

**Minutes of the Faculty Senate**

**Date: 8-29-2023**

**Presiding:**  **DeAnna Owens-Mosby (Instruction and Curriculum Leadership)**

**Secretary:** Jeni Loftus (Sociology)

**Senators Present:** Lynda Black (Cecil C Humphreys School of Law), Kathryn Hicks (Anthropology), Matthew Parris (Biological Sciences), William Alexander (Chemistry), Reza Banai (City and Regional Planning), Sajjan Shiva (Computer Science), Esra Ozdenerol (Earth Sciences), Leah Windsor (English), Alistair Windsor (Mathematical Sciences), David Gray (Philosophy), Sanjay Mishra (Physics and Materials Science), Stephanie Huette (Psychology), Katie Norwood (School of Social Work), Jeni Loftus (Sociology), Melanie Conroy (World Languages and Literatures), Jennifer Thompson (Architecture), Coe Lapossy (Art), Amanda Young (Communication & Film), Brian Ruggaber (Theater & Dance), Michael Anderson Schults (Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music), Patrick Murphy (Counseling, Educational Psychology & Research), Edith Gnanadnass (Leadership), Mrs. Barbara Fitzgerald, Esq. (College of Professional & Liberal Studies), Deborah Moncrieff (School of Communication Sciences & Disorders), Brian Janz (Business Information and Technology), Andrew Hussey (Economics), Mark Sunderman (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate), Frances Fabian (Management), Gensheng Liu (Marketing & Supply Chain Management), Zabihollah Rezaee (School of Accountancy), Jessica Jennings (Biomedical Engineering), Eddie Jacobs (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Rhema Fuller (Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality), Genae Strong (Loewenberg College of Nursing), William Travis (College of Health Sciences), Fawaz Mzayek (School of Public Health), Gerald Chaudron (University Libraries)

**Senator Present by Proxy**: Beverly Tsacoyianis (Scott Marler – History), Nikki Detraz (Dursen Peksen – Political Science), Stephen Watts (Timothy McCuddy – Criminology and Criminal justice), Alexander Headley (Gladius Lewis – Mechanical Engineering)

**Senators Absent:** Daniel E. Millican (Military Sciences, Naval Sciences), Mihalis Golias (Civil Engineering), Matthew Parris (Biological Sciences), Jennifer Thompson (Architecture), Tori Cliff (Journalism & Strategic Media)

**Guests:** Sara K. Bridges (Ombudsperson), Richard Evans (University of Memphis Association of Retirees), Sparkle Burns (Legal), Amanda Clarks (HR), Maria Alam (HR), Karen Weddle-West (Vice President of Student Academic Success), Jin Yang (Journalism), and Tierenee Nichols (Admin Assoc).

The four-hundred-and-ninety-eighth meeting of the University of Memphis Faculty Senate was held on Tuesday, August 29th, 2023, in the University Center Fountain Room.

**08.29.23.01 CALL TO ORDER (2:43 P.M.)**

President DeAnna Owens-Mosby called the meeting to order at 2:43 pm with a quorum present.

**08.29.23.02 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as written.

**08.29.23.03 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the April 25th, 2023, Faculty Senate (FS) meeting were approved by acclamation as written.

**02.28.23.04 PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

President Owens-Mosby reported the University of Memphis Divisive Concepts Website has been launched.

President Owens-Mosby reported that the faculty senate has been asked for representation on the CFO, CIO, SVP of Marketing and Communications, and VP of Enrollment Management searches.

President Owens-Mosby met with CFO Raaj Kurapati to discuss finishing installing the locks for the lactation rooms. A list of rooms was provided to Kurapati so that the project can be completed.

President Owens-Mosby has reached out to Marketing to ensure the Ombudsperson nomination selection process email will be launched the first week of September.

President Owens-Mosby reported that the U of M will focus on a $65M capital research investment and $5.4M for security measures.

President Owens-Mosby has been in communication with Karen Bell about Banner 9 issues and the problems are being worked on.

President Owens-Mosby announced that Disability Resources for Students office is offering two virtual opportunities to learn about accommodating students with disabilities in the classroom on September 13th from 12:00-1:00 pm and September 14th from 12:00-1:00 pm. The senate office will provide any senator the links to the trainings if they are interested.

President Owens-Mosby announced that President Hardgrave has charged the senate with creating new faculty evaluations campus wide. This will be a large undertaking for the senate this year. We are beginning to do research on what that might look like. Going forward we are looking at merit rather than across the board salary raises, so these will be important.

President Owens-Mosby reported that new SETE questions are being loaded into the SETE evaluation in the OIR office currently.

Senators will be receiving emails asking for names of faculty willing to serve on committees. Alistair Windsor has been working to fill these committees. Take these emails to your department. We need to get those filled as soon as possible.

**08.29.23.05 REPORTS**

***Standing Committee Reports***

*Committee on Committees: Chair, Alistair Windsor*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Committee on Committees Chair Alistair Windsor who reported that the Committee on Committees has been going through the list of committees and has found that some committees do not exist anymore.

They are currently showing one vacancy on the undergrad appeals committee that must be filled.

Committee on Committees will send out an email listing the three positions that have to be filled on the faculty appeals committee. This is a new committee that was formed last year. Committee members serve a three-year term. Initially terms were staggered, but they have shuffled around people based on who has retired or no longer able to serve.

The committee will send out an email looking for volunteers to fill university committees. If more people volunteer than they have spots, they will hold an election at the next senate meeting.

*Academic Policies Committee: Chair, Edith Gnanadass*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Academic Policies Committee Chair Edith Gnanadass who reported that the committee is working on two charges from last year.

The first charge is the AI policy. They are forming an ad hoc committee. They want to get a report and draft policy to the senate by the end of the semester.

The other charge is textbook affordability, which they continue to work on.

*Academic Support Committee: Chair, Dursen Peksen*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Academic Support Committee Chair Dursen Peksen. Nicole Detraz was filling in for Dursen Peksen and reported that the Committee has nothing to report.

*Administrative Policies Committee: Chair, Stephanie Huette*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Administrative Policies Committee Chair Stephanie Huette who reported that the committee has nothing to report.

*Budget and Finance Committee: Chair, Zabi Rezaee*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Budget and Finance Committee Chair Zabi Rezaee who reported that the committee has many charges, more than they can handle this year. One charge is to get involved with any budgetary issue related to the university. During the summer Rezaee served on and attended many of the steering committee meetings relating to SRI and RCM implementation phases.

The other charge was to produce a list of acceptable peer institutions. Last year the list that was created was voted down by the faculty senate. Now the budget and finance committee will work with the provost office to develop an acceptable list and will prepare a report for the senate with a new list. This list is very important to do salary comparison and compression studies.

*Faculty Policies Committee: Chair, Lynda Black*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Faculty Policies Committee Chair Lynda Black who reported that their main charges this year are looking at summer compensation policy, particularly where there are classes that have been cancelled after the contract has been signed, minors on campus policy, and academic freedom.

*Library Policies Committee: Chair, Frances Fabian*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Library Policies Committee Chair Frances Fabian who reported that they have met to follow up on their charge from last year concerning the library budget, next they will work with the administration to see how they plan to cover the gaps in the library budget.

*Research Policies Committee: Chair, Debbie Moncrief*

President Owens-Mosby yielded to Research Policies Committee Chair Debbie Moncrief who reported that they do not have specific charges, the two things they will focus on are pre and post award coordination and tech transfer methodologies.

**08.29.23.06 NEW BUSINESS**

Divisive Concepts Law – Melanie Murry and Barbara Deans, University Counsel.

Melanie Murry presented an overview of the law and how it pertains to us as faculty. Essentially, the legislation does not do much in terms of what we do as faculty. The university has created a website with information on the law. Fifteen states have passed some form of legislation to deal with divisive concepts. On the website the divisive concepts that we are prohibited from teaching are listed. What the law does is make clear that students or employees cannot be penalized in any way (such as for hiring, promotion, graduation or tenure) for not supporting, believing, endorsing, promoting, confessing, acting upon or otherwise assenting to one or more of the divisive concepts. We cannot require training that includes one or more the divisive concepts. Divisive concepts can be discussed in classes, faculty cannot require students to endorse a divisive concept. Our job is to educate, not indoctrinate.

Diversity is broad. It’s not just about race. It is more inclusive than that. Individuals who work to increase diversity on campus must also include intellectual diversity.

The act proscribes that university must have a complaint procedure. If student, employee or faculty member believes that someone within the university has violated the act they can file a complaint. That complaint will go to the complaint triage team. That team is made up a representative from legal, audit, HR and OIE. That team will evaluate if the complaint falls under the statute. If it involves a faculty member, that complaint will be handled under the faculty handbook under alleged misconduct. It will go through the appropriate process, and faculty will receive appropriate due process.

Under this law there is no authorization for an individual to file a lawsuit against a faculty member personally. Under state law, we are state employees, and as such the Tennessee Attorney General is our attorney. If there is any litigation, the attorney general would represent us as long as we were working within the course and scope of our employment.

Academic freedom is not restricted under the divisive concepts law.

Do not hesitate to reach out to legal if you have questions or concerns, they are happy to talk with us.

Ombudsperson Selection Process and Nominations

Everything on the website is updated for the process. Email soliciting nominations will go out during the first week of September. End of the nomination period is the 18th. We are working on putting together a selection committee, will include three senators or three senate appointees. We will follow the timeline on the faculty senate website. We are on target to have someone in the role in January.

Ombudsperson Presentation, Sara Bridges

Ombudsperson works with people who have been referred to them or have gone through their handbook and decided they need to talk with someone. Sara asks that we go back to our faculty and remind them that there is an ombudsperson who is available to work with them should they need it. Discussions are confidential. The ombudsperson is neutral, independent, and separate from the administration.

Faculty Trustee Presentation, Jeff Marchetta

The faculty senate is the voice of the faculty, the faculty trustee listens to that voice, and brings that perspective to the board. The trustee looks more at the forest, such as the strategic plan. He balances the perspectives of the faculty and balances that with what the board as a whole thinks is good for the university. Marchetta is available to discuss any concerns about the direction of the university, either with a department or an individual.

**08.29.23.07 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The executive committee has been meeting with the deans to discuss shared governance and asking them to consider meeting with their senators at least once a month to help with communication flow.

The Executive Committee is meeting monthly with the president, provost and the CFO.

The Executive Committee has also met with the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation. He is changing the bylaws to have the members of the Senate Research Policies Committee on the U of M Research Council.

We are opening doors and having doors opened to us in the senate. Other people will be in the room as guests, such as Human Resources.

Executive committee is meeting once a month. Standing committees are meeting once a month as well.

Reminder if you have anything to report in the senate to get that information to the senate office ten days prior to the faculty senate meeting.

**02.29.23.08 ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 3:41 pm.