

Faculty Senate Report to the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates Missouri State University September 22, 2013

Submitted by Ryan Giedd, Missouri State University Faculty Senate Chair

Important Issues

The most important issue on our campus this past Spring and Summer has been the possible holdback of funding from the Governor's Office. In the Missouri General Assembly's veto session (held on Sept. 11) legislators attempted to override the Governor's veto of House Bill 253 from the 2013 legislative session. The Governor withheld about \$4.425 million from the Missouri State University budget. The loss of this funding would have seriously impacted the salary increase expected for our Faculty in the next fiscal cycle. Fortunately, veto override failed by 15 votes and, most recently, the governor released the funding.

We have also initiated (and the administration has approved) a Professor Salary Incentive Program. This program was originally suggested by a MSU Faculty Senate Action during the previous administration. At that time no action was taken. Our new administration embraced the idea, set up a committee to determine methods of implementation and fully funded the program. It is designed to supplement the salary of full-professors where in recent years salaries have not kept up with peer institutions. It is a merit based system with an emphasis toward continued research/scholarship excellence. The program is administered through the Office of the Provost and workshops are being offered early this fall to assist interested full professors. To be eligible professors must have held that rank for at least five years. It is anticipated that we will award a minimum of 20 this year.

Faculty Handbook

This year our Faculty Handbook is undergoing its septennial review in the Faculty Handbook Review Committee (FHRC), with recommended changes to be brought to Faculty Senate this spring. At MSU, this is not a committee of the Faculty Senate, but a "joint" committee of the Provost Office and the Faculty Senate. Operationally, this means that changes that are made are done so with Faculty Senate input, *but not necessarily approval*. The administration reserves the right to make changes to the Faculty Senate Handbook that do not meet with Faculty Senate approval and take those changes directly to the Board of Governors.

The septennial review is mostly involves a process to "clean" up the language and make the Handbook self consistent after seven years of amendments. Therefore, nothing substantial is anticipated at this point. However, there may be some issues with respect to our merit system that will require further debate. Additional concerns relate to academic "entities" within our organizational structure that are not traditional Colleges and Departments, but Schools and Centers.

Budget Issues

The Executive Budget Committee of the university has not yet met this Summer or Fall (partially a result of waiting for the results of the General Assembly Veto Session). Major issues will involve plans for a Faculty salary increase that may include a merit based increase for the first time in over 10 years. Other issues include: the allocation of funding for academic programs that have, according to the administration, demonstrated “sustained growth” in enrollment, and, funding for various athletic facilities through student fee increases initiated through the Student Government Association (SGA). The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has noted that the SGA priorities for student fee increases are in perfect alignment with administration budget priorities; this is of some concern, since we would like SGA student fee recommendations to the student body to be as independent as possible.

Other Issues

We expect a Domestic Partner Benefit package will be presented to the MSU Board of Governors this Fall. This is an issue that the MSU Faculty and the Faculty Senate has addressed in the past few years. We remain cautiously optimistic that this package will be all that has been informally represented to us in the past few weeks. If so, we believe this will have a very positive impact within the Faculty at our institution.

Diversity initiatives at MSU appear to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to be driven from a top down philosophy rather than by a fully Faculty inclusive and interactive manner. We will be exploring this in more detail in the coming months to determine if such a policy can be expanded to a more inclusive approach. At this point *we do not expect there to be any intent not to work closely with Faculty*, but perhaps be a result of expediency.