MEMORANDUM

To: Dean Satish Udpa

From: Robert Y. Ofoi
(On behalf of Committee Members John F. Foss and Srinivasan Arjun Tekalur

Re: 2011-2012 University Council-Faculty Senate (UC/FS) Report

May 9, 2012

The 2011-2012 agenda for University Council and Faculty Senate overlapped on most issues. Thus, I am presenting one report for both committees, in the form of summaries of the major topics of discussion during the academic year.

- President Simon discussed the university budgeting process, in light of the controversy with the State Legislature on the legality of MSU’s tuition increase. She reported that MSU had worked closely with key legislative personnel all along, and that no one had voiced any major concerns. She assured the committee that MSU was compliant.

- Lt. Penny Fischer (DPPS) outlined plans for an address grid for the MSU campus, citing the following benefits: improved public safety, easier location of buildings and other sites, improved GPS mapping, and improved postal/parcel delivery.

- Provost Wilcox discussed the implementation of academic program reviews at least once every seven (7) years. The purpose of the review “is to provide a means of purposeful reflection for academic programs and to assist the unit in improving and assist the Dean in advancing the College.” The system has been in place for some time but, until now, discussions have been primarily between the Provost and affected deans and other administrators.

- The committees discussed and approved a set of ASMSU proposed amendments to the Bylaws for Academic Governance. The amendments were then forwarded to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

- The committee listened to two presentations from the University Research Organization (URO) Work Group, led by Professors Kempel and Drzal of our college. The Work Group reported that it had gathered extensive information from a number of universities which use UROs as part of the research enterprise, and that the data have been used to help formulate a similar organization at MSU. The group had provided opportunities for involvement of the MSU research community in the process. The committee approved the Working Group recommendations.

- The committee approved a proposal to establish a new faculty tract of Fixed Term Faculty, designed to provide staffing for university research focused on extramural funding. The goal is to provide a means of attracting such faculty to MSU and motivating them in a well-defined system.

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1Minutes of the October 18, 2011 meeting University Council
In like manner, the committee approved a set of proposed changes to the Librarian Continuous Appointment System, to bring that system in line with standard faculty promotion procedures at MSU.

Some announcements of interest:

- Provost Wilcox announced that 7,800 freshmen enrolled at MSU for Fall 2011
- President Simon announced that Professor Nunez had been appointed the Chairperson of a Search Committee for the position of Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies. She also announced that the committee will work actively with a search consultant firm, Russell Reynolds Associates.

Other noteworthy items:

- Jim Sumbler ended his eighteen years of continuous service to the MSU academic governance system.
- The committee adopted a University Committee on Undergraduate Studies (UCUS) recommendation to have all students complete SIRS evaluations online. A pilot study had provided clear evidence of much better student compliance in the online system, compared to the traditional route of distributing surveys in class.
- Jennifer Battle (Office of Sustainability) and a committee studied the energy situation at MSU for several years. She presented an Energy Transition Plan they had developed prior to seeking its approval from the Board of Trustees (BOT).