



## CAMPUS MEMO

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**TO:** All Faculty, Springfield Campus

**FROM:** Rachelle Darabi, Associate Provost

**DATE:** March 26, 2015

**RE:** Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: Perspectives on democracy

### **Nominations and Applications are solicited for the Provost Fellow for 2016-2017 Public Affairs**

The Office of the Provost is pleased to announce that the Public Affairs theme for the **2016-2017 academic year** will be *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: Perspectives on democracy*. In order to allow for better planning and preparation, we have selected the theme early and are now accepting nominations and applications for the Provost Fellow for Public Affairs for 2016-2017. The selected Fellow will “shadow” Provost Fellow, Dr. Elizabeth Dudash-Buskirk, in order to better understand the planning process of the Public Affairs Conference.

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

These words from the preamble of the Declaration of Independence are familiar and oft quoted. Their meaning, however, remains open to interpretation and has continually evolved in the 250 years since they were written. Missouri State University’s public affairs theme for the 2016-17 academic year, ***Life liberty and the pursuit of happiness: Perspectives on democracy***, is rich with opportunities to engage the campus community in discussions that will explore both our rights and our responsibilities as citizens in a modern democracy.

American society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has little in common with the era when the founding fathers crafted plans for the founding democracy. Ever changing demographics, cultural mores, values, technologies, and definitions of “unalienable rights” have raised important questions for our nation... What are the costs and benefits of the freedom our democracy affords? How do we balance majority rule with individual rights? What are the limits of free speech? What are the causes of political and social apathy? How have partisan politics impacted the conduct of our government? To what extent is economic equality promoted in our democracy? How has the digital world influenced life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? What role should the United States play in exporting democracy to foreign nations? Is the way America practices democracy the right or best way or can we learn lessons from other democracies around the world? Is access to healthcare an unalienable right?

These questions, and more, will serve as a vehicle for investigating the benefits and opportunities of our democracy.

As is the case this next years with the theme of ***Building Healthy Communities: Body, mind and spirt***, the intent will be to incorporate this new theme into as many campus activities and programs as possible. This effort will begin with recruitment and orientation materials sent out to prospective students; carry through to the New Student Convocation, Public Affairs Week, the Public Affairs Convocation Lecture; and culminate with the 2017 Public Affairs Conference, which will be the primary responsibility of the Provost Fellow for Public Affairs with support being provided by the Office of Public Affairs Support and the Conference Advisory Committee.

The Office of the Provost welcomes applications and nominations for a Provost Fellow who will be responsible for refining this theme, developing and promoting related activities and serve as the chair of the 2017 Public Affairs Conference. The person selected will receive a one course reassignment per semester (total of 6 hours) and an \$8,000 stipend. Although the appointment will be for one year, the person selected will be asked to shadow the 2015-2016 Provost Fellow in order to gain an understanding of the full responsibilities of the position.

Individuals wishing to be considered for this position should submit **a CV and letter of interest** outlining their experience, skills and ideas to Dr. Rachelle Darabi, Associate Provost for Student Development and Public Affairs no later than **5 pm, April 24**. Review of applications will begin April 14. Questions concerning this position should be directed to Dr. Rachelle Darabi.