

Intercampus Faculty Council Report January 8, 2008

Attendance: Tim Farmer, Teresa Thiel

Code of Conduct: Fraud Hotline

The University of Missouri now has a Fraud Hotline to allow anonymous reports of fiscal misappropriation. This was the result of the Sarbanes Oxley Act that is designed to prevent corporate malfeasance. Some faculty have expressed concern about the anonymity of the complaints and worry that allegations of misconduct may become a part of their employment record. IFC was assured by representatives of the UM System legal office (Bunky Wright) and human resources (Blake Huser) that nothing goes in a file unless it is substantiated.

Student Complaints

Student complaints on most campuses now go directly to a central administrative office on campus, rather than to the chair of the unit where the problem occurred. Faculty are concerned that in cases where students complain about faculty or file grievances against them, the faculty member is on the defensive and in some cases must explain his/her actions to an administrator who has no classroom experience. There was a more general discussion of the concern among faculty that student seem to have many more rights than they once did and that the university seems more concerned with protecting student rights than protecting faculty.

Intellectual Pluralism

There is concern that students might be able to control the content of university classes if their complaints that the instructor failed to include a point of view is taken seriously by administrators. At MU a student in a biology class expressed some concern to an administrator that alternatives to evolution were not presented in the class. The student did not make a formal complaint, file a grievance, or ask for any change; however, the instructors in the course, two of whom are NTT faculty, were concerned that complaints against faculty might affect their careers, especially if the complaints become part of their employee files. HB1315 – Intellectual Diversity- has been prefiled for the 2008 legislative session.

SB 389 Implementation - Consumer Information

By August of 2008, SB389 requires that we provide information for the instructors for all courses that will include name, credentials and rank. The System plans to have the instructor information available on a separate, publicly available web site. This site will obtain basic information from People Soft, so that faculty can check this information, correct mistakes and add other relevant information. The advantage of this system is that

it includes anyone who is paid by the university. It is not clear yet that all campuses will use the same system.

SB389 also requires that we provide information on student course evaluations. This will consist of only a few selected questions and the information will be available on a secure site only to students.

State Government

The Governor has proposed a 4.4 % increase for the higher education budget, with 4% increase in faculty salaries. The Governor will request \$13.5 million for the “Preparing to Care” health care initiative. UM’s portion would be \$8.5 million. A number of bills affecting higher education have been prefled and Steve Knorr will be keeping IFC updated on their progress.