

Minutes for this meeting recorded and prepared by Secretary Judith Coleman

Members attending: Vicki Webster, Gwen Meador, Cetin Oguz, Severine Groh, Karen Bell, Brett Oleis, Mary Bess Pannel, Charles Abraham, Leslie Green-Pimentel, Andrew Wegmann, Todd Davis, Michael Mounce, Kristina Claunch, Guozhen Zhao, Shelley Collins, Lacey Blessitt, David Hebert, Timothy Watkins, George Beals, Judith Coleman.

01) Meeting called to order @ 3:30pm by President George Beals

02) Minutes: March minutes approved unanimously.

03) President's report

- President Beals introduced himself to new senators in attendance. He also explained to all new members that he would continue to serve on Academic Council and Cabinet through June 30, at which time the new president will take over all duties.
- It was reported that, due to a miscommunication, the resolution regarding changes to the withdrawal date and the resolution amending summer pay were not included on the most recent Academic Council docket; these will be addressed soon.
- President Beals reported that Edwin Craft in OIT has requested the creation of a \$5 course fee per credit hour for all online courses. This request would pay for Canvas and Zoom licenses.
- DSU has requested a 5% tuition increase from IHL; this is in line with all other Mississippi universities. President Beals reported that there was some discussion of requesting an increase as high as 8%, but it was concluded that IHL would be unlikely to approve such an increase.
- For the benefit of new senators, President Beals asked if there were any questions regarding the recently-approved Pepsi contract. He briefly explained the bidding process that led to this contract and reported that vending-machine sales have increased and that students overwhelmingly support this new arrangement.
- It was reported that students are requesting official approval to wear non-academic cords and stoles at graduation ceremonies.

04) University Entities

Report from Staff Council – Christy Riddle reported that summer hours for University offices would be implemented beginning Monday, May 7, and that Kent Wyatt would be staffed by at least one person on Fridays to answer phone queries.

Report from BPAC – Ellen Green reported on several upcoming performances at the BPAC, including *The Westerlies* and *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*; before the *Cinderella* performance, an event will be held that includes dinner and costume contests.

05) Faculty Senate Committees

Committee on University Services – Severine Groh reported that the committee met and are planning an “Okra Cares” fair event that will bring non-profit associations from around Cleveland and the Delta to campus so that students, faculty, and staff can learn about the programs and find ways to contribute and volunteer.

Committee on University Standing Committees – No report.

Committee on Elections – Severine Groh reported that all elections have been concluded.

Committee on Technology – No report.

Committee on General Academic Affairs – Cetin Oguz reported that, in response to an email to the online portfolio service Interfolio, an Interfolio representative indicated that Provost McAdams had spoken to them approximately six months ago and that it was their understanding a committee would be formed to determine the best way to structure an online tenure portfolio.

06) Old business

1. President Beals disseminated a draft statement on the definition of interpersonal relationships for the purposes of promotion and tenure; IHL has mandated that “interpersonal relationships” be defined for all universities, and some of the language in this statement comes from IHL. Discussion about this statement raised the following points:
 - If implemented as written, this seems like a tool that could be used for persecution of faculty members for various reasons. This policy seems primarily punitive.
 - Some of the items listed in the statement are difficult or impossible to measure and would therefore be subjectively evaluated.
 - President Beals clarified that, if a faculty member’s poor behavior affects their tenure or promotion, it would need to be because multiple sources have reported and confirmed said behavior; one report from a single individual would not be enough to negatively affect T&P.
 - It was reported that the Tenure and Promotion Committee has already recommended that this language be sprinkled throughout DSU’s T&P policies, not be codified as a stand-alone statement.
 - The following questions were raised in discussion: how will this affect faculty members in real ways? Will this stifle freedom to dissent with regard to the administration? Is this not a management issue from the perspective of Chairs and Deans?
 - President Beals closed discussion by clarifying that discipline-specific T&P policies need to be formulated and ratified. He invited further comments to be sent directly to him.
2. Senate discussed a proposal regarding Non-tenure Track Ranks, which would be a set of ranks for programs that may not have clear terminal degrees but do have professors with invaluable and necessary experience; examples include DMI and Aviation. There is a possibility we could lose faculty members in such departments because they have no hope for advancement under the current system. President Beals summarized some of the discussion Senate has had in previous months for the benefit of new senators.
3. The issue of the graduation venue was revisited and summarized for the benefit of new senators. Next year, graduation will be moved to Friday of exam week, and students overwhelmingly support returning the ceremony to the coliseum. General discussion in Senate acknowledged that, while many faculty would prefer the ceremony to remain in the BPAC, graduation is ultimately about the students, and faculty should support them. Some discussion ensued about amending seating arrangements so that faculty members could sit with or near the students in their discipline.
4. The possible implementation of plus/minus grades was revisited. Senator David Hebert reiterated some of the main issues to consider in making this move, including what options (A+/A/A-, or A/B, etc.) we would want to adopt, when this would be phased in, how the transition would be handled, what the standard practices of our closest sister schools are, how this would impact awards, how transfers would be handled, and what individual units within DSU think of this plan. The Committee on General Academic Affairs will work to establish a clear set of benefits and a list of limitations this change would bring about.

07) New Business

1. President Beals appointed himself as chair of the Bylaws Committee and indicated that new bylaws would be brought to the Senate in September.
2. Members of the 2017-2018 Senate unanimously elected Severine Groh as the new President.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned @ 4:45pm.