Emeritus is More Than a Title

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Distinguished faculty share knowledge in unique college

When a retiring professor is granted the title of Emeritus, it can sound more like an end to an esteemed career than a next step. An Emeritus College, however, is a way to tap into the valuable reservoir of knowledge and wisdom to the mutual benefit of the professor, the university and the community.

At UMKC, emeriti professors can belong to the newly established Emeritus College, which brings some of the most experienced and connected faculty back to continue contributing their creative, intellectual and scholarly talents.

"I expect the Emeritus College to be a valuable resource for faculty as well as for students," said Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Carl Hackett. "It will play an important role in keeping one of our most valuable resources, our emeritus faculty, more fully engaged in the intellectual life of the university."

In November 2010, Hackett established an Emeritus College Working Group to study Emeritus College models at other universities and to propose a model for UMKC as part of the Strategic Plan. In May 2010, retired Vice Provost Eliza Chronwall, Ph.D., was selected as the dean of the new Emeritus College. Chronwall says she is excited about working with her former colleagues to establish the college.

The membership fee-based organization was established to honor and engage the more than 400 UMKC emeriti. For their 340 annual donation, members gain access to Emeritus College facilities housed in room 228 of the Miller Nichols Library. The venue, which opened in November 2012, has working spaces with computers, two small meeting rooms, a conference table and comfortable reading areas, and donated art decorating the walls.

Several programs are planned for members to continue their academic lives. Eventually, a quarterly newsletter will be published, and members will receive general business cards. Life-time and Founding members, as well as generous non-member donors, will be honored on the Donor Wall.

Emeritus College members are all volunteers; they reap more lofty benefits than salaries. They can serve as valuable mentors to young faculty. UMKC graduate students may receive informal advice and writing tutorials from members; and the presence of emeriti professors extends the university's resources into the community. Members are available to lecture in the community and to serve on civic boards.

UMKC is one of approximately 22 universities around the country with a visible Emeritus College. To support the college, UMKC is seeking $2.5 million in private funds as part of the UMKC Retirees capital campaign. The largest portion — approximately $2 million — will endow the emeriti college, ensuring a stable funding source into perpetuity. The remaining $500,000 will provide start-up costs. The university already has received donations of more than $100,000.

To learn more, visit the website or contact the office via email at Emeritus College.

And, if you are an emeritus faculty member, complete this form and become a member.

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Tags: Eliza Chronwall, emeriti, Emeritus College