SHARED GOVERNANCE IN PROCESS
A Statement From Sherry Buchanan, Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Governors

MAY 2013

We are approaching the final stages of one of the most comprehensive shared governance processes that a campus can experience. It is also a process that demonstrates a "full circle" of decision-making that is one example of how shared governance can work.

A little over a year ago, the Board and senior administration studied Robert Dickeson's *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* and looked at things that could be done to allocate resources more effectively in times of shrinking financial support for public higher education. The Board decided that MSSU should conduct a comprehensive study of all programs, academic and non-academic, so that data-based decisions could be made in upcoming program and budget planning. The Board's overarching goal was to focus on the quality of our offerings to students and to our community and on the financial sustainability of this institution.

This administrative decision about WHAT needed to happen and WHY we needed to do it was made in the Spring of 2012. An Operational Plan was adopted in August 2012, with involvement from the President's Council, Deans' Council, and Presidents of the Faculty, Staff and Student Senates. The Plan was then taken to the campus for finalization of HOW the process should occur and for the monumental amount of work that has been needed to bring the project to completion. Input has been sought far and wide through a consistent process, and a representative Task Force is using objective criteria to analyze data.

The Task Force is nearing the completion of their dedicated, arduous duties and will soon present their conclusions and recommendations to the campus and administration. The next few months will allow everyone to review the materials and give additional input. Then, senior administration will formulate their recommendations for changes that need to be made. The process will come full circle in the Fall of 2013 when those recommendations are brought to the Board of Governors for final decision-making.

Our prioritization study demonstrates several elements of effective shared governance: designation of appropriate roles and decision-making authority, representative communication, mutual respect for others' input and decisions, involvement of all stakeholders, and rational, data-based decision-making. The decisions to be made after this project are necessary and will enhance our ability to deliver quality services while stabilizing our financial future.

The final decisions will be significant, but the process that will support those decisions is equally significant because it demonstrates how shared governance on this campus can work effectively.