

# 2014-2015 Final Report on the Committee on Committees

## May 31, 2015

The charge to the Committee on Committees (COC) is to review, on an annual basis, one-third of the MU standing committees and to make recommendations to the Chancellor and Faculty Council on the continuation of the committees and the revision of charges and/or membership to improve the committees' functions. The COC also follows up on past recommendations for changes.

The COC met during fall 2013 to review the procedures for evaluation of MU standing committees. Each COC member agreed to review one standing committee. As part of the review process, each committee member attended a meeting of his/her assigned committee (when possible) and requested that the committee chair and members complete a survey about their roles and responsibilities as well as the functioning and value of the committee itself. (A sample copy of the survey and letter to campus committee chairs are available for review on the COC page on the MU Standing Committees' website). Each COC member analyzed the results from the surveys associated with his/her assigned committee and then prepared a report and overall recommendation about the continuation of the assigned committee.

The COC reviewed the following committees for 2014-2015:

- Campus Parking and Transportation Committee
- Honorary Degrees Committees
- Minority Affairs Committee
- Missouri Unions Committee
- Persons with Disabilities Committee
- Student Fee Capital Improvements Committee
- Student Conduct Committee

A description of the charges of the reviewed committees, the individual reports prepared by COC members, and an overall COC recommendation for each committee follow.

### Committee Reviews

#### **Campus Parking and Transportation Committee**

***Committee Charge:*** The charge to the Campus Parking and Transportation Committee is to make recommendations to the vice chancellor for Administrative Services on the regulation of traffic flow and parking needs on and around campus.

***Review Comments:*** The Chairperson of the committee stated that the "Campus Parking and Transportation Committee works on parking and transportation issues related to the MU community with particular attention paid to making sure the viewpoints and opinions of faculty, staff and students are represented, discussed and then given full consideration by MU administration prior to decisions having potential for broad impact." Based on the survey of

committee members it seems that this committee functions well and meets its charge. Although most responses were positive, the following suggestions were provided to enhance future productivity and efficiency.

- One member felt the committee was often presented information for policy changes that had already been implemented rather than helping to make decisions.

***Recommendation:*** The COC recommends continuation of this committee.

### **Honorary Degrees Committee**

***Committee Charge:*** The charge of the Committee for Honorary Degrees is to recommend to the Board of Curators, through the Faculty Council, the names of individuals to be considered for honorary degrees at commencement.

***Review Comments:*** Committee members feel the committee is meeting their charge and has adequate communication and support. They felt that diversity was the main strength of the committee as the members represent different disciplines and is well balanced in its demographic makeup. Several expressed that the current chair as called more meetings which they felt was helpful and a needed change. Many suggested the committee would benefit from the addition of a retired or emeritus faculty member. One other suggestion was to establish some formal committee guidelines/procedures to establish continuity and so all members (especially new members) understood the committee processes.

***Recommendation:*** The COC recommends continuation of this committee. The possibility of adding a retired or emeritus faculty to the committee should be considered.

### **Minority Affairs Committee**

***Committee Charge:*** The Charge to the Minority Affairs Committee is to assess and to make recommendation to the Vice Chancellor for the issues regarding the programs, policies and services for minority students, faculty and staff.

***Review Comments:*** The Minority Affairs Committee meets at least once a month and on an as needed basis. For the first half of the year there has not been a specific agenda. However the new Chair and members and the new members that responded to the survey had set several goals that include developing a mission statement, addressing the disparity in the number of low income and minority students attending summer welcome, and establishing a mandatory diversity training for all faculty and staff. There is also a recommendation to increase the number of members that represent different entities of the University. The committee could also benefit from a community leader on diversity.

***Recommendation:*** The COC recommends continuation of this committee.

## **Missouri Unions Committee**

***Committee Charge:*** The charge to the Missouri Unions Committee is to advise the vice chancellor for Student Affairs on programs, services and policies for the operation of the Memorial Union and Brady Commons. This committee also acts on appeals in decisions of the director in implementing policy.

***Review Comments:*** Survey results from the committee members indicate that the charge is understood. One committee member re-phrased the Charge as: “The responsibility of this committee is to address any operational issues and/or concerns about the Memorial Union and Brady Commons that are brought to the committee’s attention. Also, if there is an appeal on a decision made by the director, the committee would also hear and act upon that appeal.” Based on the survey responses, this version of the charge is an accurate assessment of how the committee operates in practice.

***Strengths:*** Members consider the mix of representation on the committee to be appropriate. Committee members are interested in the work of the Unions and want to help ensure the Unions meet student needs. Several responses stressed that the staff of the Missouri Unions do great work and that they enjoy the reports provided by Union staff. Survey responses indicate that committee members believe the existence of this committee is important and that the committee should continue.

***Areas for improvement:*** Though the committee members believe that it is necessary to have a Missouri Unions Committee and that the charge is appropriate, they do not believe they are asked to contribute in a meaningful way. One committee member commented that “Decisions are made by the administrative staff and the committee seems to simply be one in name only.” While committee members felt the charge was clear, the response to the survey question about whether committee members’ individual responsibilities are clear were all negative. In FY15, the Committee did not meet until late February. The Chair indicated that the committee normally meets only once or twice a year. A commitment to more regular meetings would allow members to engage with the work of the Unions more fully, thus ensuring they are better prepared to advise on any issues that may arise. One committee member suggested that a better understanding of the University’s goals for the Unions would provide more context for the information provided during meetings.

***Recommendation:*** The COC recommends the continuation of this committee.

## **Persons with Disabilities Committee**

***Committee Charge:*** The charge to the Committee for Persons with Disabilities is to advise the provost on MU programs, services and policies that affect students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. The committee membership includes 4 Faculty (3-year terms), 4 Staff (3-year terms), 4 MSA students (1-year term), 1 GPC student (1-year term) and 8 Ex Officio. The chair of the committee is Cheryl Shigaki, Associate Professor of Health Psychology.

**Review Comments:** The committee members and the chairs in the most recent years have done a superb job in having a survey done on campus about persons with disabilities (initiated by Kim Anderson as Chair in 2007+) and advocating for people with disabilities to the Provost, Chancellor's office and other executives initiated by Cheryl Shigaki. The committee has worked with MU Healthcare on IT accessibility of the electronic medical record. Awareness about persons with disabilities on campus has been communicated to a number of senior executives and their staff. The current Printing Services calendar has a number of pages showing those with disabilities and an Accessibility Policy was created implemented into the BPPM in 2012. A review of the IT procurement accessibility process has taken place and development of a strategic plan, which includes plans for improving accessibility of current features, instituting ongoing monitoring for accessibility, and hopefully incorporating accessibility as part of the development process.

**Recommended areas of improvements:**

- The committee does not have a budget and had to depend on departments to find funding to support the committees' efforts.
- More faculties, not constrained by clinical duties, who can make a commitment to attend meetings, serve as chair and participate in the goals of the committee.
- There are no options for the committee chair since the same one continues to serve in that capacity. Perhaps there could be faculty and staff as co-chairs.
- Assign an administrative leader for the committee.
- Students are assigned to the committee and rarely attend. Perhaps there could be a student who has a disability assigned to the committee who may attend if they have an interest in the work of the committee.

**Recommendations:** The COC recommends continuation of this committee. Change the way the faculties are selected and ask for those who have an interest in this committee, and hopefully some without clinical duties. Allow faculty and staff to co-chair the committee and student members with a disability.

**Student Fee Capital Improvements Committee (SFCIC)**

**Committee Charge:** The charge to the SFCIC, comprised of eight students, eight faculty members, and three ex-officio staff members, is to advise the Vice Chancellor for Student affairs on the allocation of funds generated by the capital improvements portion of the student fee. Faculty members are appointed by the Chancellor and serve three-year terms. Six undergraduate members are appointed by the Missouri Student Association (MSA) president to serve a one year term. Two graduate students are appointed by the Graduate Professional Council (GPC) president to serve a one year term. The student chair is selected annually by the MSA and GPC presidents and is responsible for leading the committee.

**Review Comments:** Survey results from committee members showed that the committee is providing a useful function and meeting their charge. The committee has an annual self-review process and works to improve each year based on the recommendations from the review.

Strengths of the committee include a strong student chair, efficiency, strong membership with a diverse background, a strong focus on allocation of funding to serve the most number of people, and organization.

**Recommended areas of improvements:**

- The website is in need of updating but it was indicated that the committee is working with IT currently to make this a more user friendly tool.
- While the longevity of members is a great benefit—it causes a little bit of uneasiness for newer members. It was suggested that new members be introduced and better integrated.

**Recommendation:** The COC recommends continuation of this committee.

**Student Conduct Committee**

**Committee Charge:** The charge to the Student Conduct Committee is to decide cases in accordance with the University of Missouri Standards of Conduct and Rules of Procedures in student disciplinary matters and to report those recommendations to the Provost or to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The Committee hears the student appeals of charges (and sanctions) levied against them by the Student Conduct Office and Residential life.

**Structure of the Meetings.** The trial or evidentiary portion of the Student Conduct Committee hearings are digitally recorded. They begin with introduction of committee members, the student and advisor or lawyer (if present). Any advisor or lawyer is advised of his or her rights and restrictions. During the hearing, the advisor or lawyer can communicate with the student but is not allowed to directly ask any questions or make comments.

Students are asked whether they are aware of the charges brought against them, whether they have received notices and case packet and whether they realize that the Student Conduct Committee can change the violations and sanctions against them. Students are then asked if they want to continue with the hearing. If they do, they are asked whether they are contesting their responsibility for the violation, or the severity of the sanctions, or both.

The hearing starts with opening statements from the university representative from the Student Conduct Office. The student can also make one but it not required to do so. The representative from the Student Conduct Office presents the evidence of the case and any witnesses. The Student Conduct Committee members and the student can question the witnesses. After the evidence is presented, the University and the student can provide a rebuttal. The hearing ends with closing statements from the University and the student. If deemed appropriate, parents or guardians can issue a brief statement if they have attended the hearing.

After the hearing, the committee deliberates in a closed session, which is not digitally recorded. They first consider responsibility for violations and vote after a discussion. Then they vote on what sanctions to impose. After the decision, the student is notified of the decision by letter and by e-mail.

**Review Comments:** Survey results from ten members, indicated that the committee spreads its work assignments equitably among members although there were a few who did not think that it did. The hearings involve large blocks of time and some members could not participate much at all because the hearings were scheduled when they teach or have other responsibilities. Though some respondents indicated that often it was difficult to reach a quorum, the chair did not recall any cases where the committee could not reach a quorum. The times of hearings are set to correspond to times when a sufficient number of committee members have said they are available to have a quorum (at least four members plus the chair).

A major concern of the members was that the meetings sometimes last long time (past lunch/dinner hours) and under these circumstances, the university does not provide any food/beverage. Moreover, the members were not given a long enough break to get food or water on their own. As this is not a frequent occurrence so it would not cost much money. It would be much more efficient for someone to bring food to the committee than to have them take a break to go and get food individually.

Another concern was that sometimes students appealed decisions even when they have “no leg to stand” on. It appeared to some members that students had poor understanding of whether it was in their best interest to appeal and that students did not know how to present their arguments effectively. A different respondent noted that committee members were not given all of the information that might be available. It was felt that making sure the students are better prepared may make better use of the committee’s time.

**Recommended areas of improvements:** Because of a conflict of interest, it is difficult for any staff of the University of Missouri to counsel students, directly. There are possible solutions to this such as Student Legal Counsel but any recommendation for change should be made by people with legal experience and experience with student conduct issues. Giving students a better understanding of the process and the rules could reduce the number of appeals to the committee and help to protect students’ best interests. The Provost may create a committee to consider this issue. The provost office should allow the chair of the committee/staff person to be reimbursed for providing food in the rare occasion that hearings last past lunch or dinner.

**Recommendation:** The COC recommends continuation of this committee.

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