

Faculty Senate/Council Report to the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates

University of Missouri-Columbia

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Important issues on MU Faculty Council

Title IX

Title IX issues have largely dominated Council business since fall 2014 and continuing into the spring semester. Of particular interest have been executive orders issued by UM System President Tim Wolfe that have made all university employees mandatory reporters (Executive Order 40, April 2014), and paved the way for revision and extension of the UM Collected Rules and Regulations for definitions of sexual discrimination, as well as new equity panels for students accused of sexual discrimination (Executive Order 41, October 2014). Most recently, through the active advocacy of the Interfaculty Council (IFC), chaired by Dennis Miller of UMC, there has been substantial debate about further changes and additions to the CRR regarding procedures for faculty accused of Title IX violations. President Wolfe was adamant that these changes to the CRR go to the Board of Curators for vote at its meeting in early February, which they did. MU faculty have expressed concern that the newly created equity panels deny faculty access to an active legal counsel able to speak on behalf of his/her client (which was available under the old faculty misconduct rules the new CRRs replaced, though only for Title IX-specific violations). Wolfe has promised a review and evaluation of the CRRs with a possible eye to revision in two years' time. Meanwhile, the discussion continues on campus.

Faculty have also expressed frustration with the mandatory online training, made available only in late November. The training has been beset with significant technical problems; many feel that it is also inadequate in content.

There is also a movement to explore ways in which the category of "confidential" reporters might be expanded, as many are concerned about the categorical nature of the mandatory reporting requirement and its potential to dampen students willingness to discuss issues of sexual discrimination with trusted faculty and staff.

A search for the head of the new Title IX Office was conducted this fall; the formal announcement of the new director is expected imminently.

"Fact-finding" committee for School of Medicine

In response to concerns brought by SoM faculty members, over the summer the Faculty Council created an ad-hoc fact-finding committee to look into various issues in that academic unit,

including impediments to research and management-faculty interactions. Their report is in draft form and expected to be presented to the full Council in the next few weeks.

Special merit/"performance" raises

In response to faculty concern for new models of "performance" raises – large-percentage raises given to a small number top-performing faculty largely along AAU metrics, Faculty Council this fall created an ad-hoc committee to collect both data on and faculty responses to the last two rounds of faculty raises (fall 2013; summer 2014). They have issued an initial report that breaks down the amounts and percentages of raises across academic units and faculty ranks; a survey on faculty attitudes towards the raises is to be deployed in the very near future.

Important campus news

- Garnett Stokes, most recently provost at Florida State University, was appointed the new MU provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs. She rather quietly took up her new position on February 1st, 2015.
- In late fall, MU offered a "Voluntary Separation Program", or early retirement buyout for tenured faculty at least 62 years old and retirement-eligible by August 2015. Out of the 261 faculty eligible, 110 took the buy-out. The campus is now offering a similar buy-out for tenured administrators, with 28 eligible. The deadline for acceptance of the buyout is March 2nd.
- Mizzou athletic director Mike Alden announced that he would be stepping down from that role, which he has held for 17 years, as of August 31st.
- The School of Journalism is at the campus visit stage of its search for a new dean. The former dean, Dean Mills, retired in August 2014.
- The College of Engineering is also in the midst of a search after the retirement of Dean Jim Thompson in summer 2014. Robert Schwartz is currently serving as interim dean.
- MU is expected to name its new Title IX administrator this week (2/16/15).