MU nuclear engineering professors call for graduate school dean's removal

BY Mazi Farris

COLUMBIA — Three of the four tenured professors who make up the MU Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute are calling for MU Graduate School Dean George Justice's removal from office.

In an email addressed to Chancellor Brady Deaton, professors Sudarshan Loyalka, Mark Prelas and Robert Tompson expressed “no confidence” in Justice.

“We would like to see him removed soon,” Loyalka said Tuesday. “Very soon.”

According to the email, Justice knowingly violated the “faculty’s primary and direct authority on curriculum,” as stated in the university’s Collected Rules and Regulations, when he dissolved the nuclear engineering institute in March as part of restructuring and gave the four professors two years to move outside the graduate school.

In January 2012, Justice approved a submission of two grant proposals to the U.S. Department of Education on behalf of the nuclear institute at the same time he was working to dissolve the institute, Loyalka said. The four professors were kept in the dark about the process, he said.

MU Faculty Council Chair Harry Tyrer, copied on the email to Deaton, said the Faculty Council has not been asked to deal with the issue and it would be difficult to predict the chancellor's response.

According to a May 2012 Missourian report, although the original timeline for restructuring the program was on hold, faculty and alumni of the program believed future funding had been jeopardized by the speculation.

If the accrediting body and funding sources no longer believe the restructured program is capable of delivering comparable academic services, the degree program in nuclear engineering could lose accreditation and future funding, according to the email to Deaton.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken on Tuesday said she did not know whether Deaton had received the email. In any event, she said, Deaton can't comment on personnel issues.