

Missouri State University Faculty Senate Report to MSU Board of Governors
May, 2021

Cameron Wickham, Chair of Faculty Senate 2020-2021; cwickham@missouristate.edu

Faculty Senate Activity Since Last Report

As of this writing the Faculty Senate met three times under my time as chair since the last report. At these meetings the Senate approved 6 new certificate programs along with 3 other curricular actions. David Hall, Director of Safety for MSU updated the Senate on Covid-19 policies at each meeting, with President Clif Smart joining him in April.

At the February meeting, Kelly Wood, Associate Provost for Student Success, and Dan Raines, Director of Academic and Student Services-Athletics presented a report on Blackboard access for advisors. This is a pilot program aimed at retention. The program enables advisors to monitor the gradebook of their advisees in hopes of identifying academically at-risk students in a timely fashion. Additionally, Dr. Jason Jolley from the Reynolds College of Arts and Letters and Dr. Sarah Morrison from the College of Natural and Applied Science gave the PowerPoint presentations outlining some of the DEI activities and actions their respective college's diversity committees are doing. For more information, see <https://rcoal.missouristate.edu/diversity.htm>.

At the March meeting, the Senate approved [changes to the Senate bylaws](#), including language clarifying who may challenge a Senate Action, and allowing the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) to temporarily adopt special rules to conduct business when the Senate meets virtually. The Senate also approved adding language to the Faculty Handbook detailing the method of voting for members of the University Hearing Committee.

The Faculty Concerns Committee chair Dr. Ximena Uribe-Zarain presented the results of the biennial [Faculty Morale Survey](#). The FSEC and President and the Provost have engaged in discussions of the results of the survey, and I encourage the Governors to read the survey. Major findings of the Committee include

- The majority of respondents reported that they are satisfied being a faculty member at MSU, but believe faculty salaries are inadequate.
- Many faculty members indicated their beliefs that the university spends more than necessary in administration and athletic services and not enough in academic support and custodial services.
- Most faculty responded that they were satisfied at some level with computer support, library facilities, and with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. However, many respondents indicated their dissatisfaction with university support for faculty research, reimbursements for conferences and travel, and faculty development through sabbaticals and educational leaves.
- Generally, most faculty reported being satisfied with how university administrators follow policies, how tenure and promotion guidelines are communicated, and how tenure and promotion decisions are made.
- Regarding compensation and workload, the most salient issues were that the prospects for faculty salary increases within the next 12 months do not look promising, the compensation for per-course faculty is not appropriate, and the compensation for those who teach an overload is inconsistent.

- In the benefits section of the survey, the issues most commonly mentioned by respondents were limited access to recreational services at campus facilities and to mental health services for faculty.
- Regarding the changes and adjustment due to the pandemic, faculty reacted favorably to their flexibility in choosing teaching modalities and their ability to conduct remote learning.

At the April meeting, the Senate heard from Dr. Christopher Herr, candidate for Chair-Elect for 2021-2022 and Dr. Lanya Lamouria, candidate for Secretary of the Faculty Senate during the Candidate Forum. Both were elected by acclamation. Dr. Catherine Jolivette, Chair-Elect for 2020-2021 then announced her resignation due to medical reasons. According to the Senate bylaws, Dr. Herr then becomes the Chair of the Senate for 2021-2022. The Senate then elected Dr. Mike Hudson for the Chair-Elect position for 2021.

The Senate also heard about the Long Range Plan from Suzanne Shaw, Vice President for Marketing and Communications and cochair of the Long Range Planning Committee, and heard a [report on personnel proportions](#) from the Budget and Priorities Committee chair Dr. Subhasree Basu Roy. The Senate approved [changes to the bylaws](#) to change the structure of the Council on General Education and Interdisciplinary Programs (CGEIP) in order to help the committee better manage their workload reviewing general education courses.