

May 18, 2012

To: The Curators of the University of Missouri

Re: MU_AAUP concerns with Recent Administrative Actions at MU and Request for Board Actions to uphold the University's Collected Rules and Regulations concerning NSEI

Over the last 10 years, an adversarial relationship has developed between some of our most creative faculty and MU administration. This in itself is not unusual, as it is common for personalities to clash. These clashes, however, are increasingly becoming more destructive to both the institution and the students enrolled. Several issues have been brought to the attention of the MU chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Many of these issues could be resolved internally if the administration acted in good faith and followed the collected rules and regulations of this university.

We note that the Board of Curators has many responsibilities. One of them is to serve as a court of Appeals. We would appreciate your guidance and action in a number of matters. We recognize that the administration of a large university is difficult and by some narratives we are doing well. The student numbers continue to rise, the sport teams are successful, and the students are dressed in tiger clothing. We give the current administration high marks in these areas.

Our greatest concern is the failure of the current MU administration to deal with some deans and chairs when they do not abide by the rules. We appreciate the tradition of supporting high-level administrators, but when their actions are egregious and destructive to students, faculty, and the state of Missouri, we ask that you intervene. Several of the current situations have been well described in the lay press. Those relating to Professor Galen Suppes (Chemical Engineering) and Professor Greg Engel (Electrical and Computer Engineering) have already resulted in legal disputes. Both of these have consumed faculty and administrative resources, and are bound to consume more.

Perhaps the most egregious issue involves the fate and future of the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute (NSEI). This is a well regarded institute with strong student successes and consistently high (top 10) national rankings in terms of faculty scholarly productivity (Academic Analytics). The Institute was ranked number one in 2007. There has, however, been a long history of actions against the Nuclear Engineering faculty, and later the Institute, described in several recent articles in the *Columbia Tribune*. These actions have their genesis in disputes between the faculty and the engineering dean, dating back to 1996. The earlier actions to dismantle the Nuclear Engineering program were halted by then-MU Chancellor Richard Wallace in 2001, who proceeded to create NSEI. Later similar actions to dismantle NSEI were effectively halted by UM President Elson Floyd in 2006.

NSEI has continued to thrive, even without institutional support and with some extraordinary constraints placed upon it (examples: no director has been appointed since 2006, in violation of CRR20.010; the institute was not allowed to hire new faculty when retirements occurred, nor allowed to compete for external grants that would have permitted extramural funding of faculty positions for several years). In 2011-12, the institute had 68 graduate students, 2.4 million dollars in extramural research and educational expenditures, and it received CAMPEP accreditation of its medical physics program.

On March 12, 2012, without warning to faculty or students, the administration announced that NSEI would no longer exist by March 15, 2012. At the same time, the web site was dismantled and a sense of institutional panic developed. The premise, made without consulting any NSEI alumni or constituent industries, was that they would form an interdisciplinary program and the tenured NSEI faculty would need to find new academic homes somewhere else within two years. The response was so furious and the inappropriateness of this action so evident and so great, that the administration has backed off and allowed the Institute to function until the last current student graduates. But their long term goals are to eliminate this program and put in its place an interdisciplinary degree that no constituent wants or will accept.

It is our considered view that the above MU administrative actions are a serious violation of CRR Chapter 20, specifically 20.035, entitled "Program Assessment and Audit." These actions have also violated the rights of a Curators' Professor by not following Chapter 320, which states that any change of appointment of a Curators' Professor, such as moving that person from one department to another, "shall be reported and approved by the Board of Curators before the effective date thereof."

Whatever the reasons (long standing personal differences or otherwise), these administrative actions have harmed students and faculty and sullied the reputation of the University of Missouri. They have significantly decreased our opportunities for participation in the development of nuclear energy and nuclear security, medical physics, and health physics. These actions have also been violations of the University's own collected rules and regulations.

We ask the Board of Curators, with your broad based talents and institutional commitments, to investigate these issues and provide remedies that allow our institution to succeed. In particular, we are requesting that the NSEI be immediately restored to the permanent status it had prior to the actions of March 12, and good faith discussions be undertaken in accordance with University regulations for greater successes.

I would be pleased to meet with the Board to provide additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

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President of MU-AAUP