

ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes September 25, 2025

Present: Leslie Griffin, Peter Dean, Joe Childs, Vicki Bingham, Fawn Ussery, Merideth Van Namen, Kristen Land, Tammy Prather, Jeffrey Leffler, Heather Miller

Absent: None

Guests: Kevin Entrekin, Serge Herzog, Dr. Curtis Coleman, Sydney Pittman, Avis Neal

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on September 25, 2025. The meeting convened at 8:30 AM, with Provost Leslie Griffin presiding.

| Agenda item | Comments/Discussion | Action taken | Responsible party |
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| Approval of Agenda: | Dr. Griffin began the meeting by asking for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham which was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All were in favor. | Approved | Leslie Griffin |
| Approval of Minutes: | The motion to approve minutes for Thursday, September 11 th was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in favor. | Approved | Leslie Griffin |
| Discussion Items | | | |
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| Guest Speaker | <p><u>Kevin Entrekin, Director of Academic Engagement and Strategic Initiatives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Griffin and Kevin visited with leadership at five community colleges in the central and southern parts of the state including Copiah-Lincoln, Hinds, Holmes, Mississippi Gulf Coast, and Pearl River. • They discussed critical pathways and workforce related opportunities. • Kevin shared that the community colleges have a strong connection to workforce partners and supports like Accelerate Mississippi. • Kevin will follow up with various units at Delta State to identify our actions to | | |
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| | <p>take to build pathway opportunities.</p> <p><u>Serge Herzog, Director of Institutional Research Effectiveness and Planning (IREP):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Griffin introduced Serge Herzon, the new director of IREP. He will be working remotely but will be on campus every other month. • He made a presentation of a dashboard he created using census tract level information to better understand our students, where they are coming from, and where they are going after they graduate. • This data can be used to flag students at risk and use that information to promote retention and graduation. <p><u>Dr. Curtis Coleman, Vice President for Enrollment Management, joined by Sydney Pittman, Director of Admissions, and Avis Neal, Associate Director for First Year Recruitment and Campus Tours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Coleman shared that Delta State will be hosting an open house called “Spooktacular” on October 31st with 229 prospective students currently registered. • His team will be hosting a lunch and learn event for counselors and clergy on November 13th with 40 currently registered. • He also reported that renovations will be made to the lobby area of the Office of Admissions to create a space to host prospective students and their families when visiting for campus tours. | | |
| Provost’s Updates | <p><u>Provost, Dr. Leslie Griffin, provided the following updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Griffin shared some updates from a recent President’s Cabinet Advance meeting. She asked that the group review and provide feedback so she can report back out at the Cabinet meeting in November. • She also shared progress that speed to enrollment continues to be a major focus and noted that progress had been made with readmits and that the University is considering some articulation products to assist with the admission and enrollment process. • She commended the group’s leadership following the tragic loss of freshman student Trey Reed and shared that she had attended the services that were held in | | Leslie Griffin |

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| | Grenada. | | |
| Faculty Senate | <u>Faculty Senate President Peter Dean provided the following update:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty Senate hosted a listening session with the Provost for faculty to provide feedback on the Faculty Load and Compensation Guidelines that were developed by the taskforce of the same name. He also shared that Faculty Senate will focus on the faculty handbook and the course evaluation process in upcoming meetings. | | Peter Dean |
| Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms | | | |
| Curriculum/ Course Actions | None | | Jeffrey Leffler |
| Policy Actions | Academic Offerings (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-lined copy of changes to the Academic Offerings Policy. Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy statement rewritten to clearly state the purpose of the policy. Terminology and references updated to align with the new University organizational structure. Language revised from “faculty who advise students” to “advisors” to reflect that not all advisors are faculty. A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in Favor. | Passed | Jeffrey Leffler |
| | Class Meetings and Assignments Policy (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of changes to the Class Meetings and Assignments Policy. Proposed revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy statement revised to articulate the purpose and explicitly reference Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) policies and SACSCOC accreditation standards. | Passed | Jeffrey Leffler |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under “Class Meetings,” a line is added requiring identification of equivalent instructional engagement for alternative formats (e.g., Hybrid, HyFlex, Online). ○ Global edits were made to match the new organizational structure. ○ Related documents updated to include SACSCOC Standard 10.7 (Credit Hours). <p>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in Favor</p> | | |
| | <p>Faculty Positions Policy (1st Reading): Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a copy of the Faculty Positions Policy. • Proposed revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy statement updated to tie the policy to the University mission, disciplinary standards, and accrediting expectations. ○ Clear distinction between ranked faculty and titled faculty. ○ Instructor removed from the ranked faculty category (previously listed in both categories). ○ Related documents expanded to included SACSCOC 6.2a (Faculty Qualifications) and 6.2b (Faculty Roles and Responsibilities). <p>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor</p> | | Jeffrey Leffler |
| | <p>Textbook Policy (1st Reading): Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of changes to the Textbook Policy. • Proposed revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy statement revised to identify the purpose and its relationship to other policies. ○ Definitions modernized. ○ Organizational references updated for the new structure. ○ Related documents corrected to reflect none (previous list contained approval dates, not related documents). • Dr. Vicki Bingham asked about the Open Educational Resources (OER) language in the document and the support available for that. Dr. Heather Miller shared that the Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning is hosting a workshop on OER and their impact on reducing costs for students. Dr. Bingham also notes the word “none” was listed twice under related documents. Dr. Leffler indicated that he would make that edit. <p>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr.</p> | Passed | Jeffrey Leffler |

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| | Vicki Bingham. All in Favor | | |
| | <p>Withdrawal From the University Policy: Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of proposed changes to the Withdrawal from the University policy. • Proposed revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy statement rewritten to establish purpose. ○ Added definitions: Official withdrawal, effective date of withdrawal, and academic standing. ○ Procedures and responsibilities section updated so signature requirements match the current student withdrawal form and process. ○ Related documents added including Withdrawal Form/Instructions, Academic Catalogs. • Tammy Prather shared that the effective date should be the date that the student requested, not the date it is processed. Dr. Joe Childs questioned the process and shared his thoughts that the process seemed punitive to a student seeking withdrawal. The group decided to revisit the policy to streamline the process. <p>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. Tabled</p> | Tabled | Jeffrey Leffler |
| | <p>Faculty Load Guidelines (2nd Reading): Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of changes to the Faculty Load Guidelines. • Faculty Senate organized feedback from faculty and a listening session with the Provost and this revision incorporates that feedback. • In “Load Assignment Protocol,” language changed from “exceeding maximum” to “large-enrolled course.” <p>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor.</p> | Passed | Jeffrey Leffler |

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| <p>Discussion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Heather Miller shared that the Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning has a full schedule of professional development opportunities including two workshops for Excel users (introductory and intermediate), an AI Problem Solving workshop, a book study on “Becoming Great Universities,” a workshop on effective assessments in Canvas, an OER workshop, and a workshop on building strong grant proposals. She also shared that the Center would have an administrative specialist working full-time beginning October 15th. • Dr. Vicki Bingham shared that her team continues to work on pathways and began work following the Provost’s recent community college visits to align that work with identified opportunities. • Fawn Ussery shared that the library has set up a system to reserve rooms online. • Dr. Merideth Van Namen shared that curriculum work continues in the College of Education, Arts, and Humanities and that some actions would be forthcoming. She also hosted two tenure and promotion trainings and will be participating in a CAEP retreat on October 3rd. She provided updates of Constitution Week events and has some recruiting events scheduled. • Kristen Land shared that her team has been working on some events to get sophomores connected. There will be a majors mixer event October 21-23. • Tammy Prather said that the new articulation specialist begins work next week and she will finally have full staff in the Registrar’s office. She also reminded everyone that October 1st is the last day apply for graduation for the Fall 2025 term and that she will be working with everyone on the articulation process that is due to IHL next month. • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared that he and Faderricka Harvey from the IREP office have built out Anthology Planning for the administrative unit assessments and have begun testing the system with administrative units. They have also begun building out the academic program assessments so Anthology can be used in the next cycle reports that are due in January. He also reported that SACSCOC is reconsidering the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) process and holding institutions harmless for the QEP during the review period. Delta State will need to decide to move forward with the QEP as it is or not. • Dr. Joe Childs shared that his team is working on curriculum revisions including adding Agri-Business concentration to the BAS in General Business. He recently participated in a vendor visit for an Agriculture Aviation Safety training and shared he is working on an MOU with the national association to create national standards. | | <p>Leslie Griffin</p> |
| <p>Announcements:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2026 Class Revisions are due October 10, 2025 • Little Texas will be performing on October 9, 2025, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Bologna Performing Arts Center • Midterm – October 15, 2025 • All midterm grades recorded by faculty – October 16, 2025, at noon. | | |

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| Adjourned: | 11:19 a.m. | | |
| Next Meeting: | October 2, 2025, at 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room | | |
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