

# ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes January 8, 2026

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

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** Dr. Maggie Moran and Kendra Whitehead

**Call to order:** The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on January 8, 2026. The meeting convened at 8:30 AM, with Provost Leslie Griffin presiding.

Agenda item	Comments/Discussion	Action taken	Responsible party
<b>Approval of Agenda:</b>	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.	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Leslie Griffin</b>
<b>Approval of Minutes:</b>	The motion to approve minutes for Thursday, December 4 <sup>th</sup> was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Merideth Van Namen. All in favor.	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Leslie Griffin</b>
<b>Discussion Items</b>			

<b>Guest Speaker</b>	<b>None</b>		
<b>Provost's Updates</b>	<p><b><u>Provost, Dr. Leslie Griffin, provided the following updates:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Griffin shared that the Mississippi Legislature is now in session. The President and the University's legislative liaison will be spending significant time in Jackson advocating for and representing the university on a range of legislative matters.</li> </ul>		<b>Leslie Griffin</b>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the university approaches budget development for the next fiscal year, the Provost will be scheduling meetings with her direct reports to discuss zero-based budgeting projections and unit-level planning assumptions.</li> <li>• Dr. Griffin requested feedback from Council members regarding recent meetings with the online education consultant who visited campus, particularly insights related to opportunities, challenges, and next steps.</li> <li>• Workforce development remains a key priority. Dr. Griffin emphasized ongoing engagement with community colleges and Accelerate Mississippi, with a focus on aligning academic programs and credentials with regional and statewide workforce needs.</li> <li>• Dr. Griffin shared that she is actively researching credit for prior learning (CPL) models. In light of a recently considered <b>IHL policy</b>, the university will be examining how peer institutions are implementing CPL and how those approaches align with emerging state guidance.</li> </ul>		
<b>Faculty Senate</b>	<p><b>Faculty Senate President, Peter Dean, provided the following update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Dean reported that the Faculty Senate is currently engaged in revising its constitution and is planning to bring a proposed constitutional amendment forward for a vote.</li> </ul>		<b>Peter Dean</b>
<b>Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms</b>			
<b>Curriculum/ Course Actions</b>	<p><b><u>Curriculum/Course Actions: B.C.A Aviation Management</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margaret Moran shared a package of proposed curriculum/course actions to revise the B.C.A. in Aviation Management within the Division of Commercial Aviation.</li> <li>• Proposed actions include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to revise the Bachelor of Commercial Aviation (BCA) in Commercial Aviation.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to revise CAV 250.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to delete CAV 332.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Tabled</b>	<b>Jeffrey Leffler</b>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to revise CAV 350.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to revise CAV 251, CAV 256, and CAV 260 to remove co-requisite requirements.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to revise CAV 353, CAV 354, CAV 355, and CAV 374.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to delete CAV 402, CAV 403, and CAV 405.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to delete MSC 105 and MSC 111.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to create new courses, including MSC 101, MSC 102, MSC 201, MSC 202, MSC 301, MSC 302, MSC 401, and MSC 402.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to create a new course, CAV 333.</li> </ul>		
	<p><b>Tabled</b></p> <p><b><u>Curriculum Action: B.S.E. Elementary Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dr. Merideth Van Namen shared a proposed curriculum actions to provide the B.S.E. Elementary Education program in an online delivery format.</li> <li>● Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ IHL Appendix 10 to offer the B.S.E. Elementary Education by distance learning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the actions and was seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All in Favor</b></p>	<p><b>Passed</b></p>	<p><b>Jeffrey Leffler</b></p>
	<p><b><u>Curriculum/Course Actions: Delta Music Institute</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dr. Joe Childs shared a package of proposed curriculum and course actions to create a new Live Entertainment Concentration within the Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Industry Studies program. The items had been tabled at a previous meeting.</li> <li>● Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to add a Live Entertainment Technology concentration to the Bachelor of Science in</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Passed</b></p>	<p><b>Jeffrey Leffler</b></p>

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Entertainment Industry Studies program.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to create DMI 312.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to create DMI 412.</li> <li>○ Approve redline changes to the undergraduate catalog to create DMI 414.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the actions and was seconded by Dr. Joe Childs. All in Favor</b></p>		
<p><b>Policy Action Items</b></p>	<p><b><u>Policy Action: Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal Policy for Graduate Students</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the graduate catalog to allow for students who have been permanently dismissed from graduate programs at the university a pathway to potentially return.</li> <li>● Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Red-lined changes to the Graduate Catalog to allow a potential pathway for a student permanently dismissed from a program to return after a three-year period.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Discussion included concerns about specific details about under what circumstances a student would be allowed to return. Concerns were shared regarding students who had been dismissed and should not return. Provost Griffin asked Dr. Leffler and the deans to consider these implications and bring back the proposal in a future meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tabled</b></p>	<p><b>Tabled</b></p>	<p><b>Jeffrey Leffler</b></p>
	<p><b><u>Policy Action: Academic Improvement Form</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dr. Jeffrey Leffler shared a proposed revision to the Academic Improvement form.</li> <li>● Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approve implementation of a streamlined Academic Improvement Form requiring signatures only from the student and advisor.</li> <li>○ Final approval for undergraduate students by the Director of Academic Engagement.</li> <li>○ Final approval for graduate students by the Associate Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>A motion was made by Dr. Jeffrey Leffler to approve the actions and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor</b></p>	<p><b>Passed</b></p>	<p><b>Jeffrey Leffler</b></p>

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<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tammy Prather presented a plan to adjust the way the summer term is set up in Banner. The current set up creates separate summer terms that she proposes should be part of just one larger term. The current setup creates redundancies in processes. This will be considered in future terms when developing the Academic Calendar. She also shared progress on Degree Works implementation still on track for Fall 2026 implementation.</li> <li>• Kendra Whithead shared that FLAC training for administrative assistants and deans/chairs will be conducted in February.</li> <li>• Dr. Vicki Bingham shared that the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and Health Sciences hosts the Mississippi Nursing Association’s Excellence in Nursing Symposium on February 6<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm in room 141 of the nursing building.</li> <li>• Dr. Heather Miller shared that the CTL has several planned events and initiatives including some HyFlex training, a HyFlex Canvas course shell template, an AI Showcase on January 26<sup>th</sup>, grant workshops, book studies, and a Nvidia AI workshop.</li> <li>• Dr. Merideth Van Namen shared that she is currently planning a spring showcase tentatively scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup>. She also announced that Karen Bell was the Humanities Teacher of the Year and there will be a special event on February 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in Jobe Hall.</li> <li>• Kristen Land shared that 40 new computers had been purchased recently. She continues to work on the Slate Student Success platform along with a Canvas add-on.</li> <li>• Fawn Ussery shared that the university archivist had resigned.</li> <li>• Dr. Joe Childs shared that the College of Business and Aviation would be hosting an Aviation Open House on April 17<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.</li> <li>• Dr. Jeff Leffler shared that the schedule for programmatic assessment had been updated. Programs are now to have their programmatic assessments to deans for review by February 15<sup>th</sup> and completed in Anthology by the end of February. He will be scheduling some help sessions. Revisions to the 2026-2027 undergraduate and graduate catalogs will be a top priority in upcoming weeks.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Leslie Griffin</b></p>
<p><b>Announcements:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Campus closed January 19, 2026</li> <li>• President’s Town Hall Meeting – Thursday, January 29, 2026 in the Jacob Conference Center</li> <li>• Music Man, Broadway Production – January 30, 2026 in the BPAC</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Adjourned:</b></p>	<p>11:25 a.m.</p>		

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<b>Next Meeting:</b>	February 5, 2026, at 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room		