

University of Memphis Staff Senate Meeting Minutes May 15, 2014

Present: JoAnn Ammons, Karen Bell, Brigitte Boyd, Lindsey Bray, Ann Brock, Dan Bureau, Hugh Busby, Constance Butts, Nick Conway, Ilene Cooper, Debra Cummings, Alfreda Davis, Vonda Dede, Rosemary Frix, Racheal Hall, Sharon Harber, Ann Hudson, Robert Marczynski, William Mueller, Vickie Peters, Gina Savell, Kate Sims, Debra Turner, Lofton Wilborn

Excused: Charles Black, DebraAnn Brown, Ashley Holloway, Lisa Justen, Georgette Kearney, Nichole McBride, Penny Saed, Sherri Stephens, Brian Wilcox

Unexcused: Marco Anderson, Bradley Arnold, Barbara Bekis, Pam Chambers, Candy Donald, Emma Elliott, Rodney Gray, Riviera Hollowell, Amy Jones, Kutanya Niter, Nicholas Racz, Jennifer Walker

President Busby called the meeting to order

Roll Call

Guest Speaker

- Dr. M. David Rudd, Incoming President of the University of Memphis
 - Dr. Rudd began by saying that he appreciated the opportunity to speak with the Staff Senate but did not want to drive the conversation. He said he wanted to talk about whatever was important to the Senators and was looking forward to the opportunity to respond to our concerns. He then opened the floor for questions.
 - Senator Dan Bureau stated that we have spent the last 12 months responding to the harsh fiscal environment and asked: what do you see the next 12 months bringing? What changes can we expect?
 - Dr. Rudd – The University has been running with the same structure for a long time while the landscape has changed underneath it. We have spent \$110,000,000 to keep up with these changes. That is a lot of money that we could have spent in other places. It was obvious we couldn't respond to a difficult budget year within a 6 month time period like we should be able to. Our budgeting model has now changed and we need to step back and look at how effective our organizational model is. We're looking at 2 to 2 ½ years to see if our structure is effective and efficient, and that is where we need to be. We will have recommendations through the Strategic Resource Investment forum (SRI) and you can follow the process, watch the timeline, and become a part of the procedure as well.

You will receive an email next week explaining the process and I encourage you to visit the SIR website (<https://blogs.memphis.edu/sriforum/>) to see how you can be a part of it.

We have had strong application growth, including the recent one in Lambuth. We have been arguing with the students that the problem is a cost issue and so we are doing an experiment with the Law School – we have eliminated out of state tuition for the Law School for next year. As of this week last year, we had 90 deposits for seats in the school (deposits mean 90% of the time the student enrolls and pays the remaining tuition). As of this week this year, we have 108, which is a 120% increase. Last year we graduated 31 from Lambuth, this year we graduated 73. We've had a remarkable response. Our problem in Lambuth is that we need to maintain, or increase that pace and not rest on our laurels. As we get better at graduating our students we also need to get better at replacing them. Learn to deal with the challenges better.

- Senator Vickie Peters stated she realizes that to become more competitive we do need to attract more and better students. She is aware that we are going to ramp up our existing online opportunities and asked what Dr. Rudd what he has in mind along those lines.
- Dr. Rudd – Pricing is at the heart of those opportunities. If you're selling shoes and you're twice as expensive as others on the market you are not competitive. We have to ask ourselves, "What is the value we add?" We need to do a better job of advertising, branding, and marketing. We will be doing a better job of marketing. We will be more aggressive by fostering our partnerships in the community with FedEx, Sedgwick, and International Paper. And we will build better relationships through internships with these and other companies. We will build on the uniqueness of Memphis. We will be asking our employees, how do we do that? How do we connect with the community? One innovative way to supplement our partnerships that has been suggested is that interns could receive discounted tuition. In June, you will hear that our competitors will be increasing tuition 6-8%. We have proposed a 4-year decrease in rates for out-of-state tuition. And we are looking at the Law School experiment to see if this kind of thing is viable on a larger scale. We will try to be thoughtful and careful, only taking informed risks. It is also good to look at private foundations for additional funding, we are looking to be more energetic at that sources.
- Senator Lindsey Bray stated that the Tennessee Promise was signed by the Governor this week and asked how this is affecting us.
- Dr. Rudd – Generally students being affected by this program are not those who we are targeting for our institution. Only about 75-100 students at the University of Memphis are affected. Over the long run it

will be a benefit for us, because after 2 years it actually broadens the pool of students available for us to recruit.

- Senator Karen Bell asked Dr. Rudd to talk about his thoughts on initiatives to recruit local talent vs. talent from out of state.
- Dr. Rudd – Responded to this question by saying he knows that we have not saturated the local market because his own daughter, a High School junior, has not yet been contacted by the U of M. She is contacted all the time by universities, but not U of M yet. But there has been a 70% increase in applications this year (14,000) and a lot of them are from the Memphis and Nashville areas. We began a new mailing campaign this year and it will expand next year. Although there was a tragedy this year in one of the mailings with the pairings of names, we will work it out before next year.
- Senator Robert Marczynski noted that the Staff Appreciation Day went well and we heard many nice things about the event. As Senators, however, we hear the overall morale is down on campus. While yesterday (Staff Appreciation Day) was nice, a lot of people are still looking over their shoulders, joking how did we get to be ranked as one of the best places to work? Are there any things in place to curb those feelings of insecurities?
- Dr. Rudd – Began by saying he was sorry he missed Staff Appreciation Day. He was in Washington D.C. working on securing \$20 million for the University. We had a very strenuous 4-months taking on this challenge to bring the budget under control. And now we need to be proactive. We will come to you, the employees, this summer and we will talk about this: How can we be proactive. When we do a budget hearing, it's not a one-time thing. The staff is a part of the process; the staff should feel more a part of the process. That will be at the top of the list. How do we include you as part of that process, how do we evaluate that part of the process? These are things we need to consider right now and it has to be a continual part of the process, a continuous dialogue. For us to come out of the toughest challenge in the history of this university in a place to grow makes us well positioned. We are better able to absorb shocks, we have flexibility so we don't have profound gaps, and we are much better equipped to look to the future.
- Senator Vickie Peters asked if our budget for next year is based on flat enrollment or increased.
- Dr. Rudd – Next year we are budgeted on a flat enrollment – remarkably flat. We have been budgeted flat for 3 years with no growth, but with so much cash being expended this is what has caused our issue.
- Senator Peters prefaced her next question by saying what she was about to ask was not meant to be disrespectful. Dr. Rudd encouraged her to be open and not worry about how it may sound. Senator Peters continued by saying that often we hear news about the university from the

Commercial Appeal first, and then we receive an email from you. Can we hear it from you first? If we hear it from the paper first we feel blindsided.

- Dr. Rudd – I do not always know when the Commercial Appeal is going to print something and I try to push information out to you in a timely manner. Generally there is an agreement with the newspaper regarding exactly when they will release information and we try to let you know before they do. But there is not a lot I can do about rumors. I cannot spend time responding to all the rumors, it would take all day. It will take us a little bit of time to create a good communication chain and I am committed to continued transparency, but I cannot be transparent about something that is not true.
- Senator Dan Bureau asked if it was too soon to identify the executive team, and if we would see any major changes.
- Dr. Rudd – There will not be a lot of changes. Dr. Karen Weddle-West is in place, and Melanie Murry is our General Counsel. Ellen Watson will rejoin in a strategic advisory role, and as our CIO. We don't anticipate any major changes, but we will do an official announcement next week. There will be changes in the Provost's Office that will be driven by Karen (Dr. Weddle-West), and my office has eliminated a position.
- Senator Brigitte Boyd asked if there would be any more reductions in force after July.
- Dr. Rudd – There were areas within Business that had been discussed; they have now been put on hold. Also what has been discussed is not a loss of positions but actually a net increase of positions. There would be a growth of about 7 research positions across colleges, but that has been put on hold. The only way to do it is to eliminate all the current positions and let everyone apply for the available positions, including the new ones.
- Senator Karen Bell asked, "What can we do to help you?"
- Dr. Rudd – I encourage you to talk to me. It is part of my job now. Talk to me. Help us to create a mechanism where we have a communication process going on all during the year. Does the Staff Senate need to meet periodically with executive group? Do I need to meet every so often with the full Staff Senate such as we have today? How do we address the morale issue, the salary issues? Let me address the salary issue a little bit right now. The State supplies just 32% of our salary. The majority comes from other sources such as tuition, endowments, and other revenue. The amounts are flexible from year to year, so we have to take on the salary issue every year. There is declining State support in every state for higher education. I am going to look to the Senate to discover how we solve the problem of finding the funding without looking to the State for increases every year? Suggestions should come from the Staff.

- Senator Brigitte Boyd stated that it was rumored the Physical Plant would be outsourced; specifically the custodial and landscaping crews, and wanted to know if this was true.
- Dr. Rudd – As Provost I have not had the responsibility of running the Physical Plant. However, I have heard absolutely no discussion about outsourcing those areas.
- Senator Dan Bureau spoke about the 32% of employee’s salary in State funding and how a 3-year rolling average drives the funding model. He stated the graduation rates 2 & 3 years ago were low, so that affects our raises now. He noted that, as we improve our graduation rates, our possibility of raises will improve and Dr. Rudd agreed.
- Senate President Hugh Busby asked if Dr. Rudd planned on looking at course releases.
- Dr. Rudd – It is an unpopular thing to look at, but he has looked at it. Overall, there is an underutilization of 12%. We are working toward less reliance on Adjunct Faculty, reallocation in teaching responsibility, research capability, overall service delivery. We are considering a Memphis consortium with CBU, Rhodes, and UT Medical to hire in full-time adjunct faculty and share them across the campuses. We are looking at the costs, it would be the first in the country.
- Senator Lindsey Bray asked if we are going to raise the minimum credit hours to 15 to be considered a full-time student.
- Dr. Rudd – We did evaluate that and found it was going to hurt us if we increased the minimum requirement. It would be a net negative for us in a cost perspective. So many of our students work, many of them full time, and would not be able to bare the extra course load.
- Senator Vickie Peters asked if the President’s Office would retain a Chief of Staff.
- Dr. Rudd – We will retain one for a while, to see how it plays out. But I don’t know if it will be effective going forward. I am committed to the issue of administrative efficiency and I will need to determine if I feel it warrants the cost.
- Dr. Rudd broke from the Q&A format for a moment and offered the following comments: “In the coming months you will hear many good things. We will move forward. I want to be fully engaged from both you and the faculty side. I am committed to this transparency thing, and if you don’t think I am being open about something please, just call me. We can start some sort of a question and answer process where questions can be generated even if I cannot be present here. I would like to begin a process where I can answer them on an ongoing process.”
- Senator Lindsey Bray asked Dr. Rudd if he thought we would be bowl eligible this year.
- Dr. Rudd – Coach Fuente is a wonderful guy and coach. We will have a tough first 6 games, but I think we will be eligible this year. People forget,

but sports are important for grants - federal grants actually. And our alumni. In many ways, it brings money to a university that many people don't realize. It shapes the branding of the university, the marketing. It's often the first thing people see, and recognize.

- Senator Lofton Wilborn asked about mentoring staff. He said, "We do it with students, why not staff?"
- Dr. Rudd – That is a great idea. We want you to stay, and need to hear reasons why those who stay, do. I would love any ideas you have about this. I would love to hear your recommendations, and would be very supportive. That is something we can do quickly and that internally we can manage.
- Senator Ann Hudson stated that we keep hearing about how we are a research institution. The library is a research area but the budget is very low – what is your plan for the library?
- Dr. Rudd – There have been many recommendations about the library. I did not cut the library budget this year even though the budget had cuts built into it. I was sensitive about it and stopped that from happening. Going forward we would like to have some open forums about it before I need to respond to some recommendations and to a report. We may need to raise private money for changes.
- Senator Robert Marczyński said he had something to bring up that affected him personally. He started here in 1981 in Scates Hall. Since then he has worked across campus and has now come full circle and is back in Scates Hall. He wants to know if there are any plans for cleaning up the men's restrooms.
- Dr. Rudd – Asked exactly what the issue was as he was unaware there was a problem. Senator Marczyński said there have been literally no changes since 1981. The building used to be dorms. The old showers have been boarded up, but that is it. Dr. Rudd said he understands how that would be a concern, especially when dealing with morale issues. He asked Senator Marczyński to help him understand the conditions by making a list of the problems and stated that it sounds like something we truly need to look into. Then he continued by saying, what you will hear from me is that we will find a way to take on a little bit each year, and budget for it. We cannot repair all of the building at one time, but if we do not do anything for 30 years we end up with what we have today in Scates Hall. We must build these things into our budget. But I have to know what we need, so don't be afraid to raise these issues when you have the opportunities.
- Senator Brigitte Boyd said we used to have a Liberty Land day for all employees and their families; can we do something like that again?
- Dr. Rudd – I would like to have something like this again. Let me find out what we are able to do, and I will throw it back to you (the Senate) to see what we want to do with the budget.

- Senator Sharon Harbor said she wanted to applaud Dr. Rudd for making statements that make us feel that the Staff matter and not just the Faculty. She said, “We don’t work here for the salary, we work here because we love the University”.
- Dr. Rudd - I understand how you could feel that certainly during the last year to two years. Going forward, we will demonstrate that you are the heart of this University. We do not function without capable staff. It is one thing for me to say it with a kind word, but it means something to demonstrate it.

New Business

- Discussion of Staff Appreciation Day
 - Received many positive comments, praise, complements. It was very successful.
 - Thank you to all of the Senators who helped plan and volunteered during the event. And a special “Thank You” to those who secured the wonderful door prizes!
- Nominations for Staff Senate President for 2014-2015.
 - Nominations were delayed due to the absence of a quorum.
- Senate Officers to be elected during the July 2014 meeting.
- Vote on Non-Active Senators
 - The vote was delayed due to the absence of a quorum.
- Floor Discussion/Issues
 - There was concern over the fact that we were unable to conduct some of our business due to poor attendance. The May meeting is often poorly attended because of graduation and other departmental events this time of year.
 - The meeting had run over time, so rather than formally reading the list of committees, President Busby asked if there were any committee reports to discuss. There were none.

Meeting Adjourned

- Motion to Adjourn by Vickie Peters
- Second by Brigitte Boyd