

12 December 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

On behalf of the Faculty Senate, I would like to offer some updates since the last meeting. The Faculty Senate remains committed to encouraging broader faculty engagement, streamlining academic processes, and strengthening campus-wide communication.

#### **1. Encouraging Broader Faculty Engagement**

We are continuing our practice of inviting guest speakers to Faculty Senate meetings to provide updates and foster dialogue. This monthly spotlight approach allows faculty to engage more deeply with specific areas of university operations.

- December: Scott Snell provided an update on the development of the Center for Integrated Educational Excellence and the upcoming implementation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II requirements. These rules mandate compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA by April 2026. Under these guidelines, all materials distributed by the University must meet accessibility standards, including captions for videos, alternative text for images, descriptive labels for links, and fully accessible PDF documents.

#### **2. Assessing and Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers**

The Faculty Senate is exploring ways to centralize the distribution of university policies that are traditionally copied into individual syllabi each semester. When policies change, updates are not always reflected consistently across revised syllabi. To ensure students receive accurate and current information, we are considering housing these policies in Blackboard. This approach would allow updates to be made once—prior to course shell creation—and then deployed uniformly across all courses. This model, already in use at other institutions, would reduce routine administrative work for faculty while improving accuracy for students, at no additional cost.

In addition, the Faculty Senate has initiated a review of the effectiveness of midterm grades. The goal is to determine whether alternative methods could better help students understand their academic progress. As part of this effort, a working group will consult with students and examine contemporary research before making recommendations on how best to support student success and retention.

#### **3. Improving Communication Between Faculty Leadership and Faculty**

Faculty Senate has been discussing strategies to better incorporate the perspectives and needs of adjunct faculty into its deliberations. While permanent representation on the Senate was deemed impractical given the nature of adjunct appointments, there is consensus that Senate members should make a more deliberate effort to keep adjunct faculty informed about Faculty Senate activities and to regularly solicit their feedback.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nicole R. Foster Shoaf, PhD*

Associate Professor of Political Science  
Faculty Senate President  
MSSU Pre-Law Advisor  
Justice Studies Internship Coordinator