



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

October 5, 2017 meeting

Is it “Better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven”? (Overview)

Faculty Senate held its fourth official meeting on October 5th. It issued a statement condemning the racially motivated vandalism off campus, received an update from the President regarding the budget situation, and approved a slate of candidates for standing committees.

“Can it be a sin to know?/Can it be death?” (Announcements)

- The Faculty Senate Blackboard site has been restored and repopulated. This term’s Communication Reports are included there under their own tab.
- MSU’s new Diversity Plan was approved at the September 28th meeting. The campus committee can access it online: <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/diversity/>
- Jason Bailey from the KY Center for Economic Policy will speak about pensions and taxes on Tuesday, October 10th at 6 p.m. in the Rodburn Elementary School gym.
- Chair Tallichet will be inviting Dr. Laurie Couch to speak to the body about retention strategies.
- Work continues on a possible proposal to move to DIII athletics. Senator Adams stated that the issue has come up in Strategic Planning committees, and that she has made information requests (for previous proposals of dropping divisions, the actual expenses of athletic scholarships, numbers re: URM’s, etc.) in that venue. Two pieces of information we already know:
 - Any savings beyond scholarship costs would be determined by the 5 sports per gender the school chooses to retain in DIII. To give one example: even non-scholarship football, like our own, racks up significant expenses in terms of facilities (a football stadium that must be maintained), personnel (it is the sport with the greatest number of coaches), and travel (which can be somewhat expensive, even in regards to “close” games, given the number of players and personnel). A shift to a DIII program without football could conceivably save more money than a shift with football.

- In 2016, the university contributed/paid \$11,426,032 of our athletics program's expenses (source: *USA Today's* [NCAA Finances database](#)). If we divide that 88% subsidization by our UG FTE (using the most recent UG FTE figures MSU uploaded to the [IPEDS database](#)), we find that every undergrad is paying \$1,172 per annum to support DI at MSU.

“So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate” (Statement on recent events)

The Executive Council of the Senate proposed a statement on the racially motivated events that took place off campus:

Several days ago the Morehead campus and community woke to acts of vandalism that represented expressions of racism, hatred, and implied violence. We, the Faculty Senate, decry this cowardly attempt to threaten individuals on the basis of race, or any other categorical difference, and to create fear and division in our community. And so, we pledge to continue our work both on and off campus to foster a socio-cultural climate of inclusion and acceptance.

The body unanimously approved the statement and requested it be disseminated to the student body. Chair Tallichet will take this request to the Provost.

“[L]ong is the way/And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light” (President's report)

The President, sporting a blue and gold tie and complementary Beaker pin, updated the body on the budget situation and recent Board decisions:

- Right now our budget is “stable.” Enrollment is slightly down (we're at 10,390 or so), but we're within our budgeted parameters, so in relatively good shape this term.
- The strategic planning process is underway. Around the first of December, individual committee work will come “to a close” so that the full plan can be brought together.

Facilities updates

- ADUC is on schedule to reopen in Summer of 2018. Between roughly March and September or October (of 2018), the building will be “filled out” and appropriate people and offices will be moved in.
- As many know from reading the BOR books or general talk around campus, six campus structures (the houses of Career Services, International, Honors, Alumni Development, COMA, and the Center for Regional Engagement) will be razed this term. These structures were in need of serious repair, and the razing will eliminate the cost of deferred maintenance as well as reduce the footprint of the university (which should help us in terms of performance funding).
 - The Palmer house is being retained to keep a clear distinction between the university and MSU's Foundation. (CO aside: one positive outcome of the U of L scandal—we get to keep Palmer!)
- The Rock opens sometime around Homecoming (so mid to late October).

- New construction is slowing down “to a crawl” to reduce construction costs (and hence payroll costs). Our focus, after the Rock and ADUC open, will be on maintaining what we have.

Pension update

- Currently, we pay 49 cents for every dollar of payroll for employees in KERS. When that rate increases to 89 cents per dollar, we will be paying about 3.5 million dollars more than we currently are (which, right now, is 11-12 million).
- The increase in KTRS rates has yet to be determined, but these costs will be relatively minimal compared to the KERS increase.
- While increased pension rates will affect all schools, MSU and Murray will be disproportionately hurt, as we are the only schools that are “full scale” in the pension system. Northern and EKV are “half out,” and UK and U of L are all defined benefit plans, so they pay only 10 cents to the dollar for staff, whereas we will pay 84 cents.
- The less than desirable pension increase will not, in and of itself, lead to a mass “shedding” of employees. Drastic moves will only be considered if we receive “catastrophic news.”
 - That said we do need to “trim our pension costs.” We will be looking at selective contracting in some areas and seeing what may result from “natural retirements” and possibly some non-renewed contracts in instruction. Such “trimming” will not fall only on faculty or only on staff—it will be done carefully and holistically.
- One way we will control payroll is through limits on overtime and “extra” payments and stipends.
- The special session on pension reform will be late October or early November. Any ratified changes would be made effective January 1 or June 30 of 2018.
- Right now, the “prevailing thought,” based on decent “Frankfort gossip,” is that
 - the state system will have a mandatory “out” at 27 years of service—those with more than 27 years currently will keep those service years, but 27 is the new maximum
 - the benefits from 27 (or more) years of service will only be able to be accessed once the employee has reached retirement age (CO note: not specified by the President, but probably 65)
 - those who continue to work after reaching the 27-year threshold will exit the pension system and be enrolled in a defined contribution plan (which, like all defined contribution plans, will have a “tax” that goes to the state pension system)
 - healthcare costs (in the state system) will increase, possibly by 3%
 - all new employees will be enrolled in defined contribution plans
 - any current employee in KERS or KTRS will be able to “opt out” of the system and get a one-time payment that will roll over into a defined contribution plan

This “thought,” Dr. Morgan cautioned, is subject to change—no one knows exactly what the legislature will do until they actually do it.

- The Board’s repositioning statement is a response to the known costs of pension reform and the likelihood of appropriation reductions.

Healthcare update

- Increases are coming at the state level, and we can't control that. We have, though, made an effort to control costs internally. Healthcare premiums in 2018 will be nearly identical to what they are in 2017. There will be only two premium increases for (1) smokers and (2) employees who have spouses/significant others who can get healthcare elsewhere.
- Our relatively generous benefits have made us the insurer of choice in the area, which means that we get all the liabilities while other employers reap the savings (when spouses/significant others come on to our plans). We can no longer afford this.
- Dr. Morgan understands that these healthcare decisions will not please all employees, but he believes that this choice offers the greatest good to the greatest number of people (who are all struggling as a result of increased costs and stagnating wages).

Positioning for the future

- State budget cuts are coming. If our appropriation were subject to the 17% cut all state agencies have been asked to make to their current budgets this year, we'd lose about 7 million dollars. Odds are we won't lose that much, and we probably won't have a cut mid year, but we need to prepare for the loss of some state funds.
- We are financially stable this year, but this doesn't mean that we should wait until March, April, or May to start making adjustments or planning strategic cuts. (CO aside: so there are ways to address shifts in state appropriations other than unvetted furloughs? *Quelle surprise!*)
- In order to account for the pension increases we know are coming, and to address the cuts that are well nigh inevitable, the BOR has authorized the administration to evaluate a "reasonable percentage" (7.5%) of our overall budget to see how we might "reposition" roughly 10 million dollars (which is the round tally of the 7.5% of our overall budget, once the "baked in" elements are accounted for).
 - Repositioning can involve cutting, but it is also controlling total payroll, maximizing enrollment, shifting our scholarship portfolio, and looking at revenue options.
 - Because we want to be proactive, rather than reactive, in the Spring, Dr. Morgan would like for decisions to be made, and plans to be in progress, by January 1.
- Speaking of repositioning. . . We've suspended the Alumni and Development center and asked donors if we could move their donations to scholarship funds. Graciously, almost all of them did. In recognition of very generous donations, we will name portions of ADUC after some alumni. Moving forward, we're going to solicit more donations for scholarships, as such giving aids our students and vastly improves our bottom line (which, of course, allows us to make better investments in things like instruction).

In response to questions, President Morgan noted that there was no indication that the benefits faculty have already accrued would be affected by pension reforms, and there is no reason, at this point, to assume that tenured faculty lines will be affected by budget issues. The current approach is to wait to see if there are natural retirements (that may or may not produce savings).

“[O]f operation blest/To sapience” (Regent’s report)

The Regent, wearing a lovely emerald tie (“With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold, erect/Amidst his circling Spires”), offered an overview of the Sept 28th meeting:

Recognizing success

- Dr. Schack (who was awarded an NSF grant) and Dr. Scott Niles (who was elected secretary of a national council) were recognized at the start of the meeting. This recognition, in Regent Pidluzny’s estimation, signals President Morgan’s commitment to rewarding faculty and staff work, even in these trying economic times.
- The first graduates of the Craft Academy were accepted at top-ranked universities (Yale, CalTech, MIT, etc.). Because a number of those graduates received better aid packages at other institutions, many did not enroll in those top-tier schools, but the acceptances themselves are a point of pride for the new academy.
 - In response to a later query, the Regent and Provost affirmed that 17 Craft graduates enrolled at MSU.
- Toward the end of his report, Regent Pidluzny stressed the importance of the suspension of the Alumni and Development Center (a suspension already mentioned in the President’s report): in privileging scholarships over (new) construction, the administration has signaled its commitment to the core mission of the university. This should hearten faculty.

Approvals, enrollment reports, and personal service contracts

- The Board approved the revised capital plan, which places “reasonable scope renovations” at the top of the list, and ratified the new diversity plan, which seeks to increase the number of URM staff, faculty, and students on campus.
- The student code of conduct has been updated. Regent Pidluzny has been assured that our code will fully comply with recent changes to Title IX.
- Tim Rhodes presented a thorough enrollment report.
 - We exceeded our target goal on new students (reaching 1,330), while maintaining a relatively high average ACT score (23). Enrollment Services should be lauded for their good work in this regard.
 - Our graduate numbers and transfer numbers are down, and our international enrollment may be peaking (and could “unwind” if we aren’t able to work out a new agreement with the Saudis or find another international market to tap).
 - If our recruitment and new student numbers remain stable, we will still see a 3% decline in enrollment because our largest cohorts will be graduating.
 - We have been encouraged to create a “culture of enrollment” so that we can help to stabilize our numbers and ultimately grow our enrollment.
- Many faculty have asked about personal service contracts. We should all know that the number listed in the Board book for contracts is the *maximum* amount the BOR approves to be spent. It is not the amount we have to or will pay.
 - In response to a question about contracts for legal counsel, Regent Pidluzny stated that there are always areas where university counselors require specialized help, such as immigration law. That said he conceded that the threatened legal action against the Executive Council of the Senate last year, and our University Counsel’s inadequate response to that threat, was

concerning because it intimated that faculty service work was (a) not part of faculty duties and (b) not covered by University Counsel. He is confident the current administration will resolve the issue.

Charting change

- We are watching what happens with the Obama era overtime rule. Given the fact that the Trump administration won't defend the rule, and changes appear imminent, it is more than likely we will have to reclassify employees again.
- As promised, the university budget will be in a new format that ensures easier data retrieval. Spreadsheet aficionados, like Regent Pidluzny, will rejoice.
- New SACS standards will be approved in December of this year.
- Paul Goodpaster has formed a subcommittee to look at BOR bylaws. Regent Pidluzny is on this subcommittee.
- Our admittedly "extravagant" construction projects—the renovation of ADUC, the new dining commons—should serve us well as recruitment and retention tools. They are incredibly impressive. (CO aside: although perhaps not as impressive as the new budget format, which Regent Pidluzny spoke of far more animatedly.)
 - In response to queries, Regent Pidluzny noted that the renovation adds 80,000 square feet to ADUC, and that there are no immediate plans to add parking spaces because the "parking crunch" of a few years back has eased—mostly due to the fact that we have fewer faculty and students.

"The mind is its own place, and in itself/Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n." (Provost's report)

Provost, resplendent in markedly darker blue and gold neckwear, reported:

- General Education reform is ongoing, and there are many exciting new proposals. Meetings will be scheduled across campus to discuss reform efforts soon.
- The new program proposal initiative (NIPI) will more than likely be suspended. The Provost has enjoyed reviewing the work, but, with the current budget situation, he cannot, in good faith, continue to ask for proposals for projects that he will not be able to fund at this time.
- Although Academic Affairs has many initiatives and hires on hold, it has not been asked to cut in terms of instruction. This in and of itself is a break with past practice.
- We are hoping that increasing our admission index will pay real dividends in the era of performance funding, and the Provost, like the President and Regent before him, averred the decision to fundraise for scholarships is a smart academic and financial move.
- Good work is being done on retention. We will hear a great deal more about this when Dr. Couch visits the body.
- Early College is an important part of our enrollment mix. When the Governor began providing scholarship dollars for dual-credit classes, we reaped some benefit from our large EC presence. Currently, the Provost is working with Joel Pace and his team to verify credentialing. They are exploring an "interesting model" that could give potential instructors discounts on coursework those instructors need to be certified to teach dual-credit classes. A great deal of energy is also being expended on

“incentivizing” EC students to attend MSU. One of our new approaches has been to target areas of larger metropolitan regions we have not been to before. In response to criticism/concerns he had heard, the Provost stressed that the “average” student earns only 7 hours from Early College, and that all the evidence we currently have suggests that EC students have “been about the same” as other students.

- During Q&A, the Provost was somewhat dismayed to discover that a faculty member in Math was not able to determine who was teaching EC math courses. He encouraged her to follow up with a series of people (some of whom she had already contacted).
- We are neither expecting nor budgeting for many Saudi students. The President met with top folks in DC and made a compelling case for reestablishing connections, but we haven’t heard back yet.

“He left it in thy power, ordaind thy will/By nature free” (Senate committee reports)

- Governance—Senator Lennex put forward a slate of nominees for standing committees. This slate (attached to the CR) was unanimously approved. The Senate also elected new members to the Planning committee (see the attachment).
- Evaluation—No report
- Faculty Welfare and Concerns—Senator Carlson encouraged faculty to review their Flexmade Easy accounts and ensure that money is being withdrawn from their FSAs (which will expire this year) before their HSAs (which will roll over).
- Issues—Senator Hare queried our SACS liaison about reports that we will now be assessing “unattached minors” (minors which do not have corresponding majors, such as French). The reports are accurate. Expect more on this in the future.
- Academic Issues—Senator Ahmadi relayed that his committee met to determine its charge—it will be reviewing general education and exploring how to deal with unprepared students

“The world was all before them, where to choose/Their place of rest, and Providence their guide” The Senate adjourned at 5:37 p.m. The next full meeting will be on October 19th.



Provided by the 2017-18 Faculty Senate Communications Officer, who knows that “malt does more than Milton can/To justify God’s ways to man.”

Governance Committee Apointments 10.5.17

Excellence in Teaching

COS 2016-2018 Michelle McClave

Research and Creative Productions

CCAHSS 2017-2019 Chris Field

Undergraduate Curriculum

CBT 2016-2018 Michael Hypes

Graduate Curriculum

COE 2017-2019 Shane Shope

Student Disciplinary

CCAHSS 2016-2018 Alana Scott

Library

CBT 2017-2019 Johnathan Nelson

Elections:

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Library 2017-2019 Tom Kmetz v. ___

Planning

CBT Senator 2016-2020 Ashraf Aly v. ___

COE Senator 2015-2019 David Long v. ___

COS Senator 2015-2019 Jennifer Dearden v. ___

Appointments:

Service

Distinguished Faculty 2017-2018 Tim Hare

Registration Advisory

Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Representative 2017-2018 Sue Tallichet

General Education Council

Faculty Senate Representative Chair-Elect 2017-2018 Tim Hare