

## **REPORT FROM PATRICIA ROBERTS/FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT**

**January 14, 2010**

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR:** The 2010-11 academic calendar which Faculty Senate recommended to Academic Council has been approved by both Academic Council and Cabinet and is already posted on the Delta State website. This is very similar to our current calendar.

**SMOKING POLICY:** After considerable discussion and research, the Cabinet approved a campus tobacco free policy in December. The policy will be implemented on Earth Day, April 22.

**FINANCIAL NEWS:** There is still very little encouraging financial news. According to today's newsletter from the Provost, enrollment is 2.55% lower than this time last year and credit hours are down nearly one per cent from this time last year. President Hilpert is anticipating the need of another three per cent cut from state funds this spring, and is meeting with vice presidents to determine how to make that cut. The IHL has asked all Mississippi universities to provide a three year "business plan" and work is underway at Delta State to draft that plan. Delta State has proposed that the IHL increase resident tuition 10% per year during the next three years. If this tuition increase is granted, the cost of tuition would climb to \$5,923 by 2013.

**IHL TENURE POLICY:** On December 17, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning gave preliminary approval to policy changes that would seriously affect the contracts of both tenured and tenure-track faculty. This policy would enable Mississippi public universities to terminate tenured faculty for "lack of funds" with only six months notice, or to terminate tenure track faculty for "lack of funds" with only 30 days notice. There has been considerable opposition to this policy from throughout the state. Mississippi State President Mark Keenum has promised faculty at that institution that he will maintain present policies on tenure and tenure track contracts, and I have suggested to President Hilpert that this would be a good model to follow. The IHL is scheduled to vote on whether to finalize this policy change later this month.

**ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS:** Today we will discuss a resolution addressing the issue of online course evaluations. The decision to conduct student course evaluations online in Fall 2009 was an administrative decision never discussed or voted by Academic Council. Next month, evaluations of deans and chairs must also be conducted online. This was voted at Academic Council on December 15, despite my vote to oppose this measure. The online forms must be submitted from our faculty e-mails, which means that anonymity cannot be entirely secure, even though Institutional Research has been asked to make faculty links "specific and secure and accessible only once per faculty member." In my opinion, online evaluations would be likely to inhibit faculty who want to submit negative evaluations of their chairs and deans. The minutes of Academic Council do not customarily record opposing votes, so the opposing vote is not reflected in the minutes recorded at that meeting.

**PRESIDENT HILPERT ADDRESS TO FACULTY SENATE:** Due to unavoidable conflicts, Dr. Hilpert is unable to address Faculty Senate this month, as previously scheduled. However, he hopes to find time in his schedule to speak to us soon.