Faculty Senate Minutes – APPROVED

Tuesday September 21, 2010

Plaza Room, Administrative Center, 3 p.m.


Excused: Madison-Cannon, Rice

Absent: Durig, Hermanns, Wang

Visitors: Nancy Day, UMKC Faculty Ombudsperson; Rick Anderson, Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services; Dennis Cesari, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Business Services; and Michelle Cone, Parking.

Welcome at 3 p.m. Called to order by the Chair, Gary Ebersole.

Informational Item

1. Chair Ebersole sent a broadcast email reminder today announcing the Betsy Rodriquez event, from 3-5 p.m. next Tuesday (September 28) in the Law School Courtroom (bottom floor). Senator Luppino will put up signs. There may be a need to register deep concern about the proposals and recommendations concerning changes in the University’s Retirement Plan. We need a lot more information and discussion about the potential changes and their implications.

Approval of Agenda.

Senator Wyckoff wanted to add a brief report about the General Education Oversight Committee. With this addition, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes for September 7, 2010

Senator Mirkin moved to accept the draft minutes for September 7 and Senator Wyckoff seconded. All Approved.

Provost’s Report: Gail Hackett

Just one major thing to share. There is a state mandated review of academic programs. The Governor sponsored a Higher Education Summit in August and gave a charge to the university presidents: to collaborate across institutions and to review academic programs for ways of saving money and achieving efficiencies. This effort is being coordinated by the Coordinating Board and the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE). These activities are occurring at a speedier rate than we anticipated.

The criteria set out by MDHE to review programs are the number of graduates. Low productivity programs will be less than 10 undergraduates, 5 graduates, 3 doctoral degrees awarded within the
University of Missouri system. The Deans have the list; there are about 30 UMKC programs on the list. On September 16 a letter was received from the Interim Commissioner of Higher Education requesting institutional responses regarding the review of programs with low productivity and any exemptions we would request.

The chief academic officers met in Jefferson City with the MO Dept of Higher Education staff about the response form. On Sept. 29 they have a meeting with MDHE. Tomorrow (September 22) there will be a conference call to talk about the upcoming meeting. The Provost expressed resistance to these directives, their intrusiveness and their short timeline. There are only about two days to provide additional feedback. October 21 is the deadline to actually submit final actions regarding these programs, to either close them or request waivers. One of the goals of this effort is to try to save money but in many circumstances closing programs will not save money. Some are very high quality programs; others may serve other important purposes that justify why we want to maintain them. Question: How far back for these numbers? A couple of years. We have a list of collaborations already across institutions. However, there may be issues other than cost at play here. A lot of the language in the charge to the universities has to do with workforce, implying that we are meeting workforce needs as we are producing graduates.

Senator Wyckoff: Are they counting the School of Graduate Studies as one program or as individual degree programs? Individual degree programs. Question: Could the list of low productivity programs be available to the faculty senate? Yes, but we don’t want to freak faculty out.

Senator Sohraby: What is the goal? This governor is pro-education. He is trying to protect education because funding is never going to be the same. Nationally, universities are moving their funding models from bodies in seats to an attainment/performance model, based on graduation. So far the goal is not well focused but the initial verbiage reflects a desire to be responsive to workforce needs. But there is more to what we do than that. Some cuts will be permanent cuts. The national trend in Higher Education (eg. Carol Twig from Transformation—funding through the Pew Trust and working with states to use technology to achieve better quality and quantity for lower costs) asks “How can we do better with less?” Perhaps by restructuring courses, eliminating low productivity courses.

Senator Wyckoff: Internally our budget model is geared toward Student Credit Hours (SCH). This criterion of graduates is incompatible with our budget model. That’s a worry for us. Will we have to adjust the budget model? Not today.

Faculty Ombudsperson: Nancy Day

This is a brand new position (.25 time) that began on September 1st. Nancy Day brought a very preliminary draft of a brochure to promote what services she can offer, as well as what she cannot do. To date, there has been one case. Although case records are not kept, at end of the year she reports on the general issues she’s seen on campus, which may help develop policies. The office right now is located at 4747 Troost, but that feels isolated. She is still setting up: she has an email address (UMKC-faculty-ombuds@umkc.edu), but no phone yet. After attending a three day training in October she will
write a charter for her office. In addition, to networking with other Ombuds organizations and persons, she has a mentor at another university.

**Question from Senator Mirkin:** Whose idea was it to have an Ombudsperson? It was a joint decision between the Faculty Senate and the Provost. **Question:** What is your background in Human Resources (HR)? She has been a practitioner, a teacher of HR performance review, etc., a Department chair, the Director of the MBA program and Interim Dean. Her primary focus has been and continues to be concerned with how we treat each other.

Senator Fincham: This is a thankless task and so I want to thank you for taking it on.

**Student Government Association.** Chaz Walgren did not attend.

**Parking Study and UM System-wide Shared Services Initiative**

Dennis Cesari presented a Parking & Transportation Update. This included the 2009 Task Force Summary; the Initiatives Addressed in FY2010; and the Initiatives Being Pursued (a handout was provided).

Rick Anderson presented 5 out of 51 slides about the Shared Services Initiative. The phase 1 analysis involved data collection and benchmarking for Finance, IT, Procurement and Human Relations.

Looking at Resource Allocation, UM is more transaction focused with less time on planning and strategy. Procurement and IT were low cost compared to peers.

So far we have paid $600,000 to the Hackett group to do this analysis (No relation to the Provost 😊).

Recommendations: we tend to have more transactions than our peers.

The Steering committee will meet with the fiscal officers in all schools to come up with recommendations about how we move forward. With Finance and IT, he didn’t see a big opportunity for re-allocation. A subcommittee of the Faculty Senate’s Budget committee, the Support Cost Review Committee, is looking at this also and wondering whether there is enough upside to pay the tab for the next step in the analysis?

Senator Wyckoff: Aren’t we paying them to come up with conclusions that we wanted? Is it wise to pay a consultant to give us a conclusion that the data doesn’t support.

The Faculty Senate delayed the capital projects report until our next meeting due to time considerations. **Question:** Didn’t you develop a form for every project over $500,000? Yes, we will be sharing that form.

**Retirement and Benefits Discussion: Tony Luppino and Gary Ebersole**

Senator Luppino: Internally the Faculty Senate Budget Committee (FSBC) has been studying everything we can get our hands. We want to do a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of any proposed changes to the retirement benefits package.
A special subcommittee looks in detail and keeps apace with the benefits committee: Max Skidmore, John Clark, Randy Gardner, Christopher Hoyt, Mike Plamann, and Bill Black. This is a good group committed to doing their homework. We met today with Karen Bame from Human Resources and with the UM System Retirement and Staff Benefits Committee. Joe Singer is also on it. The FSBC developed a list of questions for Betsy Rodriquez on the following topics: 1) basic assumptions and 2) financial health of existing plan, and 3) what studies they are doing. We will get responses to all questions. The FSBC has a special meeting with her before her presentation to the campus.

Chair Ebersole: We have been coordinating our activities with the other campuses. Faculty Senate leadership will be meeting at the Board of Curator’s meeting in Springfield this week where there is the opportunity to get more information about where they are going and why. Many are concerned about the time frame. December is very close for any decision to change benefits and retirement program that will have long standing implications. There is no opportunity on the program for faculty voices to be heard.

Senator Wyckoff: Concern is not just the rapidity but why not make an informed decision?

Chair Ebersole: Three Curators will rotate off the Board after December who are the most vocal proponents. This seems to be an artificial deadline. We need time to understand what would happen if you went to a different program? Curator Warren Erdman from KC is the chair of the Board’s Compensation and Benefits subcommittee. This subcommittee will distribute information at the Curators meeting with nothing on the website before the meeting.

Comment from another Senator: Defined benefits/contributions can be made to work well but it’s all in the details, it’s in the black now but will we be solvent in the future? We have to know exactly what is being proposed. It could be a disaster.

Provost Hackett: The change under consideration is for current employees to continue on the current plan and a defined contribution for new employees. We are living off those who don’t stay 5 years.

Senator Luppino: This is not an easy decision either way. A Defined Benefits plan is attractive for getting people to stay long term and we need to look at the effect of having a 5 year vesting period on new people. The purpose of having the FSBC struggle to get information is to not panic university employees, but rather to reassure folks by knowing that there is a serious group studying this matter from various perspectives.

Senator Sohraby: The big picture doesn’t look good. Our salaries are lower than the national average, but our retirement benefits are better. This sort of change puts us in a difficult position. It is important to consider compensation as a package, not just as salaries. Should we change the benefit plan that has worked well in order to address the issue of a group of faculty and staff who aren’t going to stay.

Provost Hackett: I have never seen a package like this one. What other institutions have 5 year vesting?

Senator Mirkin: Is there any consideration to having choices? Any plan can be made to work. We need options.
All faculty have three documents as of today. **Question:** Is the Staff Council doing anything? Chair Ebersole met with the President of the Staff Assembly just this morning and gave her the information that went out to all faculty. Betsy Rodriquez has had a meeting with the presidents of the staff councils already. Staff are invited to the Sept. 28th meeting with Betsy. These changes might have a larger impact on lower paid staff members. Senator Bethman: Most staff are in favor of defined benefit and don’t move that much. They are here because of the benefits. At the Directors level there might be more movement.

**Campus Security Assessment Plan Committee**

Senator Yang volunteered for the committee on Security issues on both campuses, that is charged to assess the security environment at UMKC and determine any needs in order to make us more secure. It is a large committee. They hired a consultant to get the job done. They produced a draft document made available to all Senators. Bob would like feedback. A more robust report is coming at the end of the month.

**Question:** Are we a secure campus, are there any holes? While some doors are never locked, on the whole the assessment of the current situation is pretty good. Senator Plamann: Are you getting historical information for the last 5 years? There is a perception problem in part due to a local Fox TV report on sexual assault on campus as very high. The statistics came from the Women’s Center which may have given a slant to that particular crime.

**General Education Oversight Committee**

Senator Wyckoff: Senators Stanley, Mirkin and Wyckoff represent the Senate on the General Education Oversight Committee. A lot of changes are being looked at now, at least conceptually. Senator Wyckoff is shocked at how quickly things are moving and would like guidance concerning how involved the faculty should be in this process. All agreed that curriculum matters should be a faculty driven process level. He suggests that there be a regular report from this committee. Chair Ebersole reported that Harris Mirkin has announced his retirement at the end of this academic year and, since the General Education Oversight Committee Appointment was for three years, we need to get a new representative from the College. Senator Baker: I’m incoming chair of curriculum committee in A&S, we’ve heard no reports from that committee. There needs to be greater transparency. **Question:** Ken, would you like to serve on this committee? Senator Baker agreed to participate. Senator Krantz: There are eleven different General Education requirements, each school has a different set. Because intra-university transfers and retention are important campus issues the committee meets every two weeks.

**Adjourned at 5 p.m.**