Intercampus Faculty Council (IFC) Retreat

August 19 and 20, 2014; Country Club Hotel and Spa, Lake Ozark MO

Attendance: Gary Allen (University of Missouri System, UMS), Martin Bohner (Missouri University of Science & Technology, S&T), Beth Chancellor (University of Missouri, MU) Mark Fitch (S&T), Hank Foley (UMS), Steve Graham (UMS), Rebecca Johnson (MU), Matthew Keefer (University of Missouri-St. Louis, SL), Steve Knorr (UMS), Carole McArthur (University of Missouri-Kansas City, KC), Dennis Miller (MU), Melanie Mormile (S&T), Deborah Noble-Triplett (UMS), Craig Roberts (MU), Betsy Rodriguez (UMS) Christopher Spilling (SL), Nancy Stancel (KC), Keith Stine (SL), Peggy Ward-Smith (KC), Chris Weisbrook (UMS), Tim Wolfe (UMS)

The meeting commenced at 3 pm on August 19 with introductions and an informal, roundtable discussion on important issues facing our university system and higher education, in general. Topics included academic freedom and autonomy, shared governance, tenure and post-tenure review, evaluation of teaching performance, the balance between collaboration versus competition in academic work, and Title IX.

Betsy Rodriguez (UMS Vice President for Human Resources) reported on benefit changes for the fall enrollment period, with a focus on health care and wellness initiatives. Dr. Rodriguez stated that employees need to be informed and that all are expected to actively select their benefit plan. She provided a basic overview of the plans and noted that there will be several avenues at each campus for employees to learn about their options. IFC members asked Dr. Rodriguez to prepare an overview of the status of the retirement/pension program for a future meeting.

Deborah Noble-Triplett (UMS Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs) reported on the status of the Mental Health and Sexual Assault Task Force, which was formed in January 2014.

Tim Wolfe (UMS President) reported that each campus has seen a significant increase in enrollment, an increase in the number of high-quality students (e.g., those with high aptitude test scores), and achievement of key metrics (e.g., student retention and research productivity). Mr. Wolfe attributed these to the ongoing strategic planning initiative. Mr. Wolfe commented that he is pleased and optimistic regarding higher education funding from the state. He said that, although more work is needed, legislators and residents of the state are forming a favorable opinion of the university and the importance of education.

Gary Allen (UMS Vice President for Information Technology) reported on the ongoing work of task force on enterprise resource planning (ERP) software optimization. A consulting firm has been, and will be, meeting with representatives at each campus to analyze our current environment. The goal is to develop ERP systems that improve efficiency, while maintaining or reducing costs. Dr. Allen and President Wolfe commented that these can be achieved through consistency and sharing across campuses. Dr. Allen stated that the task force is expected to report with recommendations by the end of the calendar year.
Beth Chancellor (MU Associate Chief Information Officer) reported on recent incidents where employee computer credentials were compromised, which resulted in diversion of pay and travel expenses, inconvenience to employees across the system, and work hours to investigate and defend against this fraud. Ms. Chancellor presented a brief overview of multi-factor authentication (MFA) and stated that her office is evaluating MFA options for our system.

The meeting concluded at 7:15 pm and resumed at 9:15 am on August 20 with a second informal, roundtable discussion on important issues. Several items were discussed, including leadership at the department/division level, the status of non-tenure track faculty, and shared governance. Through these discussions, IFC members agreed to develop a subcommittee that will review philosophies and policies regarding tenure with the goal of preparing a series of recommendations for all faculty and system and campus administrators. Subcommittee membership and the changes were not formally established at this retreat.

Steve Knorr (UMS Vice President of University Relations) reported on systematic efforts from his office (e.g., the Show Me Value tour) to improve the perception of the university and higher education throughout the state. Mr. Knorr said that the President’s visits throughout the state, with an emphasis on rural areas, have been successful. These efforts will continue and include campus chancellors. Several IFC members encouraged University Relations to include faculty in these outreach activities. Mr. Knorr also reported a positive outlook on university funding from the state, with (potential) increases in state appropriations, support for capital improvements, and increases in bright flight scholarships.

Chris Weisbrook (UMS Director of Academic Programs) reported on president’s awards, their funding sources and the number of nominations for each award over the past four years. Dr. Weisbrook indicated that there is reduced funding available for the awards. IFC members agreed with her recommendation that the award funding levels remain consistent (i.e., $5000 for each faculty award) and separate awards for service and mentoring be combined and retitled into a single award.

Steve Graham (UMS Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs) distributed a draft (August 15, 2014 version) of a new policy on evaluation of the ability to work. This policy would address the processes and criteria to be used when a faculty member may be unable to perform functions of his/her position. Dr. Graham encouraged IFC members to review the draft for in-depth discussion at the next (September 25) meeting.

The meeting concluded at 2:15 pm.

Minutes approved by IFC 9/25/14