

FACULTY SENATE AND UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS

RESPONSE TO FIVE-YEAR REVIEW REPORT - FALL 2016

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2016 Senate and Assembly Response to Five-Year Review

The process of the Five-Year Review of the Faculty Senate and University Assembly was reasonably smooth. All necessary materials needed by the Senate for preparing the Self-Study and organizing the day of the review were provided promptly. Dr. Isaac-Savage was very cooperative regarding the Senate Chair's restricted availability dates. In the future, it would be beneficial to notify the Senate Chair about an impending Five-Year Review during the Spring Semester before the review takes place, rather than over the summer. The need for additional warning is more relevant for units like the Senate because the leadership rotates among different units throughout the University every few years. Therefore, the Chair who will be managing the review is less likely to be aware that review is pending than in a Department where he or she is more likely to have taken part in the previous review.

The process for the Five-Year Review involved constituents at all levels of the University. The reviewers met with Deans, Student Government Association leaders, Staff Association leaders and members, Faculty Senators and other Faculty, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, and chairs of the various committees of the Senate and Assembly. The breadth of those invited to participate in the review sessions allowed for a reasonably complete perspective on the Senate and Assembly, and the way they function within the University. The external reviewer also met separately with the UMSL representatives to the Intercampus Faculty Council (IFC), because this had been part of the 2011 itinerary. It is my belief that this part of the Review Itinerary was not necessary and did not add anything of value to the review. Instead, the IFC representatives could be invited to attend other sessions on the review itinerary.

The review took place during a time of high uncertainty and stress on campus. Salient issues include the severe budget cuts and layoffs announced in the late spring of 2016 and the effort to unionize the faculty by the SEIU and some faculty members. The views of those consulted about the Senate/Assembly, as reported in both the External Reviewer's Report and the Campus Review Team Report, inevitably reflect the tensions raised by these issues. Many of the comments address issues and concerns that are beyond the scope of the Faculty Senate and University Assembly. This suggests that the roles the Senate and Assembly play within the process of shared governance is not widely understood, even though it seems to be valued by all University constituents. Furthermore, it suggests a need for the Senate both to better inform the faculty about how the Senate/Assembly works and to explore means of helping faculty find effective avenues for having their concerns addressed and voices heard. Both of these issues are addressed in the initiatives described below.

However, despite the relatively fraught climate, most of the groups included positive comments about the role of shared governance and its effectiveness at UMSL. The external reviewer described the Faculty Senate as "a well-functioning organization that fulfills its designated role." Similarly, the Campus Review Team Report stated that faculty agreed that "the Senate exemplifies shared governance and facilitates collegiality across campus."

The contents of the two reports show considerable consensus about the state of the Faculty Senate and University Assembly, and the recommendations of the two reports are similar. The recommendations that are common to the two reports are addressed first. The review then

considers recommendations that appear in only one of the reports. The Campus Review Team Report provided a numbered list of recommendations, and those recommendations are referenced by number in the discussion below.

Some of the recommendations seem to fall outside the purview of the Senate/Assembly as defined by the Bylaws, which are contained in the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri System (CRRs). In these cases, this review describes why we see a conflict between the recommendation and the role of the Senate/Assembly. Where possible, it explains how the concerns that underlie the recommendations might be addressed in a way that is consistent with the Senate/Assembly's scope and responsibilities. Furthermore, it should be noted that addressing some of the following issues presented in the two reports, particularly those involving changing the membership of the Senate or Assembly, will require changes to the existing Bylaws and Operating Rules. Either the Steering Committee or an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate formed as a working group will be charged to further examine these issues, survey any relevant constituents, and develop proposals for changes of and additions to the Bylaws and Operating Rules.

Response to Areas Common to Both Reports – Issues on which there is agreement:

Dissemination of Information:

Both reports highlight the role of Senate and Assembly as a vehicle for communication within the University, and point out that the flow of information from the Faculty Senate to faculty in the departments across the University is dependent on Faculty Senators reporting what transpires at Senate meetings to their departments. The External Reviewer suggested encouraging department chairs to include Faculty Senate updates as standing items on departmental meeting agendas. The Campus Review Team included the following recommendation (#1):

Institute an orientation session for department chairs and deans educating them on the importance of shared governance, encouraging them to disseminate feedback from senators to faculty at college and department meetings, and facilitate the participation of their faculty and staff in Senate and UA meetings even if they are not senators. Encourage department chairs to establish a system for relaying information about the governance of the university to adjunct professors and for obtaining their input.

Senate Response: Many elements of the transfer of information by Senators to their departments are not within the Senate's control. It relies on three pieces: first, that Senators attend the meetings so that they can hear and retain the material presented, second, that Senators remember and are motivated to bring the information back to their departments, and third, that departments have a venue (formal or informal) for the Senators to relay the information to other faculty. The Senate cannot enforce attendance or require chairs to make room for reports for faculty senators at meetings.

However, there are several ways in which the Senate might better facilitate information transfer. This includes highlighting both the Senators' responsibility to report to their departments and means through which Senators might transfer information - such as requesting that Senate

Updates be added to faculty meeting agendas – in the orientation for Senators included in the first Senate Organizational Meeting each spring. Information about shared governance and the Faculty Senate, including the information that meetings are open to all faculty, will be included in a revised version of the Faculty Handbook.

Instituting a stand-alone orientation session for chairs and deans, as the Campus Review Team suggested, is unlikely to be the most efficient way to inform department chairs about the role of faculty governance and of what they can do to help keep faculty informed. The Senate cannot require department chairs or deans to attend an orientation session and, given the time demands chairs face, many would be unable or unwilling to find time for such a meeting. However, we can seek to use existing means of communication to inform them. For example, the Senate Chair may request that information about the Senate be included in the University-wide Orientation Session for department chairs and other administrators at the beginning of each academic year. The Chair could also request permission to visit an upcoming Provost's Council meeting and an upcoming Department Chairs meeting, if the Provost is willing, to talk to the deans and chairs about the importance of shared governance and to request that the deans encourage department chairs to include a Senate report at their departmental meetings.

The Role of Staff and Students in the University Assembly:

Both reports pointed out that the proportion of staff and students to faculty in the University Assembly is low, and both groups reported feeling underrepresented. The Campus Review Team Report included the following recommendation (#4):

Increase the representation of students and staff on the UA and its committees.

Senate Response: Changes to the structure of the University Assembly or to Senate/Assembly committees would require a change in Bylaws. The typical process is for these changes to be reviewed by the Bylaws and Rules Committee, which recommends them to the Assembly for a vote. If passed by the Assembly, they go to the faculty for a vote and then have to be approved by the Board of Curators. This is a lengthy process. However, steps have already been taken to encourage the initiation of this process. In September of 2016, the current Chair of Senate/Assembly invited both the Student Government Association (SGA) President and the Staff Association President to develop proposals for any changes in representation that they thought appropriate, and promised to support both consideration of the proposals by the Bylaws and Rules Committee and bringing any initiative put forward by Bylaws to a vote of the Assembly. However, these proposals must come from the SGA and the Staff Association, as it is inappropriate for the Senate/Assembly to impose additional participation requirements on the staff and students.

The Campus Review Team Report also included the following recommendation (#4)

Give them [staff and students] the same amenities that are provided to faculty senators such as name placards.

Senate Response: Name placards will be created for the student and staff representatives, and will be available at all University Assembly meetings, beginning with the February 2017 meeting.

The Campus Review Team also recommended the following (#3):

Ensure that chairs respect and solicit the opinion of students and staff on their committees.

Senate Response: The Senate can encourage appropriate treatment of staff and students, even though it cannot directly control the actions and attitudes of the committee chairs. Each year as part of the initial committee meetings to elect committee chairs, committee chairs will be reminded that staff and student members are full members of the committees, and will be asked to encourage the staff and student members to participate in the committee discussions.

Finally, the Campus Review Team Report included the statement that students sometimes choose to skip committee meetings rather than arrive late or leave early and recommended that the University Assembly (#2)

Institute an orientation for student and staff representatives on the UA. Encourage their participation in the discussions of the committees. Encourage students and staff to attend meetings even if they are late or have to leave early due to scheduling conflicts.

Senate Response: The Faculty Senate Chair currently meets with the SGA and Staff Association Presidents at the beginning of each academic year. The Chair could supplement this by meeting with student and staff representatives at the beginning of the academic year to address their questions about the University Assembly and to provide an orientation to committee participation. The orientation will include encouraging active participation and attendance, even for part of a meeting.

Preparation of Faculty for Committee Responsibilities

Both reports express concerns about the preparation of faculty for certain committee responsibilities. The External Reviewer stated that

The need for training is a significant issue for some committees. It is recommended that the Faculty Senate consider this issue and establish a training program for those new to committee membership.

Senate Response: The Senate will assess committee responsibilities and identify committees that would benefit from training for new committee members. At the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, the Senate will survey chairs of all Senate and Assembly committees to identify areas where current committee members would have benefited from training. During the 2017-2018 academic year, committee chairs who indicated that their committees would benefit from training will be asked to develop, in conjunction with the Senate, an orientation to the committee for use in future years. Those orientations will become part of the initial committee meeting each academic year.

Both reports recommend training specifically for members of the Budget and Planning Committee. The External Reviewer suggested that the Vice-Chancellor of Administration/CFO offer workshops or seminars on the budget, and the Campus Review Team recommended (#10)

Institute Budget & Planning committee training sessions for members each fall semester.

Senate Response: The Senate will ask that the Vice Chancellor for Administration/CFO coordinate a training session for members of the Budget and Planning Committee and, provided the Vice Chancellor/CFO agrees, will work to help facilitate and develop that training.

Further, the Campus Review Team expressed concern about preparation of committee chairs, and provided the following recommendation (#3):

Better define the responsibilities of each committee and make the process for committees to bring their proposals up for vote in the Senate clear and easy.

Senate Response: The Faculty Senate plans to create a list of each of the chair's responsibilities and committee procedures by requesting that each committee chair include a description of processes and requirements with the 2016-17 committee report. This list will be forwarded to each of the newly-elected committee chairs each year. When needed, the Senate Chair can meet with committee chairs on an individual basis to address any unique questions. Committee chairs are always welcome to ask for any assistance from the Senate Office.

To clarify the process for bringing proposals to the Senate or Assembly for a vote, the Senate will create a simple procedural guide that describes the process of bringing committee proposals first to the Steering Committee for approval, and then to the Senate for a vote.

The Campus Review Team also recommended (#3) the following:

Develop better processes for handing-off responsibilities from past chairs to current chairs. Encourage the retention of institutional memory.

Senate Response: Current Senate structures address retention of institutional memory through two means, which seek to balance the need to maintain institutional memory with the 2011 Five-Year Review recommendation to broaden participation in the Faculty Senate and its committees. First, committee members serve multi-year terms with staggered ending dates, so several members of any given committee are returning members each year. Second, committee chairs prepare annual reports of the activities of the committee at the end of each academic year, and the incoming committee chair receives the prior year's report at the start of the new academic year. As noted above, sitting committee chairs will be encouraged to develop a procedural guide to make these reports more useful. Incoming chairs will be reminded that the committee's prior work has been documented in the prior year's report, which they receive, and encouraged to contact the prior chair of the committee if needed. The incoming and outgoing chairs will also be encouraged to meet to discuss any duties, and for any training that might be necessary (such as for C&I). As an additional means of retaining institutional memory, each year the Committee on Committees will be reminded to balance institutional memory with inclusion of new members for fresh ideas.

Representation of Faculty

Both reports comment positively about the way that NTT and T/TT faculty are treated equally within the Senate and its committees. The Campus Review Team Report also praised the recent changes to Bylaws that made Departments' eligibility for representation dependent on the number of fulltime faculty rather than the number of T/TT faculty. The External Reviewer commented positively on the equality of units and the efforts of Bylaws & Rules to achieve that equality.

However, both reports point out that adjunct faculty have no voice at the Faculty Senate, and no way to communicate their concerns. The Campus Review Team Report also highlights the importance and value of adjuncts to the University, and includes the following recommendation (#11):

[T]he CRT recommends that a survey be undertaken to ascertain the level of interest in shared governance among adjunct instructors, and in the case of such interest, that the Faculty Senate determine the best way of inclusion.

Senate Response: The Senate will develop a survey instrument for adjunct instructors to gauge their interest in the Faculty Senate, and administer that survey during the 2017-2018 academic year. If such interest exists, either the Steering Committee or an ad hoc committee of the Senate will be charged with developing a proposal for a mechanism for allowing representation by adjunct faculty for terms consistent with their appointment terms. The committee might consider other universities' practices for including adjuncts in faculty governance. It should be noted, however, that changing the representation of the Senate to include adjunct faculty would require a change in the Faculty Bylaws. As noted above, the standard process allows for extensive input and the building of consensus, but is not speedy. It starts with bringing a proposal to the Rules and Bylaws Committee and concludes with approval by the Board of Curators. The proposal development process timeline and success of such a proposal are not predictable.

Response to External Reviewer Report – Issues on which there is agreement:

Shared Governance

The external reviewer noted that the current relationship between the Faculty Senate and the Chancellor is “a good-faith relationship,” and that the Faculty Senate “has only modest power via the bylaws,” and suggested codification of the relationship in the bylaws so that “future faculty senates and administrators would inherit the structure which has led to that good relationship.”

Senate Response: The existing working relationship between Faculty Senate and the Chancellor and Provost contributes substantially to the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate and to the climate of collegiality that characterizes UMSL. During the spring of 2017, the Chair of Senate will work with the Provost and Chancellor to identify and document the specific elements of that working relationship. Either the Steering Committee or an ad hoc committee of the Senate will be charged with examining the current Bylaws and developing a proposal to codify the working relationship between the Chancellor and the Faculty Senate, to the extent that this working relationship is driven by elements that can be codified, rather than by personalities. This may involve defining a broader scope for the Senate, similar to the scope of MS&T's senate. This may also involve charging an ad hoc committee with comparing the UMSL Bylaws and Operating Rules with those of the other three campuses.

Committees concerned with employment conditions:

The External Review Report points out that the “UMSL committees address what faculty do but not....how we work.” One of the two issues presented is that there is no committee with the role

of overseeing proposed changes, particularly at the level of the CRRs, that affect the interests of the faculty, particularly with respect to academic freedom. The implicit recommendation in the report is that there should be a committee similar to S&T's Academic Freedom and Standards Committee. Further, the report implicitly recommends a committee to examine personnel policy changes regarding faculty.

Senate Response: Within the past six months, three substantial changes to the Collected Rules and Regulations of the UM System (CRRs) have been proposed, with requests for Senate approval. For two of these proposals, the content was not under the purview of any of the existing Senate and Assembly committees, and all three of these proposals have implications for faculty personnel policy. Further, review of proposals that affect the CRRs is outside the scope of the mission of the Bylaws and Rules Committee, and the attempt to solicit comments from the Senators without some review by a Senate Committee has generated minimal response. The Senate would benefit from the existence of a committee that is charged with review of CRR proposals from this perspective, particularly one that focuses both on maintaining academic freedom and on personnel policy issues for the faculty. Either the Steering Committee or an ad hoc committee of the Senate will be charged with developing a proposal to create such a committee or a proposal to modify the charges of existing committees to include review of CRR proposals from these perspectives.

Response to Campus Review Team Report – Issues on which there is agreement:

Communication of Faculty Concerns to the Senate and Administration

Throughout the Campus Review Team Report, comments from faculty indicate a feeling of not being heard, either by the administration or by the Faculty Senate. Further, the Campus Review Team Report pointed out that Faculty Senate “provides a mechanism for faculty to express concerns,” but “faculty cannot directly bring up issues to the Senate.” The Campus Review Team Report included the following recommendation (#6):

Make it easier for faculty to communicate their concerns, i.e., form a “Committee on Faculty Concerns” that actively solicits input from faculty members.

Senate response: The idea of a committee dedicated to providing a venue for faculty at all levels to express concerns issue has been recently brought to the attention of the Chair of Senate in other contexts as well, particularly as it affects all faculty who are not protected by tenure. In separate situations, untenured TT faculty, NTT faculty, and adjunct faculty have all expressed concern about whether there would be negative ramifications of bringing issues to the attention of administration or the Senate. This is probably indicative of heightened uncertainty arising from the recent round of budget cuts and layoffs, rather than any true threat of job risk, but that statement is not intended to diminish the feelings of insecurity by those faculty.

The need for such a committee was also expressed in an informal discussion among a few members of the Faculty Senate. In that discussion, the consensus was that such a committee might work to address some of the issues that have been expressed by faculty who have argued for unionization.

It is crucial that such a committee have breadth on all dimensions. It must have enough tenured faculty to be able to convey difficult issues to administration. It must have representatives who

can understand and be sensitive to the different issues faced by faculty of all different ranks. It must have enough breadth that an “outside” viewpoint would be available for anyone.

A committee dedicated to faculty concerns would benefit the University community in many ways. It would provide faculty who have concerns with a safe place to discuss them. It would allow the faculty who currently feel they do not have a voice, or who are reluctant to voice their concerns, an outlet. It would also allow issues to be communicated to the faculty and administration before they fester.

Either the Steering Committee or an ad hoc committee of the Senate will be charged with developing a proposal for Faculty Concerns Committee, with the expectation that an ad hoc committee for Faculty Concerns will be created promptly.

Faculty Participation in Shared Governance

The Campus Review Team Report expressed various concerns about participation of faculty in shared governance and the work of the Faculty Senate, and included the following recommendation (#7):

Motivate participation of faculty in the Senate and UA. One strategy might be to circulate brief annual reports that summarize the accomplishments of the Senate and UA for the year, provides next year’s meeting schedule, describes the major issues that will be addressed in the upcoming year, and solicits input on these and other issues.

Senate Response: The Senate agrees with the importance of faculty participation in the Senate and Assembly, and with elements of the strategy suggested. At the same time, there are elements of that strategy that are impractical. Specifically, annual reports from the committee chairs are not due until the end of Spring Semester, and the issues that will be addressed by the Senate and Assembly are often not known far in advance. Further, the Senate does not agree with the implied premise that dissemination of annual reports will motivate participation in shared governance.

However, in preparing the self-study report for the Five-Year Review, it was apparent that the Senate and Assembly have accomplished much in the past five years. Before receiving these reports, the Senate Chair had already begun preparing an executive summary of the accomplishments of the Senate/Assembly and its committees. The challenge with that executive summary has been to shorten it enough that it will be read. The Chair will complete that report and disseminate it within the University community as a way to increase interest in Senate and committee participation. The Chair also plans to make a presentation to the Senate and Assembly summarizing those accomplishments, in the hope increasing awareness of the impact of shared governance and of motivating Senators to serve on these committees.

Before the election of Senators this year for terms beginning in the 2017-2018 academic year, the Chair of Senate contacted the members of departments and colleges that have Senate openings to encourage them to consider serving on Senate. Before the distribution of the committee preference poll, the Chair of Senate will send an email to all eligible faculty, encouraging them to respond and to participate in the committee work of the Senate and Assembly.

The Senate's meeting schedule is always available on the Senate website and on the campus calendar. The room in which the Senate normally meets is more than ample for additional attendees, unless the attendance is more than double the number of Senate members. In the future, the Senate could electronically distribute the meeting schedule to all faculty at the start of the academic year and remind the faculty that the meetings are all open meetings. Faculty Senator reports about Senate meetings at department meetings may also encourage participation and interest.

Response to Campus Review Team Report – Issues on which there is disagreement:

Recommendation 3: Institute an orientation for committee chairs.

Senate Response: The responsibilities of committee chairs vary widely, as does the experience level of individual chairs. Thus, the necessary content of an orientation would be different for each chair. A common, formal orientation, therefore, would be unproductive, and could actually be counter-productive in that it is likely to be perceived as an additional burden and a disincentive to serve as a committee chair. Several of the initiatives proposed above, including the development of a more detailed procedural guide and a written set of procedures for getting issues on the Senate/Assembly agenda should help provide committee chairs with the information they need to function effectively. Furthermore, the Senate Office works with the committee chairs to support them, and will continue to do so. The suggestions on page 4 above under "Preparation of Faculty for Committee Responsibilities" should be both sufficient and more effective than an orientation.

Recommendation 5: Form a "committee of committee chairs" where they can meet, share expertise, and coordinate to reduce the likelihood two separate committees are unknowing working on the same issue.

Senate Response: The Senate Office has frequently provided information to committees that they are working on the same issue, and will continue to do so. The Senate Office also has consistently been willing to facilitate meetings with various members of the Senate and Assembly committees, and will be happy to organize meetings for the committee chairs to meet and discuss issues. However, the creation of a formal committee of the committee chairs would be solely for the purpose of additional meetings and would weaken rather than strengthen the Senate and the structure of the committees. The Senate might identify the handful of committees whose responsibilities may overlap, and find a way for greater communication between the chairs of those committees.

Recommendation 8: Provide the Provost's and Chancellor's presentations in advance to senators for them to raise relevant questions.

Senate Response: These presentations are informational and do not require deliberation leading to a vote by the Senate or Assembly. Therefore, the content of presentations by the Chancellor and the Provost, whether that content is released before Senate meetings, and whether that content is released in writing at any time is not under the control of the Faculty Senate. It would be presumptuous of the Senate to require early posting of the contents of presentations by the Chancellor, the Provost, or any other presenter on the agenda.

Recommendation 9: Provide more time for senators to deliberate on honorary degrees. Consider providing the names of potential awardees and sharing their application at one meeting (as is currently done), but voting the next meeting.

Senate Response: The structure of the Senate's role in awarding honorary degrees is outside the control of the Senate. Further, changes to the portion of the CRRs addressing this process are under consideration, and that proposal is expected to come before the Board of Curators. The representative from the Honorary Degrees committee has been made aware that Senators would like more time to consider these proposals, and is considering how that might be accomplished. Since the names of potential awardees must remain confidential, it is difficult and perhaps inappropriate to distribute the nominations ahead of time. Senators can always ask that a particular nomination be turned down or tabled, if they are uncertain whether a particular candidate should be awarded an honorary degree. Senators should also remember that it is not their responsibility to research the nominee's background, as that is appropriately managed through the existing process.