

Board of Governors
01-16-15

I apologize for being unable to attend this meeting in person, but attendance at the annual NCAA Convention is mandatory. But, with no meeting in December and this conflict in January it will be three months since I've been able to meet with all of you. Perhaps we could look to next year's calendar and adjust the January meeting by one week if it coincides with the NCAA Convention meeting date. It's worth considering anyway.

Faculty members were welcomed back to campus January 9th and the spring semester is off to a roaring start. In addition to the normal business of faculty meeting we introduced Hayley Hanson, of the Husch Blackwell law firm, who conducted a required Title IX workshop.

December 5th was a big day on campus as we hosted area legislators in the morning and enjoyed a visit from Governor Nixon in the afternoon. During the session with area legislators we focused on the financial constraints the University operates under due to both reduced state funding over the years and the statutory cap on tuition that locks the rate to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The problem with linking tuition to CPI is that low tuition institutions like Missouri Southern are destined to fall farther behind each year due to the compounding effect of the limited rate. As a result, Missouri Southern now receives the lowest total revenue per student of any public university in the State of Missouri. We asked legislators to seriously consider this issue and think about creative solutions to this growing problem.

Later in the day on December 5th we were visited by Governor Nixon to announce his support for a \$5.2 million renovation project designed to improve lab and classroom facilities in Reynolds Hall. The Governor was joined by Senator Richard who also supports the project. So, we are very hopeful that this project will move smoothly and rapidly through the appropriations process.

I'm sure that Dr. Garoutte's report brought you up to date on the details of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Search, but I would like to add that in my view this is one of the best search committees ever assembled. The members are totally impartial, fully engaged, and extraordinarily thorough. Plus, we have a very nice candidate pool to consider. So, I am quite confident that we will come up with an academic leader for Missouri Southern that will fit perfectly into our campus wide initiatives and help elevate the trajectory of every program we currently offer and contemplate offering in the future.

As you know, Joann Graffam resigned to pursue an exciting professional opportunity and we certainly wish her the best as she opens this new chapter in her career. Subsequently, John Tiede accepted the Interim Vice President for Development position. We are working very closely with the Missouri Southern Foundation to identify the ideal person to fill the permanent role (because the Foundation pays ½ the salary).

On December 9th we served as host to the Freshman Legislator's Tour – and had about 50 newly elected lawmakers on campus for lunch and a brief presentation. We included representatives from our student body in the welcome, had pieces of our African Art collection on display, and enjoyed background music from our Steel Drum Ensemble during lunch. We also invited representatives from Crowder College to join us and asked Glenn Coltharp, Crowder's VPAA, to give a brief overview of their offerings. I then walked the group through a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted our International mission, incredible faculty, campus

construction projects, terrific student outcome measures, and graduate success in the career marketplace. I believe it was a very positive and productive day and served as an effective vehicle to acquaint the new legislators with Missouri Southern.

Dr. Lipira has volunteered to head up the task force to develop a draft proposal for a Non-Smoking campus policy and as soon as the semester is fully underway we will engage a group made up of faculty, staff, and student body members to investigate policies at other institutions and create a draft policy for MSSU. The draft will be presented to the President's Council for review and comment. Subsequently, the draft policy will be presented to the Board for input, modification, and/or action.

CQI/Program Prioritization – We are currently working directly with individual Departments regarding the Program Prioritization items that were inadequately addressed in the voluntary change stage of the program, and we have targeted the end of spring semester to have the CQI/Program Prioritization work completed.

Just before the holiday break we met with the Faculty Comprehensive Compensation Committee to discuss their work with regard to creating a system to make our salaries more competitive. While we all agree that increases are needed, in some areas desperately needed, we also understand the financial challenges the University community currently faces. This very thoughtful discussion also included the recognition that many of our staff members are also underpaid. We will continue to work together to develop a fair and affordable program of salary increases going forward in conjunction with the overall efforts of the Financial Stability Committee and the Great Game of Education initiative.

Regarding the Great Game, we are moving ahead with the formation of the Design Team, Critical Number Task Force, and development of training materials for campus members. As the system continues to evolve to meet our needs it is apparent that greater “transparency and openness” is already having an impact. A number of faculty and staff members have taken advantage of SRC's generous offer to give us seats in their training sessions and the conversations among attendees upon arriving back on campus are energizing and encouraging. We are blessed with a terrific group of faculty and staff and they are determined that Missouri Southern will not only survive in the future... we will thrive! Scott Cragin and Jeff Gibson are doing a great job leading this initiative and I can't wait to see the ultimate outcome of this groundbreaking work.

In closing, I would encourage everyone to keep an eye on the Campus Calendar of events because the spring semester is packed with opportunities to attend concerts, plays, recitals, athletic events, and a variety of other campus activities. We hope you will be able to attend as many of them as possible because they showcase the incredible talent of our students – and demonstrate the remarkable guidance these students are receiving from our terrific roster of faculty, staff, and coaches. They all do an incredible job.