Minutes of February 28, 2013
Faculty Council Meeting

Attendance
Members Present: Steve Ball, Clyde Bentley, A. Cooper Drury, Tim Evans, Bina Gupta, Cheryl Heesch, Art Jago, Rebecca Johnson, Kattish Katti, Sudarshan Loyalka, Tony Lupo, Judith Mabary, Tom Marrero, Dennis Miller, Stephen Montgomery-Smith, Joe Parcell, Craig Roberts, Vitor Trindade, Harry Tyrer, Douglas Wakefield, Rachel Brekhus (Librarians), Richard Guyette (NTT), Nicole Monnier (NTT), John Lory (NTT), and Rebekah Hart (sec.). Members Absent: Jim Baumann, Lisa Flores, Candace Galen, Francisco Gomez, Raja Gopaldas, Ilhyung Lee, Camila Manrique, Karen Piper, Stephen Sayers, Don Sievert (MURA), Mark Prelas (AAUP), Charles Nilon (Black Faculty and Staff), and Katherine Reed (NTT).

Approval of Minutes
Chair Harry Tyrer called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. in S203 Memorial Union. The minutes of the January 24, 2013 Faculty Council meeting were approved as submitted.

Chair Tyrer noted that immediately preceding this Faculty Council meeting, representatives of the MU Police Department gave a safety training presentation that if approved would be disseminated to the campus. [Recorder’s Note: this presentation was arranged by the ad hoc committee on safety chaired by Rebecca Johnson.] Also announced was the spring semester general faculty meeting that will begin at 3:30 p.m. on April 9th in Jesse Wrench Auditorium.

Discussion Item(s)
Course Evaluation Redesign – Guests: Jim Spain, Lisa Sireno, and Paula McFarling. Jim Spain, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies, introduced the project that began three years ago. Faculty Council had agreed that three questions would be included that would address Senate Bill 389. The Assessment Resource Center (ARC) has worked on the redesign for the past two years. Lisa Sireno and Paula McFarling reported on ARC’s recommendations. An ad hoc task force created by Faculty Council identified key elements in the student evaluation: course content, learning environment, teaching delivery, and assessment. Members of ARC then collected data from faculty, administrators, campus leaders, students, and other stakeholders. Recommendations were made that resulted in both main and supplemental forms. Faculty were asked to look at questions and to consider courses they had taught in the last two years in order to determine what type of evaluation would be most informative. Faculty wanted responses from students regarding: if they were learning, if they were actively participating, if the course material was relevant to their career path, and if the course content introduced new ideas. Faculty also suggested that certain subjective terms be avoided and that questions that would result in irrelevant, out-of-scope, or distorted information be omitted. Administrator surveys were also used to collect data. Students were given surveys in the form of pilot evaluations, which yielded information about what students wanted to be asked, namely, was the instructor fair, was the course useful, was the information relevant, and would
the student recommend the course to others. The data collected was used to make recommendations for the new MU evaluation forms. A single main form was devised that would address key constructs, writing and composing, and technology and would also include a five-part SB 389-compliant question. Student comments should not be optional. A supplemental form would be class specific and could be prepared using banks of pre-written items for various types of courses. The form would contain class-specific questions that target six topic areas, up to eight instructor-developed questions, and space for written comments. An additional SB 389 (only) form was also proposed for those classes that would not be evaluated with the main form.

In the discussion that followed, Jago voiced concern about how the new forms would capture the information required by the present tenure and promotion application process. Other points of discussion included the proper administration of evaluations by faculty, how information captured would be used, improving the student response rate, problems with making responses publically available, and increasing the number of SB 389 questions from three to five. Spain explained that the SB 389 questions on the present evaluation forms combine several items where a single answer may not be appropriate. The expanded number of questions would resolve this problem.

Faculty Council must approve the proposed changes within sixty days for the new evaluations to be in place for use at the end of the Fall 2013 semester. The matter of changes to the evaluation will now go to Academic Affairs for further discussion. Recommendations will be presented to Faculty Council by mid April. Roberts suggested that a FAQ page be added to the Faculty Council website regarding the new evaluations. Spain agreed to prepare a 1-2 page response that can be posted to the FC website, along with the proposed forms, and be available to the faculty at large.

2012-2013 Academic Calendar Revision – Monnier. Monnier asked for a decision on whether or not the closure of the university at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 21 for snow be counted against the required number of in-session class days as stated in the CRR. Johnson made a motion that the rules be suspended. The motion was seconded and approved. Johnson made the motion that Faculty Council accept the Thursday in question as one of the required course days for the semester. The motion was seconded and approved.

NTT Vote – Montgomery-Smith. Montgomery-Smith reported on the status of the software to be used to gather an electronic vote on the issue of making NTT faculty voting members of Faculty Council at the Columbia campus. All tenure and tenure-track faculty names have been entered into the database. Each faculty member will receive an e-mail with access to the secure voting site. Wakefield asked for clarification on the process for handling the votes. More than one person should oversee the count. Bentley will assist Montgomery-Smith with the count. Because of uncertainty about the security of the Qualtrix software, Council agreed to allow another week for additional software to be investigated before proceeding. Faculty will receive a reminder to vote following the initial e-mail as well as an explanation of what the “yes” and “no” votes mean. All communications will come from Tyrer as chair of the Faculty Council.
Resolution for moving budget from advisory to shared authority in UMC Faculty Bylaws – Loyalka. Loyalka presented a series of slides based on discussions with Terry Jones (UMSL) on the manner by which UMSL implements shared authority for budget decisions between the faculty and administration. UMSL has established a Budget and Planning Committee, which reports to the University Assembly. The Assembly appoints ten faculty to this committee, the student government president appoints two students, and the staff association president appoints a staff member in addition to him/herself. The Chancellor and Provost are ex-officio (non-voting) members. The B&P Committee addresses larger-scale issues that affect the university but does not debate budget concerns at the college/department or individual level. Input from the committee is frequently adopted by the Chancellor. UMSL’s approach has been successful because of the full support for transparency and timeliness and the Chancellor’s commitment to shared governance. Fiscal Affairs proposed adopting an approach similar to that now in place at UMSL. Fiscal Affairs would become the new B&P Committee, with additions of students and staff; this committee would report to Faculty Council. A similar approach could be adopted at the school and department levels, further extending the goal of shared governance. Loyalka indicated that he has met with the Chancellor regarding this plan and that the Chancellor wants to make sure that those involved understand that “with authority comes responsibility.” Roberts pointed out that training regarding the university budget and how to address confidentiality issues would be necessary. Evans stated that administration must be engaged at each step in the development of the shared authority plan. Doug Wakefield noted that we must first be clear about what “shared” entails. UMSL is fairly small and a less complicated organization when compared with MU. Noting that the intent is to use UMSL’s ideas if not the details, Loyalka agreed to come back to Council with a proposal and to expand input beyond Fiscal Affairs in determining what the proposal should contain.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Mabary, Recorder