Dear colleagues –

At the January 16, 2018 meeting of the UMKC Faculty Senate, I presented a draft proposal regarding academic reorganization, to be considered following the process for academic reorganization developed and approved by Faculty Senate during Academic Year 2016-17 (see attachment #1). On February 21, 2018, I sent an email to the Faculty Senate, Academic Council and Executive Council with copies to Executive Committees of Staff Council and the Student Government Association that included the final version of the proposal for academic reorganization in a document titled “Provost Charge to Faculty Senate – Academic Reorganization” (see attachment #2).

Upon receipt of the charge, and based on questions received from faculty, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee worked in the early months of the Spring semester with Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Diane Filion and myself to revise and refine the process for overseeing proposed reorganizations, which was approved by Faculty Senate on March 6, 2018 (see attachment #3).

This document addresses the proposal in the Provost Charge to move the Department of Theatre from the College of Arts and Sciences into the Conservatory of Music and Dance.

The purpose of this move, as with all moves, should be to create conditions that foster even greater success for all affected parties in the conduct of our tripartite mission of teaching, discovery and innovative service.

**Votes and Rationale of Faculty to Move the Department of Theatre into the Conservatory**

While work was ongoing to refine the reorganization process, and in response to the proposal in the Provost’s charge to move the Department of Theatre into the Conservatory, Department of Theatre Chair Carla Noack reported on January 28, 2018 that faculty of the Department of Theatre in the College of Arts and Sciences voted by email in unanimous support of the proposal.

On February 22, 2018 Faculty of the Conservatory of Music and Dance voted in overwhelming support of the proposal, with several items identified as concerns regarding the reorganization.

The record of the votes and a summary of the reasons for supporting the proposal are provided in attachment #4.

**Provost Recommendation and Rationale for Move**

As outlined in Step II.2 of the revised process, having received the relevant votes and reports from the moving unit (Department of Theatre) and the receiving unit (Conservatory of Music and Dance), this document serves as the Provost’s compilation of reports and recommendations regarding the move of the Department of Theatre into the Conservatory for consideration by Faculty Senate.

***Benefits of Move for Department of Theatre and Conservatory***

In considering the benefits of moving the Department of Theatre from the College of Arts and Sciences into the Conservatory, I am in agreement with the summary report provided by Conservatory Dean Diane Petrella and Chair Carla Noack.

In brief summary, for students and the teaching enterprise, the benefit is the strengthening of the curriculum to create a comprehensive program of performing arts, and closer connection to a greater number of faculty working on disciplines of the performing arts. The move also provides opportunities to create exciting and innovative new programs to the region.

The primary benefit to the discovery enterprise is that the move creates conditions for more disciplinary-informed discussion and closer collaborations in the support, activity, and evaluation of research and creative work.

With regard to service, the primary benefit of the move is that UMKC will be able to offer much more integrated, coordinated, and collaborative service in a broader array of services to the performing arts community in the region and beyond.

Administratively, the move allows UMKC to strengthen its position among peers, to market performing arts programs more competitively, and to take advantage of administrative efficiencies.

Finally, please note there is significant benefit to the College of Arts and Sciences in moving a department that has historically required a significant amount of subvention off the budget of the college.

***Risks of Move for Department of Theatre and Conservatory***

There are risks associated with the move of the Department of Theatre to the Conservatory, which must be addressed during the implementation phase of the reorganization, and if not addressed, may jeopardize the success of the reorganization.

My discussions with faculty of the Department of Theatre have surfaced one overarching concern, which is that the merger could put the department in a position of being a “service-unit” to the other programs in the Conservatory. The concern is that the primary function of the department could be to provide services to the other units, rather than focusing on it’s own teaching, research and service, and being a full member of the Conservatory in its own right.

Three primary concerns have been identified by the Conservatory, which include:

1. The debt the Department of Theatre (DOT) has accrued through overspending will not be transferred to the Conservatory
2. The Conservatory will add four additional staff members at the time of this merge
   * 1 full time line already in DOT
   * 1 full time advisor (currently .5 in DOT)
   * 1 full time staff member (currently represented in the Conservatory budget, but left open after a termination)
   * 1 new full time staff member, possibly transferred from the College of Arts and Sciences, to support the shift of students/faculty/programs from the infrastructure of CAS and into the infrastructure of the Conservatory
3. The establishment of a “grace period” during which DOT finances do not impact Conservatory finances, to allow time for the management of the DOT budget and adjustment to Conservatory oversight.

***Provost’s Recommendation***

Assuming the risks identified above will be addressed to the satisfaction of all parties during implementation, the Provost is in support of this merger and recommends moving to the implementation stage of the reorganization process.

**Next steps**

As outlined in Step II.3, the next step in the process is for the Faculty Senate to provide additional comment and recommendations regarding the proposal, and to consider whether or not to endorse the proposal.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of and perspective on these important matters.

I look forward to your guidance as I work with Chancellor-designate Agrawal to make a final determination regarding the constitution of an implementation committee to further the work of advancing this proposal for reorganization.

Respectfully,

Barb

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