

MISSOURI SOUTHERN

STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY SENATE

January 3, 2025

The Faculty Senate met once since the last Board of Governors meeting. In addition to the usual and informative reports, we welcomed a couple of guests, Dr. Hodson and Dr. Delehanty, who each provided useful information to the senate about their respective areas. The senate is looking forward to hearing from campus Athletics at our next meeting.

Among the actions completed, the Senate asked the Handbook Committee to prioritize reviewing two chapters from the Faculty Handbook each year. Faculty Senate is in the process of reviewing the revamped Undergraduate Curriculum and Policies Committee (UCPC, formally Academic Policies Committee). Dr. Delehanty reported that the new process is working far better than the previous process. The Faculty Senate still needs to approve the changes for permanent inclusion in the Faculty Handbook.

After some investigation into the matter of an Emergency Faculty Fund, we've learned from Dr. Toms that such a fund already exists and has a small balance. It is housed in the University Foundation. Pre-tax contributions can be made through payroll deductions. We plan to publicize the fund further in the coming semester.

The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) finalized its updated report on Adjunct/Overload pay. The committee found that MSSU overload pay has not been updated since 2013 and that many of our peer institutions have more generous compensation for adjuncts and overloads. FWC recommends modest pay increases along with a pay differential for faculty with doctorate/terminal degrees and those that have earned master's degrees/specialist for adjunct pay. However, the FWC recommends that the pay differential should not be applicable to overload pay. The Faculty Senate briefly discussed the report and voted to accept and endorse the recommendations. We are looking forward to discussing the findings with administration. The Faculty Senate is also anticipating a report from the Welfare Committee addressing compensation tied to promotion, as well as a pay equity review.

I'd like to again close my report with a few student testimonials that highlight the exemplary work of our faculty, particularly the aspects of instructions that are a challenge to quantify and can get overlooked. In my previous report I included three longer comments from students nominating their professors for the Outstanding Teaching Award. The comments demonstrated the qualitative labor that doesn't always get captured in the various indices used to measure successful outcomes at a university. This month I'm including a few shorter comments, about three different professors, that also point to the hallmarks of an excellent faculty body. The comments are slightly edited for length and to protect anonymity:

"She is an incredible educator who is also quite compassionate. I truly appreciate reading her kind, upbeat, and supportive comments on my assignments. She gives excellent advice on how I might better my work."

“She truly cares about the success of her students and works diligently to ensure that she is providing the students with the best materials and resources. Outside of the classroom, she takes a personal interest in her students. She asks about families, work experience, interests and hobbies, and remembers these details for future conversations.”

“He cares so much about his students and always pushes us to think outside the box. I can tell he's actually passionate about his classes and wants all of his students to find their own artistic voice. Without him my art would not be as focused and successful and I truly believe he deserves recognition for his hard work and dedication to the students at Southern.”

I welcome your suggestions and look forward to continued collaboration with administration and staff in the coming semester.

Thank you,

Michael Beilfuss
Faculty Senate President
Assistant Professor, Language and Literature