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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes - July 2001

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Faculty Senate
Approved Minutes
18 July 2001

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. (There were never enough people for a quorum.)

2. Roll Call:

Present: Bailey, Barik, Benoit, Boggs, Bowers, Bracken, Broughton, Brown, M. Cohen, S. Cohen, Dagenais, Foster, Gifford, Gray, Hill, Hsu, Kwiatkowski, Matheson, Murray, Olsen, Perkins, Rogers, Rowe, Shardo, Spector, Sylvester, Vest, Willis

Absent (Excused): Broome, Comstock, Figarola, Guest, Hermanson, Kimball, Longenecker, Mozur, Painter, Swofford, Townsley, Weitzel, Wesenberg, Wheeler

Absent (Unexcused): Beatty, Blackwell, El-Saba, Ellis, Garmon, Hanks, Kayes, McNair, Miller, Pettyjohn, Temple, Wilson

3. Approval of Minutes: With no quorum, minutes could not be approved.

4. Communication from the University President:

As of July 18, 2001 President Moulton said there was no appreciable progress but no setbacks with the Foundation lawsuit. The late February mediation failed. The November negotiations seem to be progressing with a settlement agreement. One issue that stands out is who pays the legal fees of the two board members. Originally the understanding was if they win, they would ask the court to add legal fees to the settlement to cover the cost. The Foundation thought the fees issue was a deal breaker and that USA should pay reasonable legal fees. President Moulton called a USA Board of Trustees meeting to meet on this one issue. Trustee Brunson recused himself, and otherwise they voted unanimously to approve USA paying reasonable legal fees so that the lawsuit might end sooner. A motion will be heard July 26th and a second mediation session with Judges Butts and Neilson will be held. The governor called a meeting to discuss possible settlement. It seemed to go well with all involved seeming to believe it needed to be settled soon.

President Moulton then discussed proration. He gave a brief history of the proration this year beginning with 6.2% proration and then the possibility of 11.2%, then the successful lawsuit brought by K-12 and finally the Supreme Court decision that overruled that decision and put us back to 6.2% proration. We haven't received our checks yet from the state. There was a bond issue passed at the end of the regular legislative session for more money where most money will go to K-12 but the University should receive approximately \$2 million. This money is limited to being spent on buildings or capital fund items. President Moulton would like about half (\$1 million) to go into the new library building. All this extra money does is reduce the deficit, we are still behind in funds. Next year there will probably be around 6.2% proration again. We will not be where we should have started this year. With cutting our budget this year and freezing positions, etc. we might come close to even for the year. Next year we might get more tuition money if retention is good. There is a higher enrollment so far for this year and with a 10% tuition increase, the income will help.

President Moulton offered to answer any questions senators might have:

A - Early retirement was offered to the hospitals but not campus, why not?

President Moulton did not rule out the possibility of offering early retirement to University employees in a few years time. At the present time, it would cut too many key people which would also create a recruiting burden.

At the hospitals it helped avoid layoffs. Next year is an election year, so with luck, the legislators should try to fund us as well as possible.

B ❖ Is the lack of raises true for all Alabama universities?

President Moulton said Auburn may have said they will give raises but he❖s not sure and doesn❖t know how they would manage to do it. All other presidents at a Presidential Council meeting said no raises are possible this coming year. With our 8% raise a few years ago and 6% last year, we are about equal to the national average over those years in raises.

C ❖ What is the situation with K-12 and raises?

Don❖t know ❖ the legislature decides on their raises each year.

D ❖ What is going on with the College of Medicine? What is the climate in the hospital and medical schools? (From a senator that said they were not in the College of Medicine and wanted to understand about people and departments leaving, etc.)

President Moulton said he would try to answer but that it was extremely complex with lots of variables. The marketplace in the health services field has changed in the past few years. When the University bought the Medical Center in 1970 it was bankrupt and we inherited their de facto mission of taking care of the indigent population. With Children❖s and Women❖s and Knollwood, approximately 25% of the patients are indigent now (used to be 30%). Most of Knollwood and C&W have some insurance coverage.

Physicians sustain themselves with clinical and state support. In the community, physicians normally have about 3% bad debt. Our faculty have 25% bad debt. The hospitals have about 5-6% bad debt. The Medical Center and clinics have the highest bad debt. We only receive \$7.5 million county money and that hasn❖t grown in years. Across the country HMOs and health care has changed. Harvard has closed 6 services, Stanford has cut clinical faculty salaries 30%. In 1996-1997 the Health Services Foundation lost \$7 million. The next year we lost \$4 million, last year \$3 million and this year they may break even. The faculty has helped by accepting no raises the last 3 years. Ophthalmology performed good services, but was not integral to the medical education. We can get help elsewhere by clerkship rotation but not running the service itself. We would have preferred not to lose oncology, but they left. One faculty retired and one partly retired. We made arrangements for services. This is happening all over the country. We are healthier than last year, but change is painful. People are in hospitals fewer days (about half the length of a visit 10 years ago). Things are looking up. A new chair for Orthopedics starts next week ❖ Brent Myers (a hand surgeon). We are looking for the head of Oncology for the Research Center. We must find a way to give everyone health care.

(After President Moulton left, some faculty expressed a different viewpoint. They said the residency programs are in danger of accreditation problems as well as the clinical departments. Harvard has other hospitals nearby to take over the programs they have cut, we don❖t. Accreditation is the largest concern ❖ not enough faculty ❖ they need some strictly teaching faculty, not there simply to make more money. There are two missions ❖ education and the indigent and we must not lose sight of either one. Recruitment is a huge problem ❖ nobody wants to come here with our current problems.)

5. Reports from Standing Committees:

Senator Jane Boggs stated that for the Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee that there was not a lot to report this time. The sick leave for faculty guidelines for 12 month faculty had the College of Medicine concerned as some parts were rewritten and this was being looked into. The sick leave donation policy will not be looked at until other details are dealt with.

6. Reports from Caucus Leaders:

No reports from the Colleges of Allied Health, Business, Computer Science, Continuing Education, Education, Library, Medicine, or Nursing. For Arts and Sciences, Senator Isabel Brown reported that they met with the dean for an hour. They spoke about tenure, promotion, morale, and workload. Not much was resolved but he is aware of their concerns on tenure and promotion. They want to know if there is a policy towards more research or more teaching. How do faculty avoid not knowing if their chance at tenure is good after mid-tenure review? They discussed the secrecy of committees and the possibility of giving the candidate the vote count (but not who voted which way) to give them a better idea of how well/poorly they were rated by colleagues. They discussed workload with reassigned time being the main issue. The dean wanted 4/4 if a faculty member isn't doing strong research. Now there are 190 faculty with 130 receiving reassigned time which is 60 too many. There have been 25 resignations in the college with 10 filled. Financially the college is in better shape with 15 open positions, that money is saved. The dean pointed out that summer enrollment has been good and that money may not be so tight for the departments.

7. Without a quorum, no specific new or old business matters were brought up. A general discussion revealed that some colleges had rolled back their increased teaching loads due to proration going back to 6.2% while others had not. There was also a concern noted that in some areas (especially Computer Science) new faculty were being hired in at instructor levels instead of higher level faculty. This was viewed as very poor policy in the long run.

Senator Nicholas Sylvester wants the Senate to adopt a resolution to use the bond money to hire part time faculty. Some others agreed and others said instead they would like to see the hiring freeze stopped. It was mentioned that President Moulton said the money could only be used for capital expenses.

8. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

S. Murray, Secretary