Colleagues,

This is a seminal moment in the life of Langston University. Dr. Henry Ponder, as interim president, is providing transformational leadership and providing an opportunity for faculty to use their collective wisdom to shape the character and structure of the University. At the September University Senate meeting, President Ponder announced the dissolution of that body in deference to a Faculty Senate organized by and presided over by faculty elected by colleagues.

The Committee on Committees (CoC) was charged with responsibility for facilitating the transitional process. Members of the Senate were invited to serve on this expanded CoC. Upon careful reflection and consultation, the following guiding concepts have been developed:

- Dissolution of the University Senate and development of a Faculty Senate is an appropriate and much desired action.
- The collective faculty needs to engage in discussions about the function and structure of the new Faculty Senate.
- Deliberations and decisions about the new Senate should be informed by “best practices,” professional guidelines, and institutional assessment data.
- Faculty at all three campuses and across all disciplines within the University should have opportunities to engage in meaningful dialog about this bold new direction.
- Time is of the essence, given the urgency of the need to educate and empower the collective faculty, define the form of the new Senate, and launch this new initiative immediately, but no later than fall 2012.
- An optimistic timeframe might include completing the organizational framework by March 2012, electing officers by mid-May, and enjoying smooth sailing thereafter.

The original CoC included Carolyn T. Kornegay, Yvonne Montgomery, Corey Moore and Dorothy Wilson. (Debbie Masters declined to participate in this expanded committee charge). At its October 10th meeting, the CoC agreed to examine ten higher education institutions (five in-state and five out-of-state).

- Lincoln University-Missouri (Kornegay)
- Kings College (Kornegay)
- Alcorn A&M University (Montgomery)
- Alabama State University (Moore)
- North Carolina A&T University (Wilson)
- Northwestern Oklahoma State University (Moore)
- Oklahoma State University (Montgomery)
- University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (Manyibe)
- Cameron University (Manyibe)
- University of Central Oklahoma (Wilson)

Edward Manyibe has been requested to serve on the committee because of his experience with qualitative research. Edward Khiwa and Mose Yvonne Hooks volunteered to serve during the September University
Senate meeting. Additional faculty representatives are to be elected from the various areas of the University as outlined below:

- One each from Oklahoma City campus, arts and sciences, agriculture, education and behavioral sciences, nursing and health professions, physical therapy, and the library
- Two each from business and the Tulsa campus

All faculty are advised that this will be a working committee (aka “study group”) which will be responsible for:

- Preparing for and participating in study group meetings related activities
- Establishing and maintaining effective communications with other faculty
- Facilitating respectful and informed discussions and deliberations among faculty within their respective areas
- Understanding the concepts and issues being considered
- Maintaining an objective position and promoting dispassionate discourse among colleagues
- Presenting the concerns, views, and considerations of colleagues in a logical and coherent manner
- Helping the study group condense information into a logical framework to inform recommendations made to faculty with regard to the Faculty Senate

This information is provided in preparation for today’s faculty meeting. You are also invited to explore the following link (http://departments.kings.edu/facultygovern/). King’s University has a treasure trove of information about their transitional process and their governance structure. The AAUP also provides excellent guidance r/t shared governance and faculty senates. This, along with other information can inform our decisions so that we achieve the best possible outcomes for our University.

Because we must accomplish a lot within a short period of time, we need study group members who have the passion, flexibility and commitment to work effectively and efficiently with a focus on the desired outcomes. Individuals who believe that they are already overworked and cannot possibly squeeze another activity into their itinerary should carefully consider the time commitment involved with this activity. I really hope that all of us will be “chomping at the bit” for the opportunity to perform such sacred service.

As for me personally, I would echo the words of Sweet Honey in the Rock (Ella’s Song) “We who believe in freedom must not rest until it comes. . . . Struggling myself don’t mean a whole lot, I’ve come to realize. Teaching others to stand and fight is the only way our struggle survives. Not needing to clutch for power, not needing the light just to shine on me, I want to be one in the number as we fight against tyranny. What touches me most is that I have a chance to work with people, passing on to others that which was passed on to me. We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.

President Ponder has given us an opportunity to fully operationalize the faculty role in institutional governance. Please share our excitement and hopeful anticipation as we move Langston University forward.

Thanks in advance for your positive response.

Carolyn T. Kornegay for the CoC
Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the organization; being a role model for followers that inspires them; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that optimize their performance....

(from Wikipedia)