

**From:** Samples, Robert  
**Sent:** Friday, July 29, 2016 2:50 PM  
**To:** UMSL Faculty  
**Subject:** Message from the Provost

**Distributed on behalf of the Office of the Provost at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.**

Dear Colleagues:

Recently, I wrote to you with information in response to the attempts of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to approach the UMSL faculty regarding unionization. I heard from several colleagues who were grateful for the information and applauded the communication, and unfortunately some who complained about aggressive encounters with union representatives. Chancellor George received a letter (to which he has responded) from several faculty members representing support for the unionization initiative. I would assume that you will have received a copy of this letter. However, in case you did not, I have attached the letter. Please read the attached letter carefully.

I was disappointed that the authors of the letter to Chancellor George considered my communication to be “confrontational” and that I had “publicly disparaged” the activities. This was not the spirit in which my letter was intended. It is our wish that each faculty member makes their decision with complete and open knowledge of the process, the unique laws governing Missouri Public Institutions of Higher Education, and the potential ramifications. As a faculty member with 27 years of service and former senate chair, my heart and concerns are still very much with faculty and the well-being of this wonderful University. Faculty colleagues, if you were offended by my message, please know that no slight was intended and that I intended the letter to be informational based on the best advice from experts in the area. I simply want you to do your own due diligence before making a very important decision; ask the tough questions.

However, I was disturbed and disappointed by one sentence in the attached letter: “...so that we can work together to avoid any disruption for our fellow faculty and our students.” I know many of the letter signatories personally and worked together with them on many occasions. I know they are dedicated to UMSL and care about our students. Therefore, I hope that this statement is not as onerous, threatening

or potentially illegal as it sounds. In his response letter, Chancellor George has offered to meet informally with these faculty members and to listen to their concerns and I hope we can reach an understanding.

As to the processes which will govern union organizational activities, I am working with the UM System General Counsel's Office to determine the correct and lawful means in which to engage in these conversations. I will certainly share them with you as I am informed. However, it is evident that any communication between the University and the union will be handled at the system level.

Again, if you are considering signing a union representation card, please take all factors into consideration when thinking of your own future and that of the institution.

Sincerely,

Chris Spilling, PhD, CChem, FRSC  
Professor of Chemistry  
Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs