

Communications Report of the Faculty Senate meeting on 2021-August-19

1. **Meeting start:** 15:45/3:45 PM
2. President Dr. Patricia Harrelson started the meeting of the new 2021/22 Faculty Senate by discussing the minutes of the two senate meeting on August 12, 2021, the closing meeting of the FS 2020/21 and the Opening Election meeting of the FS 2021/22. Senator Hare moved to approve both minutes, second by Senator Grupe, approved.
3. Announcements:
 - Attendance Tracking: Make sure students are given some task in the first two week of the semester that confirms that they were actively participating in the class. This is crucial for financial aid purposes. There is a new, easier system in place and the deadline is August 26.
 - Do not ask students in your class if they are vaccinated or not. This is considered personal information. The exceptions are courses that include outside training where vaccinations are required. Please refer to Provost Norman's email from August 19.
 - Photos: Please send a photo of yourself to Communications Officer Dr. Grupe (d.grupe@moreheadstate.edu) by September 03. If you need a photo, please contact our University photographer Tim Holbrook (t.holbrook@moreheadstate.edu) and set up an appointment with him. In case you are not providing a photo, the EC will pick a photo for you!
4. Presidents Report: no report, the president was unable to attend.
5. Regent Report (Dr. Adams): Faculty Regent Dr. Adams gave a summary of the BOR meeting from this morning. The raises to employees as suggested by the president were approved. These are \$10 per hour for the lowest paid employees on Campus and a \$400 if an employee joined MSU in 2020 and an additional \$200 if joined in 2019. The Board also approved a modification of the debt policy (which is included in the BOR bylaws). The main modification is that we will now use the Moody's score card to make debt determinations. What is interesting to note here is that the "cash on hand" not not as important any more in the new metric, but what is even more important is how much money is in the Foundation. In addition the BOR approved the consent agenda which included an update of the Emergency Operations document. Regent Adams requested that the BOR remove the word "flu" from the pandemic plan in the Emergency Operations document. Other members of the Board suggested we refer to the flu/virus pandemic plan. That will be the designation. In his closing remarks the president stressed the following points the administration will be focusing in the next year:
 - A push to be one of the top 15 institutions in the South
 - The QEP
 - Website revision/branding

- Recruitment in area high schools
- Employee salaries
- Development of 1-2 new programs
- Recapturing student retention
- Fundraising
- Alumni giving (particularly scholarships)
- Foundation (which has increased to \$72.5 Million)

Senator Sharp was wondering when the raise would go into effect. The hourly raise for waged employees will go up in September, but Regent Admas wasn't sure when the \$600 raise will go into effect. We know by now after an email by the President dating August 24 that this will go into effect on October 16. Senator Grupe was wondering what every happened to the \$500 stipend for recruiting on an Eagle team. Regent Adams said it was not discussed at the board and she had no further information. Senator Hare ask if there is any kind of consideration of following our policies for raises, meaning that we use merit raises again. Regent Adams mentioned the the highest priority of the President is the salary gap of several thousands of dollars we have with other universities and the President wants to address this problem first, but he is not concerned with merit. Senator Hare requested that the new EC should discuss this further with the President. Why are some of us putting a lot of work into this while others do nothing and still get a raise (Senator Hare expressed this slightly different, but I am referring here to he recordings, see link below). Senate President Harrelson said that with all the conversations she had with President Morgan it became clear that his first priority is closing the gap and not merit at all. President Harrelson mentioned that a meeting with the President and the EC has been already setup in the new few weeks (canceled in the meantime).

6. Staff Congress Report (David Flora): Chair Flora summarized the previous staff congress meeting and mentioned the discussions on UAR 324 concerning staff pay raises when changing positions. Also an issue is eliminating fees for staff when they are taking classes at MSU, like the fee for using the rec center. The Benefits and Comp committee are still working on the staff survey. Also discussion with Caroline Adkins regarding medical coverage were discussed. Another issue mentioned was PG 49 which governs the vacation days for staff. Currently there is a cap at 225 hours. President Morgan proposed that cap be lifted, however there is a deadline by they have to be taken. The idea here simply is that vacation days have a purpose and they should be taken. It is after all a benefit. This was moved by staff congress to Benefits and Comps.
7. SGA Report (Ethan Wells): Ethan welcomed all new faculty senators. He mentioned that SGA still has their senate elections coming up. The Eagle Fest in the previous night had an amazing outcome. Lots of people came to their booth. SGA is excited about the new year.
8. Provost Report (Dr. Norman): Nothing really to report. It looks like we are off to a good start into the semester. Provost Norman talked about the about the 1 or 2 new programs mentioned in the BOR report, that these are right now in just preliminary discussions. Right now this is at the deans level, but once this is at a more mature state, faculty and

programs will be ask for their input. Senator Morrison ask about asking vaccination status of students if this was a University policy or a legal requirement. Dr. Norman said that this is not a legal requirement. This is personal health information, but there are cases when courses can require vaccinations.

9. Executive Council Report:

- **Faculty Campus Climate Survey** During the July 12 meeting we had a report by Lesia Lennex and Sue Tallichet on the Faculty Campus climate survey. You can find the executive summary of the report in the appendix of this document (Section A) and the Full report on the Faculty Senate Blackboard shell in the folder for the July 12, 2021 meeting. The EC was approached by several faculty asking if this survey could be presented to the Board of Regents. President Harrelson ask the Senate what their opinion is to share this report with the BOR. Dr. Lennex (still guest at this moment) who worked on the survey highly encouraged that this survey should be presented to the BOR. Senator Hare asked our current Regent Adams and also past regents what their perspective is on how the BOR would react to the survey results. Regent Adams responded and said that the BOR needs the 30000 feet view, but it will be helpful for the BOR to see the survey. It is a rounded survey that summarizes good aspect of the institution, but it also highlights the problems. This information may help the BOR to make wise decisions in the future. Senator White was concerned about the 33% return rate and about the random sampling. Senator White said it maybe more important that the provost and president see this report, he is not so much concerned about the BOR, because the provost and present can change things. President Harrelson ask past-president Grupe if this was presented to the provost and president. He mentioned that he contacted them both right after the July 12 meeting. President Morgan referred to the provost and the plan is to meet with the provost to discuss this further. Provost Norman who was still on the call ask to speak. He was looking for a summary of the report and he would be open for discussions. Dr. Lennex said she would send an executive summery to him through President Harrelson.

Senator Hare moved to go ahead and present to to the BOR. The motion was second by senator Long and passed.

- **Resignation of President Harrelson** President Harrelson announced that effective by the end of this meeting she would stepping down as the Faculty Senate President. She has already informed the EC, the provost, and the president about this step. The reason is that the she and her husband Flint expecting another child in February and she wants to take some time of this semester to take care of her family and herself. President Harrelson said that she was really looking forward to her role as faculty leader, but she has full confidence that president-elect David Long will be able to take over the rule as president. Together with parliamentarian Doug Chatham, President Harrelson came up with a plan how this will work. The first step is that president-elect Long will no longer be representing his department and as a replacement for him Lesia Lennex will represent his department now as the second senator (besides Senator Sharp). But now we also have to elect a new representative from the College of Education on the Executive Council. For this purpose the senators of this college

have to have a new caucus and went into a Webex breakout room to bring forward candidates for replacing David Long on the EC. The College of Education presented Lesia Lennex as their sole candidate. After some technical issues with the polling function, Governance chair Julia Finch was also to conduct the election and Lesia Lennex was voted into the EC. She will take over the role as chair of the Evaluation committee. Congratulations President Long and Senator Lennex!

Because president-elect will now be the new president we also need a new president elect pro-tempore. President Long will then finish this partial term and then finish his term in 2022/23 for which he was elected into, meaning the President Long can serve for almost 2 years. The president elect pro-tempore only serves for this year 2021/22. This rule has to be elected from our new EC, Julia Finch, Katie Kaufman, Kouroush Jenab, and now also Lesia Lennex. A poll was conducted by still President Harrelson. The result was that Senator Finch was elected to be President-elect pro tempore for the remainder of this year. This concluded the report from the Executive Council.

10. Executive Council Committee Reports:

- **Academic Issues:** (K. Jenab): No report
- **Evaluations:** This will now be led by Senator Lennex
- **Faculty Welfare & Concerns** (K. Kaufman): No report
- **Governance:** (J. Finch): Please send preferences on which subcommittee you would like to serve to her by Monday, August 23. She reminded everybody to always reserve the 3:45PM/15:45 every Thursday as meeting time, starting next week. Senator Finch will also send out appointment letters for standing committee members within the next week or two.

11. New Business: Senator Finch mentioned that we have partnered with the National Coalition Building Institute to become one of their campus affiliates working with Dr. Caroline Atkins through Diversity and Inclusion. There will be diversity training offered again. Recently this was done for the incoming RAs. Let Senator Finch know if you are interested, or contact your College ambassador, or Caroline Adkins.

12. Old Business: Ad Hoc committee on Workload. We receive a report from this committee during the close out session of the 2020/21 senate on August 12. Ad hoc committees can only work until the end of the senate year and need to be re-instated by the new senate. President Harrelson presented the committee description and the committee member to senate and ask if the new senate wishes if this committee will continue its work. The original plan was that this committee would present their final report by October 15, 2021 to the FW&C committee which would then present this to senate by Spring 2022. Senator Grupe suggested to extend the October deadline by a month given that the committee has not met since June (as reported by Senator Sharp during the August 12 meeting). President Harrelson suggested that FW&C will discuss this at the first meeting on August 26 and also check with the committee members if they wish to stay on. FW&C can then present this to Senate at the September 02 meeting. Senator Grupe made a motion that this committee continues with its work and that FW&C presents an updated committee

description/timeline and membership list at the September 02 meeting. Senator Hare second. Motion approved.

13. **Final Announcement by President Harrelson:** The way it worked out from her department, Katie Kaufman substituted for her while she is president. But this also means that with President Harrelson's resignation she will be no longer senator. However, she promised that she is planning to attend the meetings off and on.

The Senate is wishing Patricia and Flint all the best with their new baby.

14. Senator Finch moved to adjourn, actually second by several senators, motion passed. Meeting adjourned: 17:00/5:00 PM
15. The **recording of the meeting** can be found at <https://moreheadstate.webex.com/moreheadstate/ldr.php?RCID=1bfa7651d91b52443d9fc799f8f500fb>
16. **Final Final Note:** Past President Dr. Grupe presented the Resolution of Honoring former Senate President Dr. Lesia Lennex to her on August 25 after receiving the signed document from University President Dr. Jay Morgan. Dr. Lennex was very thrilled about this resolution.



Figure 1: Resolution for Lesia Lennex

Submitted by Senator Dr. Dirk Grupe, Communication Officer of the 2021/22 Senate

A Faculty Campus Climate Survey Executive Summary and Recommendations

Positive aspects of MSU climate were noted throughout this survey. Most respondents indicated that they understood their role in the mission of MSU, that they had adequate training to do their job and that they had productive interactions with their co-workers, supervisors and colleagues in other areas. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed to some extent that their work at MSU is important (96 percent) and that they liked the people with whom they worked (83 percent). In response to Chair or Associate Dean questions, most faculty respondents indicated agreement that their Chair or Associate Dean is candid (71 percent), communicates with faculty/staff in a timely manner (71 percent), listens to employees in their reporting department(s) (76 percent), listens attentively and with empathy to concerns expressed by others (69 percent), and ensures that their faculty/staff have the resources, information, authority and support needed to achieve job duties (70 percent).

Negative aspects of MSU climate were noted in several specific areas throughout this survey. It should be noted that faculty disagreed with more specific questions regarding Chair/Associate Dean communication. This pattern also suggests that there is a significant number of faculty who may have become marginalized by their immediate leadership. At least 70 percent or more of the respondents were dissatisfied (disagree or strongly disagree) that vacancies were being filled in a timely manner. Only 10 percent of all respondents agreed that vacancies in their unit were being filled in a timely manner. Moreover, 69 percent were dissatisfied regarding having adequate personnel in their work area to accomplish tasks. Most respondents (74 percent) said they worked during their paid time off, and about half of them (46 percent) indicated their disagreement that they had opportunities for advancement at MSU. Slightly less than half of all respondents (48 percent) said they felt their work at MSU was valued. Another 44 percent of respondents disagreed with that statement.

According to aggregate survey results, the greatest source of dissatisfaction was compensation, followed closely by lack of adequate faculty, and lack of shared governance. Approximately three quarters of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they were adequately paid for their work. Only 5 percent of the respondents agreed that “adequate annual raises are built into the budgeting process,” while an overwhelming 90 percent disagreed with that statement (73 percent of which strongly disagreed). The open-ended response questions clearly cited lack of hiring tenure-track faculty as a source of dissatisfaction. Some responses appeared to indicate that programs had significantly suffered due to lack of tenure-track hiring and retention. A distinct lack of shared governance was cited in several open-ended responses. Faculty expressed disenfranchisement by the administrative structure which includes Chairs/ Associate Deans, Deans, Provost, and President.

While there are positives at MSU, the negatives may more clearly and immediately affect our academic programs. An academic program thrives in an environment of research and scholarship. Programs must have adequate faculty (tenure-track and/or tenured faculty) to address programmatic integrity as well as participate in an informed academic culture driven by scholarship and research practices (including internships, undergraduate research, and graduate programming). A university must financially support their faculty in order to attract, and retain, quality tenure-track candidates. Faculty clearly love their students, but at the end of the day, bills must be paid. Offering competitive salaries, at all ranks, would encourage quality applicants and could begin to address lack of adequate tenure-track faculty.

As previously noted, a neutral response often indicates a lack of knowledge about the content of a survey item. Recall that most self-identified faculty reported that they had relatively little or no contact with their Deans and that on three-quarters or slightly more of the items evaluating how Deans and the Provost did their jobs, faculty's modal response was neutral. Taken together these findings demonstrate an existing void between faculty and upper level academic administrators due to a lack of understanding about what administrators do and a lack of communication between the two parties. Clearly, these results support the recommendation to enhance communication between faculty the Deans and the Provost in order to establish shared governance in the process. One helpful initial step could be to determine job descriptions for all academic administrators, namely Department Chairs and Associate Dean; Deans and the Provost.

The lack of shared governance at MSU is a persistent issue. Many have noted it anecdotally and this survey supports the finding that MSU lacks commitment to shared governance. To paraphrase the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), faculty representatives, duly elected and selected through Faculty Senate, should fully participate in curriculum and academic affairs, university operations including selection of administrator search committees and policy formation, and long-term planning including budgets, compensation (salaries, etc.), and hiring/retention of tenure-track faculty. Open-ended responses indicate that faculty value their students and colleagues but that lack of shared governance leading to a "rudderless" and "shambolic" institution has left faculty disparagingly exhausted. Faculty are ready and willing to work with administrators to create lasting shared governance. A shared governance which would embrace the ideals of higher education would encourage not only quality applicants, but also retain outstanding faculty. While this survey is an excellent beginning because it has identified areas of weakness and concern in the work climate at Morehead State University, follow up surveys that focus on specific areas for initiating and developing lines of communication between faculty, staff and administrators that establishes and maintains shared governance is imperative. These developments could launch the development and implementation of supervisor evaluations and fair and adequate compensation that become routine. These steps are much more certain toward contributing to the future growth of the university than the path the institution is currently pursuing.