Academic Administrators Assessment

Faculty Concerns Committee Report 2017-18. Initial report: 2-27-2018

With *Addendum: College Deans*

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Introduction

The purpose of the Academic Administrators Assessment is to provide a feedback mechanism whereby faculty evaluations of academic administrators can be compiled and reported back in summary form to the faculty and to the university community as necessary. This survey was administered in November of 2017, during the final month of service by deans of department heads. As such, it is likely more useful than the IDEA survey of the same positions taken in January-February 2018. Why? Inconsistent results will plague the IDEA survey as respondents fail to rate a position now occupied by someone new or rate the position based on the performance of someone who is now departed. Some persons in administration moved from one position to another, likely adding to the confusion.

Methods

This survey relied on a questionnaire that included 64 closed- and open-ended questions. Faulty were asked to respond to each question using a scale that ranged between 1 and 5, where 1 indicated "strongly disagree"; 2 was "disagree"; 3 was "neutral"; 4 was "agree"; and 5 was "strongly agree." The survey was administered during the first two weeks of November 2017. Two hundred twenty-eight (228) faculty members responded.

Data Summaries

Table 1 compares the average positive responses for each of the positions assessed. That is, the value for the response "Agree" was added to the value for the response "Strongly Agree" to determine the percentage positive response for each of the four positions. Table 1 reveals that only the position of academic dean reports a positive value below 50%. The positive values for president, provost and department head average well above 50%.

Table 1 - Average Positive for Each Administrative Position

	President	Provost	Dean	Head
Average Positive	78%	59%	49%	68%

The utility of the survey results is diminished considerably once the demographics of the faculty respondents is taken into consideration. For example, Table 2 shows that when asked to declare their rank, 36 preferred not to answer. That is, nearly 16% of respondents declined to so identify.

Table 2 - Response by Faculty Rank (N=228)

Declared Rank	Number Responding
Clinical	8
Instructor or Sr. Instructor	31
Assistant	62
Associate	33
Full or Distinguished	57
Prefer not to answer	36
Missing Answer	1

Table 3 - Faculty respondents by college or other unit. Responses were dominated by COAL, COB and CHHS

Table 3.-Distribution of Faculty by College or Unit (N=228)

College or Other Unit	Number Responding
COAL	50
COB	30
CHHS	49
COE	35
CNAS	16
CHPS	18
School of Comm. Studies	1
Graduate	0
School of ACC	1
Darr	2
Library	6
Greenwood Lab	1
Prefer not to answer	19

Therefore, reading through the numeric results and the written comments should be done with this context in mind.

President

The average of all survey questions regarding the president is 4.2. Faculty believe the president is an effective ambassador (4.42) for the university and that conditions at the university have improved under his leadership (4.36). His "good job" rank is 4.37. Faculty ranked his budget priorities below 4.0 at 3.88. Table 4 shows the results for the president.

Table 4 - Questions and Mean Survey Response for President. Overall Average 4.22

4a MSU Improved undr Pres	4.36
4b Decisions Actions Benefit	4.27
4c Supports Research	3.74
4d Shared Gov	4.07
4e Communication Budget	4.25
4f Ambassador	4.42
4g Support Public Affairs	4.36
4h Supports Diversity	4.33
4i Marketing MSU	4.41
4j Long Range Planning	4.21
4k Good Job	4.37
4l Budget Priorities	3.88

Written Comments Regarding President

Respondents offered 101 written comments regarding the president.

Positive Comments. The positive comments concentrated on two areas: the ability of the president to promote Missouri State University and efforts by the president to improve faculty morale. Various questions in the survey can be loosely organized around these two issues.

Promotes University. Forty five individuals commented and thirty four of those individuals provided responses that were completely or in part positive. Nine of these individuals made general positive statements about President Smart, e.g., "I think President Smart has been highly effective" or referred to attributes they found positive, "….he is very accessible and approachable". Twenty-one of the comments made specific reference to President Smart's interactions with external entities with many of the comments pertaining to President Smart's interactions with the state legislature. Three of the thirty four comments were positive statements regarding his management of the budget and four of the thirty four discussed President Smart's positive interactions with traditional and social media.

Faculty Morale. Of the fifty-six comments offered, thirty four provided responses that were completely or in part positive. Twenty two of these were positive comments about President Smart's overall performance and attributes. Some of these attributes

included accessibility, advocacy, positive attitude, dedication, hard work, and caring. Five individuals provided positive feedback regarding the President's management of budget changes/cuts. Five individuals made positive comments about his interactions with students, his social skills and/or use of social media. Two individuals provided positive comments regarding President Smart's support of diversity with one comment specifically discussing his support of people of color (POC) in the community. Finally, there was one comment regarding his assistance with the Ellis Hall renovations.

Negative Comments. Of the 36 opportunities-for-growth comments provided on the survey, nine (25%) focused on increasing faculty salaries. Four comments noted that President Smart was very supportive of students, but seemingly less supportive of faculty. Three comments related to faculty concerns over how the university was dealing with the budgets cuts (i.e., representing MSU's funding needs to the legislature and renovating buildings during a time of budget cuts). Three faculty comments related to low faculty morale. Concerns about dwindling resources and support for faculty research, including resources within the library to promote research productivity, were expressed in two comments. Two additional comments emphasized faculty members' concern about the vision of the university as focused on financial growth and accepting all students rather than on providing a rigorous education and graduating strong alumni. Two faculty, who identified as members of underrepresented groups, expressed concern about President Smart's response to the protests in Charlottesville. Two faculty comments suggested that President Smart engage in more oversight of the Deans, including holding the Deans accountability for supporting and hiring underrepresented groups. Nine of the 36 comments did not relate to other comments shared by faculty. These included concerns about decreasing faculty lines, the online teaching incentive, creating more green spaces on campus, and establishing new traditions for students to enjoy at the institution. Finally, one comment suggested that President Smart create an online "suggestions box" to solicit ideas about how to make the university run more efficiently as one way to manage decreased funding.

Provost

Faculty ratings for the provost clustered between a mean of 3.73, which is approximately the same as the previous survey of 3.83 in 2015. The highest rated items dealt with supporting the public affairs mission and the "overall" rating of having done "a good job." The lowest rated items received mean scores of about 3.5 on the scale and involved budgeting shared governance. Table 5 shows the results for the provost.

Table 5 - Questions and Mean Survey Response for President. Overall Average 3.73

1a Program Strength	3.66
1b Strength Grads	3.57
1c Support Improve Teach	3.84
1d Support Improve Res	3.63
1e Communication	3.79
1f Shared Gov	3.59
1g Fair	3.71
1h Supports Diversity	3.9
1i Faculty Recognition	3.8
1j Support Public Aff	3.95
1k Good Job	3.87
1l Budget Appropriate	3.5

Written Comments Regarding Provost

Comments suggested that the provost has brought stability and trust to the provost office but that he has too low of a profile and too little control over colleges. As one commenter said, "The Provost office is accessible to faculty and interactions with the Provost and Associate Provosts are open without fear of negative reactions or retaliation in response to disagreements about policy or procedure. A stronger presence of the Provost office in oversight of deans might help to ensure this same level of integrity is maintained at the college level."

The quantitative ratings also support one of the qualitative themes from the comments: declining quality of programs and decreased rigor in classes. Faculty believe the administration, and the provost specifically, push for quantity over quality. This manifests itself in larger classes and more per-course instruction.

College Deans – Updated April 9, 2018

As shown in Table 6, survey results for the college deans demonstrate a consistent level of disappointment amongst the faculty who responded to the survey. The most positive result was the strength of the college level support staff.

Please see "Addendum – College Deans" at the end of this report for a more detailed analysis for the questions regarding effective leadership and climate of fairness.

Table 6 - Questions and Mean Survey Response for College Deans. Overall Average 3.45

9a Effective Leader	3.3
9b Goals Aligned	3.84
9c Sound Plans	3.54
9d Challenges Identified	3.48
9e Collaborative Decisions	3.03
9f Supports Quality Ideas	3.34
9g Favoritism Non Existent	3.22
9h Promotes Fairness	3.15
9i Efficient Administration	3.69
9j Effective College Meetings	3.31
9k Money Spent Wisely	3.4
9l Timely Info to Faculty	3.75
9m Transparency	3.27
9n Strong College Support Staff	3.96

Written Comments Regarding College Deans. Of the 56 written comments, 17 were positive and 25 were negative.

A summary (paraphrase) of **positive** comments:

The dean is described as: excellent, very effective, fantastic, efficient, fair, supportive, improved demeanor

Characteristic actions include: communicates clearly, communicates budget information, goals and priorities are clearly communicated, maintains transparency, devoted to the goals of MSU, faculty felt supported during budget crisis

Demonstrated leadership skills include: provides strong leadership and vision, addresses concerns, recognition of faculty accomplishments, participates in faculty meetings, meets with all assistant professors

Comments about interim/new dean: ability to listen, great job of stepping in and managing/supporting, too early to answer questions

A summary (paraphrase) of **negative** comments:

The dean is described as: vindictive, talks negatively about people in front of others, ineffective leader, very difficult to work with and to work for, unsupportive, cannot be trusted, no one trusts dean, micro-manager, difficult, socially awkward, judgmental, terse, rude, critical, obstructionist, appetite for power, harmful, nitpicks

General issues include: favoritism, has reduced morale, doom and gloom mentality, provides vague ideas but expects specific results, inequality, bully's faculty especially junior faculty who avoids dean at all cost, does not consider input from faculty, does not communicate deadlines, prone to making constant micro-aggressions, makes comments that undermine female faculty, gets mired in details and lose sight of the big picture, top down decision maker who is unresponsive to faculty issues and concerns, has less than 15% support from the faculty in the college, constantly churns up tension with faculty and staff, caught up in minutiae such as the apparel of staff and faculty, responsible for a visually stunning waste of space (building addition) while classrooms and technology are outdated and unreliable, and the HVAC system and elevators have been neglected, reputation for saying one thing and doing another, frequently makes disparaging comments, does not uplift or recognize faculty

Leadership issues include: reactive, no focus on long-range planning, only cares about new initiatives that make them look good, does not advance any positive agenda, is not a collaborative leader, persistent and pernicious lack of respect, a manager but not an academic leader, never heard as many negative comments about a leader, ineffective leader, does what they want no matter what the faculty think, never provides encouragement or support of faculty initiatives, we only see the Dean when something is wrong, poor leadership skills, relationship of department with dean is atrocious, dean does not allow for a faculty appeal to grievances lodged against a faculty member

Department Head

The average overall score on the survey for department heads was 3.86. Department heads scored well for issues such as "goals aligned" (4.13) and strong department administrative staff (4.21). However, collaborative decision-making (3.68) and transparency (3.71) are areas where department heads appear to need to make improvement. See Table 7, nearby.

Table 7 - Questions and Mean Survey Response for Department Heads. Overall Average 3.86

7a Effective Leader	3.73
7b Goals Aligned	4.13
7c Sound Plans	3.75
7d Challenges Identified	3.83
7e Collaborative	3.68
7f Supports Quality Ideas	3.9
7g Faculty Recognition	3.83
7h Favoritism Non-existent	3.79
7i Promotes Fairness	3.81
7j Efficient Administration	3.94
7k Effective Faculty Meetings	3.73
7l Money Spent Wisely	3.92
7m Timely Info to Faculty	3.95
7n Transparency	3.71
7o Strong Support Staff	4.21

Written Comments Regarding Department Heads. Comments cut across many departments across university. The summary therefore do not reflect a particular unit in any specific college. For the purposes of our summary, the comments are divided into positive and negative mainly and on the fringe there are comments we classified as neutral, out of place and questionable practices.

Positive comments refer to a department head/leader who is transparent, communicates decisions timely, fair, has strong organizational skills, enforces policy objectively, mentors and supports faculty and staff. Additionally the department head/leader takes constructive criticism well and implements remedial measures. The department head must have vision for the department and encourages collective participation for overall welfare of the faculty.

Our tally shows that there was a total of 59 comments with 18 (31%) positive, 24(41%) negative, 12(20%) were out of place, 3 (5%) neutral and 2(3%) questionable practices.

Addendum: College Deans
April 9, 2018

After speaking with Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, Chair of the Faculty Senate, we both agreed that the Likert scale does not provide a suitable weighting scheme for this survey. For example, the selection "Strongly Disagree" is awarded a value of one point, while the selection "Strongly Agree" is awarded five points. The Neutral option is awarded 3 points but may actually reflect "no opinion" rather than a balance of agreement or disagreement. Dr. MacGregor submitted the data to SPSS using traditional scaling techniques and produced disaggregated results for all questions in the survey. Her complete analysis is posted on the Faculty Senate website.

The results are based on the number of respondents who selected each descriptor. For example, the selections for the value "climate of fairness" for the Dean of the College of Natural and Applied Sciences are distributed as follows:

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	5.9
Disagree	1	5.9
Neutral	2	11.8
Agree	7	41.2
Strongly Agree	6	35.3
Total	17	100

The values in percent for "agree" and "strongly agree" sum to 76.5%, which is reported in the cell "All Agreement Sum" on the following page in Table A1.

This addendum isolates only two of the several measured characteristics: effective leadership and climate of fairness. Dr. MacGregor's results for these two components of the survey appear in Table A1 under the heading "Actual Numeric Weighted." The category "All Agreement Sum" is the combined value for the percentage of respondents who selected "Strongly Agree" and "Agree." The category "Neutral" is the percentage of respondents who selected that descriptor. The values for the combination of "Disagree" and Strongly Disagree" may be obtained by subtraction.

Effective Leadership. The Dean of the College of Natural and Applied Sciences is described as being an effective leader by 82.4% of the respondents. Just 11.8% of respondents remained neutral. Well over half of respondents also agreed that the deans in three other colleges were effective leaders.

Climate of Fairness. The Dean of the College of Natural and Applied Sciences is described as having maintained a climate of fairness by 76.5% of respondents. The Dean of the College of Arts and Letters was so evaluated by 69.1% of respondents. All other college deans were evaluated at 50% or less by respondents.

Table A1. – College Deans Leadership and Fairness

College of Natural and Applied Sciences. N=17

Selected Component	Likert Weighted Mean	Actual Numeric Weighted	
		All Agreement Sum	Neutral
Effective Leader	4.12	82.4%	11.8%
Climate of Fairness	3.94	76.5%	11.8%

College of Arts and Letters. N=44

Selected Component	Likert Weighted Mean	Actual Numeric Weighted	
		All Agreement Sum	Neutral
Effective Leader	3.84	60.9%	32.6%
Climate of Fairness	3.88	63.1%	23.9%

College of Humanities and Public Affairs. N=16

Selected Component	Likert Weighted Mean	Actual Numeric Weighted	
		All Agreement Sum	Neutral
Effective Leader	3.50	62.6%	12.5%
Climate of Fairness	3.44	50%	25%

College of Education. N=35

Selected Component	Likert Weighted Mean	Actual Numeric Weighted	
		All Agreement Sum	Neutral
Effective Leader	3.31	57.2%	5.7%
Climate of Fairness	2.94	40%	22.9%

College of Business. N=30

Selected Component	Likert Weighted Mean	Actual Numeric Weighted	
		All Agreement Sum	Neutral
Effective Leader	2.80	40%	16.7%
Climate of Fairness	2.57	30%	20%

College of Health and Human Services. N=48

Selected Component	Likert Weighted Mean	Actual Numeric Weighted	
		All Agreement Sum	Neutral
Effective Leader	2.69	35.4%	12.5%
Climate of Fairness	2.65	25%	25%