Summer Ten-Week Term	7/25/2025	7/31/2025
2025 Fall	11/17/2025	12/3/2025
2025 Fall Mini Term One	10/2/2025	10/7/2025
2025 Fall Mini Term Two	11/21/2025	12/1/2025

**Reports from Committees on which I Serve:**

**Athletic Council** – The committee has not met as of this report. Our first monthly meeting will be September 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Dean’s Council** – Dean’s Council did not meet in person in August, but an email vote concerning rescinding AOP 11.05 Requirements for Shortened-Format courses was held. Much of the language in AOP 11.05 is now included in AOP 12.12. This vote passed unanimously to rescind AOP 11.05.

The council met on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Four AOPs were discussed. These were AOP 13.03 Responsibilities in Instruction and Curriculum, and Attendance at Classes, AOP 13.05 Faculty Grievance Procedures, AOP 12.04 Final Examination, and AOP 12.38 Undergraduate Academic Advisement. AOP 12.38 was a minor edit, and with approval from the Executive Committee, this edit was done to comply with an updated IHL policy. AOP 12.38 was then sent back to Associate Deans Council for a full update and will return to the full senate soon. AOP 12.04 was passed and sent to Faculty Senate along with AOP 11.05. We cannot rescind AOP 11.05 until AOP 12.12 Credit and Grades is passed, so AOP 11.05 will be assigned after AOP 12.12 is completed. AOP 12.04 Final Examination has been sent to Academic Affairs as of September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Design Review Committee** – This committee did not meet in September. The next meeting is scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Executive Council** – This committee did not meet in August. The next scheduled meeting is September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Game Day and Special Events** – This committee has not met since the last Faculty Senate meeting.

**Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council** – This committee has not met since the last Faculty Senate meeting. I spoke with VP Ra’Sheda Forbes last week, and she assured me that a meeting will be held very soon.

**Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee** – This committee has not met since the last Faculty Senate meeting. The September meeting was also canceled.

**Parking and Traffic Regulations Committee** – This committee met on August 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss a request from the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. The request was to create reserved parking for each college dean. Discussion was held, and this passed the committee by a 4-3 vote.

**Sustainability Committee** – This committee has not met since the last Faculty Senate meeting.

**United Faculty Senate Association of Mississippi (UFSAM)** – This committee has not met since the last Faculty Senate meeting. I circulated a proposed letter to our senate body for approval. The Robert Holland Faculty Senate voted unanimously on the support letter on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and the UFSAM was notified that day. The letter was then sent on September 4<sup>th</sup> to the president of Jackson State University and copied to the IHL Commissioner Dr. Al Rankins, the AAUP, and members of the Jackson State Faculty Senate. A copy of the letter is under Old Business in the agenda packet. The Mississippi University for Women Faculty Senate voted to not support this letter, so the final letter was signed by those below.

Robert Banik, Mississippi State University  
Joshua Bernstein, University of Southern Mississippi, President of the UFSAM  
Candace Carter-Stevens, Mississippi Valley State University  
Nora Gough-Davis, Delta State University  
Anant Singh, Alcorn State University  
Hans P Sinha, University of Mississippi  
Bradley J. Walters, University of Mississippi Medical Center

## REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE VICE PRESIDENT

### **Committee on Campus Access**

This committee has not met since the last Vice President’s report.

### **Calendar Committee**

This committee meets an hour before the September Faculty Senate meeting. I will have a report at next month’s meeting.

### **Master Plan Development and Advisory Committee**

This committee has not met since the last Vice President’s report.

### **Undergraduate Research and Creative Discovery Committee**

This committee has not met since the last Vice President’s report.

## REPORTS FROM FACULTY DESIGNATES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

## BUSINESS SENT TO COMMITTEE



**MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
UNIVERSITY™

### AOP 12.04: FINAL EXAMINATION

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to define the policy regarding final examinations at Mississippi State University and to define the responsibility of the administrators and faculty.

#### POLICY/PROCEDURE

For the purpose of this policy, the final examination period is defined as the normal five-day (may span a weekend) period during which final examinations are scheduled.

All final examinations will be held as specified on the Examination Schedule except those for classes meeting fewer than two lecture hours per week and/or certain other classes which may be given at particular times by special permission from the Provost and Executive Vice President. Classes meeting fewer than two lecture hours per week and all laboratories will have their examinations at the last regular meeting of the class. Evening classes will have their examination on the same night of the week during the final examination period. Classes offered in shortened formats should hold the final exam during the last class period **for synchronous delivery or the last class day for asynchronous delivery when the exams are not scheduled in the University academic calendar.**

The purpose of the Reading Day, when scheduled, is to allow students time to study and prepare for final examinations. No student activity, meeting, assignment, or event should be scheduled on this day. These restrictions apply to all Mississippi State University classes (e.g., face-to-face, online, etc.).

When an instructor teaches more than one section of the same course, permission may be given in advance at the instructor's discretion to a student registered for the course to take the examination in any one of the sections, provided that procedure does not result in too many examinations for the student in one day.

Students are entitled to sit through the full three hours of the allocated exam time. If a student is late for the examination but no classmates have completed the examination before the student's arrival, then the faculty member must allow the student to take the examination within the remaining examination time. If a student arrives after an examination has been submitted for evaluation, the faculty member or proctor may refuse to administer the final examination to the late student.

Asynchronous online classes will have their examination during the regular examination period. Examinations for traditional 15-week semester courses must be available to online students for at least 72 hours between the end of Reading Day and prior to the end of the exam period. In the case of shortened-format terms, examinations will be available to online students for the duration of the final examination period. For asynchronous courses in shortened formats with no scheduled final examination period, examinations will be available to students for 48 hours to include the last day of class. Synchronous online classes will follow the normal exam schedule.

Courses delivered through face-to-face including hybrid methods may opt to also offer asynchronous online examinations; however, students must also have the option to complete an in-person final examination during the regularly scheduled final examination window. In cases of asynchronous final examinations for face-to-face courses, the final examination window must include at a minimum the full three-hour session allotted by the final examination schedule.

Grading Day: Faculty should be given at least 24 hours from the time of conclusion of the examination period and the submission of final grades to the Registrar's Office to grade exams. Exceptions to the published Examination Schedule are discouraged. If an exception is deemed necessary, the request must be approved by the respective department head and dean and copies of these approvals placed on file in the dean's office. Approval for a request to change the final exam schedule must be secured at least 2 weeks prior to final exam week. Exceptions to the published Examination Schedule will be emailed and announced to the affected classes at least 2 weeks prior to final exam week.

### **Three or More Final Examinations in One Day**

Students should not have to take more than two final examinations in a given day. To resolve the problem of multiple final examinations, students must initiate the process and administration will become involved if necessary. The rescheduled final examination ideally should be a time that is convenient for both the instructor and the student. The rescheduling should be completed prior to the beginning of the final examination period and the resulting examination must be administered during the final examination period. Any exception to these guidelines must be approved by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President.

Student Responsibilities to Resolve Multiple Examinations If the schedule has three or more final examinations scheduled on one day for a student, the student should take the following actions:

- The student should notify all instructors at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the examination period to explore if one of them can easily reschedule an examination.
- Within a week, if no instructor is willing to voluntarily reschedule a final examination for the student, the student should notify the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President so that this issue can be resolved administratively.

Administrative Responsibilities to Resolve Multiple Examinations: If the student contacts the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President, the Executive Vice Provost will coordinate the next steps of contacting the associate dean(s) in the college(s) of the student and the professors who are giving the final examinations. The following provisions will apply:

- The affected associate dean(s) will resolve the situation and decide who will reschedule which examination.
- The lead associate dean will be the associate dean representing the college of the student.
- The decision of the lead associate dean on which examination is to be rescheduled will be the final decision.

Students should report any violation of the above policy to the instructor's department head.

### REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the Executive Vice Provost with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

REVIEWED:

_____ Executive Vice Provost	_____ Date
_____ Provost and Executive Vice President	_____ Date
_____ President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate	_____ Date
_____ Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness	_____ Date
_____ General Counsel	_____ Date

APPROVED:

_____ President	_____ Date
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BUSINESS TO BE SENT TO COMMITTEE

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

ANCILLARY AFFAIRS

CHARTER & BYLAWS

FACULTY AFFAIRS

## **Report to the Robert Holland Faculty Senate**

### **Faculty Affairs Committee**

#### **Report on AOP 12.03 Awarding of Degrees Posthumously**

**September 5, 2024**

#### **Background**

On August 16, 2024, Robert Holland Faculty Senate President Robert Banik assigned AOP 12.03, Awarding of Degrees Posthumously, to the Faculty Affairs Committee for review. This AOP was going through the regular 4-year review cycle. It had been slightly edited to include a student being currently enrolled to be awarded a degree posthumously and to also change the College of Veterinary Medicine to professional school in case MSU ever adds an additional professional school in the future.

#### **Recommendation**

The Faculty Affairs committee recommends that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate approve AOP 12.03: Awarding of Degrees Posthumously, with the edits made by the Faculty Affairs Committee.

#### **Discussion**

The first two changes come in the Eligibility section of the AOP.

1. We decided it was better wording and flow to move the statement about a student being enrolled at the time of death from the first statement to part (1) in the Eligibility section. It also seems that previous edits were attempted to try and mention that a student could be recently enrolled at the time of death and still be awarded a degree posthumously. We agreed that this should be included in part (1) as well.

2. In the paragraph after part (2), it was recommended that we include the graduate coordinator in the recommendation list for any graduate student who this policy would apply.

The next change comes in the Family Notification section of the AOP.

3. The committee has recommended a rewording in the second paragraph of this section to help with flow and grammar.

Finally, the last change came in the title of the people who are required to sign the AOP upon finalization.

4. Since Dr. Peter Ryan is no longer the Dean of the Graduate School and the AOP was signed by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, we felt that only the title Executive Vice Provost should remain for the first signature.

**Committee Members: Jacob Tschume (Chair), Russel Carr, Whitney Crow, Alexis Gregory, Kimberly Kelly, Krish Krishnan, Swapnil Patole, Amirtaha Taebi**



## **AOP 12.03: AWARDING OF DEGREES POSTHUMOUSLY**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to clarify policies and procedures by which Mississippi State University may confer posthumously baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees upon students who are deceased prior to but nearing formal completion of all degree requirements of the programs being pursued.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

Mississippi State University may confer posthumously baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees upon students who are deceased prior to but nearing formal completion of all degree requirements of the programs being pursued. Any student who is deceased after completing degree requirements but prior to the conferment of the degree will receive the earned degree with no posthumous designation.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for the award of a Mississippi State University degree posthumously, the student must have met both of the following conditions:

1. At the time of death, the student was enrolled or recently enrolled and nearing completion of work required for award of the degree. "Nearing completion" is defined as having completed 75% or more of the course work required by the degree program. For graduate students in thesis and dissertation programs, 75% or more of the course work should have been completed and the student should have commenced the research process. Graduate students in non-thesis programs should have completed 75% or more of the required course work. Professional students should have completed 75% or more of the course work for the degree.
2. The student was in good academic standing and was successfully progressing toward completion of requirements for the degree to be awarded.

Recommendation for award of the degree is made by the faculty in the student's major department and approved by the department head, school director, or college dean. In the case of a graduate student, the student's Graduate Committee will make the recommendation to the graduate coordinator, department head, school director, or college dean and Dean of the Graduate School. In the case of a professional student, the Dean and Faculty of the respective college or school will make the recommendation to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

If a student does not meet the above criteria, then the Office of the Registrar may award a certificate of attendance.

**Commented [JT8]:** Covered below in Part 1 of this section

**Commented [JT9]:** Added to replace the previous part deleted and still cover enrolled and recently enrolled students

**Commented [JT10]:** Faculty Affairs Standing Committee believes that the graduate coordinator of the program should be included.



Final approval for awarding of degrees posthumously shall rest with the Provost and Executive Vice President, Mississippi State University.

#### **Approval Process**

The process for identifying and considering candidates for the award of degrees posthumously shall be as follows:

- The University Registrar, upon learning of the death of a Mississippi State University student, shall ascertain the relative academic standing of the student, as specified above.
- If the deceased student is determined to be eligible as a candidate for posthumous award of the degree being pursued, the University Registrar will so certify to the appropriate Academic Dean. The Registrar will indicate the appropriate semester and graduation date for awarding the degree.
- The departmental faculty, department head, and dean will determine if the student's overall record merits further consideration and recommendation that the posthumous award be granted; such information will be communicated to the Provost.
- The Provost will weigh all information relating to each case independently and will prepare a memorandum granting the Posthumous Award of the appropriate degree(s).

#### **Awarding of Degrees Posthumously**

Upon approval by the Provost, the following procedure will be followed:

- The Provost will prepare a presidential notification letter to the family.
- Concurrently, the University Registrar will prepare a diploma for mailing or presentation to the family.
- The posthumous nature of the award will be indicated within the student's permanent record. The following notation will be placed on the transcript of the student – “Degree Awarded Posthumously.”

#### **Family Notification**

No family notification should occur until the award of the degree is officially approved by the Provost and the President signs the letter of notification.

The letter and diploma may be mailed to the family or presented to the family in a private presentation arranged by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President. In addition to the letter from the President, the student's department and college/school may send a letter or card to the student's family, highlighting the student's contributions or academic performance or the like.

**Commented [JT11]:** Cleaning up the wording of this part of the AOP

**REVIEW**

This AOP will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require an earlier review by the University Registrar with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

**REVIEWED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Vice Provost \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provost and Executive Vice President \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Counsel \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
President \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Commented [JT12]:** Since Dr. Ryan is no longer the Dean of the Graduate School and the previous version of this AOP was signed by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, we deleted that portion off the name.

STUDENT AFFAIRS  
UNIVERSITY RESOURCES  
OLD BUSINESS

UNITED FACULTY SENATES ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI

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Joshua Bernstein, President [joshua.bernstein@usm.edu](mailto:joshua.bernstein@usm.edu)

September 2, 2024

Via Electronic Mail

Dear President Thompson,

On behalf of the United Faculty Senates Association of Mississippi, we write to express our concern regarding the recent actions taken against the President of the Faculty Senate at Jackson State University, as detailed in your August 1 letter. We have been made aware of these developments through communications from faculty members at Jackson State University and by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Our primary concern lies with the apparent lack of adherence to due process and the protection of academic freedom, which are fundamental to the integrity of higher education institutions. The suspension of a tenured faculty member from teaching duties, pending the outcome of dismissal proceedings, raises significant questions about the procedures followed and the potential implications for faculty governance and academic freedom at Jackson State University.

The letter from the AAUP, dated August 12, 2024, outlines several critical issues related to the suspension, including the apparent lack of adherence to the due process standards as set forth in the AAUP's *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. As highlighted by the AAUP, the suspension appears to lack the necessary preconditions for such an action, specifically the requirement of immediate harm and prior consultation with an appropriate faculty body.

We emphasize the importance of protecting academic freedom, particularly when faculty members engage in governance and critique institutional policies. Faculty members must be free to express their views and fulfill their roles as faculty representatives without fear of unjust reprisal.

We echo the AAUP's call for a thorough review of the situation and urge that all actions taken be in strict accordance with established due process procedures. The integrity of Jackson State University and its commitment to academic excellence are best served by upholding the fundamental rights of its faculty members and ensuring transparent, fair processes in all matters related to faculty governance and discipline.

We acknowledge that our understanding of this situation is based primarily on information provided by faculty of the institution and the AAUP. We appreciate that you may have additional information that could provide further context or alter our interpretation of events. If so, we would welcome your further comments and clarifications.

The United Faculty Senates Association of Mississippi stands ready to support the principles of due process, academic freedom, and shared governance. We look forward to your response and are hopeful for a resolution that reflects these core values of higher education.

Sincerely,

Robert Banik, Mississippi State University

Joshua Bernstein, University of Southern Mississippi

Candace Carter-Stevens, Mississippi Valley State University

Nora Gough-Davis, Delta State University

Chad Murphy, Mississippi University for Women

Anant Singh, Alcorn State University

Hans P Sinha, University of Mississippi

Bradley J. Walters, University of Mississippi Medical Center

**NEW BUSINESS**



Dr. Julie L. P. Jessop  
Associate Director and Hunter Henry Chair

jessop@che.msstate.edu

September 6, 2024

Dear Mr. Banik,

I am writing to express multiple concerns about the continued erosion of contact hours at MSU. This fall, the academic calendar contains only 44 contact hours instead of the IHL-required 45 contact hours (i.e., 2250 contact minutes) for a 3 s.h. course.<sup>1</sup> This decision impacts all teaching faculty, and my MWF course suffers even more so since it a 4 s.h. course. I lost 3 hours of class time because the last day of classes this fall semester is now a Tuesday. This shortfall has required me to rearrange my schedule of topics and to make drastic cuts in my lesson plans. I no longer have the class period to cover engineering ethics, which is one of the student outcomes I typically assess for our accreditation (ABET) review, or to hold a final review session for the students. Thus, the shortfall negatively impacts student learning.

In AY2022-2023, I was a member of the Contact Hour Working Group. Our charge was to define direct faculty instruction that comprises the 45 contact hours vs. indirect instruction that falls outside those hours (i.e., what occupies 2-3 hours of the students' time outside of every 1 hour in class). During our discussions, we raised an alarm that contact hours in the spring semesters were being dropped from the academic calendar. Even if teaching faculty make use of the additional class day for M-only classes and the "optional" day for MW and MWF classes, students are not getting the required 45 contact hours. Since the fall semester contact hours are diminishing as well, our warning appears to be falling on deaf ears.

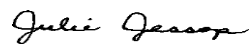
My concern runs even deeper because MSU is already shortchanging student learning opportunities by including the final exam as part of the 45 contact hours. When I came from the University of Iowa, I had to cut a week's worth of content (a whole chapter!) from my course since Iowa does not include the final exam in the 45 hour count. Iowa is not unique in its accounting of only lecture periods for required contact hours: public institutions in Georgia are examples of our peer institutions that do likewise.

Finally, as a parent, I am very displeased that my child is not being offered instructional time with subject-matter experts to its fullest extent. If I am cutting corners in my classes to fit these shortened semesters, I am certain that their educational experience is also being adversely impacted. There are only 24 hours in a day – instructors cannot simply assign an online lecture to fill the gaps caused by the shortened semesters. Students need time to process material, and students need time to interact with their instructors to ensure that they understand the concepts. To make matters worse, my child is charged the same tuition for this diminished instructional time.

I am requesting that the Faculty Senate investigate why the number of contact hours has been reduced from the required 45. I am also requesting that teaching faculty have a larger voice on the Calendar Committee. I note that the only faculty member on the committee appears to be the Faculty Senate representative – the rest of the committee is made up of staff and administrators.<sup>2</sup>

If the MSU vision is truly to “provide an innovative, hands-on learning experience,”<sup>3</sup> we need to ensure that the students are guaranteed the minimum required contact hours with their instructors.

Sincerely,



Julie L. P. Jessop

*Professor*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://catalog.msstate.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies/creditsgradesandstanding/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.msstate.edu/directory/standing-committees?criteria=committee&term=calendar>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.president.msstate.edu/communications/vision-mission/>

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