

**Deans Council Minutes
December 6, 2004**

Members present: Peter Rabideau, chairman; Mark Binkley, Gregg Boring, Frances Coleman, Sara Freedman, Bob Karr, Sue Minchew, Nick Nichols, Phil Oldham, Glenn Steele, Vance Watson, Jim West, and Peter Wood. Also present were: Charles Guest, Gary Pike, Mike Rackley, Colin Scanes, Butch Stokes, and Joe Farris.

1. Mr. Joe Farris presented a summary of a statewide opinion survey about higher education, MSU, and its major competitors. The survey was conducted in 1996 and 1998 and again in 2004 by the Social Science Research Center. Questions asked were to gain knowledge of how Mississippians view Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, University of Southern Mississippi and other state colleges and universities. Mr. Farris also gave MSU's U.S. News ranking.

2. Dr. Gary Pike distributed the Institutional Benchmark Report (Nov. 2004) for Mississippi State University. The report is the result of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey which identifies several opportunities for improving the undergraduate experience at Mississippi State University. This year's analysis is based on approximately 162,000 randomly selected students at 472 four-year colleges. The report focuses on five benchmarks: (1) level of academic challenge, (2) active and collaborative learning, (3) student-faculty interactions, (4) enriching educational experiences, and (5) supportive campus environment. The data from the national report and from Dr. Pike's material show that a supportive campus environment is a strength of the university. There are two areas where MSU may be able to make improvements. The MSU scores on the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark were well below the average for doctoral/research-intensive universities. For first-year students, lower scores are primarily attributable to a lack of emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, and for seniors the low scores are attributable to lower than average scores for writing and higher-order thinking skills. MSU's scores on the enriching educational experiences benchmark indicates another area where MSU has an opportunity to improve undergraduate education. For first-year students, the MSU scores are somewhat lower on all three scalelets related to enriching the educational experiences. For seniors, low scores are most apparent on the varied experiences scalelet. Dr. Pike distributed the NSSE 2004 results by college for MSU for first-year students and senior students. Dr. Pike stated that the University of Kansas has been identified as one of the schools that seems to be doing a good job based on their benchmarks. Their report is available on the website of University of Kansas Office of Institutional Research.

Dr. Pike also distributed a department profile form for Publications and Creative Works. He asked the deans for comments and/or suggestions. Department heads will be asked to compile the information and submit to the deans; the deans will then submit a college report. Dr. Pike asked that the deans attach a list of the publications and creative works. There are some who might not show up in the department but would show in the College. Dr. Pike asked that suggestions or comments be sent to him before Christmas break, preferably by December 10. Forthcoming publications are to be counted in the next year's report. Institutes and centers need to be included for research professors. Unduplicated

counts should be included within the college. It was noted that conference proceedings and conference presentations should be reported separately. Book chapters are included. The original source information is critical to cross check. There is a rule that the academic department should receive credit for what is contributed by the faculty of that department. If a faculty member is receiving 100% E&G funding from a departmental budget, that academic department should claim the credit. When a department plays a role in mentoring and hiring faculty and the faculty moves to an institute or center, the department should receive a share of the credit. The Provost and Vice President for Research will be looking closely at the reports and how credit is being given for publications.

3. Other Items:

Learning Communities: The Provost Office sponsored a faculty forum on learning communities which was received with enthusiasm. Dr. Richard Raymond, Head of the English Department, will be the interim director to help get this going. At some point a fulltime director will be appointed. RFPs will be sent to faculty to develop learning communities. Funds have been identified for this purpose.

Affirmative Action: At the November 1 Deans Council meeting, Dr. Rabideau discussed the need to set goals and timetables to determine how to address affirmative action plans. Departmental and college plans need to precede a division plan. The college plans are due May 1, 2005, to the Provost Office.

Budget: There will be a 1% reallocation of continuing funds within the FY '06 budget effective July 1, 2005. These funds will be redistributed according to performance-based evaluations, along with special needs and opportunities. Decisions will not be made before July 1. Deans should develop a FY '06 budget that does not depend on funds from this pool.

Annual Review: The Provost has sent a memo to the deans regarding annual reviews with a form titled "Guidelines for Dean's Performance Appraisal," which includes a set of performance objectives. Deans should submit a written response to these performance metrics by March 1, 2005. The memo was also sent to directors who should complete the Administrative/Professional Review Form by March 1, 2005.

Faculty Hires: Dr. Rabideau reported that the Provost Office is returning documents for faculty hires for revision purposes. IHL has said that a change in tenure policy is going before the Board at the December meeting; there will be no early submissions. The change states that a tenure-track faculty with no prior service can only apply for tenure in year six of the probationary period of seven years. Faculty members with tenure at other institutions may be hired with tenure. There are some other changes coming before the Board. Non-tenure track instructors may be hired on contracts up to four years. We want to look at this in a little more detail. It is a challenging issue for a lot of reasons. We get a number of non-tenure track instructors who want to make a career of this. Some of these are quality teachers. We tend to appoint these instructors on one year contracts. We would like to see

a rolling contract that would give an element of job security. The IHL will not entertain exceptions to the tenure decision.

4. Other Items.

- Butch Stokes distributed instructions for commencement on December 10 and 11. There will be practice sessions on Thursday, December 9, for deans, ushers, and associate deans. Dr. Lee and Dr. Rabideau will have a walk-through session on Friday morning.