

**Faculty Senate Report to the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates**  
**Missouri State University**  
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**Submitted by Christopher Herr, Missouri State University Faculty Senate Chair**

**Important Issues**

Our new president, Clif Smart, who had been working as interim president since summer 2011, was approved in October.

Probably the most important issue currently on campus is the ongoing revision of our General Education program. The revision began two years ago with a Task Force appointed by the former Provost, with the goals of 1) making the program more relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills students need to succeed in the marketplace and 2) more fully integrating our Public Affairs mission into the program. The committee on General Education is currently reviewing course proposals, and while there has been a high initial rejection rate, it is likely that, after all is said and done, the new program will be relatively similar to the old program. The entire program is scheduled to come before the Faculty Senate in April; if it is approved, it will begin in Fall 2014.

The other issue that has gained increasing attention over the past few months is the role of online education—including MOOCs—at Missouri State. Currently, we do not offer MOOCs nor do we accept credit from those courses taken elsewhere. However, the President recently convened a committee to examine if, how, and when we might accept such courses for credit. As is the case with most universities, enrollment goals are starting to pressure decisions about curriculum, and there is some tension between faculty and administration about the role of online courses/programs.

**Faculty Handbook**

Our Faculty Handbook is undergoing its septennial review in committee, with the changes to be brought forward to Faculty Senate next year for revision and approval. The most pressing issues will be compensation (in particular, the revision and funding of a merit pay system that faculty can support), the integration of the newly-formed School of Agriculture, and tenure/promotion issues with a growing number of clinical faculty. Recently, the general principles by which these revisions will be made were approved by Senate, in the hope that when the revised document comes to the floor next year, there will already be some agreement about proposed revisions.

**Budget Issues**

The Executive Budget Committee of the university met shortly after the Governor's proposed budget was announced to discuss how to allocate money coming both from the released holdback and also the possible new state funding tied to performance measures. Missouri State met all five of its performance measures. Nothing has been decided,

though it seems likely that we will increase tuition at the SB 389 maximum (1.7%), hoping to offset increased costs through those costs alone. That would leave whatever new money is made available to be put towards salary, new hires, and deferred maintenance.

Missouri State's portion of the released holdback from the State is a little less than \$800,000. The plan right now is to put that towards funding programs that are growing (new hires, etc.), most likely several health care areas.

### **Other Issues**

The terms of several of our Governors have recently expired. We have two new governors already, and will likely have two more within the next couple of months. The new board seems much more hands-on than the previous board, but they also seem more willing to reach out for faculty input.

The Student Government Association spearheaded a couple of issues that affect faculty. The most important is a new requirement that programs requiring students to purchase technology over \$150 dollars will have to get prior approval. This stems from a complaint from SGS (though not the students directly affected) about our Kinesiology program, which recently began requiring all majors to have access to an iPad, which is used in courses throughout the major, including for e-books. The new approval policy is pretty complex, and will likely discourage the kind of innovation the administration says it wants.

A move towards unionization continues to make progress at Missouri State. There is a small but active chapter of NEA on campus conducting a listening campaign, and a membership push is in the planning stages. One of the issues that we will need to figure out is the relationship of Senate to the union. A few years ago, a report by an ad hoc Senate committee recommended that the union and Senate operate separately, if for no other reason than to protect Senate, which operates under the aegis of the Board of Governors. However, if Missouri State gets to a point where unionization and collective bargaining is possible—that's still at least a couple years away—then the role of Senate in representing faculty interests to the administration will need reassessment.