

Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Unit Models

Status Report – October

Below you will find information regarding committee actions taken or planned as of October 13th.

Faculty Survey on Academic Unit Leader Models

This survey was distributed to gather faculty input on a potential change from the current Mo State policies and procedures for hiring academic unit leaders (department heads or school directors) to one where the faculty elected the unit leader. However, after reading the feedback from faculty, it was clear that there are strong arguments for and against both models. The survey also gave us a better understanding of the specific concerns faculty have regarding the role of the AUL and how changes could increase faculty participation in shared governance. Below is a summary of the committee's findings.

1. Faculty participation in the survey:
 - a. 378 respondents: 91% faculty, 9% current or former AUL
 - b. 54% no experience with elected AUL model, 27% experience as grad student, 26% as faculty, 4% as elected AUL
 - c. 271/378 left written comments
2. The survey was anonymous and Qualtrics filters were used to reduce chances of multiple responses from a single individual. Less than 10 were flagged as potential issues, most were instances where the survey was not fully completed the first time and a second attempt was made.
 - a. Of those who left comments, 89% were faculty members and 11% were AULs.
 - b. Of those who left comments, 51% had no experience with elected AUL models, 28% had experience as grad students, 27% had experience as faculty, and 6% had experience as elected AULs.
3. The committee conducted an initial review of the comments independently and then met to discuss identified themes. Below is a partial list of identified themes.
 - a. We need to be mindful of wording and provide clear definitions for models (elected, appointed, rotational, etc.) in all future communications/surveys.
 - b. The desire for the AUL role to be more of faculty advocate and less of an agent of administration seemed to supersede other issues.
 - c. Faculty have legitimate concerns regarding both our current selection model and the potential alternatives mentioned.
 - d. Units/faculty need flexibility to choose external or internal searches.

- e. Staff have important information and perspectives which can inform the committee's research and recommendations.
- f. Inconsistencies and opacity in roles across units and colleges need to be addressed in order to create common definitions, job duties, required job qualifications, training, and compensation systems for AULs.
- g. Inconsistencies and opacity in roles across units and colleges need to be addressed in order to formulate a workable model of shared governance that includes faculty oversight/input into selection, evaluation, and review/recall of AULs.
- h. AULs need experience or training in fields of the faculty they administer
- i. Delegation of AUL responsibilities to program directors leads to differing job duties and compensation (or lack thereof) and should be considered along with the inconsistencies mentioned above.

A list of comments (edited or redacted to prevent identification) will be posted to the committee's website soon.

Staff Survey on Academic Leader Models

A survey was distributed to support staff regarding the impact of changing AULs/AUL model. Seventeen staff provided written comments (only one duplicate found, no others were flagged by the system or IP address check). All comments were submitted to Perplexity (AI) to identify themes. Those themes and comments (redacted or edited to prevent identification) can be found in the document, "Support Staff Survey Results Report," on the committee's website. The primary issues were (1) the need for required, formal new AUL training, (2) concerns about the long learning curve for the position, and (3) a concern about how short-term lengths would be disruptive to the success of the department and would cause undue stress on support staff.

External Comparisons Spreadsheet

The committee has been gathering information on the policies and procedures at other institutions. We are still collecting data but our progress so far can be viewed at the link "Master Table for External Comparisons as of 2026-10-13." Please keep in mind that the spreadsheet is a work in progress and will be updated as new information becomes available. We are developing a survey to distribute to faculty at the comparison institutions to fill in the blanks and also to gauge their satisfaction with their academic unit leader models.

Updates in the Future

As we gather additional data and start to form recommendations, we will continue to share our progress with you. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Committee Chair, Dana Haggard (DHaggard@missouristate.edu) or any of the Ad Hoc Committee Members.