

MISSOURI SOUTHERN

STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY SENATE

May 28, 2026

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

The faculty senate is pleased to provide the following update on the end of the 2025-2026 academic year and all that we worked together to accomplish as we move ahead toward another exciting year at Missouri Southern.

Updated Syllabi Shared via Blackboard

As we approach the beginning of the 2026-2027 academic year, Faculty Senate has been working alongside Digital Learning to implement a system in which required information that is the same across all courses and programs is embedded in blackboard course sites. This will ensure all university policies are represented accurately and consistently across all courses offered by Missouri Southern. This change will also help maintain compliance necessary to continue to meet the standards by HLC.

Increased Transparency Regarding Online Anonymous Comments

In an effort to better represent faculty across campus, Faculty Senate has begun compiling anonymous comments with suggestions, questions, and/or concerns in an ongoing spreadsheet with both the comment, as well as action taken regarding those comments. This process has helped ensure that Faculty Senate is able to not only respond and share concerns with the necessary parties, but also that we are able to document what actions were taken. This is especially beneficial with anonymous comments due to us being unable to respond to the original commenter. Additionally, it has allowed us a better documentation system in which faculty can remain aware of the communication and collaboration happening between their senators and administration.

Partnership with Registrar's Office

As an example of the benefit of the previously mentioned increase in transparency, we have also partnered with the Registrar's office to improve processes. After the Registrar was made aware of concerns shared by Faculty, they were gracious enough to offer a solution in which all academic petitions would be submitted digitally after being signed by the appropriate Dean. This change will streamline the process for faculty, students, and the Registrar, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Registrar's office for their willingness to identify a solution that will benefit students and advisors alike.

New Senators and Election Results

At our final Faculty Senate meeting of the year on May 4, 2026, we were able to thank outgoing senators for their service and welcome new senators being elected to new terms. Additionally, the following individuals have been elected or have transitioned into the following positions:

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- Dr. Zack Rice – President; Associate Professor of Teacher Education
- Dr. Victoria Rhodes – President-Elect; Associate Professor of Biology & Environmental Health
- Dr. Leslie Smith – Parliamentarian; Associate Professor of Spanish
- Dr. Megan Bever – Member at Large; Professor of History
- Ms. Amber Carr – Secretary; Assistant Library Director and Associate Professor
- Dr. Nicole Foster Shoaf – Past-President; Associate Professor of Political Science

Conclusion

Faculty Senate is pleased to have completed a successful year in which its senators and the faculty they represent took an active role in continuing MSSU's commitment to shared governance. We are also pleased with the initiatives with which we were involved and look forward to the upcoming year with a continued commitment to shared governance, communication. We appreciate the Board's support as we work to represent Faculty in a way that strengthens the university and its endeavors.

Respectfully submitted,

Zackary Rice, Ed.D

Associate Professor of Teacher Education
Faculty Senate President