The University of Missouri Faculty Council is charged to periodically evaluate the performance of the Chancellor and the Provost. In 2011, the council reviewed Chancellor Brady Deaton, through a survey sent to all tenured, tenure-track and ranked non-tenure-track faculty.

The survey was sent to 1968 faculty members, who also were sent a reminder a few days later. It drew 417 responses for a 21% response rate.

The survey was divided into six areas of concern – understanding university issues, general administration, personnel, budget and resource management, academic and extension programs, and communication. Scores were generally high in all six areas. However, concern was noted about the chancellor’s communication and knowledge/concern for issues at the unit or individual level. The latter may be a reflection of the former, as there seems to be some challenge in the communications “trickle down” to the department and then individual faculty.

In general, the faculty evaluation of the chancellor on 55 measures was positive. The faculty was also asked “grade” him -- 38.8% gave the Chancellor an A, 25.4% gave him a B, 19.4% posted a C, 7.7% gave him a D and 8.7% gave him an F. The results for all of the questions are in the evaluation report.

The Faculty Council Executive Committee met with Chancellor Deaton June 16 to go over the results and to discuss their implications. The discussion was honest and informative. The chancellor took suggestions from the council members on how to address the communications issues.

Chancellor Deaton agreed to meet with the Faculty Council Executive Committee again in November to discuss how the issues raised by the survey were addressed.

Attached are a series of charts that depict the responses to the survey. Note that several question allow for a “no basis to answer” that shows up on the high side of the chart. Combined with the low number of faculty who responded to the evaluation request, this showed a low level of faculty engagement that concerned the Faculty Council as well as the Chancellor. It may indicate a need to examine our own communications practices along with those of the Chancellor.

In addition to the charts, a spreadsheet shows the aggregated answers in numerical form. For purposes of analysis, columns were added that combined the two lowest scores for a question and likewise combined the two highest scores. The percentages produced offer a rough depiction of “direction” for the results.

Submitted by
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The respondents were generally somewhat older than the campus population and predominately male and tenured professors. More than half had worked at the University of Missouri for 11 years or more.
Although the electronic mailing list did not include high administrators, 78 faculty respondents indicated that they also had administrative duties.

Of note is the high level of participation in campus-wide committees by the respondents. This may also indicate that participation in a campus committee is tied to an increased awareness in campus governance and therefore participation in the chancellor’s evaluation process.
Understanding of University Issues

The Chancellor scored very well in this category, especially on the history and traditions of MU and the relationship of MU to the state and Columbia.

The two low items – understanding of shared governance and of issues in your academic unit – were of concern to both the Chancellor and the committee. Both may be related to communication issues.
General administration

Now, let’s look at the Chancellor’s performance in the general administration of the University of Missouri at Columbia. This time, use a similar 1-5 scale to rate Chancellor Deaton’s performance, with 1 representing “very poorly” and 5 representing “very well.” How well do you feel the Chancellor:

Again, most scores were high, especially on ethical performance and professional values. The two lowest – “treats all school, colleges & divisions equally” and builds effective teams may be influenced by the communications issue. Note the very large number or respondents for both questions who said they had “no basis to answer.” The committee and the Chancellor discussed how faculty members know what is happening in other departments and what campus teams accomplish. The visibility and transparency of campus administration is an issue.
Personnel issues

Next we will look at how the Chancellor faces personnel issues. Again, use the 1 to 5 scale to rate Chancellor Deaton’s performance, with 1 representing “very poorly” and 5 representing “very well.” How well do you feel Chancellor Deaton:

- Recruits campus leadership
- Holds campus leadership accountable
- Facilitates professional development
- Respects others
- Responds fairly to personal grievances
- Encourages quality performance from...
- Responds to morale issues
- Encourages pride in the university
- Deals with people with fairness
- Encourages diversification in hiring
- All Other Responses

The low scores here reflect earlier concerns about transparency and communications. Faculty expressed concerns about holding leadership accountable and responding to morale issues. The question about responding to grievances produced too many “no basis to answer” replies to be indicative.

Note that the Chancellor scored extremely high in his respect for others and his encouragement of pride in the university.
Faculty approval of the Chancellor’s handling of budget and resources was tepid, though to be sure the current economic climate produces few success stories. The low score here was on fairly allocating funds. The high score was in promoting fundraising and university development efforts.
The next area deals with MU’s academic and extension programs. Please use the 1 to 5 scale to rate Chancellor Deaton’s performance, with 1 representing “very poorly” and 5 representing “very well.” How well do you believe the Chancellor:

- Is guided by high academic standards
- Is knowledgeable about academic culture
- Supports academic needs
- Encourages innovative academic approaches
- Encourages MU’s teaching mission
- Encourages MU’s research mission
- Encourages MU’s economic mission
- Encourages MU’s outreach mission
- Encourages MU’s international programs

The Chancellor shined in this area. His ratings for high academic standards and knowledge of the academic culture were outstanding. Faculty also ranked him especially high on his encouragement of MU’s research mission and international programs.
As mentioned before, communication is an area of special concerns. Although more than half the responses are positive to several questions, there was obvious concern about communicating with faculty, communicating through the deans and communicating directly to faculty members. The committee noted that these concerns can precipitate other challenges for the university, so should be treated seriously.
Most faculty saw some improvement or at least little slippage in the Chancellor’s performance improvement since taking office. Note again the high number of faculty who said they had “no basis to answer.” A sub-analysis by years of experience at MU showed that faculty who have been at the university less than a decade answered “no basis” much more than the senior professors. This was especially true of the faculty with five years or less at MU. The fact that these professors do not have enough background to comment on university affairs may again be an indication of challenges in faculty/administration communications.
The final grade

Finally, we’ll wrap up this survey with the classic academic question:

The unit of measure faculty are most familiar with in performance evaluation is the letter grade. Chancellor Deaton earned an “A” from 39% of the faculty and a “B” from 25%.

The 32 “F” grades he received were indicative of a trend throughout the survey. There was a cluster of about that many respondents that graded the Chancellor very low on almost any question. This represents a small-but-vocal dissatisfied group whose concerns should be noted. Once again, improved communication – both ways – could help here.