American Association for Higher Education Annual Meeting Report

From: Robert Logan, Associate Professor, Journalism

Robert Logan, Journalism, attended AAHE at the request of Faculty Council and the Provost's office. This is his report to the Council.

An emphasis on collaborative learning and a commitment to good teaching highlighted the annual meeting of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) in April.

Most of the 165 participating faculty from 140 different colleges and universities in AAHE's Forum on Exemplary Teaching reported significant improvements in papers, exams, student interest and teaching evaluations if class sessions included preassigned reports by a team of students. More than half of the participating faculty said they routinely supplement lectures or class discussions with student presentations or reports.

Supervised laboratory experiences or student team presentations were seen as pedagogically superior to class lectures and Socratic teaching styles in most arts, humanities and science disciplines. Faculty also reported frequent check points (e.g., exams, quizzes, papers, every two weeks or so) helped maintain student interest in semester long courses.

Several faculty from professional programs noted that collaborative models may be less appropriate in graduate settings where students enroll to work with a faculty mentor. There was considerable agreement, however, that thesis and dissertation advising can be an exemplary collaborative arrangement.

Although most of the discussion was based on anecdotal evidence, educational researchers attending the conference noted that many of the assertions made by the Forum's participants were empirically grounded.

There was considerable agreement that faculty sponsored dialogues about teaching can advance pedagogy and reinforce a university's commitment to classroom instruction. A strategy utilized in this year's Forum asked faculty members to prepare a 2-3 minute story about an incident that influenced their classroom performance.

Faculty were divided into groups of five persons from different disciplines who shared their experiences. One person was elected to present a story and discussed the commonalities within the group to the larger audience. Although the story approach was initially uncomfortable for some participants, most of the faculty found the ensuing dialogue quite useful.

The faculty emphasis on improving teaching also became the focus of discussions by campus administrators during the conference. University provosts and presidents heard Ernest L. Boyer, President of The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching, report that the interpretation of the term “scholarship” in American universities needs to be widened to include faculty teaching performance.

Boyer said the Carnegie Commission's forthcoming analysis of the status quo in American universities will report that the emphasis on faculty research productivity has become excessive and educationally counterproductive. Faculty evaluations need to multidimensionally appraise a faculty member's contributions to academic, university, civic and cultural communities in the future, Boyer explained.

The Carnegie report, which is entitled “The New American Scholar” will be published later this spring. Initial administrative reactions at AAHE ranged from enthusiastic approval to sarcasm. But the report picked up support in interesting quarters, including President Donald Kennedy of Stanford University, who used it as the cornerstone of his remarks to the Stanford faculty one day after the meeting on April 5.

During a speech to celebrate Stanford's centennial and to frame the university's goals for the next century, Kennedy said, "it is time for us to reaffirm that education—that is, teaching in all its forms—is the primary task, and that the society will judge us in the long run on how well we do it."

Kennedy then asked for institutional renewal and reemphasis on advancing pedagogy in all disciplines. During public comments during AAHE, Kennedy and several other leading administrators said it was important for leading public and private research universities to recommit themselves to better teaching.

At MU and more personally, the AAHE meeting confirmed my belief that the Faculty Council should accelerate existing cooperation with the Provost's office to advance teaching throughout the university.

But also I left the AAHE meeting with considerable pride. I can honestly report that faculty-student relations, interdisciplinary faculty cooperation and faculty and administrative interest in improving teaching seem healthier at MU than at most competing Carnegie Research institutions.

Indeed, MU may be closer to the goals advanced in “The New American Scholar” than most of the approximately 1000 large research institutions, small colleges, community colleges and regional, urban universities which sent representatives to AAHE.
Minutes of the Faculty Council Meeting
April 12, 1990

Attendance
The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. in S110 Memorial Union. Twenty-five members were present. Professors Eckernacht, Schrader, Sievert, and Slusher were absent. Council met in open session until 3:55 p.m. and then met in closed session to discuss committee appointments and personnel matters.

Approval of Minutes
A correction was made in the minutes of the March 29, 1990 meeting. In the discussion item on teaching evaluation on page two the sentence, “The Director of the Center for Teaching will be invited to serve ex-officio.”, was corrected to read, “The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence will be invited to serve ex-officio.” The minutes were approved.

Report of Officers
Chairman Kimber reported that members of the IFC had received a copy of a recent memo outlining an agenda for the system Academic Affairs Council, which consists of the Provoce, and others, from the four campuses. Included among the agenda items are Faculty Analysis and Academic Program Review.

Chairman Kimber reminded Council of the memo from Dean Sheridan sent to all faculty announcing an open faculty forum to hear a committee report on and a discussion of our Grant and Contract Incentive (GCI) program. The open forum is scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, 1990, at 3:40 p.m. in Electrical Engineering Auditorium.

Chairman Kimber read a letter from Student Services Vice Chancellor McIntire concerning the resolution, approved by Council on March 29, 1990 on membership in social fraternities and sororities. Vice Chancellor McIntire supports the intent of the resolution and will immediately begin scheduled meetings with various groups to explore strategies and options in working on this important issue.

Chairman Kimber read a letter from Chancellor Monroe announcing that the reception for the Chancellor's Purchase Prize in Art, originally scheduled for April 24, 1990 would be postponed until the fall semester.

The Faculty Council meeting scheduled for May 3, 1990 was changed to May 10, 1990 because of the meeting of the Board of Curators in Rolla on May 3. The May 10, 1990 meeting will be in N222/223 Memorial Union and the Council chair for 1990-91 will be elected at that meeting. The nominating committee was announced to be Professors Warder, Fritzell, and Neely. Professor Warder will serve as chair. It was also announced that the Executive Committee will meet on May 4, 1990.

Action Items
None.

Discussion and Information Items
Faculty Handbook. Professor Fritzell presented a report for the Faculty Affairs Committee on revisions in the MU Faculty Handbook. The committee began reviewing the handbook in 1988-89. The proposed revisions bring the handbook up-to-date by:
1—incorporating all changes adopted by the MU Faculty, MU Faculty Council, and Board of Curators between 1984 (when the previous revision was completed) and early 1990;
2—incorporating revised descriptive information and administrative procedures provided by university and campus administration;
3—correcting inconsistencies in style and usage throughout the document;
4—revising slightly the contents and format of the document.

A motion to suspend the rules in order to take action on the report was approved. A motion to approve the revisions in the Faculty Handbook was approved. Following approval by the Board of Curators, the handbook should be printed and distributed to the faculty in the fall.

Reports from Standing Committees
Academic Affairs. Professor Hahn reported that discussion of the proposed general education requirements has been completed in all except one division. A meeting will soon be held with this division.

Special Projects. Professor Logan reported that he is preparing a summary of the recent meeting of the American Association for Higher Education that he attended. It was also reported that Professors Logan and Kimber will visit with Provost DeFleur to discuss the recent faculty survey.

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Billy Cumble, Recorder
Highlights of the
April 26, 1990
Faculty Council Meeting

As a result of the action of the faculty at the General
Faculty Meeting on April 25, 1990, in which the eight pro-
posals were referred to Faculty Council, Professor Warder
suggested that the Executive Committee examine the eight
proposals and determine what Council can do. The Executive
Committee will begin to examine the proposals at their next
meeting on May 4, 1990.

Council approved a proposal submitted by the Academic
Affairs Committee, to establish a General Education Budget
and Planning Task Force. The group will use the previous
General Education Task Force report to build upon and to
develop a plan for possible implementation of General Educa-
tion Requirements which will be acceptable to a majority of
the voting faculty. The task force will be charged to develop
and put a realistic cost estimate upon the proposed capstone
discipline, cluster, and sophomore seminar. They
will also recommend a phase-in plan for the sophomore
seminar. After the task force presents a report and an explicit
budget detailing the source of funding, the faculty will then
be asked to vote on the entire matter of General Education
Requirements.

Council also endorsed a proposal from the Minority Affairs
Committee that strongly urges the system and MU to extend
their commitment to equal employment and educational op-
opportunities explicitly to gay men and lesbians and include the
words “sexual orientation” in the list “race, color, religion,
sex, national origin, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam Era
Veteran” in all of their policy statements on equal employ-
ment and educational opportunities.
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