

**The
U.M.K.C.
Faculty
Senate**

Report

The Voice of the U.M.K.C. Faculty

April 3, 2001

Note: Reports took up most of the meeting, but at the end there was an interesting discussion of faculty governance issues, especially in the context of the rather egalitarian theory that underlies the BluePrint process. The Interim Dean of the combined engineering/computing science school was appointed without discussing possible candidates with faculty, and without even explaining the rationale for the appointment after it was made, though the Interim Provost did say that he had phoned 6 faculty members. This action seemed to fit a pattern in which important decisions were made in a way in which consultation was bypassed, while a great deal of discussion occurred in areas where no apparent decisions have been made. Of course, some Senators would vehemently deny this formulation, and most Senators seem to be unsure of it. Still, it was a clear concern as we discussed the pattern of governance at the university. Hopefully, it is just a passing glitch.

There were reports on the structure of the graduate school, on the Education School Fact Finding process and a possible broadening of tenure rules. Interim Provost Eddy said he thought the fact finding process had been useful, and the Senate thought it was successful. We also discussed the Senate's rather muddy election rules. Chair Ed Mills will be leaving at the end of the term, and the Senate will miss him. He has been outstanding, and the Senate gave him a round of applause. We are also having a party for him and that, to your Secretary's knowledge, is the first time that has happened.

Interim Dean Appointment Process Questioned

Though there was no crisis about the issue, and the school was not asking for action by the Senate, there was an expression of concern. Many did not understand why this particular person was appointed, and some did not think it was a good appointment. It was an interim appointment, of course, so the issues were muted. Though some Senators did not think that the Senate should be discussing this controversy at all, since the matter was internal to the Computing Science/Engineering School, others thought the appointment raised important questions about qualifications and process.

It was emphasized that the issues were not personal, and there was no call for a revocation of the appointment. The intensity was certainly not anything like the Education School controversy. But, it seemed strange that faculty was not consulted, since there was no apparent conflict on this issue, and both the administration and the faculty would want the best Interim Dean. Perhaps the faculty could add information and perspective to the decision making process? Even stranger was the apparent reluctance of the administration to explain the rationale for the decision. Especially when considered in the light of other recent actions on campus, the decision seemed to display a hierarchical decision making process that was

specifically rejected in other areas. Dual messages breed cynicism, and we thought they were a danger.

Tenure regulations reviewed

The BluePrint Pride team was examining the current tenure regulations with the intent of revising them to embrace the Boyer model of scholarship. They will seek the input of the Faculty Senate and others. The aim is to reward other types of scholarship and service than are traditionally recognized.

Graduate governance structure discussed

It was argued that the administration had an unusually strong governance role in the graduate program at UMKC. Specifically they chaired both the Ph.D. Executive Committee and the Graduate Council and set the Agenda for both groups. Several Senators said that the Agendas focused on administrative concerns.

Additionally, some argued that there did not seem to be a reason for two separate bodies. The rules themselves were written a long time ago and reflected different priorities than exist now. We didn't have any concrete suggestions, and thought we needed more research before we could recommend a change. We also didn't think that the Senate could do more than suggest that the Graduate Council and Doctoral Faculty examine the rationale for change and make their own proposals. Still, we created a committee to examine the issue and get information on desirable changes and how to put them into effect. Members are Charles Cobb (Dentistry) and Gloria Meredith (Medicine). They were to consult with Deans McQuarrie and Hovis and report back to the Senate this year.

Elections

The Senate procedures on elections are confused, and the nomination and selection of Senate officers seem to be chaotic. The pending resignation of Chair Ed Mills has highlighted the need to revise the rules, and a committee will meet to discuss changes. (Charles Cobb [Dentistry], Harris Mirkin [Political Science] and Ellen Suni [Law]) Meanwhile, after Ed Mills leaves, and before a new Chair is elected, Vice Chair Kathleen Schweitzer (Library) will serve as Chair.

The *Senate Report* of March 20th, 2001 was formally accepted.

Respectfully submitted,

Harris Mirkin
Faculty Secretary