

**Deans Council Minutes**  
**May 4, 2015**  
**1:30 PM**  
**President's Office Conference Room, Lee Hall**

**In attendance:** Jerry Gilbert (chair), Richard Blackburn, Lori Bruce, Tim Chamblee, Pat Matthes (for Frances Coleman), Cody Coyne, Amy Adkerson (for John Dickerson), Greg Dunaway, Kent Hoblet, Julia Hodges, George Hopper, Jason Keith, Brandon Jolly (for Joan Lucas), Sharon Oswald, Allison Pearson, Steve Parrott (for Mike Rackley), Roxie Raven, Peter Ryan, Chris Snyder, Jim West.

**Others present:** Teresa Gammill, Steve Taylor.

**Minutes taken by:** Martha Thomas.

1. Upon a motion by Richard Blackburn and second by Sharon Oswald, the minutes of the April 6, 2015, meeting were approved unanimously with the following correction:
  - a. Adding Cody Coyne as being in attendance.
2. Announcements:
  - a. Jerry Gilbert discussed a recent trip by several MSU administrators to visit the University of Tennessee at Knoxville to learn about their one-stop advising unit. MSU is considering developing a pilot program based on this model. Dr. Gilbert stated that the unit would provide answers to fundamental questions and refer questions that cannot be answered to the appropriate office.
    - i. Roxie Raven asked whether there was academic advising in the Tennessee model. Dr. Gilbert stated that there was not as it is too difficult to advise students from different disciplines. Students with specific questions about their academic disciplines would be referred to the appropriate department/college.
  - b. Dr. Gilbert discussed the recent Faculty Senate spring roundtable which featured MSU's branding as its primary topic. There is a campaign underway to unify MSU's message and look with regards to websites, publications, logos, etc. Dr. Gilbert stated that he would invite Sid Salter to present to the Deans Council on the subject.
  - c. Dr. Gilbert discussed plans for commencement including: Friday, May 8: MSU-Meridian, College of Veterinary Medicine, and the first of two Starkville commencements; and Saturday, May 9: the second of two Starkville Commencements.
  - d. Dr. Gilbert reminded the Deans Council of the National Student Exchange (NSE) program where an undergraduate student can attend certain other universities in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico for a semester. Students in the NSE program pay their home university's tuition. Dr. Gilbert stated that this is a great opportunity for students to explore a different region. Nancy Fultz in the Office of the Provost can be contacted for more information. Ten students are coming to MSU in the fall of 2016 as part of the NSE program.
  - e. Dr. Gilbert stated that there are three academic programs being considered by IHL for authorization to plan including the M.S. in Plant and Soil Sciences, the M.S. in Music, and the Ph.D. in Plant and Soil Sciences.
  - f. Dr. Gilbert announced that Glenn McCullough, an IHL board member recommended by MSU, was named by Governor Phil Bryant the executive for the Mississippi Development Authority. Dr. Gilbert stated that the Governor will announce another appointee to replace Mr. McCullough on the IHL board.
  - g. Dr. Gilbert discussed the proposal by the University of Mississippi to restructure the IHL board and stated that MSU's position is that the current structure is acceptable.
  - h. Dr. Gilbert discussed a recent meeting of President Keenum with Mississippi Power and stated that Steve Taylor would be in touch with their Human Resources director regarding Mississippi Power employees pursuing degrees at MSU.
3. AOP 13.15 – Evaluation of Teaching Performance:

- a. Peter Ryan stated that the AOP was developed with cooperation from Faculty Senate and a subcommittee of the Associate Deans Council.
  - b. There was discussion about the online evaluation instrument and whether there is a difference in response rate or teaching evaluation scores when using the online instrument. Tim Chamblee stated that the intent is to move all student teaching evaluations online and that the survey will be administered by the process selected by the Teaching Evaluation Committee.
  - c. Ms. Raven stated that most students she has spoken with feel rushed to complete a teaching evaluation during the class period and that typing is easier than handwriting responses.
  - d. Allison Pearson stated that she taught two sections of a course and had one section complete paper evaluations while the other completed online evaluations. The response rate was higher on the paper evaluations but the scores were the same.
  - e. There was discussion regarding the evaluation of course content. Cody Coyne stated that he believed that the AOP should address course content – but that students should not be the overriding factor in evaluating course content.
  - f. There was discussion regarding the recommended edit to the AOP which states that only the faculty member shall receive a copy of the teaching evaluation comments.
    - i. Sharon Oswald stated that she was made aware of an issue in a classroom via e-mail that was addressed in the comments section; however, the department head and dean were not aware of the problem because they did not have access to the comments.
    - ii. Kent Hoblet stated that many students are surprised that the comments are not available beyond the faculty member teaching the course.
    - iii. Dr. Gilbert suggested editing the AOP to allow comments to be sent to the Department Head of the faculty member.
  - g. There was discussion regarding the use of student evaluations beyond the purpose of instructor improvement.
    - i. George Hopper stated that student evaluations are used in the promotion and tenure process and that perhaps this should be reconsidered if there is some doubt as to the results' validity. Dr. Hopper discussed using the numerical evaluations in comparison with others' scores.
    - ii. Jim West expressed concern that student evaluation comments are often hand-picked for annual reviews, award nominations, etc. He stated that if the rationale is to give the instructor information to help them improve their instruction, then we should not allow faculty to pick and choose which comments they provide for those purposes.
  - h. Dr. Gilbert discussed the recent Faculty Senate confidence survey of administrators which allows comments to be viewed up the chain.
  - i. There was discussion regarding other universities' procedures regarding the comments.
  - j. Brandon Jolly stated that the more that is known by those in positions of supervision, the better.
  - k. Julia Hodges stated that it is important for department heads to act on issues if they are informed of a problem.
  - l. There was discussion regarding whether lecturers would be governed by this policy. There was a recommendation to define "instructor of record" as it is used within the policy so that it would govern all of those individuals delivering instructional content.
  - m. Dr. Gilbert stated that Dr. Ryan would take these comments and bring a new version of the AOP back to Deans Council.
4. Other Items:
- a. Amy Adkerson discussed plans for commencement and asked that the deans take charge of the Ph.D. hooding process to help expedite it. Dr. Blackburn asked that the students have their hoods unbuttoned when they get to the stage.

- b. Ms. Adkerson asked for response to the e-mail sent regarding college ushers.
  - c. Dr. Blackburn discussed the recent NCATE visit and stated that he received an excellent preliminary report. Dr. Blackburn stated that the College of Education has also helped the College of Veterinary Medicine in the area of assessment and that they are happy to help any other college.
5. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:52 PM.