January 17, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

“For all that has been, thank you. For all that is to come, yes!” -- Dag Hammarskjold, Swedish diplomat, economist and author.

The Faculty Senate President’s communication serves to provide an overview of the Faculty Senate’s recent activities and to keep all of you informed of concerns related to faculty matters. The following should bring you up to date from the past semester.

As we begin the second semester of the academic year, the unfortunate leadership crises of last year which continued into the beginning of the fall semester seem to be fading into the past. Since September 1st when Bill Kauffman took over as interim president, we have seen genuine efforts on the part of administration to consult with faculty, to work collaboratively with faculty, and to be fair and accessible. Under the leadership of President Kauffman and Vice President-Chief Financial Officer David Heimburger the budget process this year was conducted in an open and forthright manner. Chris Sebelski, chair of the Faculty Senate Compensation and Fringe Benefits Committee and at-large member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC), and I attended the budget meetings and made presentations on behalf of the faculty. Chris’ well-reasoned and balanced presentation outlined the clear need for a multi-year strategic initiative towards a compensation philosophy and budgeting to address salary compression and salary equity. In my presentation, I emphasized the importance of supporting faculty in research and scholarship by providing adequate funding for resources to support these endeavors, including the libraries and the Office of Research. I also underscored the need for expanded services for students to create a better teaching environment for faculty. With great satisfaction I report that this year Faculty Senate leadership was successful in arguing that the line item for faculty salaries be built into the budget rather than being considered last after all other funds were allocated, as had been done in the past.

The Faculty Senate Governance Committee, chaired by FSEC at-large member Doug Williams, is working on updating the chart of the governance structures in the colleges, schools and libraries with the goal of finding ways to make improvements in faculty representation at the unit level where needed. As a first step in understanding the different governance structures on campus and in identifying best practices, Doug held the first-ever meeting of the chairs of the faculty assemblies at the Faculty Senate Kickoff in September. The Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, co-chaired by FSEC at-large member Greg Marks and Faculty Senate Past-President Mark Knuepfer, has begun working on their charges for this year. The charges include review of the Travel Policy, evaluation of the research grant processing system and disbursement of grant funds, implementation of evaluations of deans, and establishment of external reviews for all departments and programs. This committee already has identified some matters to address related to the first two charges and will be acting on them in the short term.

Among other activities of the Faculty Senate this fall, the FSEC arranged for training of the members of the Faculty Senate Professional Relations Committee and the ad hoc Judicial Panel in the processes related to faculty grievances and termination cases. The training was led by Danielle Uy, Senior Associate General Counsel, and Bob Kreiser, Associate Secretary (retired) of the American Association of University Professors, as mandated by the Faculty Manual. Additionally, the FSEC met with the Executive Board of the Staff Advisory Committee (SAC) earlier in the semester, the result of which is the formation of the ad hoc Staff-Faculty Relations Committee. The charge of the committee, made up of staff and faculty from across the University, is to establish a process by which bullying between faculty and staff can be addressed effectively. The committee is ably co-chaired by Sue Stevens, Past-Chair of SAC, and Jan Wilson (CPHSJ).
The Faculty Senate has made efforts this semester to find ways to bridge the divide between the St. Louis and Madrid campuses. Over the summer I met with some of the faculty in Madrid to learn about their campus and to listen to their concerns. With the aid of Fuze meeting software we have been able to include faculty in Madrid in Senate meetings and in the open fora held in the initial phase of the presidential search. There is now an ad hoc subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Governance Committee tasked with studying governance on the Madrid campus in an effort to better understand what can be done to address the needs of the faculty there. Senator Stephen Casmier (A&S) has provided thoughtful and strong leadership as chair of this ad hoc task force.

The Faculty Senate has hosted a number of guests this year at its meetings. President Kauffman made his first address to the Senate on October 1st. He returned for a special Faculty Senate meeting on November 12th, along with Vice President-Chief Financial Officer Heimburger, to discuss the budget and the projected deficit. Jim Smith, trustee and chair of the Presidential Search Committee, was an invited guest at the October 1st meeting to discuss the search process. The Senate will continue to have guests at its spring meetings: Jim Smith is returning to provide updates on the search process at the January 21st, February 25th and March 25th meetings. Other invited guests at the January meeting, which is at 3:30pm in the Saint Louis Room of Busch Student Center, are Associate Vice President-Graduate Education Diana Carlin and the faculty representatives of the Board of Trustees standing committees. The faculty representatives will give reports from the September and December Board meetings. At the February 25th meeting the FY15 budget and an endowment update will be presented by Vice President-Chief Financial Officer Heimburger and Treasurer-Chief Investment Officer Gary Whitworth, respectively. I encourage SLU faculty to attend this meeting; Faculty Senate meetings are open to all faculty. Faculty Senate Secretary Becky Lorenz will send a meeting reminder to all faculty for this meeting.

The FSEC serves as the nominating body for Faculty Senate and university committees. Since this fall, the FSEC has appointed faculty to the standing committees of the Faculty Senate (Academic Affairs, Governance, Professional Relations, and Compensation and Fringe Benefits), and the ad hoc Judicial Panel. This past semester the FSEC nominated faculty to various university committees, including the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC), University Recognition Committee, Academic Integrity Committee, the standing committees of the Board of Trustees, Strategic Enrollment Management councils, Strategic Technology Planning Committee, Communications ad hoc Task Force, Program Review Committee, ad hoc Medical Benefits Committee, and the search committee for the open position of VP-Human Resources. As the above list demonstrates, faculty members play an important role and provide significant representation in the governance of the University. Countless faculty generously participate in service to the University by sharing their time and talent and by committing to the work of these diverse committees on top of their many other responsibilities and duties.

Lastly, I wish to provide you with an update on the Six Points. Last year in response to the votes of no confidence of Vice President-Academic Affairs Manoj Patankar and President Biondi, the Board of Trustees and the Faculty Senate agreed to act on Six Points in an effort to improve relations between faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees. I include the Six Points below with an update on each point in italics.

• The President of the Faculty Senate will appear before the Board of Trustees annually to share the faculty’s perspectives, insights and concerns with the Board. If there are pressing issues from either Board members or from the Faculty Senate, the trustees are willing to consider additional presentations at quarterly Board meetings.

I will make a presentation before the Board at the May, 2014 meeting. Additionally, the Faculty Senate President now is a permanent member of the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee and a report of the Faculty Senate is on the agenda for each meeting.

• Representatives of the Board and the administration will meet annually with the Faculty Senate to report on the state of the University.
I have extended invitations to Board of Trustees Chair Joe Adorjan and President Kauffman to make a presentation of the state of the University at the May 6, 2014 Faculty Senate meeting.

• The Board will review the roles of faculty, student and staff representatives on standing Board committees to establish and assure effective participation in future meetings.

The faculty representatives on the Board of Trustees committees will provide reports to the Faculty Senate at the January 21st meeting. They may share any information that is not confidential. The role of faculty on the standing committees has been expanded such that the faculty representatives are encouraged to participate in discussions, share information, and submit agenda items; the representatives are expected to make an annual report to their respective committees.

• The Faculty Senate will support and participate in development of an annual assessment of the University Community, conducted by an external and independent organization. The purpose of this process is to provide the Board of Trustees, as well as the university community as a whole, with a holistic understanding of the interests and concerns of the faculty, staff and students.

The survey will be repeated annually with the same general committee make up, allowing for changes in University personnel. The results of the survey will be used to assess the overall health of the University and identify problems that should be addressed with early intervention by collaborative means.

The Climate Survey was presented to the Faculty Senate last spring by Board of Trustees Vice-Chair Pat Sly. The survey is now established as an annual process managed by the Office of Human Resources. Interim Vice President-Human Resources Patty Haberberger anticipates there will be another survey conducted this spring. Faculty representatives remain on the Climate Survey Committee.

• The Board and Faculty Senate will support the ongoing work of the Faculty Manual Revision Task Force.

The Faculty Manual Revision Task Force will continue its efforts particularly in defining the principles of shared governance and the means by which this is attained. This committee will present their recommendations in open fora to the faculty and to the Faculty Senate for discussion and input. Ultimately, any proposed changes to the Faculty Manual as a result of this committee’s work and input from faculty will follow the established process in which the proposed changes are voted on and approved by the Faculty Senate, then approved by the VP-Academic Affairs and President, and then adopted by the Board of Trustees.

The Faculty Manual Committee on Shared Governance finalized its work on the Shared Governance Principles document in late October. Chair Miriam Joseph presented the document to the Faculty Senate at the December 3rd meeting and I presented the document to the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee at the December meeting. The Faculty Manual Committee intends for the document to serve as the framework that shapes the Faculty Manual Revision Task Force’s work on the balance of the Faculty Manual. As work on the Manual revision continues, the Task Force, together with representatives of the University administration, will propose how best to incorporate the statement itself (possibly in an introduction or prologue; perhaps as an in-text provision). Below is the link to the Shared Governance Principles document on the Faculty Senate website:

• The Faculty Senate and the Board will explore opportunities to develop a process to affirm support for effective shared governance and address long-term trends affecting the academic life of the University.
This final point is to establish that the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees will jointly continue to explore means to improve communication and the overall climate at Saint Louis University.

Chair of the Board of Trustees Joe Adorjan formed a Communications Ad Hoc Task Force that includes a faculty representative. He reports that the committee has put into place the following action steps to enhance communication on campus:

1. **Improvement on the processes in place for current methods of communications:**
   
   a. *Reinforcing with all members of the President’s Coordinating Council (PCC) that information shared at the PCC meeting – with a few exceptions – should be shared with the constituent groups of all attending*
   
   b. *Restating at all trustee committee meetings that have faculty, staff and student representatives, that information shared at the meetings – except where confidentiality is requested – should be shared with the leadership of constituent groups and shared with membership*
   
   c. *Deans, vice presidents, academic department chairs and staff department heads will be encouraged to share information with those in their areas on a regular basis, and methods for ensuring that sharing takes place will be investigated*
   
   d. *The next Climate Survey would contain questions about communication at the division and department level*
   
   e. *Establish methods by which the Staff Advisory Committee can report information to all staff, not just members of SAC*
   
   f. *Reinforce SLU Newslink as a primary communication vehicle to relay important University information, and adding information links on Newslink from constituent groups*

2. **Augmenting those processes with additional opportunities for input, feedback and including face-to-face meetings or fora**
   
   a. *Plan open fora, especially around the presidential search process and quarterly town hall meetings with senior administrators*
   
   b. *Invitations to vice presidents and other key administrators to meet at least yearly with key stakeholder groups (some VPs are already meeting)*
   
   c. *Creation of web pages that include regular webinars, videos and other pertinent information for the University community*
   
   d. *Creation of an online “Suggestion Box,” to encourage feedback and ideas from the University community*

3. **Reestablish relationships and trust, with communication being a key vehicle in that effort**
   
   a. *Establish more opportunities for two-way communication among all stakeholder groups*
   
   b. *As noted above, plan for town hall meetings that are designed as “conversations” between the administration and stakeholder groups*
   
   c. *Encourage feedback from the University community (see Suggestion Box above)*
d. **Recognize that important information should be communicated internally first before being released to media or other outside groups**

4. **Educating the University community about the role and work of the Board of Trustees**
   
a. **Communication to the University community about the role of the Board, its function and expectations**

b. **Opportunities for informal interaction with members of the Board**

c. **Updates to the trustees about new communication initiatives**

In conclusion, you can see that the Faculty Senate represents the multitude of interests of faculty actively and responsibly. The Senate relies on the input and guidance of faculty via senate representatives, faculty assemblies, and committees to effectively represent faculty interests. The senate representatives are engaged and active at meetings and in their committee work and the members of the FSEC are hard-working and committed to moving SLU forward as we enter a new era. I am encouraged by the spirit of collegiality fostered by President Kauffman, Vice President-Academic Affairs Ellen Harshman, and other members of administration and I expect that administration and the Faculty Senate will continue to build a relationship founded on mutual respect and trust.

Respectfully yours,

Jane Willman Turner, MD, PhD
Faculty Senate President