

FACULTY SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS

Report of the Chairperson
October 10, 2006

1. I would like to encourage faculty to submit nominations for honorary degrees to the Honorary Awards Committee. Cindy Vantine (ext. 5442) coordinates the activities of that committee and can fill you in on the process. You can also go to the University Relations webpage for information about the process.

The requirements to be considered are very broadly stated. Basically almost anyone can be nominated except currently employed faculty and staff and currently enrolled students. Faculty making nominations should be prepared to appear at the Honorary Awards Committee meeting to answer questions about the nomination.

2. At our last meeting, Dr. Tom McPhail volunteered to look at the issues of governance that the Higher Learning Commission considers in accreditation reviews. Many thanks to Dr. McPhail for willingly taking on this task.

He reported the following governance-related issues.

- CBHE, along with recent legislation and policy changes
- Board of Curators
- University Assembly
- University Senate, including committees (especially Budget & Planning)
- Chancellor's Cabinet
- Graduate Council
- Staff Association and challenges facing it
- Student Government Association
- Provost's role, committee structure, grievance processes
- Governance concerns since the last visit
- Governance of off-campus initiatives
- Role of human resources
- Role of Office of Equal Opportunity
- Catalogs, web sites, handbooks, etc which have governance information

Some of these areas directly affect the Senate and Assembly, and many others affect us in our interface with other campus units, e.g. grievance processes, Staff Association, and Student Government. I've continued discussing review of faculty governance with the provost and we are committed to making it a valuable process. A draft of guidelines for our review is awaiting approval by the provost and chancellor, so the process is moving forward.

3. The Board of Curators met in Kansas City on October 5-6. I attended the open meeting as well as the meetings of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee, Finance Committee, and Physical Facilities Committee.

Most of the agenda items were fairly perfunctory – e.g. changing asset allocations for the endowment and pension funds, naming designers and architects for new buildings on the UMC campus and hospitals.

Vice President Lehmkuhl gave a very well-prepared presentation to the Student and Academic Affairs Committee pertaining to measures that are appropriate for program reviews, which was particularly interesting given the review ahead of us. Specifically he talked about benchmarking costs of programs against similar programs at peer institutions (rather than comparing costs of programs within a campus, across units) and looking at measures of program importance other than the number of graduates. He used our Department of Foreign Languages & Literature as an example of a unit that has a relatively low number of graduates, but produces a large number of student credit hours because of all the service courses taught by that department, thereby contributing significantly to the mission of our campus.

On the darker side, homophobic comments by one of the curators on the Curriculum Committee started a flurry of discussions outside the meeting, with actions in response. UMSL student leaders who attended that meeting relayed the curator's comments back home, which created considerable upset, requiring Provost Cope and Vice Provost Coonrod to calm fears. The Intercampus Student Council met after the Board of Curators meetings to discuss its response to the one curator's comments. The Intercampus Faculty Council meets this Friday in Columbia. I intend to report on the effect of those comments on UMSL students to President Floyd and raise this issue with the IFC.