Minutes of Meeting  
MSU Staff Senate  
October 10, 2012

The MSU Staff Senate met Wednesday, October 10, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 189 in the Dillard College of Business Administration Building. Members in attendance were Marilyn Brown, Mike Deming, Gayla Aldrich, Reagan Foster, Lucy Davis, Ernest Cooper, Sue Witherspoon, Dirk Welch, Patricia Lowry, Dr. Michael Mills, Dawn Fisher, Chris Stovall, Jamie Fowler, Lynn Sosebee and Peggy Brennan. Dirk Welch, Chair, presided.

Also present was guest speaker, Dr. Marilyn Fowlè, Vice President for Business Affairs and Finance, Philip Mundine, Student Government Association Representative and Judy Salazar.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Dirk Welch.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the September 12, 2012 meeting were presented. Ernest Cooper motioned to approve the minutes, Patricia Lowry seconded; the minutes were approved by unanimous vote (closed).

Presentation of “You Make a Difference” Certificate

Dr. Michael Mills presented Judy Salazar, Benefits Coordinator, Human Resources with the “You Make a Difference” award certificate. Ms. Salazar was anonymously nominated for the certificate for her efficient and pleasant customer service she continues to give during this time of changing health insurance. She very much appreciated the recognition and stated that “in Human Resources customer service is just part of what we do and we try to do it to the best of our ability”. More information regarding the “You Make a Difference” awards and program is available at http://www.mwsu.edu/staffsenate/difference.asp.

Guest Speaker, Dr. Marilyn Fowlè, Vice President for Business Affairs and Finance

Dr. Marilyn Fowlè addressed the Staff Senate regarding university funding and some programs and plans that are under review for approval and implementation in the near future. The 2013 Legislative Session opens the second Tuesday in January (January 8, 2013). Therefore, Dr. Fowlè is focusing on what will affect the financing of the university for the next two years beginning fall 2013.

Dr. Fowlè explained the university receives funds from the following sources:

- tuition and fees paid by the students
- gift monies
- grant monies
- state appropriations

Dr. Fowlè will be watching very closely what evolves out of the 2013 Legislative Session this spring regarding the state appropriations. She further explained that as a fair and balanced way to fund higher education, the state uses four basic formulas to allocate the state dollars. The two main formulas that fund approximately 70% of the state dollars the university receives are the instructional formula and the infrastructure formula. She explained the four formulas as follows:
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> Instructional Formula:
The instructional formula is the most important state funding formula. The state looks at how many and what classes are taught at the university. They calculate how much they will reimburse you by looking at the semester credit hours and the level of the semester credit hour (i.e., freshman-sophomore level; junior-senior level; or masters or a doctoral level). Therefore, a freshman level English composition class costs less to teach than a doctorate level engineering class, due to the degree level of the instructor and number of students in class. The state also takes into consideration the type of program, for example, an English major is one of the lower cost majors and an engineering program is one of the higher cost majors. The state will take all of the semester programs generated at the university and they weight the semester credit hours. For example, a freshman English class has a weight of 1, but a doctorate level pharmacy class has a weight of 19. Therefore, it will take 19 freshman English students to earn the same amount of money that the state would reimburse the university for 1 doctorate level pharmacy student.

Dr. Fowlé will be watching carefully the weighted semester credit hour generation. The university could actually be up in enrollment but down in weighted semester credit hours. For example, if we enroll a large number of freshmen but lose a number of graduate students it would result in losing weighted semester credit hours. Vice versa, the university could be down in enrollment but up in the number of upper level graduate students and it would quickly make up for any loss in the lower level freshmen numbers. Midwestern State University is losing some lower level freshmen, but we have been graduating a number of students, which means we should be up in our upper level weighted semester credit hours generation.

Dr. Fowlé explained she is in the process of reviewing last year’s weighted semester credit hours and the base period. The base period includes the summer before the legislative session, fall before the session and the spring of the session. The base period is when the legislator looks at everything and decides how they will allocate according to the formulas. They will take a snap shot in time which becomes the base period on which the state funding will be based for the institution. According to reports Dr. Fowlé has received and reviewed from Institutional Research and Assessment, we are down 4% in weighted semester credit hours. She will continue to closely monitor the weighted semester credit hours through the fall semester.

The instructional formula is not a linear process, so it is not one for one. If the university is up 1 weighted semester credit hour you do not necessarily get paid an extra amount. It is relative to how all the other institutions in the state are doing. Using a pie of money as an example, Dr. Fowlé explained that our slice of the pie depends on how our percent of weighted semester credit hours compares with the other institutions in the pie. If all the institutions in the state grow in size, the pie does not change size and the amount of money does not change size. If every institution grows 10 percent and we stay the same our pie slice will shrink. We will lose money even though our weighted semester hours didn’t change. Likewise, if the university grows by 5%, and everybody else grows 10% we may still lose money. Therefore, it is not necessarily if you grow that you are going to gain money or if you stay the same, it’s relative to how all the institutions in the state are doing. Dr. Fowlé is reviewing how much the university generated in this instructional formula last year and how much could we possibly lose. We were down 4% comparing last year to the previous year, if we lose another 4%, we would be down 8%. If we lose eight percent of our formula on instruction it is equal to about a ballpark figure of $1.2 million.

> Infrastructure Formula
The infrastructure formula used for state appropriation is driven by how many students you have coming in and out of your facilities. The state uses a predicted space model, where the number of students you
serve and the type of programs determines the square footage for the institution that is used in the formula. If the institution over builds or enrollment shrinks you do not get any more money and you are only paid for the facilities you need. Institutions that may have a small facility but a large number of students actually get paid more which encourages the efficient use of space. This formula accounts for approximately a quarter of the state appropriation funding compared to the instructional formula

> **Teacher Supplement**

The institutions that have fulltime, tenure track professors teaching there is a small amount of appropriation funding through the teacher supplement formula.

> **Small School Supplement**

Small institutions that have fixed costs which the infrastructure formula does not cover are allocated a small amount in the state appropriation funding through the small school supplement formula.

Dr. Fowlè predicts that during the next legislative session, Midwestern State University will not have an increase in state appropriation funds, but rather a decrease. In addition to the above formulas, the state is considering implementing outcomes based funding. The state would pull 10% of the funds out of the undergraduate formula and put them into the outcomes based funding. The state would look at three years of measures to include the following:

- How well an institution is generating graduates
- What is the institution Retention Persistence rate with students
- Is the institution producing stem graduates (science, engineering, etc.)
- Are you generating and taking care of high risk students and seeing them through graduation.

According to information received by Dr. Fowlè, if the above outcomes based funding is implemented, MSU would gain approximately $178,000.00.

In September 2012 the Noel-Levitz Higher Education Consulting firm visited the MSU campus to review how the university does recruiting and admissions. Noel-Levitz response was that MSU is a great university and they can sell this institution seven days a week. MSU has great classes, faculty, programs, the campus is gorgeous and according to Noel-Levitz MSU has everything. MSU is not a hard sell institution at all, but the message is just not getting out to the potential students. Noel-Levitz indicated that Admissions is 20 years behind in using available technology to reach the potential students. A recruitment plan is being created by Noel-Levitz to help the university reach the recruiting goals.

Dr. Fowlè complimented the good condition of the facilities at MSU compared to other institutions she has encountered in the past who had a deferred list of necessary repairs with no funds available.

Dirk Welch and Dr. Michael Mills, on behalf of the Staff Senate Executive Committee, met with Dr. Jesse Rogers, Dr. Stewart and Dr. Fowlè on Friday, October 5, 2012. Dirk Welch asked Dr. Fowlè if she would brief the MSU Staff Senate on information covered in the meeting regarding plans and programs under current discussion.

Dr. Fowlè informed Staff Senate members that a general faculty meeting was held on Monday, October 8, to outline a faculty pay enhancement plan. The goal is to put $500,000 over the next three years into faculty pay by changing how faculty are paid now and redirecting those savings back into faculty base pay. The following are the three plans being reviewed and discussed to redirect funds into faculty pay over the next three years:
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1. The first-year plan will involve reviewing and revising the faculty summer pay scale. Most universities in the state have reviewed their faculty summer pay plus made modifications. Currently, faculty are paid one-twelfth of their nine-month contract salary to teach one class in the summer. The plan under review and discussion is to have a summer pay scale from $3,000-$5,000. This plan would generate approximately $400,000 to redirect into faculty base pay.

2. The second year of the plan is the Volunteer Separation Program (VSP) for eligible faculty and staff. If you have worked at MSU full-time for 10 consecutive years and your age plus your years of State of Texas service equal 80 by August 2013, you will be eligible for this program. This is not an early retirement program. Basically, you will give up your position and in return, the university will pay you a lump sum of 50% of your budgeted FY12 salary. Eligible faculty will give up tenure to take advantage of the program. Dr. Fowlé gave an example of how money would be redirected as follows: A professor making $100,000 a year is paid a lump sum of $50,000 and the next year a faculty member is hired at a cost of $70,000 resulting in a savings of $30,000 that could be redirected to faculty base pay. The VSP will be a one-time offer. Dr. Fowlé explained that the VSP will be presented for review and approval at the next Board of Regents meeting in November. Once the plan is approved and finalized, letters will be sent to all faculty/staff that are eligible. Dr. Fowlé explained that until we actually see how many people are going to sign-up for the VSP, there is no way of knowing what kind of savings it will produce.

3. The third year the university hopes to see increase enrollment through the success of the recruitment plan created by Noel-Levitz.

Dr. Fowlé informed Staff Senate members that the above plans and program are under review and discussion and to be aware there may be revisions before they are finalized. She assured Staff Senate that the next piece she will work on is staff. Unfortunately, she does not have the summer pay to take from the staff to redirect so it is a little trickier to create a plan.

Dirk Welch thanked Dr. Fowlé for coming and speaking to the MSU Staff Senate. Dr. Fowlé said she will be happy to come back any time and give updates of where we are.

1. Correspondence: None

2. Staff Committee Reports:

Executive Committee: Met on Wednesday, October 3, 2012, to set agenda for Staff Senate meeting on October 10, 2012.

Long Range Review and Planning Committee: No report. Current and past nominations for the “You Make A Difference” website can be found at http://www.mwsu.edu/staffsenate/difference.asp.

Communications Committee: No report.

Membership Committee: No report.

Bylaws Committee: Chris Stovall distributed a draft of a proposed additional change to 2.393 Staff Senate Purpose and Constitution approved at the previous Staff Senate meeting on September 12, 2012. The additional change was suggested by Dianne Weakley, Director of Human Resources (see highlighted text below). After further discussion, Chris Stovall proposed 2.393 Staff Senate Purpose and Constitution be changed as follows: the
wording from term beginning the following September be changed to in the next fiscal year. Ernest Cooper made a motion to approve the proposal; Lucy Davis seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote (closed). The proposed change will be forwarded to the Office of the President for review/approval.

2.393 Staff Senate
STAFF SENATE PURPOSE AND CONSTITUTION
Date Adopted/Most Recent Revision: 08/10/2012

B. Officers
The officers of the Senate shall be the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer, and Parliamentarian, which will constitute the Executive Committee. During the month of May August, senators who will serve in the next fiscal year term beginning the following September, will hold an organizational meeting to elect officers for the new term. The current Chairperson will preside over the organizational meeting and no other business will be conducted. Members elected to the Executive Committee shall serve as officers for a one year term beginning September 1. The Chairperson of the Staff Senate shall be a voting member of the Administrative Council and shall attend the meetings of the Board of Regents. The Executive Committee may appoint ad hoc committees within the membership as deemed necessary.

Scholarship Committee: No report.


Academic Council: Reagan Foster reported Academic Council did not meet but on September 19, 2012 there were Undergraduate Course and Catalog Changes approved by an electronic vote for the Dillard College of Business Administration and the College of Science and Mathematics. The current and past minutes of the Academic Council meetings are available at http://academics.mwsu.edu/academicaffairs/minutes.asp?LL=232 .

Faculty Senate: Chris Stovall reported the MSU Faculty Senate met on September 20, 2012. The current and past minutes of the MSU Faculty Senate meetings are available at http://faculty.mwsu.edu senate/minutes.asp?LL=1602 .

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Council: No report.

Board of Regents: Dirk Welch reported the Board of Regents met on September 18, 2012 for a brief meeting to approve a final resolution to refinance bonds to benefit the university (see attachment 1). Copies of current and past Board of Regents meetings are available at http://welcome.mwsu.edu/president/regents_minutes.asp?LL=83.

3. New Business:
Dirk Welch distributed to members of Staff Senate a copy of the minutes of the MSU Faculty Senate meeting held on September 20, 2012 (see attachment 2). He explained at this meeting the members of the Faculty Senate adopted the following resolution as a result of a letter from a Caribbean student in the Wichita on September 19 (see attachment 2) that described repeated incidents of racism in social media messages against Caribbean students at MSU. The following resolution submitted to MSU Faculty Senate by Nathan J. Jun, Ph.D. and Beverly Stiles, Ph.D. was approved by members of the MSU Faculty Senate on September 20, 2012:
WHEREAS Midwestern State University’s core institutional values include “emotional and physical well-being”; “mutual respect, civility, and cooperation”; “social justice”; and “a safe, attractive, and well-designed campus” (http://welcome.mwsu.edu/president/Mission Statement.asp);

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate of Midwestern State University is resolutely committed to maintaining and promoting the mission of our institution;

WHEREAS the Caribbean student population of Midwestern State University has recently been subjected to bigoted attacks by other students (http://thewichitan.com/2012/09/18/letter-to-the-editor-09192012/);

WHEREAS bigotry, discrimination, prejudice, or intolerance of any sort is fundamentally antithetical to the aforementioned core institutional values;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate of Midwestern State University,

(a) while affirming the value of the responsible exercise of free speech, affirms also the values of multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance;

(b) unequivocally condemns racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of bigotry;

(c) stands in solidarity with our Caribbean student population in unequivocally condemning the bigoted attacks to which they have been subjected;

(d) urges relevant parties in university administration to investigate and, if necessary and appropriate, pursue disciplinary action for the attacks in question;

(e) recommends that the university community consider possible course of actions to prevent these kinds of attacks from recurring.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan J. Jun, Ph.D.

Beverly Stiles, Ph.D.

After further discussion by members of the Staff Senate, Ernest Cooper made a motion to support and endorse the above MSU Faculty Senate resolution; Patricia Lowry seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote(closed).

4. Open Forum:
Dirk Welch encouraged all the MSU Staff Senate Committees to meet before the next Staff Senate meeting scheduled for November 14, 2012.

Dirk Welch requested if any one has any questions or concerns regarding the VSP, faculty pay enhancement plan or any other topic covered in the presentation/discussion with Dr. Fowle, to please contact him or anyone on the Staff Senate Executive Committee. Also, he asked the Staff Senate members to relay any concerns or questions that they may encounter from any other staff on campus to the committee regarding the topics discussed by Dr. Fowle.

5. **Announcements**: None

6. **Adjournment**: The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

/SIGNED/

Peggy Brennan
Staff Senate Secretary/Treasurer
Midwestern State University
Board of Regents Meeting
September 18, 2012
8:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: MSU Campus
Hardin Administration Building Board Room
3410 Taft Boulevard
Wichita Falls, Texas

The Board of Regents of Midwestern State University may deliberate and take action regarding any item on this agenda. The Board reserves the right to discuss any properly posted items in Executive Session whenever legally justified in accordance with the Texas Government Code Chapter 551.

Call to Order

Introduction of Visitors

Public Comment
A public comment period concerning agenda items will be provided in accordance with the Board of Regents By-Laws, MSU Policy 2.22.

Texas Public Finance Authority MSU Bond Resolution
12-01. The Board of Regents previously approved a Resolution for Financing to the Texas Public Finance Authority authorizing the refinancing of a Series 2002 tuition revenue bond for campus improvement projects and, the second, a Series 2003 bond for the renovation of Pierce and Killingsworth Halls. The board will be asked to adopt a final resolution as follows.

AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF THE TEXAS PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY REVENUE FINANCING SYSTEM REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS; AUTHORIZING ACTIONS BY THE TEXAS PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY, MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY, AND REPRESENTATIVES THEREOF IN CONNECTION WITH THE SALE AND DELIVERY OF SAID BONDS; AND RESOLVING OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.
MSU Faculty Senate
September 2012 Minutes

The 2012-2013 MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 PM on September 20, 2012, in the Priddy Board Room in the Dillard College of Business Administration. Senators present included Azouz, Idir; Black, Alan; Bowles, Betty; Bultena, Charles (Treasurer); Debois, Barbara; Duff, Jeremy; Gibson, Martha; Fidelie, Laura; Jun, Nathan; LaBeff, Emily; Lindt, Suzanne; McClintock, Stuart (Secretary); McDonald, Dale; McDonald, Terry; Morrison, Gary (Parliamentarian); Morrow, Ruth; Owen, Jim (Chair); Paddock, Ted; Roberts, Kathy (Vice-Chair); Scales, Jon; Sernoe, Jim; Stiles, Beverly; Wood, Julie.
Chris Stovall from the Staff Senate and Matthew Park, Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs, also attended the meeting.

The agenda was unanimously approved.
The minutes of the August meeting had been approved by e-mail vote.

Current Business:

1. Piper Award: The Faculty Senate chose Dr. Rebecca Dodge, Associate Professor of Geosciences, as the university’s nominee for the Piper Award. Chair Owen will forward this nomination to Dr. Rogers, who will then recommend Dr. Dodge to the Minnie Piper Foundation.

2. Faculty Satisfaction Survey: Senator Stiles made a motion to consider having some sort of a faculty satisfaction survey. The motion passed, and Chair Owen opened the floor for discussion. Senator Stiles said that she had no agenda but thought that some sort of survey would be a beneficial tool for faculty and administration to gauge morale on campus using statistics rather than anecdotal evidence. Senator Jun mentioned that faculty members were often quite isolated from knowing much about one another, separated by department and college, and that a survey would allow faculty to get a campus-wide perspective of faculty opinion. Treasurer Bultena wondered what was to be done with the survey’s results. Senator Wood thought that such an instrument could give the Faculty Senate insights into the issues that it should deal with in representing the entire faculty. Vice-Chair Roberts said that survey results would also help the Faculty Senate make relevant recommendations to the Provost. The motion passed.
Senators Jeremy Duff, Laura Fidelie, Nathan Jun, Suzanne Lindt, Ruth Morrow, Kathy Roberts, Jon Scales, and Beverly Stiles volunteered to serve on an exploratory committee to deal with the survey.

Committee and Other Reports:
1. Administrative Council (Owen): Chair Owen reported that changes were made to the policy manual that codify some new responsibilities to Keith Lamb’s office.
2. Board of Regents (Owen): The BOR met this week to discuss better financing for some outstanding bonds. The BOR will meet next in November.
3. Academic Council (Roberts): Vice-Chair Roberts reported that some changes in course requirements were made in math and business.

4. Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (Lindt): (no report)

5. Intercollegiate Athletics Council (Paddack): (no report)

6. Financial report (Bultena): The Faculty Senate has $2,544. The Faculty Senate has enough money to support at least two Senators' attending the Texas Council of Faculty Senates' conferences in October and February.

Old Business: none

New Business:

1. As a result of a letter from a Caribbean student in the *Wichitan* (September 19) that described repeated incidents of racism in social media messages against Caribbean students at MSU, Senator Stiles with a second by Senator Jun made a motion for the Faculty Senate to adopt the following resolution:

   WHEREAS Midwestern State University's core institutional values include "emotional and physical well-being", "mutual respect, civility, and cooperation", "social justice", and "a safe, attractive, and well-designed campus" (http://welcome.mwsu.edu/president/MissionStatement.asp);

   WHEREAS the Faculty Senate of Midwestern State University is resolutely committed to maintaining and promoting the mission of our institution;

   WHEREAS the Caribbean student population of Midwestern State University has recently been subjected to bigoted attacks by other students (http://thewichitan.com/2012/09/18/letter-to-the-editor-09192012/);

   WHEREAS bigotry, discrimination, prejudice, or intolerance of any sort is fundamentally antithetical to the aforementioned core institutional values;

   BE IT RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate of Midwestern State University,

   (a) while affirming the value of the responsible exercise of free speech, affirms also the values of multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance;

   (b) unequivocally condemns racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of bigotry;

   (c) stands in solidarity with our Caribbean student population in unequivocally condemning the bigoted attacks to which they have been subjected;
(d) urges relevant parties in university administration to investigate and, if necessary and appropriate, pursue disciplinary action for the attacks in question;

(e) recommends that the university community consider possible course of actions to prevent these kinds of attacks from recurring.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan J. Jun, Ph.D.

Beverly Stiles, Ph.D.

Chair Owen opened the floor for discussion. Because the Faculty Senate had only received notice of this letter the day before the meeting, the Chair said that he was reluctant to rush to judge without being able to investigate the situation. After hearing some of the messages, he felt comfortable that an informed judgment about the resolution could be made. Senator Wood wondered if the Faculty Senate was within its charge to pass such a resolution, in light of first amendment rights. Senator Jun emphasized that this resolution was a response to racist comments and was meant to show the Faculty Senate's condemnation of the comments as well as its support of the Caribbean community at the university. Senator Semoe stated that the Faculty Senate's resolution was a reply to the comments, which is another expression of first amendment rights. Senator Black thought it would be appropriate for the SGA should take up this issue also.

Senator Fidelie called the question. The resolution passed with one negative vote. The Chair thanked the authors of the resolution for their quick and thoughtful work on this issue. The resolution will be sent to the administration as well as to the editor of the Wichita.

Announcements:

1. Chair Owen reminded Senators to send him nominees to serve on the Tenure and Promotion Review Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart McClintock
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Jim Owen
Chairman of the Faculty Senate

The next Executive Committee meeting will be at 3 PM on Thursday, October 4, 2012, in the Apache Board Room of CSC.
The next Faculty Senate meeting will be at 3 PM on Thursday, October 11, 2012, in Kiowa Ex-Students room in CSC.
Mission Statement

Midwestern State University is a leading public liberal arts university committed to providing students with rigorous undergraduate and graduate education in the liberal arts and the professions. Through an emphasis upon teaching, augmented by the opportunity for students to engage in research and creative activities alongside faculty and to participate in co-curricular and service programs, Midwestern State prepares its graduates to embark upon their careers or pursue advanced study. The university’s undergraduate education is based upon a comprehensive arts and sciences core curriculum. The understanding that students gain of themselves, others, and the social and natural world prepares them to contribute constructively to society through their work and through their private lives.

OUR VALUES

- Excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and artistic production
- Intellectual curiosity and integrity
- Critical thinking
- Emotional and physical well-being
- Mutual respect, civility, and cooperation
- Social justice
- Civic service
- Stewardship of the environment, and of financial and human resources
- A safe, attractive, and well-designed campus

Letter to the Editor – 09/19/2012

September 18, 2012 By The Wichitan 3 Comments

MSU- My University?

I’ve tried to write this letter many times, and each time I closed my word processor in disgust at the atrocities being leveled towards me.

I told myself to ignore it, not to bother myself with the ignorance of others and to rise above it, but I can no longer do so in good conscience.

In 2009 I left my small island home to come to Wichita Falls soley for the purpose of attending Midwestern State University. Before I left I was warned that Texas was a red state, full of rednecks, cowboys and racism.

However, I chalked it all up to stereotyping and ignored it. To my pleasure I had never been confronted with any open issues of racism on MSU’s campus or in Wichita Falls for that matter.

That was until the summer of 2012. What started as just another day of idle chatter on Twitter gave me a glimpse of exactly how some students at MSU view their international student population.
There’s an account on Twitter dubbed @MWSUproblems for students to vent their frustrations about the school and college life in general.

The initial concept intrigued me so I followed the account, but my enthusiasm quickly faded.

Amid issues about parking and the police officers’ new vehicles, some students seem to be quite perturbed by their Caribbean population or ‘the Caribs’ as we’re so fondly called.

It started with an offhand, albeit offensive comment about one particular student’s penchant for dressing up like a cowboy and spiraled into complaints about undeserved grades and other charges. The topic even spurred its own hashtag, #blametheCaribs.

Apparently, some of the people I share a classroom with as intellectual equals think my fellow Caribbean students and I need to be ‘put in our place.’ (something @Marty_Party465 claims to have done.)

And according to @NathanDubose, even the admissions department has grown tired of our presence. Is this what administrators think of its Caribbean population?

Would they prefer not to have international students at all, or just not ones from the Caribbean?

This incident also speaks to a wider issue of ignorance on campus. Ignorance of other cultures, and an unwillingness to learn.

I always thought that education was about broadening one’s horizons and learning about a world outside of your own, as opposed to merely getting a degree.

But I suppose that must be a Caribbean thing. I for one, would be interested to know what our administrators think of @mwsuproblems and whether or not the account was sanctioned to use the school’s acronym and a picture of Hardin tower.

Perhaps the Office of Student Development would be interested in holding a panel discussion on the way Americans view other cultures, modern-day racism, or ethnocentrism on a whole.

Signed,

Raisa S.N. Charles

Proud Caribbean Student