

Report

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

March 5, 2002

Note: Most part-time and adjunct faculty are exploited most of the time. There seems to be general agreement about that proposition. But all aren't exploited, and the UMKC budget crisis doesn't allow easy, quick solutions.

Discussion with Provost Ballard:

Part-time and adjunct faculty issues

Like almost all state universities, UMKC makes heavy use of part-time and adjunct faculty. The gradually eroding state budget has increased reliance on them. There was general agreement over the dimensions of the problems (issues of institutional identity, low pay, lack of benefits and little job security). We didn't find a solution to the problem, of course, but as good academics we discussed the creation and composition of a committee to study the issue. There are several aspects:

All-Faculty Meeting

The All-Faculty meeting will take place on April 2nd at 3:00. There is a web announcement of place and agenda. We might see a preview of the new UMKC web page, and faculty will be able to comment on the design.

Senate Elections

This spring there will be an election for Senate officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and two IFC representatives). Officers serve for two-year terms, and the 5 officers together function as the Senate Executive Committee. A solicitation for nominations will have been made by the time you read this.

Correction

In the last *Report* it was stated that commercial search firms are being used in all dean searches. The SBS search committee is not using a commercial firm.

* Reliance on part-time faculty is correlated with the declining level of state support of the university, as we have moved from 17% of the state budget to 13%. The Dental School makes the greatest use of part-time faculty (52%)¹ followed by A&S (48%) and the Education School (44%). The Medical School is composed almost entirely of adjunct faculty, but theirs is a special situation.

* The Provost said that he had seen figures indicating that, in the UM system, UMKC has the biggest part-time staff, the lowest teaching loads and the highest cost per student credit hour (SCH). This figure is subject to analysis, of course. We have a high concentration of professional schools, and the accuracy of the UMKC data was questioned. A review of several issues involved in the collection and interpretation of this data is underway.

* There are different types of part-time and adjunct faculty. Some are just used as cheap labor, while others are hired because they have unique skills but have other jobs and don't want to work full-time for the university. The availability of

¹ Dental School Senators said that virtually all of their part-time faculty provided clinical teaching to students in the clinics, and did not teach courses that met on a scheduled basis. Their commitment to clinical supervision ranged from a couple of hours every 2-4 weeks to a half-day a week. Full-time clinical faculty were available to students in clinics, associated labs, and courses about four days per week. If part-timers were measured against the *number* of full-time faculty, the 52% figure was correct. But they thought the figure was misleading, since the comparison only made sense if the amount of time each contributed to the school was reasonably similar across individuals.

this type of person is one of the advantages to being in an urban area. Some part-time faculty work here just because they want to teach a course in an area they have studied, or because they want access to some of the research tools of the school, while others depend on part-time teaching for their livelihood. Doctoral students use part-time teaching as a way of getting experience and supplementing meagre graduate stipends.

- * UMKC pays part-time and adjunct faculty less than comparable institutions. Additionally, they are not given benefits. The Provost agreed part-time faculty was exploited, and said he was committed to fixing the problem, but thought that because of the current budget crunch it would take up to 5 years. He said this year would be the worst one, but he wanted to get started. We discussed some problems and possibilities: pay increases had to come from somewhere, and with very tight budgets would programs be cut? Or would salary compression be increased? Could we reduce the number of part-time faculty and increase the benefits of those that remained? Perhaps individual part-time positions could be combined? Could benefits be made available to part-timers, since that was a relatively low cost item that could be helpful? Should higher paid faculty and staff forgo salary increases so more money could be given to part-timers? *[Note: Another idea discussed in a previous Senate meeting was whether the job-security of long-time part-time faculty could be increased.]* There was general agreement that doctoral students, who often rely on part-time teaching to supplement their incomes, needed to be protected.
- * The Provost said he had intended to have a committee in place by this time, but had not yet appointed it. We discussed the composition of the committee with him. He likes small committees (10 or 12 people) with good diversity. We all agreed that part-time faculty needed to be represented. It was also suggested that the AAUP be represented, since the AAUP had been discussing the issues and had lots of information available. There was agreement that the Senate also needed to be involved. The Senate Executive officers were to meet with the Provost in the near future to discuss the composition of the committee.

PRIDE

We briefly revisited the PRIDE Report. Some Senators suggested that tenure issues should be discussed by the Promotion and Tenure Committee, rather than by a self-selected group like PRIDE. Other suggestions weren't as drastic, but proposed that the group meet with the Promotion and Tenure Committee (they intended to do this), and/or that PRIDE be reconstituted so that there was a better representation of faculty. The PRIDE representatives on the Senate said that their report was just intended to open up a discussion, that it wasn't a conspiracy to undermine tenure. Perhaps they could do a better job of selling their ideas, and there was a suggestion that the group should study some strategies for implementing organizational change.

Elections and the all-faculty meeting

You should have received an electronic notice about the all-faculty meeting on April 2nd at 3:00 PM.

Elections for general officers of the Senate take place this year. Much of it will be done on-line. We discussed some procedural issues: can a person run for more than one office? (No); will decisions be by majority (over 50%) or by plurality (the largest number of votes)? [We unanimously decided that since American elections used the plurality system we would do that in the elections for Senate officers.]

We thought it would be good if candidates for Senate office developed a short statement of what their goals etc. were. It was suggested that candidates could introduce themselves at the April 2nd all-faculty meeting, and Senators thought that would be beneficial and a good tradition to start. We briefly discussed other aspects of the meeting. Senators thought the Chancellor and Provost should be there, but agreed they ought not to not run the meeting. They could give a short overview of the University's situation. They might be asked to answer pre-submitted questions. Several Senators thought it would be worthwhile to build a time for all campus activities into the schedule, since it was difficult to find a time in which an all-faculty meeting could be held.

IFC Report

There will be a **fee increase**, though the rates are not yet set.... The UMC faculty refused to accept the state-wide **general education requirements** and that may have adverse consequences for the UM general budget.... UMKC is sending fewer proposals to the **Research Board**. Though some preference is given to proposals from Assistant Professors, all faculty should apply. It was suggested that non-regular faculty should also be able to get research funds... The **MOBIUS** system will be fully funded.... If the Curators mandate a **2% salary increase pool**, campuses will need to create the fund. No extra funds will be attached to the mandate.

Respectfully submitted,

Harris Mirkin
Faculty Secretary