UMKC Faculty Senate

Meeting of 16 October

DRAFT Minutes

**PRESENT:** Ebersole; Ward-Smith; Fieldman; McArthur; Stancel; Wyckoff; Weatherholt; Burnett; Holder; Ellinghausen; Dilks, Richardson; Van de Leifvoort; Morehouse; Petrie; McCall; Sykes Berry; Pennington; Gerkovich; Krantz; Kumar **Excused:** Plamann; Solose; Nickel; Luppino; Flowers; Igwe **Absent:** Grieco; Butner; Bethman; O’Brien; Hermanns

**Information and Announcements**

* Chair Ebersole reports on the recent meeting of the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates which he attended. The group met with David Pearce, Chair of the Missouri State Senate Education Committee, as well as David Russell, the Commissioner of Higher Education. Both of them are Republicans and supportive of higher education. Regarding the budget, Pearce suggested that it would be prudent to plan for another 5% reduction in the state’s higher-ed allotment in the coming year. The current year’s state budget was built on a projection of 3.9% increase in revenues over last year, though to date the increase is about 4.6%. Russell was formerly chief of staff to System President Forsee, and before that to President Floyd. He notes that many of the directives that come out of the legislature go to his department for approval. He would be willing to come to talk to the Senate if we were to invite him.
* The Faculty Senate executive committee has decided to postpone the deans' evaluations for this year in order to align ourselves with the Provost’s Office “360” evaluation. A review of the provost needs to be incorporated into the revised calendar.
* Faculty Senate Vice-Chair Peggy Ward-Smith announces that the School of Nursing has added a bachelor’s degree in Health Science that was approved last year. As a result, the school’s name has become the School of Nursing and Health Studies as required in order to offer the new degree.
* The draft agenda was approved as submitted.
* The draft minutes from the meeting of 2 October were approved as submitted.

**Information regarding Missouri’s Amendment 2**

Cindy Pemberton, Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs, reports on a recent meeting of the University of Missouri Academic Officers with UM System Vice-President Steve Owens and two consultants hired by the university to consider the potential effects of the amendment. Some information:

Since this is a new law we should expect that one or more students will eventually approach faculty about not participating in an academic activity based on religious grounds. All are encouraged to be sensitive and compassionate; emotions do rise in such discussions, and faculty are asked to explain that this is a new situation, one to be handled carefully and with respect, and to request then that the aggrieved student put his/her concerns in writing. Should the situation arise, Owens reminds us that none of us is alone in this. Talk with colleagues about it; more immediately, a faculty member should immediately contact the chair, the director/dean, and the provost; together they will work the process through the legal system.

Pemberton reiterates that it will help the institution greatly to know the scope of any issues that do arise; even in the case of a minor matter that can be readily resolved, please make sure the information is in writing and shared in the cause of building a base of reference situations to inform future actions.

**Discussion and vote on the RooWriter Proposal:**

Senator Dilks recaps parts of the discussion at first reading:

The proposal comes from a provost-directed committee charged with looking at alternatives to the current WEPT. Whereas WEPT is a pass/fail instrument only, the RooWriter will serve a diagnostic function; and because there is interaction with the graders, students will be able to get valuable advice in regards to their writing skills. Faculty too will be able to see the feedback from the expert graders.

Senator Andy Holder (College of Arts and Sciences) has made a proposal via email [the text of which was printed in full on the meeting agenda]. His concerns are that [summarized: HF] students are under time pressure; they prioritize their tasks around those with strong accountability measures, and the RooWriter lacks such measures; that it is a purely verbal instrument.

In the discussion, it became clear that there is a minimum standard of 400 words, and that poor essays will be rejected, but accompanied by helpful feedback. To the suggestion that some disciplines favor figures, charts, and etc. over pure text, it was noted that once the program is approved and working, it will continue to be adapted to include such possibilities. Further extended discussion led to the agreement that language specifying the 400-word minimum would be added to the proposal on which we vote. When the vote was taken, it was heartily approved, with one abstention.

**Campus-Wide GenEd Committee**

The structure of the campus-wide GenEd committee is such that all departments offering undergraduate courses should have members on that committee; there should also be two members from the Faculty Senate.

Senator Jerry Wyckoff and Senator Andy Fowler volunteered for those seats and were approved.

**Chairs for standing committees of the Faculty Senate**

Senate Chair Gary Ebersole reminds us that our bylaws indicate that each standing committee should be chaired by a senator. Seven standing committees need senators to fill two-year terms. Following is the list of committees with chairs either currently serving, volunteered, or appointed.

* Academic Issues Committee - Steve Krantz
* Administrative Issues Committee – Peggy Ward-Smith
* Faculty Senate Budget Committee - Tony Luppino
* Faculty Welfare Committee - Connie White
* COSCO - Organizational Structures and Community Outreach - Carol McArthur
* Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
* GenEd Curriculum Committee