

to the faculty and staff of Mississippi State University

RIF policy OK'd; mail vote planned on governance

More than 200 faculty members on hand for the fall general faculty meeting heard President Malcolm Portera report that a newly approved reduction-in-force policy is now in effect, announce the formation of a task force on enrollment and retention, and discuss the budget reallocation in progress.

The general faculty will have to submit ballots by mail, however, on proposed changes in the university governance document, since attendance at the Sept. 23 meeting fell short of the quorum of 250 required for a vote.

The faculty charter calls for balloting by mail to be conducted by the Holland Faculty Senate chair within 30 days after a meeting in which action could not be taken for lack of a quorum. The proposed change in Principles for University Governance would streamline the search process, particularly for non-academic administrative positions. The changes endorsed last spring by the faculty senate are online at <http://www.ur.msstate.edu/news/announce/genfac.asp>.

The new RIF policy, recommended by

the faculty senate and approved by the president in early September, is a concise document that Portera said removes much of the complexity from previous drafts considered in recent years. The policy is online at http://msuinfo.ur.msstate.edu/pubs/rif_policy.htm.

Portera also announced that Provost David Cole will chair a task force on admissions, retention and graduation. Other members are Roy Ruby, vice president for Student Affairs, and Clyde Williams, associate professor of English. Williams was appointed by faculty senate chair Robert Cooper.

A record enrollment of 16,047 this fall and a new high of 15,270 students on the Starkville campus is stressing university resources and the Starkville community's infrastructure, Portera said. He said Mississippi State needs to grow to 1,000 faculty members to keep pace with the demands of burgeoning student numbers.

Citing faculty salary increases of 18 percent over two years, the creation of

new faculty positions, and additional funding for the library and research support, Portera said the university is ahead of schedule in meeting the goals established when he took office 21 months ago.

Portera said that Provost David Cole
Continued on page 3

New program helps freshman retention

The new freshmen who entered Mississippi State in the fall of 1998 made better grades and were less likely to drop out than the previous year's freshmen.

University officials attributed the improvements at least in part to an experimental program designed to help students succeed by stressing class attendance in the critical first weeks of classes.

This fall's one-year retention rate improved by more than 3 percent--with 79.5 percent of fall 1998 freshmen remaining in school after one year, compared with 76.3 percent of the fall 1997 freshmen.

By the end of their first year of college, the fall 1998 freshmen had a typical grade-point average of 2.60, compared with a 2.52 for their counterparts of the year before. Only 23.3 percent of the fall 1998 freshmen had a grade average below 2.0--which equals a "C"--compared with 25.8 percent from the previous year.

The numerical differences are small but statistically highly significant, said David McMillen, professor of psychology and coordinator of the Freshman Academic Success Project. He said the improved performance of last year's freshmen may stem from efforts to make sure the new students showed up for class.

The project is continuing this year.

Continued on page 3



Workers with Covington Floors in Birmingham apply a rubberized surface to the flooring at McCarthy Gym. The new surface is one of the last steps completed as the gymnasium is transformed into the MSU tennis team's new indoor facility.



MSU Women's Club officers for 1999-2000 are (front, l-r) Mildred Stickley, adviser; Charleen R. Carroll, president; Mildred Sellars, first vice president; and Karon Makamson, membership vice president. On the back row (l-r) are Barbara Matta, yearbook chairman; Julia Saunders, adviser; Pam Ray, treasurer; and Diane Alexander, secretary/publicity. Not pictured are Susan Brown, scholarships, and Olivia Portera, special counselor.

Osteoporosis talk leads off women's club

The Mississippi State Women's Club is opening a year of programs with a discussion on osteoporosis.

Dr. William Bennett of Starkville's Bennett Medical Clinic and Osteoporosis Center will speak on the crippling bone disease Oct. 8 in the Colvard Union ballroom.

Prior to his noon speech and the luncheon, nurse Sue Ann Bennett will conduct an osteoporosis screening beginning at 11:30 a.m., also in the ballroom.

In addition, bridge games will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the Colvard Union faculty lounge.

Reservations should be made by noon, Oct. 6.

Persons wishing to ride the shuttle service to the meeting should board the Maroon Route shuttle at Humphrey Coliseum. Shuttles run approximately every 10 minutes.

Dale Welch (325-7392) is serving as hostess for the meeting; Sara Valentine (325-1913) is co-hostess; Jamie Inmon (325-4053) is reservations chair; and Lynn Adams (323-2996) is bridge chair.

Other programs for the 1999-2000 academic year include:

Nov. 5, Starkville author Jack Kean;

Dec. 3, "Last Christmas of the Millennium";

Jan. 14, "Nature's Angels" with MSU alumna Penny Sanford;

Feb. 4, "English Cottage Gardening" with Suzanne Cade of "The Everyday Gardener" in Jackson;

March 3, Karen Carroll of "Southern Accents" magazine;

April 7, fashion show; and

May 5, scholarship program.

Membership in the MSU Women's Club is open to all faculty and professional staff, spouses of faculty and professional staff, and retirees and spouses of retirees.

For more information on the programs or club membership, telephone Charleen Carroll, president, at 325-3573.

Memo is published for the faculty and staff of Mississippi State University by the Office of University Relations. It is published weekly during the fall and spring semesters and twice a month during the summer. It is also available electronically through the World Wide Web at msuinfo.ur.msstate.edu/msu_memo/. Editorial material should be sent to Kay Fike Jones, Mail Stop 9512, or via Internet to jonesk@ur.msstate.edu.

Exhibit honors ex-art leader

A celebration of the life and work of the art department's founding administrator will take place Oct. 8 at the university's art gallery.

The public tribute to Arthur Leonard Farley will begin at 7 p.m. in the Art Department Gallery in McComas Hall. The program includes a reception and the formal presentation of an exhibition of photographs by the Clanton, Ala., native who died in 1997 after a decade of retirement from an 18-year MSU career.

"Leonard and his wife Deedie traveled extensively throughout the United States and the world," said current department head Brent Funderburk. "This retrospective exhibit will illustrate some of the photographic results of those travels."

Farley's acclaimed Natchez Trace Parkway Series is a prominent part of the collection, Funderburk added.

The gallery exhibition runs through Oct. 22.

Farley was a University of Alabama and Ohio State University graduate who taught at Arkansas State University before coming to MSU in 1968.

"Leonard influenced hundreds of students in his 18 years at Mississippi State and his 'investment' in them and the department has paid off in so many ways," Funderburk said.

"Today, we enroll some 300 majors and, with a 150 percent increase in majors over five years, are the fastest growing department in the university," he said. "We also believe it to be one of the best art departments in the South."

To further honor Farley's memory, Funderburk said a scholarship fund is being created through the university's Office of Development.

"This scholarship program, like Leonard's academic career, will help make a difference in the lives of young, talented students," Funderburk said.

For more information on the exhibition or scholarship fund, contact the Department of Art by e-mail da@ra.msstate.edu or telephone 325-2970.

Engineering ranks in Top 50

The College of Engineering now ranks among the nation's top 50 engineering research schools, based on research spending.

Figures released recently by the American Society for Engineering Education show the university's engineering research expenditures for 1997-98 totaled more than \$21 million, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. MSU now is 49th on the ASEE list, just

Retention--continued from page 1

Faculty members, residence hall staff members and parents are among those being enlisted to encourage class attendance.

Instructors teaching freshmen are asked to check attendance regularly, and students who miss more than one class during the first two weeks of the semester are contacted "to let them know someone is concerned," McMillen said.

Also for the second year, President Malcolm Portera sent a letter during the first week of the fall semester to the parents of approximately 2,000 new freshmen, reminding them of the importance of class attendance and asking them to talk to their son or daughter about it.

Parents and new students heard the same message during MSU's summer orientation programs for incoming freshmen conducted by the Division of Student Affairs. The university's athletics department has donated office space, telephones and a computer to aid with the project.

Faculty members in departments across the campus have embraced the class-attendance initiative and most have been eager to participate, McMillen said.

Apparently as a result, the fall 1998 freshman class had a larger percentage of its members returning for the sophomore year than any group in at least the past 10 years. The dropout rate among freshmen has been in the 22-25 percent range throughout the decade.

The proportion of first-time freshmen who go on to graduate from Mississippi State within six years has hovered just below 50 percent in recent years, but the university's strategic plan calls for raising that rate to 60 percent over the next five years.

behind Michigan State and the University of Arizona.

Among Southeastern Conference schools, Mississippi State's level of engineering research is second only to the University of Florida.

"Most of the \$21.2 million spent on research went into our state's economy, making engineering research at MSU a big business for Mississippi," said engineering dean A. Wayne Bennett. "An additional benefit of the growing research program is the involvement of undergraduate and graduate students, which is an enhancement to their education.

"This is a major accomplishment for the college," he added. "I am proud of our faculty and staff for their efforts."

ASEE is a 106-year-old organization of some 12,000 members, including college deans, faculty members, students, and industry representatives.

Much of MSU's engineering research is conducted at the National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center, which accounted for \$7 million of the 1997-98 total, and the Diagnostic Instrumentation and Analysis Laboratory, with \$6 million. The balance of research in the college is carried out in the academic departments.

Current engineering research projects range from prototype aircraft systems development to work with artificial wetlands that can be used to treat waste.

Bennett said engineering research spending for the most recent fiscal year totaled almost \$27 million, an increase of more than 25 percent.

"Mississippi State likely will move up the ASEE list for 1998-99," he said.

The increased activity in the College of Engineering is part of the university-wide emphasis by President Malcolm Portera and research Vice President Robert Altenkirch to strengthen support for research.

Portera has set an MSU goal of ranking among the top 50 public research universities as determined by the National Science Foundation. The university currently ranks 66th on the NSF list.

"I am confident we will continue to see gains in this area," Bennett said.

Meeting--continued from page 1

will administer a \$500,000 fund derived partly from university licensing royalties to help academic departments deal with special needs this year in the wake of the reallocation of E&G funds now in progress. Increases in departmental operating budgets likely will move up on the funding priority list for next year, he said.

The university will continue to move away as quickly as possible from reliance on lapsed salaries to meet the annual operating budget, Portera said, with a goal of leaving lapsed salary funds in the units where they occur, rather than reverting to the general fund.

Mississippi State has requested an overall increase in state support of \$15.5 million for 2000-2001, Portera said. The request was presented in mid-September to the joint Legislative Budget Committee. Faculty salary increases, additional research support, classroom renovations, and department operating budget support are among the needs to which new funding would be applied.

The live web broadcast of the meeting has been archived and is available from the Faculty Senate web site at <http://www.msstate.edu/org/fs/faculty_senate.html>. Click on "General Faculty Session, 9/23/99" near the bottom of the web page.

NOW president to make two appearances at MSU

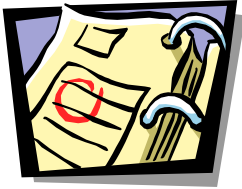
Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, will speak Oct. 5 at two public programs.

The visit by Ireland, head of the nation's largest feminist organization, is being sponsored by the MSU Women's Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences and University Honors Program.

At 12:30 p.m. in the McComas Hall theater, she will discuss "Women in Office—Feminist Issues." A book signing and reception follow in the McComas Hall lobby.

At 3:30 p.m. in the Women's Studies Center at nearby Rice Hall, her topic will be the future of feminism.

For more information about Ireland's MSU programs, contact Rose Kadende-Kaiser at telephone 325-6652 or e-mail address <kadende@ra.msstate.edu>.



Calendar of Events

Send your calendar items to

Kay Fike Jones, 102 George Hall; Mail Stop 9512; FAX 325-7455; e-mail <jonesk@ur.msstate.edu> at least **TWO WEEKS** in advance. For updates, check <www.msstate.edu> and click on "News" for msu.NOW!

Ongoing Events, Activities

"Living in a Material World" costume exhibit, second and third floors, Mitchell Memorial Library, through mid-October. Wanda Cheek or Phyllis Miller, 325-2950.

"The Photography of Leonard Farley," through Oct. 22, Department of Art Gallery, McComas Hall. Opening reception, Oct. 8, 7 p.m. 325-2947.

October

4

School of Architecture Fall 1999 Lecture Series: architect Peter Lynch, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., Giles Hall, 4 p.m. 325-2202.

"Intro to Excel 97," Continuing Education, 107 Dorman Hall, 1-5 p.m. \$95 after Sept. 27. 325-8876.

Asian Film Series: "Spices," Colvard Union small auditorium, 7 p.m. 325-2028.

5

New Faculty Research Orientation Workshop, Bost Extension Center theater, 1-5 p.m. 325-3570.

Vocalist Kimberley Davis, Lyceum Series performance, Lee Hall auditorium, tickets \$6, \$4 and \$3, 7:30 p.m. 325-4201.

National Organization for Women president Patricia Ireland to speak: "Women in Office--Feminist Issues," McComas Hall theater, 12:30 p.m.; "The Future of Feminism," Women's Studies Center, basement of Rice Hall, 3:30 p.m. 325-6652. (see story on page 3).

6

"PowerPoint 97--Beyond the Basics," Continuing Education, 107 Dorman Hall, 1-5 p.m., \$85 before Sept. 29. 325-8876.

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.

7

MSU vs. Jacksonville State, women's soccer, MSU soccer field, 4 p.m.

Miss Reveille pageant, Humphrey Coliseum, 7 p.m. 325-2930.

Guest Artist Series: Karen Garrison, flute, Bettersworth Auditorium, Giles Hall, 7:30 p.m. 325-3070.

Faculty and Professional Women's Association Social, Women's Resource Center, Rice Hall basement, 4:30-6 p.m. 325-7458.

"Troubleshooting for PC Maintenance," Continuing Education, 107 Dorman Hall, 8 a.m.-noon, \$95. 325-8876.

8

MSU vs. Belmont University, women's soccer, MSU soccer field, 4 p.m.

"Computer Use: How to at MSU" and "Student Safety" International Student Mandatory Extended Orientation, Rogers Auditorium of McCool Hall, 3-5 p.m. 325-8929.

MSU Women's Club: bridge, 9:30 a.m., Colvard Union faculty lounge; osteoporosis screening, 11:30 a.m., Colvard Union ballroom; luncheon and Dr. William Bennett's talk on osteoporosis, noon, ballroom. 325-3573. (see story on page 2).

11

"Intro to Microsoft Access 97," Continuing Education, 107 Dorman Hall, 1-5 p.m., \$95 after Oct. 5. 325-8876.

School of Architecture Fall 1999 Lecture Series: architect Tim Rosenbury, Springfield, Mo., Giles Hall, 4 p.m.

11-15

Wood Magic Science Fair, Forest Products Lab. Call Amy Garrard, 325-8453.

12

Faculty and Professional Women's Association brown-bag meeting, "Research Goals for MSU: How Do Women Faculty Measure Up," Dr. Robert Altenkirch, Colvard Union third-floor faculty lounge, noon-1 p.m. 325-8643.

12, 13

College Bowl, third floor, Colvard Union. 325-2930.

15

"Cooperative Education and Career Services--Thinking About Employment Now and in the

Future," International Student Mandatory Extended Orientation, Rogers Auditorium of McCool Hall, 3-5 p.m. 325-8929.

MSU vs. Tennessee, women's volleyball, Newell-Grissom Building, 7 p.m.

World Food Day Teleconference, "The Future of Agriculture," Bost Extension center theater and Building B, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 325-8429.

STS+ honors 14 in business affairs

Fourteen Office of Business Affairs staff members were recognized for their job performance during the fourth annual Support Through Service Plus Stakeholders Meeting.

Members of the business affairs cabinet selected someone in each department who best exemplified STS+ spirit for an STS+ Spirit Award.

Award winners for 1999 include: Emma Armstrong, Support Services; Brenda Bishop, Receiving and Property Control; Jeanette Booth, Procurement and Contracts; Willie Chandler, Dining Services; George Davis, Physical Plant; Todd Hall, Systems and Networks; Willie Hampton, Transportation; Sue Johnston, Human Resources Management; Rochelle "Shell" Jones, Printing Services; Leann Markham, Information Systems; Sandra McClelland, Laundry; Ken Stewart, Comptroller and Treasurer's Office; Dorothy Tate, Telecommunications; and Renu Thamma, User Services.

Asian Film Series begins Oct. 4 with 'Spices'

The free, public showing of "Spices," the first in this fall's Asian Film Series, is scheduled for Oct. 4, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Colvard Union small auditorium.

The series is sponsored by the departments of Art, Philosophy and Religion, History, Political Science, and the Center for International Security and Strategic Studies.

"Spices" is an Indian film about a young woman caught between the advances of a ruthless tax collector and a society that looks the other way towards her plight. It is directed by Keten Mehta and features Smita Patil.

For more information, telephone Chris Gunning or Melanie Dobbs at 325-2028.