Dear colleagues,

As we approach the mid-way point in the semester, allow me to update you on the status of several important Senate initiatives and to let you know of some of our other activities.

2005 Revision to the Faculty Manual
The adoption of a comprehensive revision to the Faculty Manual continues to be our highest priority. In this connection, you should know that, though the Senate leadership (the Executive Committee and members of our Manual Subcommittee), the Provost, and the General Counsel put in some serious time and effort on the document during September, the revision is not yet complete. While it is clear that progress has been made, a half dozen or so substantive issues are still outstanding. Moreover, although we have reason to believe that discussions on those remaining issues will take place soon and we expect to have the revision ready for approval by the Senate and then submission to the University Board of Trustees in December, our first objective is to get those outstanding matters settled in the best way possible.

Thus, all faculty should understand that the operative document continues to be the 1994 Faculty Manual (as amended), which can be found on the Provost’s website. HERE

Salary Initiative
From our earliest meetings this past summer, the Executive Committee has been considering how the Senate might play a constructive role in increasing salary levels across the University. Our main concern has been with what we see as declines in real standards of living over the last four years or so, especially in the case of faculty and staff outside of the higher pay levels. I note in this regard that the Department of Labor’s Dec03-Dec04 change in the consumer price index (CPI-U) was 3.3%, its Sept04-Sept05 change was 4.7%, and much of the recent increases in energy costs have yet to work their way through the economy. Additionally, we have been mindful that when one takes into account our across-the-board %-age increase approach to salaries and retirement benefits together with our flat dollar amount approach to health insurance premium increases and to increases in co-pays, fees, and other charges (for the most part), it is obvious that our less well paid faculty and staff have fared the worst. We realize, of course, that University compensation and benefits practices have not been outside of the mainstream, and we note and applaud recent initiatives (e.g., salary floors for faculty of each rank, minimum pay for adjuncts, the $20,000 salary floor for staff, subsidized parking and health insurance for low paid employees) that put us in good light against some of our peers. Nevertheless, the overall experience of many faculty and staff is of a declining standard of living. And that fact has us concerned about other things. We are concerned about financial stress undermining the morale and productivity of faculty and staff. We are concerned that declining real incomes will further compress salary differentials within units. There is a concern that we remain competitive with our peer institutions.

Accordingly, the Executive Committee, in consultation with our Compensation and Benefits Committee, is presently in the process of fashioning a salary increase proposal to be submitted early in the University’s FY07 budget planning process. Designed to address the concerns described above, the Senate proposal will be both specific and comprehensive. We will keep you informed.

Faculty Senate Meetings
The Senate symbolically initiated the new academic year with our Kickoff Dinner on September 13th. With members of the President’s Coordinating Council, several deans, and the leadership of the Staff Advisory
Committee and of the Student Government Association in attendance as guests, the Kickoff featured an Address to the Senate in which President Biondi recounted substantial recent accomplishments of the University and then set out ten important challenges that the University must address over the next decade. The ten challenges, which shape much of the context within which all of us will work, were made a central part of Fr. Biondi’s recent State of the University Address, which you should have received by email on October 7th.

Our next Senate meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 18th, at 3:30 p.m. in Room 253 of the Busch Student Center. In addition to the Report of the President and the Executive Committee, the meeting will include two substantive sessions. First, we will engage in a discussion of faculty involvement in development and alumni relations activities with Steve Petersen (Interim V-P Development and University Relations) and Mary Domahidy (faculty representative to the Development and University Relations Committee of the Board of Trustees). We will then discuss the current state of University athletics with Mike Ross (SLU representative to the NCAA and chair of the Athletics Advisory Board) and with Athletics Director Cheryl Levick, with a special emphasis on the changes and challenges attendant to entry into the Atlantic 10 Conference. As you know, the regular meetings of the Senate are open to all faculty, and I invite and encourage each of you to attend on Tuesday.

I want to also give you advance notice that the Senate will meet on Tuesday, November 15th, at 3:30 p.m. in Auditorium C of the Doisy Learning Resources Center, School of Medicine. That meeting will feature a presentation on the University’s endowment and our investment strategy by Bob Woodruff (V-P Business & Finance/CFO) and Bryan Pini (Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer).

**Faculty Senate Committee Activities**

In addition to the activities of the Executive Committee and of the Senate as a whole at our regular meetings, a great deal of the important work of the Senate is performed on an ongoing basis by our various standing committees. A complete listing of Senate committees and committee members can be found [HERE](#). And while the charges for each committee are multiple, a brief description of some of their present activities is illustrative of the breadth and importance of the work they perform. Thus, our Academic Affairs Committee is in the process of surveying SLU academic integrity policies, procedures, and actual practices on a school-by-school basis with an eye towards identifying “best practices”, and is monitoring various “Academic Bill of Rights” campaigns. Our Affirmative Action and Diversity Committee is working with the Provost in an effort to survey and assess affirmative action and diversity initiatives campus-wide, again with an eye toward recommending improvements. The Compensation and Benefits Committee, in addition to working with the Executive Committee on our salary proposal, is monitoring likely changes with and the actual utilization of fringe benefits. Our newly renamed Faculty Resources Committee is compiling an inventory of University services and activities that are appropriately regarded as faculty resources, with accompanying narrative which explains and articulates just how such services and activities are necessary to the performance of faculty responsibilities and conducive to faculty development. Our Governance Committee is attempting to obtain descriptions of de facto governance structures in the colleges, schools, and libraries and will analyze and compare this information with practices at peer institutions. Finally, our Professional Relations Committee has been quite busy investigating and occasionally adjudicating various grievances and other personnel actions involving faculty.

As you can see, the work of the Senate is done by many people in many ways. On behalf of all of them, I assure you that we will exercise the privilege and the responsibility of acting on your behalf to the best of our abilities.

Respectfully submitted,
John Griesbach, Faculty Senate President
Erratum: Several colleagues brought to my attention that I was in error in my August 29 communication when I wrote: “You might also have noticed that health insurance premiums for the next year have been held in check for the two HMO plans.” I now understand that only the CMR HMO plan premiums were held in check, at a 1% increase. There was a 14% increase for the HealthLink HMO plan, and a 17% increase in HealthLink UPMP premiums. I have also been informed that 2080 of the roughly 3500 health insurance enrollees (68%) are in the CMR HMO; 494 are enrolled in the HealthLink HMO; and 640 are in the HealthLink UPMP plan.