July 7, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

The Spring semester has ended. The academic year has ended. The fiscal year just ended. In fact, my term as Faculty Senate president is over (more to follow on that). But I owe you one last news message. Even if you don’t get around to reading this until Fall, it’s here for the record and is posted with earlier newsletters on the Senate’s Web site.

Faculty Contracts
July’s begun and once again we are wondering where our contracts are. I’m advised that they are in process and should be out any day. While we won’t see merit raises for FY10 and most of us know exactly what our incomes from SLU will be next year, there are a few exceptions. UMG faculty are governed by their own compensation plan and will see salary adjustments based on that plan. In addition, our colleagues who received tenure and/or promotions in rank will see increases for those achievements (vs. merit), and there always are shifts in administrative assignments (e.g., department chairs) that affect pay.

University Budget and Academic Planning
SLU has made it through FY09 with no additional budget cuts and no across-the-board reductions in personnel. As mentioned in my Spring semester messages, the Provost requested academic planning information from the deans and directors. I hope you all had an opportunity, through whatever means your unit uses, to participate in this process. The Provost is working on compiling the information he received; most immediately, it will inform FY11 budget discussions.

FY10 Admissions and Enrollment
The latest FY10 admission and enrollment figures continue to look promising. For example, the number of traditional freshman admissions confirmed for Fall 2009 is slightly higher than the confirmations for Fall 2008. Registration continues through the summer and we’re at 95% of where we were at this point last year. Final numbers really won’t be known until mid-September when the Fall census is published, but the signs are trending positive. I don’t have data for upperclass retention, but the retention rate of Fall 2008 first-time freshmen returning for Fall 2009 is about the same as last year’s so at least we’ve not experienced a significant drop in this population. One reason surely must be the Student Emergency Scholarship Fund campaign which had pulled in about $461,000 as of early June—an impressive achievement!

New Policies
Several new University policies have been approved by the President’s Coordinating Council (PCC) in recent months:

Conflict of Commitment Policy and Conflict of Commitment Disclosure Form (posted on the Provost’s Web site: see the Policy at http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/policies_procedures/Conflict-of-Commitment03-09.pdf and Form at http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/Conflict-of-Commitment-Disclosure-Form.pdf ). “The purpose of this policy is to define “conflict of commitment” within the context of a faculty member’s ongoing University responsibilities and to articulate the manner in which potential conflicts of commitment should be reported. By inference, this policy incorporates the section in the Faculty Manual (Sec. III. G.6) that articulates the faculty member’s rights and responsibilities with regard to extramural activities.” It is recognized that faculty properly engage in many activities in their
professional lives. It’s important from the University’s perspective, however, that all faculty meet their “regularly assigned duties and obligations of scholarship, teaching, and service.” The Policy and Form provide faculty with the means of communicating about “any paid or unpaid extramural, professional, or commercial activities that have the potential to create a conflict of commitment” so that any administrative concerns, real or perceived, can be addressed constructively up front. Now all full-time faculty must complete the Conflict of Commitment Disclosure Form annually, with interim updates as individual circumstances require. The Form will be filed with faculty evaluation materials.

Interim Faculty Bereavement Leave Guidelines
In response to questions about faculty leave at the time of an immediate family member’s death, the following Guidelines have been implemented to ensure these situations are handled consistently across the University (the Provost distributed them to the deans on April 6, 2009). The Guidelines are based on the Bereavement Leave section of the Staff Handbook and will be further reviewed to ensure they reasonably address all types of University faculty employment. You can expect the Guidelines to be referenced in a Faculty Manual amendment next year. Here’s the text:

In the event of a death in a faculty member’s immediate family (spouse, child, parent, sibling, legal guardian, mother- or father-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or any other relative living in the family household), arrangements may be made with the faculty member’s supervisor for a bereavement leave of up to three days with pay. A faculty member may request additional vacation time or an unpaid leave of absence if necessary, and it must be approved by his/her immediate supervisor.

Policy for Externally Sponsored Programs: Grants, Contracts, and Agreements (posted on the Provost’s Web site; see http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/policies_procedures/GrantsContractsanAgreement.pdf). This policy deals with the submission of proposals through the Office of Research Services (ORS) for external funding to support research, scholarly, programmatic, and other activities “to ensure that requests for support are compliant with all necessary institutional and sponsor regulations.”

Policy on the Distinction between Gifts and Sponsored Programs (posted on the Provost’s Web site; see http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/policies_procedures/Distinction-between-Gifts-and-Sponsored-Programs.pdf). This policy outlines “a general framework for proper solicitation, administration, and accounting of gifts and sponsored programs” to better ensure “that the sponsor is approached appropriately and gifts and grants are managed and accounted for properly.”

Complimentary Campus Parking for SLU Emeritus Faculty
Yes, the words “complimentary” and “parking” in the same phrase! Emeritus faculty are expected to continue to be professionally active (see the Retired and Emeritus/a Faculty Policy at http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/policies_procedures/Retired_Emeritus.pdf). Many of them view having to continue to pay for parking as a disincentive to continuing an active, unpaid, relationship with the University. Negotiation of this benefit began during John Griesbach’s Senate presidency and was finally approved by the PCC this year. It is based on two assumptions:

- Emeritus faculty have the same parking privileges, and are subject to the same rules, as current faculty tag holders in the designated garages.
- Emeritus faculty are not eligible for complimentary parking for SLU Chaifetz Arena events in parking locations east of Grand.

Furthermore, complimentary parking will be limited to specific garages, i.e.,

- Olive and Hickory East garages during the academic year when the regular shuttle service is available.
- Olive, Laclede, and Hickory East garages during the summer when the regular shuttle service is unavailable and there is greater excess capacity in the parking garages.

Emeritus faculty will receive notification about the benefit and its operational details at the time of implementation. My expectation is that this will occur in Fall 2009.
**Guest Presentations at April Faculty Senate Meeting**

Dr. Phil Alderson (Dean/School of Medicine (SOM) and VP/Health Sciences Center) spoke about major activities and initiatives at the SOM and with the University Medical Group (UMG) in the year he’s been at SLU. He also related ways in which the various health science units at SLU have been working together since they all began to report to him in January ’09. Continuing a tradition begun several years ago, Provost Joe Weixlmann contributed some remarks and responded to senators’ questions on a variety of topics. A summary of both presentations appears in the [draft meeting minutes](#) posted on the Senate’s Web site.

**Faculty Senate Standing Committees**

The work of the Senate’s standing committees has concluded; the committees’ [annual activity reports](#) are available on the Senate Web site. Since the committee structure had not been thoroughly reviewed for at least ten years, the Executive Committee (EC) sought input from current senators and committee members regarding future directions for these four topical committees: Academic Affairs, Affirmative Action and Diversity, Compensation and Fringe Benefits, and Governance. In summary, these committees will be continued with a few changes in ’09-’10 while the EC concurrently explores the possibility of significant changes in subsequent years. For more information, see Item IV of the April 28th [Report of the President and EC](#), posted with that date’s draft meeting minutes on the Senate Web site.

**Fr. Biondi’s Reception Honoring Faculty**

This April 27th event at Boileau Hall was well attended. It was a nice opportunity to mingle socially with faculty from all of the University’s schools, colleges, and libraries, as well as deans and VPs. Fr. Biondi spoke personally to many of the attendees, none of whom could recall there having been a similar event in the past. We hope this is the start of a new tradition.

**May 2009 Commencement and August 2009 Convocation**

While standing at my seat as the stage party processed into Chaifetz Arena, I scanned the floor and guesstimated that approximately 250 to 300 faculty were robed and in attendance. I’m sure our graduating students and their families appreciated our presence, honoring the students’ achievements and the families’ support of them during their time at SLU.

Last August was the first time the annual University Convocation and Family Welcome was held at Chaifetz. During the ceremony, faculty were asked to stand; only a relative few were present and we were scattered throughout the facility. In fairness, most faculty—myself included—knew very little, if anything, about Convocation, as there had been no general publicity about it across the campus. The August 2009 event is listed on the University’s official academic [calendar](#) and will take place the morning of Friday, August 22nd. Plans for this year’s event call for faculty, as well as the stage party, to be seated on the Arena floor. I hope many of you will attend to make a memorable first impression on SLU’s new students and their families. I do not know yet whether academic attire will be required for faculty; that information and other details are forthcoming.

**Senate Executive Committee (EC) Elections**

At the April Senate meeting, elections were held for secretary and two at-large seats. Linda Hoechst (DCHS) won a two-year term as secretary, succeeding Jane Turner (SOM). Linda joined SLU in 2007 and was a senator in ’08-’09. She has substantial governance experience, at her previous institution as well as in her professional field. Incumbent at-large members Judy Durham (A&S) and Mark Ferris (CSB) were elected to full two-year terms and join continuing at-large members Mark Knuepfer (SOM) and Alan Weinberger (Law). [Joanne Langan](#) (Nursing), President-Elect this past year, assumed the Senate presidency at the conclusion of this meeting. As I noted in April ’08 upon her election as my successor, Joanne brings extensive governance experience to her new role. I trust you will show her the same high level of support given me. I can tell you that she’s hit the ground running!
As past president, I remain on the EC in an advisory role for one more year. I’ve been privileged to work closely with two superb EC teams (the aforementioned members as well as, in my first year, John Griesbach (Law), Matt Mancini (A&S), and Jan Wilson (CEPS)). The Senate president may be the most visible EC member, but all EC members work very diligently. I especially want to acknowledge Jane Turner, who had been a SOM senator three years ago when the newly elected Senate secretary resigned. She volunteered to serve as secretary that year and then chose to run for a full two-year term of her own. The secretary is the backbone of the EC and the Senate, and Jane did an outstanding job.

And Finally...
The proverb “May you live in interesting times” seems applicable to my experiences of the past two years as Senate president. Certainly, there have been challenges (e.g., reorganizations, budget/economy). But there also have been positives. First and foremost among the latter are the many people across SLU who care so deeply for this place and its mission. The Senate presidency provides a unique perspective on how this complex entity works (ok, and sometimes doesn’t). What I have found is that people generally are willing to engage in discussion. Indeed, Fr. Biondi, Provost Weixlmann, the VPs, and the deans all have been accessible whether by email or phone, or even for a meeting if warranted. Further, the EC and Provost have standing monthly meetings and communicate frequently via other means in the interim. Always substantive, these interactions also are characterized by respect, trust, candor, collegiality—and humor. Many other people also contributed to the “shaping” of my term: senators who embraced changes in our meeting structure that enabled us to better engage with one another; Senate committee members whose efforts help address topics of faculty concern; staff and student leaders with whom I served on the PCC and consulted on topics of common interest; and many of you, my faculty colleagues, who served as Senate-nominated/appointed representatives to University committees or who contacted me with questions/suggestions about policies or Faculty Manual provisions or even just sent a brief note upon receipt of my periodic email messages. Thank you for your support and confidence. It truly has been an honor and privilege to represent and advocate for the SLU faculty as Senate president.

In closing, I’ll remind you that the framework for much of the Senate’s activity during the second half of my term was its Shared Governance Action Plan, which emerged from the Senate Governance Committee’s 2008 Report on the Shared Governance Survey (2007). In late spring, we added a “status” column to record our progress. Please take a look at the Plan now and when you do, consider where we started. Positive change most often is incremental—but it is change nonetheless. The Plan will continue to be a guiding resource during Joanne’s presidency, and it will be updated and revised as needed. Shared governance isn’t something that just happens; it involves all of us at SLU, at all levels and in all areas, working as partners. I hope you will continue to ask questions and get involved. Active, constructive participation is the way forward.

With best wishes for a productive, yet relaxing, remainder of summer –

Respectfully submitted,
Miriam E. Joseph
Faculty Senate President 2007-2009