



Board Report
04-15-16

Alan Marble

Budget and Legislative Priorities – As the Legislative session enters the final weeks, activity is picking up on all fronts. The higher education funding bill (HB3) which passed out of the House with a 2% increase, moved to the Senate where they voted a 6% increase (in agreement with the Governor's recommendation). The bill is now in conference and we expect some kind of compromise between 2% and 6%. However, in any case, we also expect that any increase in funding will also include either an "explicit or tacit" agreement not to raise tuition this fall. We will know more about the conference committee recommendations in the coming weeks.

Additionally, the new decision items on the priority list we created last fall remain in place at this point (funding for the UMKC Dental School program on campus, access to the Regional Center Building, and some additional funds for Reynold's Hall). But, we will not know the final version of the state budget until session ends the second week of May.

University Budget – The annual budget for Missouri Southern will not be completed and officially presented to the Board of Governors until June... after the State budget process is finalized. But, through the work of our dedicated faculty and staff, along with our increasing awareness and understanding of the Great Game of Education... we will be presenting a "balanced budget" for the first time in several years. This gives me great pleasure, because I hate the idea of deficit budgets.

The budget we plan to present for consideration will include a recommendation for a reasonable salary increase for faculty and staff that we believe they have clearly earned through their diligent efforts to make our operation more efficient and productive... while continuing to focus on providing the highest quality service to our students... inside and outside the classroom.

Great Game of Education – Now, moving to the Great Game of Education for a moment, you are aware that we now have the Culture Committee assembled and they have had their initial organizational meeting, elected officers, and set out their operating parameters... the first of which is to focus heavily on training across campus. And, I have every confidence they will be very successful in their efforts.

But, what effects should we expect from all the training? One example could be the salary increases I just mentioned a few moments ago. This year we will simply recommend an across the board increase of "x" amount (to be determined when the state budget is settled). However, if we had the "appropriate metrics in place" we could offer an across the board increase of "x" with the potential to increase it to "2x" if we hit certain markers throughout the year (perhaps measured and awarded quarterly). Some

would say that sounds a lot like “profit sharing” but we are a non-profit institution so maybe we will call it “non-profit sharing,” but the point is this... if we have clearly defined metrics (both quantitative and qualitative)... and those marks are met, then some of the Operating Cash that is saved should be available to share with the people that worked so diligently to hit the marks. And, developing a system like this will make it very easy for each faculty and staff member to clearly have “a line of sight” to our critical number... Operating Cash.

Of course determining the appropriate metrics will be a huge task. Accordingly, I plan to re-activate the Financial Stability Committee to engage in the work of developing clear, appropriate, and achievable metrics that will guarantee quality; while encouraging productivity and efficiency. The Financial Stability Committee has been on hiatus this year because we effectively cleared the first hurdle... stabilizing the budget, but now we need to gather again to take on the task of determining relevant metrics for the Great Game. If we are successful in this effort an added bonus will be that if we hit our self-determined metrics - we are virtually guaranteed to hit the Performance Funding measures set out by the state. And, the Performance Funding measures are used to determine state funding allocations.

Strategic Planning & the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) – As you know, we have a scheduled visit from HLC in 2018, and we had two areas of weakness identified during their last visit: Shared Governance and Strategic Planning. We have made significant strides in the area of shared governance and we will continue to move that direction with the help of the Great Game, but it's time to engage in Strategic Planning in a focused manner. Truthfully, this is a healthy process in and of itself, so it's something we are looking forward to with a good deal of eagerness and anticipation.

Accordingly, I have asked Dr. Hodson, Dr. Carson, Dr. McGrane and Ms. Josie Welsh to take the lead in organizing the Strategic Planning committee and be prepared to engage in the process early next fall. But, I've also asked them to be creative in how they design the process so we don't just add, committee after committee, and meeting after meeting, to the schedules of already busy people. I'm excited to see what they come up with because I believe it will be a novel but very effective way to produce a Strategic Plan that will guide us over the next few years.

Policy Library – Our representatives at Husch Blackwell are still wading through the tangle of policies, procedures, and guidelines that evolved over the years, but we are probably at the point in the process where we will be able to suggest a “Policy on Policies” for your consideration at the May-June Board of Governors meeting. This document will simply try to clearly identify the types of policies that are over-arching and “organizational” in nature, and should be acted on by the Board of Governors. It will also identify the types of policies that are “operational” in nature and should be dealt with by the University Council and/or appropriate university policy making group (Academic Policies, etc.). This “Policy on Policies” step will help move us forward in the logical development of the Policy Library.

University Council – I list the University Council because I would like to thank the members for serving on the initial group and for taking up some very serious issues in a very thoughtful manner. We have had our final meeting for the academic year and I believe we've accomplished a lot. But, there is still much to be done to make sure our "operational policies" are effective and efficient, and to look for better ways to do the things we do routinely. It's a great group and I'm very grateful for their tireless work.

Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence – It was my honor to join Nursing Professor, Christine Eller, in Jefferson City for a luncheon where she received the 2016 Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence at Missouri Southern. Dr. Tia Strait, Ms. Grace Ayton, and members of Dr. Eller's family were also there to celebrate this prestigious and well-deserved honor.

Governor Nixon pointed out in his comments that just a few years from now, few of today's students will remember who was Governor of the State of Missouri in 2016, but they will always remember the Professors who made a "positive and dramatic" impact on their lives.

This was a great reminder of the important work we are privileged to be engaged in... and Dr. Eller is a wonderful role model for all of us. And, for that we say thank you Chris, and congratulations on being recognized for 34 wonderful years of teaching at Missouri Southern State University.