

ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes September 11, 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: None

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on September 11, 2025. The meeting convened at 8:30 AM, with Provost Leslie Griffin presiding.

Agenda item	Comments/Discussion	Action taken	Responsible party
Approval of Agenda:	Dr. Griffin began the meeting by thanking everyone for their efforts to get the fall term started and 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, August 14th was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in favor.	Approved	Leslie Griffin
Discussion Items			

Guest Speaker	None		
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 meeting. These include that university signage is on the radar and that they review several pages of Cabinet Advance takeaways. • She also shared that there is a hope for a more robust roster of summer camps 		Leslie Griffin

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	<p>provided and that now is the time to begin talking to faculty about potential ideas to fill in gaps in the schedule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She shared that classes would be redirected on the afternoon of Monday, September 15th to all faculty and students to participate in Centennial events. • The next home football game will be Saturday, September 27th. 		
Faculty Senate	<p><u>Faculty Senate President Peter Dean provided the following update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today is the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Senate. The agenda focuses on setting priorities for the year. • The Senate had a special meeting in August to review the Faculty Load and Compensation guidelines that were developed by the taskforce by the same name. The Senate is in the process of scheduling listening sessions by the end of September with the Provost and Nicole Spinks, Chairperson of the taskforce, leading those discussions. 		Peter Dean
Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms			
Curriculum/ Course Actions	<p>HPER – Modification to an Existing Degree Program:</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Thales Barbosa presented that the recent organization of the University and deletion of programs within the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation provides an opportunity to consider a new name for the Division. • Renaming the Division to the Division of Sport and Movement Sciences would better reflect current programs and concentrations, enabling students to pursue suitable career opportunities and facilitate recruitment efforts. <p>A motion was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in Favor</p>	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p>HPER – Modification to an Existing Degree Program:</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Thales Barbosa presented that faculty in the Division thought it necessary to change the name of the undergraduate degree within the Division to better reflect its current three concentrations including Exercise Science; Sports Management; and Sport and Movement Studies. ○ The proposed revision would change the name of the degree program from Bachelor of Science in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation to Bachelor of Science in Sport and Movement Sciences 	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler

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	A motion was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham to approve the action and was seconded by Fawn Ussery. All in Favor		
	PSY – Curriculum Action: Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Van Namen presented that after the reorganization it has been difficult to offer the PHI 201 that is required as part of the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology’s general education requirements. Sufficient philosophy content exists in the required PSY 101 and PSY 406 courses within the major. • The proposed action would remove PHI 201 as required so students can take 3 hours of other Arts & Humanities general education electives. A motion was made by Dr. Merideth Van Namen to approve the action and was seconded by Peter Dean. All in Favor	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
Policy Actions	Academic Freedom (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-lined copy of changes to the Academic Freedom Policy. • Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edits to align with the new Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board Policy 102.6. ○ Edits to align the policy with the faculty role versus staff and students. A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor. Document will be sent to Faculty Senate for review.	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
	Academic Honesty Policy (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of changes to the Academic Honesty Policy. • Proposed revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edits to language to reflect the new organizational structure (“Department” changed to “School”). ○ Adds definitions for “fabrication,” “Falsification,” and “Unauthorized Artificial Intelligence Use” to make the policy explicitly relevant to inappropriate uses of artificial intelligence. ○ Emphasizes MS IHL board Policy and SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation as foundational to the policy. ○ Dr. Griffin emphasized the importance of this discussion considering advances in artificial 	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler

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	intelligence technology advancements. A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Joe Childs. All in Favor		
	Class Absences and Excuses Policy (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a copy of the Class Absences and Excuses Policy. • Red-lined revisions remove procedural language related to health absences that is no longer relevant to the current organizational structure or online students. • Dr. Bingham suggested that the word “instructor” be changed to “faculty member.” • The group decided that this policy needed more consideration of how it impacts other policies and forms before being approved. The action was tabled.	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler
	Faculty Positions Policy (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of changes to the Faculty Positions Policy. • Proposed revisions update the policy to include SACSCOC Standard 6.2A as a related document and the addition of a statement that faculty positions are distinguished by type and rank related to the University’s mission, disciplinary standards, and accrediting expectations. • Dr. Merideth Van Namen questioned the existing language in the policy stating “Instructor” as rank. The group discussed the need to align with policy with language from the tenure and promotion documents. The action was tabled.	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler
	Non-Academic Disciplinary Transcript Notation Policy: Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of proposed changes to the Non-Academic Disciplinary Transcript Notation policy. • Proposed revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mild edits to the document to emphasize due process. ○ Edit to connect the policy to MS IHL Board policy. A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr.	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler

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	Vicki Bingham. All in Favor		
	School/Division Chair Policy (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a red-line copy of changes to the Unit/Division Chair Policy. • University Counsel reviewed the document and determined that the statement regarding a five-year appointment as Chair was contradictory to the at-will employment status of the university. • Edit the language to refer to a one-year appointment with the option to renew for one-year periods at the discretion of the Dean. A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Fawn Ussery. All in Favor	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
	Revised Academic Improvement Plan (1st Reading): Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a revised Academic Improvement Plan document. • The revision focuses on removing administrative barriers so students can be more efficiently readmitted and enrolled after suspension. • The group discussed the document's connections to other policies and the readmission process. • A decision was made to table the motion so a subcommittee of Drs. Bingham, Leffler, and Van Namen can present it within the context of these other policy and procedure considerations. A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the action and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. The action was Tabled.	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Griffin shared that the Office of Academic Affairs will be conducting a program analysis to identify programs that need revision and/or additional promotional support to ensure their vitality. • Tammy Prather shared information regarding a recent request for articulation updates. The information has been shared with Deans and a one-month turnaround is expected per MS IHL. • Dr. Leffler shared that the build out of administrative unit reporting had been completed 		Leslie Griffin

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	<p>for Anthology Planning. He will be meeting with administrative unit directors to assist them in inputting their 2024-2025 reports and will then begin working with academic programs to get them ready for their reports in January.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heather Miller shared that the Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning has a full schedule of professional development opportunities. She is also working to provide grant writing/management support to faculty. • Dr. Van Namen shared that her college is working on curriculum revisions that will be coming forward in the upcoming weeks/months. • Dr. Childs shared that his college is working on potential AI integration in the MBA program. • Dr. Bingham shared that the Speech and Hearing and Social Work programs are implementing their new Hyflex delivery modality and that her college is also working on an online LPN to BSN pathway. She also shared that she has been working on a lecture series for HPER and Math and Science as well as a potential greenhouse revitalization and community garden project. 		
Announcements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centennial Opening Ceremony and Reception, September 15, 2025, 1pm to 2 pm in the BPAC • Centennial Time Capsule, September 15, 2025, 3 pm on the Quadrangle next to Flag Plaza • Constitution Week 2025 Lecture Series: The Body Problem, September 23, 2025, 6 pm in Jobe Hall Auditorium • Midterm – October 15, 2025 • All midterm grades recorded by faculty – October 16, 2025, at noon. 		
Adjourned:	11:10 a.m.		
Next Meeting:	September 25, 2025, at 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room		