

ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes February 19, 2026

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

Absent: None

Guests: None

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on February 8, 2026. The meeting convened at 1:30 PM, with Associate Provost Jeffrey Leffler presiding.

Agenda item	Comments/Discussion	Action taken	Responsible party
Approval of Agenda:	Dr. Leffler 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 Kristen Land. All were in favor.	Approved	Jeffrey Leffler
Approval of Minutes:	The motion to approve minutes for Thursday, December 4 th was made by Dr. Merideth Van Namen and seconded by Dr. Joe Childs. All in favor.	Approved	Jeffrey Leffler
Discussion Items			

Provost's Updates	<p><u>Provost, Dr. Leslie Griffin, provided the following updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Griffin shared that MS IHL hosted a meeting to discuss the four proposed versions of the funding formula. • The IHL board voted to move forward with the Mississippi College nursing pathways, including the DNP with a concentration in Nursing Education and Executive Leadership. • At the CAO meeting, there was an emphasis on gainful employment and the need to improve tracking of student employment outcomes. 		Leslie Griffin
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report on the assessment of online learning is scheduled for tomorrow. • We are actively working through the budget process. The Provost will meet next week with units that have larger budgets. • Deans need to focus on community college recruitment for our new pathways and coordinate these opportunities with Dr. Leffler. • Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College will be visited next week by a team from our faculty and leadership to continue pathway discussions. • A meeting was held last week with Dr. Craft to discuss AI-related issues and explore professional development opportunities in that area. 		
Faculty Senate	<p>Faculty Senate President, Peter Dean, provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Dean reported that the Faculty Senate supports the reinstatement of the faculty teaching and scholarship awards. Dr. Jon Westfall is leading the Academic Affairs committee to coordinate this effort and will follow up directly with the Provost regarding next steps and implementation details. 		Peter Dean
Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms			
Curriculum/Course Actions	<p><u>Curriculum/Course Actions: BAS/BBA Computer Information Systems - Cybersecurity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Joe Childs shared a package of proposed curriculum and course actions to revise the BAS in Business Administration and the BBA in Computer Information Systems • Proposed actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to add a Cybersecurity concentration to the BAS in Business Administration. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to add a Cybersecurity concentration to the BBA in Computer Information Systems. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 240. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 320. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 350. 	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 365. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 445. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 450. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 460. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 465. ○ Red-lined changes to the undergraduate catalog to create CYS 470. <p>A motion was made by Dr. Joe Childs to approve the actions and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Bingham. All in Favor</p>		
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fawn Ussery reported that the archives have been reorganized and noted that she is hoping to receive additional assistance in the coming days. ● Dr. Heather Miller reported that this week the GCFCTL will be hosting a HyFlex training. The second part of that training will take place on Tuesday the 24th, focusing on activities. On the 26th, there will be a trip to Jackson as part of the Let's Go initiative to visit Amazon Web Services and the Nissan Motor Company plant. On March 31, there will be an AR Conference at The University of Southern Mississippi from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She will also place Half-Lives information in the Canvas shell for the CTL. ● Tammy Prather reported that there is a Degree Works meeting tomorrow to finalize the cloned test environment. Progress is going well, though significant work remains. ● Dr. Joe Childs reported on an AI package available from McGraw Hill. He attended a brief demonstration of the tool and shared the information in case others are interested in exploring the opportunity further. ● Peter Dean reported that an election is underway to fill three open Faculty Senate seats, including Nursing, HPER, and Library. ● Dr. Jeffrey Leffler reported that the undergraduate catalog is near completion and will be distributed soon for final review so that colleagues may submit any remaining edits. 		Leslie Griffin
Announcements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None 		
Adjourned:	2:16 p.m.		
Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next Meeting Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026 (Tentative), 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room ● Upcoming Meeting Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026, 8:30 am in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room 		

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