

**DAFVM Senate Meeting
Minutes
May 9, 2024**

Recording: [May 2024 DAFVM Faculty Senate Meeting-20240509 1835-1](#)

DAFVM Faculty Senate Member Attendees:

Knight, Tricia (Chair); Correa, Sandra (Co-Chair), Rios, Leyla (Secretary); Acharya Adhikari, Pratima; Basu, Priyadarshini (Priya); Burke, Benjamin; Franca, Fred; Gholson, Grissett-Hartwick, Gretchen; Drew; Howell, George (Trey); Jaffe, Michael; Manginsay, Natalie; Melanson, Rebecca; Morrison, Carley; Poudel, Krishna; Vance, Carrie; Wilson, Jeff; Yu, Fei, Zurweller, Brendan.

Excused:

Camp, Jason; Lee, Alison; Woolums, Amelia

Absent:

Cavinder, Clay; Fulford, Charles (Taze); Ganapathi, Shankar; Karunakaran, Ganesh Kumar; Li, Tongyin; Lloyd, Debra; Maples, Will; Nanduri, Bindu; Sparks, Bekah; Seong, Yun

Call to Order-Meeting called to order by Dr. Tricia Knight

Roll Call-Recorded by Dr. Tricia Knight

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Pratima Acharya Adhikari moved to approve the minutes. **Dr. George (Trey) Howell** seconded it. No discussion and no opposition. The minutes were approved.

STANDING REPORTS

Holland Faculty Senate Updates. Dr. Michael Jaffe

- The meeting was mainly about finances. When asked by the different, presidents of universities around the state what their top priority for funding this year was everybody gave their answer. Dr. Keenum's answer was for funding for faculty salary and faculty retention. In a poll that was taken amongst the southern University group, the SUG, the average salaries for professors in Mississippi State are 79 % of what the average should be below average. Associate professors are 80 % of average salaries and assistant professors are 85 % of average salaries, so his goal is to try to bring our salaries up to at least the mean or better. He said our average pay raise this past year across the campus was 2.65 %, which is below the cost of living, and different peer universities go up more than ours. So, bring our salaries up to a cost of living increase.
- **The W:** the President talked about the proposal to add the Mississippi University for Women (The W) to be part of Mississippi State. The Education Committee and the Senate for Appropriations Committee, they wanted to move Mississippi University for Women to MSU, both committees passed it. When it was taken to a full senate vote, the vote failed by a two-vote margin, then ended up being for 1 vote against
- **PERS:** the board that is managing PERS for the state has directed that all employers around the state contribute an extra 2% to the pool. For Mississippi state that would

account 7.25 million dollars/year extra that the university would have to contribute towards PERS/year. However, the Senate passed a suspension of this 2 % increase, and the state is going to be increasing this. No impact on current employees or current retirees will have their benefits disrupted. What they're looking at is possibly focusing on new employees' retirement plans.

- **Salaries Employees:** they mentioned raise of salaries by 1% of employees on this campus means \$3.5 million. So, to raise salary by 2% on top of means an additional \$7 million. He said the Mississippi State's current operating budget is over \$200 million and the cost of operations would increase by 3% this fiscal year due to inflation, meaning an additional approximately \$10 million on our university's cost of operations. A 1% increase in tuition generates about \$1 million for the university, so that means that is difficult to cover raises based on tuition increases.
- **Facilities:** they spoke about updating the Wise Center, which is a 45-year building, and they are looking into receiving funding from the state for this, also improving facilities for Wildlife Programs, and the School of Architecture and Design
- **Salaries of Graduate Assistants:** they are looking into improving stipends for graduate assistance. In several departments, it has been brought to our attention that salaries have not been increased in years making us lose good, qualified grad students due to the inability to fund them.

Office of the Vice President: No Report

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences & MAFES: No Report

College of Veterinary Medicine: No Report

Extension: No Report.

College of Forest Resources (CFR) & Forest and Wildlife Research Center (FWRC): Dr. WES BURGER (Assoc. Dean)

- **Decrease in revenues,** the Legislature had significant savings from the last 3 fiscal years the revenues are the primary reason why this year's terms of revenues are above the estimate or revenues above the previous year is because, several years ago some change. The goal of our President is to bring our salaries up relative to the Southern University group.
- In Natural resources, we have a more precise estimate, and relative to the salaries of the Southern forestry experiment stations we are only 7% below instead of 15%, relative to our peer institutions.
- Also, you indicated the differences between faculty ranks. We hire faculty at generally competitive salaries relative to our peers, falling behind in the associate and full ranks because of compression.
- Based on the appropriation increase for each of the separately funded units, should be about 3.5 % for extension, 3.6 % for MAFES, 3.1 % for FWRC, and 7 % for the Vet school, because of an initiative they wanted to fund in the Vet school.

- As soon as we have guidance on that, we will start working that out. It will be merit-based.
- **Dr. Rebecca Melanson:** Are early promotions granted or not, based on the budget?
- **Dr. Burger:** No, the promotions are based on merits and not on the budget, they are based on recommendations from the P&T committee, the President, and the Dean. There is no relationship between budget and the possibility of getting promoted.
- **Dr. Sandra Correa:** Can you clarify when the clock starts for being promoted to full professors, is it the year when the associate professor submits the package to become a full professor, or when finally becomes a full professor?
- **Dr. Burger:** According to the faculty handbook, there are two different clocks for promotions. 1st of all, you could be promoted early by one year, but you cannot get tenured early unless time was credited to you for service at a prior institution and that's written into your offer letter. So, the normal promotion time is five years of full service. The clock for tenure track twelve-month faculty starts July 1st, and the clock for nine-month tenure track faculty starts 16 August. After that starting date, you need, basically, five full academic years in rank as an assistant professor before you can apply. You actually apply in your 6th year, but you do not hear about the decision until the end of your 6th year. Your promotion doesn't take effect until the beginning of your 7th year essentially. You need to spend one year waiting on an answer and then your promotion and the associate raise starts either July one or 16 August of your 7th year. Now, as I said, you can go up for promotion early, but not, you can't go up for ten year early. Your tenure clock doesn't start until the next 16 August. So, if you get hired after 16 August, it actually takes you a year longer in order to get that 1st raise, that 1st promotion raise. So Dr. and then what about the next promotion? So when does the start again? It will start on the same, same date. For the promotion from associate to full professor, it is not clearly defined, you can go up in your 4th year and would be considered early, but after your 5th year would be considered just normal. For promotion to full, you can wait a year, two years, you can wait five years if you want before you go up. You don't have the luxury of doing that on that 1st promotion. You've got to go up in your 6th year if you're in a tenure-track position. If you're in a non-tenure track extension, or research position you are not required to go up.
- **Dr. Rebecca Melanson:** Is this timeline the same for other universities? Based on the times you gave us, a new faculty from start to finish should be able to get fully promoted to professor status in twelve years. Is this correct?
- **Dr. Burger:** Yes, it is correct, it's almost identical in every institution. Almost everywhere expects a full professor you will have attained some level of national or international recognition.
- Two more things I want to add: this graduation week, everybody knows that Friday is the graduation at 03:30 in the hub. I hope the faculty will be able to attend that. We like to have, at least some representation from every department there. So I hope you'll be able to join us today. This is the most important day of the year for our students. We had the hooding ceremony yesterday with a really good turnout. We had about 68 PhDs across the university that took part at yesterday's ceremony.

Faculty Housing Appeals Committee. Dr. Tricia Knight

- No requests

Old and New Business Dr. Tricia Knight

Dr. Sandra Correa Ad Hoc Committee

- The Ad Hoc committee discussed how to move forward with the approach we wanted to take, which was to survey chairs of search committees and also to the recent hires, so faculty or extension faculty have been hired in the last five years regarding the hiring process. Dr. Coble suggested that we also ask department heads about the procedure so we incorporated that into the questionnaire. But we need more time to develop the questions. So right now there are seven members on the committee and some are ending their time, so we are requesting that other people, if there are interested, to please let us know. We start again activities in the fall. The goal is to complete the questions and do the survey in the fall to come up with some metrics
- **Dr. Tricia Knight:** the department heads have been given a heads up that this is on the way and please encourage their chairs and new faculty to participate.

Dr. Tricia Knight: Election of New Officers: so this brings us to the election of new officers, there are several of us that are rotating off. It has been a pleasure to serve with you all, but we do need to elect new officers and we have either nominations or volunteers for each of the three slots, we have one for each. I am going to open the floor for nominations, and I will send an email and let everybody vote and request a, just a paragraph about yourself, to send out to everybody. If there are no additional nominations, then we will move in that direction. But we will start with the secretary.

Dr. Pratima Acharya has been nominated as Secretary, Dr. Jaffe closes the nomination in 1st place, and Dr. Correa in 2nd place. All vote in favor.

Dr. Sandra Correa has been nominated to serve in a 2nd term as Vice Chair, Dr. Jaffe in 1st, and Dr. Brendan Zurweller in 2nd. All vote in favor.

Dr. Jaffe has been nominated for Chair, and we open the floor for additional nominations or close this one. Dr. Krishna Poudel in 1st place and Dr. Correa in 2nd place. All vote in favor. Congratulations Dr. Jaffe.

Adjourn

Motion: 1st Dr. Jaffe 2nd Dr. Correa