

Board of Governors
02-20-15

Again, I apologize for being unable to attend the January meeting in person, but attendance at the annual NCAA Convention is mandatory. And, looking ahead to next year we can determine that the conflict will occur again because the NCAA meeting calendar has been established and next year the conference will be Jan. 13 – 16, in San Antonio, TX (which will conflict with our typical 3rd Friday meeting schedule). So, I would like to ask the Board of Governors to consider moving the January 2016 meeting to the 4th Friday (Jan. 22) to avoid the conflict. We can deal with this at a future meeting but I wanted to raise the issue as early as possible so you can check your calendars.

As a follow up to the meeting last month, the sabbatical requests from Dr. Vickie Roettger, Professor of Biology (fall 2015); and, Dr. William Huffman, Professor of Accounting (spring 2016) were submitted last fall and completed the committee review and administrative approval process in November. We distributed the application materials earlier to make sure you were informed about the nature of the requests and the exciting projects each Professor will undertake. Sabbaticals are a very efficient and affordable way to bring new teaching strategies, emerging technologies, and cutting edge research back to campus because our only true cost is for adjunct instruction to cover the open course load.

Certainly one of the highlights of last month came with the Martin Luther King Day of Service Celebration on January 19. The campus hosted a breakfast that was attended by over 300 community members and we were treated to one of the best presentations I've heard in years. Faustina Abrahams coordinates the event for Missouri Southern and she identified Kelly Shoenbauer-Sales as the featured speaker. Ms. Shoenbauer-Sales serves as the Court Administrator of Jasper County 29th Judicial Circuit Juvenile/Adult Drug Diversion and Drug Court. She made a passionate and captivating speech that called each one of us to greater service, not just on MLK Day, but every day, week, and year of our lives.

Another highlight of last month was being invited to join the Nutra Blend Corporation in presenting \$80,000 in support to local school districts to use for their "back pack" programs (where they send weekend food home with students in need). All the funds were raised by the dedicated employees of Nutra Blend, but we served as the fiscal agent and hosted the check presentation ceremony. As you probably know, MSSU alum Mike Osborne is President/CEO of Nutra Blend and wanted to share this service opportunity with his Alma Mater.

An overdue initiative that I intended to undertake last year actually happened this month, with Dr. Lipira's help, I was able to sit down with every Department Chair on campus to hear them talk about the exciting things happening in their respective areas. I asked each of them the simple question... what are your hopes and dreams for your Department? I learned enough in these sessions to fill a book because we are blessed with faculty that are stretching themselves every day to go the extra mile for our

students. And, all they need is the necessary resources. That's fundamentally my job, and I promised to do everything in my power to identify the support they need.

And, the identification of needed resources was the crux of my testimony before the House – Higher Education Appropriations Committee on February 2. As you probably read in the newspaper, I presented the committee with the same presentation materials we used with our local legislators back in December. The simple fact is that we are primarily financed by two sources: 1) state appropriations; and, 2) tuition and fees. We all know that state appropriations have steadily declined over the years but many fail to understand the growing disparity in tuition and fee income as a result of the law that links tuition increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The result of extraordinarily small tuition increases, coupled with declining state support, has resulted in MSSU receiving the lowest combined revenue per student of any university in Missouri. I simply asked the committee to consider this problem and address it as soon as possible.

Also, with regard to legislative activity, Senate Concurrent Resolution 9 (SCR9) includes \$5,228,422 for "laboratory renovations in Reynolds Hall" on our campus. The Resolution flew through the Senate and is now being considered by the House. We are confident the Governor will sign the legislation when it gets to his desk because he has openly endorsed the renovations on the list. It appears that SCR9 will soon appear on the House calendar for consideration and we hope that it passes quickly and is sent to the Governor to be signed into law.

In the meantime, we are continuing to make great progress with the Great Game of Education. The Design Team, made up of over 50 campus volunteers, is feverishly working on the necessary elements of the "scoreboards" we will use to mark our achievements and the Critical Number Task Force identified the single figure we will collectively monitor to measure results - - - Operating Cash. We currently have several Departments actively engaged in mini-games and several of us will be attending a workshop on High Impact Planning next month (the Great Game's version of Strategic Planning).

Obviously, the most pressing task we are undertaking at the moment is the selection of a new Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost. As previously reported, the search committee received 30 plus applications and narrowed the field to eight finalists that were invited for telephone interviews. Subsequent to the telephone interviews and further discussion regarding salary and job requirements, four of the eight withdrew from consideration. But, we were left with four very well qualified candidates to invite to campus for face-to-face meetings and open forum discussions with faculty and staff. So far we have had two of the candidates on campus and intended to have one this week but inclement weather intervened and we had to reschedule her visit. However, we are still very much on schedule to have someone named to this position by mid-March.

On the subject of new employees, we are delighted to welcome Dr. Brad Hodson to campus as the new Executive Vice President. He will be responsible for fund raising, grant writing, Foundation and Alumni Offices, Admissions, Government and Community Relations, University Relations and Marketing, and Sales, Sponsorships, and Intellectual Property agreements. Brad is a seasoned veteran, MSSU alum, and a highly motivated individual. We are fortunate to have someone of his caliber join our team.

In closing, I would like to thank the community for coming out to support the opening of our new Baseball Stadium last week. We were blessed with a beautiful day to open a beautiful park... which was made possible by the generous donations of hundreds of people. We are very grateful.