Minutes

Faculty Senate

November 01, 2011

Plaza Room, Administrative Center, 3 p.m.


Excused: McArthur, McDaniels, Sherburn, Nickel, Butner, Stanley

Absent: Lyne, Odom

Guests: Cindy Pemberton, Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs; Cyrus Moffett, U-News

1) Welcome and Informational Items

I. Chair Ebersole stated that he along with Senator Luppino and Senator Plamann will attend the UBC all day Budget Retreat. At this meeting the Deans from all the campus present their strategic plans and budget needs.

II. There was a reminder regarding the meeting at 2 p.m. on Monday November 7th with the consultants here to review Research support.

III. A reminder to all about the upcoming deadline for nominations for the several Presidential awards for faculty. These awards come with money attached. Please let faculty know about them. The website link for filing the nominations can be found at www.msystem.edu/ums/aa/awards

IV. Chair Ebersole announced that the Fall commencement ceremonies will be held on 16th of December, at 1:00PM and 4:00PM. He will be attending the ceremonies unless someone else would like to be on the podium. In such a case the person should notify the chair as soon as possible.

2) Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Senator Taylor and seconded by Senator Sykes Berry to approve the agenda. It was so approved.

3) Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Senator Wyckoff and seconded by Senator Sohraby to approve the minutes of October 18th meeting. The minutes were approved.

4) Provost’s Remarks: Cindy Pemberton

The Provost was not available. Instead, Cindy Pemberton graciously spoke about the pending General Education reform. The General Education Oversight Committee has been working for two years learning about efforts in
other schools and their experiences in addressing the role of General Education in higher education. Pemberton said that last year the group focused on Student Learning Outcomes, culminating in eight student learning outcomes being framed and then approved by a vote by faculty across campus this past spring.

5. General Education Oversight Committee: Scott Baker

Chair Ebersole introduced this discussion stating the main objective of a general education curriculum is to give more flexibility for students to change their major. General Education is also helpful in improving the retention rate for a university.

Several senators were concerned about trying to add ten courses to their curriculum. The Chair noted that the new chair at the University of Missouri Columbia campus, in conversations at the IFC, said that it has been easy to implement the General Education program for the engineering majors on their campus and he would be willing to help, if contacted, regarding how they were implemented. Pemberton also stated that UMKC is very late in adopting a General Education program whereas many institutions and universities have already implemented such. She wants UMKC to implement General Education reform by the Fall of 2013. For General Education to be successful, it requires that all members from campus commit to accomplishing the eight student learning outcomes, which means regular assessment no matter what model is adopted.

A senator stated that even though he is for the program of General Education, he does not approve the number of 30 credit hours. He said that even though his unit is practicing those eight learning outcomes, it is not happening within the first two years but rather throughout the overall education process before a student is awarded major.

Another concern expressed was that the contents in those 30 credit hours may differ from one major to another. For example, the level and content of College Algebra may differ from what is required in Engineering.

Some Senators asked for more specifics about the curriculum but Senator Wyckoff resisted that request stating that if a design was crafted for a curriculum, it would need to be re-designed if no consensus was reached by the faculty. In that situation, a lot of time and effort could be wasted in coming up with new models again and again.

Chair Ebersole said that according to the ByLaws of UMKC, faculty control the curriculum. The Faculty Senate is only the authorized body to set the curriculum across the campus. The chair also assured the Senators that the General Education curriculum is not going to replace any unit’s own curriculum but rather it acts as a unified block and that is why a representative from every unit comes up to decide the model or curriculum.

Another Senator suggested that it would be preferable to have one month to figure out how this would work in each of our respective schools before we vote on the two tiered model. To this suggestion, the chair said that this path can be more troublesome. He noted that a few universities have already tried that path but it has led to more failed General Education reform efforts. The alternative is to agree on the 30 hr block and then move to the next level. Right now we have a committee that was appointed by the Provost. But it does not have the legitimacy to make these curricular decisions. The Faculty Senate should give it that legitimacy to make certain key decisions with which we can have a proper model that would be stable for all degrees. He stated that this reform does not questioning the faculty’s ability to set the requirements for a degree, but simply puts in place a shared minimum basic 30 hour block.
Pemberton added that we have less time to do all of this than we would want and she hopes that the General Education reform can be implemented by 2013.

Ebersole sent the draft resolution to all the Senators with a cover letter requesting three main points -

1) to approve a 30-hour general education requirement for all undergraduate students across our campuses;
2) to charge the GEOC to work with the faculty across the university in the coming months to develop guidelines for designing new courses or tweaking existing courses to meet the general education requirements; and
3) to work cooperatively with the GEOC to hand over curricular and assessment responsibilities to the Faculty Senate once the General Education Curriculum has been implemented.

He continued stating that the Senate is not voting anything today. Instead the motion is to discuss with the various faculties. He recommended that Senators not think narrowly about just their own schools but more broadly of the university level. The chair also said that 2 weeks from now will be ideal to hold the vote by which a majority will determine the number of votes.

Ebersole also said that he would try to bring the model from St Louis or Columbia campus to make us better understand how they approached the implementation of their General Education program. St Louis has 50 courses from across the disciplines and that’s where the 2nd level comes up. The effort will work with every course to get the courses you are already teaching or new courses designed and approved.

6. United Way Campaign: Brenda Bethman

Live United: UMKC’s United Way and Health Charities 2011 campaign is raising money for the Community Health Charities. Everyone was invited to donate. There are many types of charities in which to participate and if you want you can also designate your gifts to go wholly to only one charity. The website for the charity is http://www.umkc.edu/liveunited/. The campaign code was sent to everyone via Email, so it must be in your Inbox. You can login using your UMKC SSO and campaign code as the Password.

7. Other Committee Reports

Chair Ebersole reminded the faculty senate that it has endorsed the idea of a tiered parking fee structure. Since UMKC has not been able to give faculty and staff much in salary increases this year, a tiered parking fee could be one way to help them take more of their money home.

Relatedly, it was suggested that the newly proposed bridge from the parking lot to the Performing Arts Center will be wasted if it is decided to move the Conservatory to a downtown location.

The Chair reported that he has added an item to the IFC agenda to help clarify the faculty status of the ranked librarians in the Collected Rules and Regulations. There has been an attempt to declassify them into academic support staff. That effort is not acceptable as this campus has accepted ranked librarians for at least the last 40 years as our faculty colleagues.

The Senate meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.