Secretary's note: This is a report on three meetings. The third was a special meeting called to deal with issues of academic freedom caused by a House attempt to penalize the university because of the controversial writing of one professor. (Me.) The meeting focused on the need to protect the freedom to responsibly discuss ideas and issues in the university. The Senate unanimously reaffirmed the principles of academic freedom stated in the University's Rules and Regulations and the widely posted statements of core values. Both the Chancellor and the President endorsed the Senate's resolution.

The second meeting was designed to fulfill an old mandate. There are supposed to be two all-faculty meetings each year, but the Senate has never called one in which the intent was to discuss policy. There were also nomination speeches, and an unveiling and discussion of the University's proposed new web site.

The first meeting was a regular Senate meeting. We didn't discuss budget issues because there seemed to be little new that could be said or done. We did talk about a preliminary report on the size of the administration.

**THE SHRINKING/GROWING ADMINISTRATION**

Jennifer Spielvogel did a preliminary study to determine if the central administration had grown. She based the study on computer classifications of administrative and faculty titles, and she conceded that the classification scheme might not be accurate and needed to be further examined. Still she thought it provided a rough guide. Some of the major findings:

- There seemed to be some growth in administration, but these were mostly middle management positions and largely at the unit level.

- In 1992 there were 207 people in the administrative categories, and in 2001 there were 226. That is a 9% growth rate. However, administrators increased by 17% (38 positions) from 2001 to 2002. All
this growth occurred in middle management titles. At upper administrative levels there was a decrease from 72 to 66.

- Between 2001 and 2002 most of the administrative growth (30 of the 38 positions) was in the academic units. Some of this might be accounted for by the shift of SICE administrative positions from UMC, by decentralization, or by temporary duplications caused by VERIP.

- In response to questions Spielvogel said that in 1992 15.7% of salary went to administration and 49.1% went to faculty (the rest went to service, clerical, technical and professional people like programmers and advisors). Currently 15.2% goes to administration and 47% goes to faculty. There has also been an increase in scholarships (including athletic scholarships) and graduate student fellowships.

Senators questioned the figures. Some thought that unranked people in academic lines might be charged to academics but really serving as administrators. A second set of questions related to the faculty: were an increasing percent of them part-time? A third group related to the computer classifications, but Spielvogel said it would be hard to get beyond those since these were federal classifications used by the university. Perhaps units could identify other administrators. A fourth set of questions were about comparative levels of support for administrative and faculty activity. Some Senators thought administrative priorities were funded more easily than faculty priorities.

Spielvogel will try to get back to the Senate quickly, but noted that she was the only person doing institutional research and said she was swamped. Of course, if we increase her staff we
increase administrative costs.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Senate adopted the following attendance policy by a vote of 12 to 3. It isn’t meant to supersede policies set by instructors, but can act as a default policy and serve as a guideline for instructors. It embodies several principles: students are expected to attend and participate in classes; advance notification of attendance policies should be given in writing; students should normally notify instructors of excused absences in advance; students who have excused absences are expected to arrange with instructors for alternative or make up work; instructors should accommodate excused absences if they do not unduly interfere with the learning objectives of the course or unduly burden the instructor; and attendance policies should be applied in a non-discriminatory manner so all university approved activities are treated in the same way. Several Senators thought that those in charge of activities should actively encourage students to attend class, and strive not to have practice during regular class times.

Each academic unit and instructor may adopt an attendance policy appropriate to that unit, a particular field of study, or for a specific course. Such policy or policies should be consistent with the general principles, and must give students advance notice in writing. In the case of an academic unit, notice may be given in the appropriate section of the General Catalog, or in other materials provided to students for the purpose of informing them of the rules and regulations of the academic unit. In the case of an individual instructor, notice of an attendance policy may be given in the course syllabus. Complaints that an attendance policy is inconsistent with the general principles by its terms or in its application may be directed to the Office of Academic Affairs after being reviewed by the Department Chair, if applicable, and by the appropriate Dean.

If neither the academic unit nor the instructor has adopted an attendance policy, or if proper advance notice of the attendance policy was not given, the UMKC general attendance policy will govern. The general attendance policy is that students shall not be penalized for excused absences. "Excused absences" include absences due to illness of the student, illness of an immediate family member for whom the student must care, death of an immediate family member, religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student for being present during class), representation of UMKC in an official capacity, and other compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. Students seeking an excused absence must provide documentation upon request to substantiate the excuse.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

We briefly discussed a faculty club. People seem to think it is a good idea, but it has been talked about several times before and has never gone anywhere. Maybe it could be a part of the new student center? We thought we should appoint a committee to explore the issue. If you are interested please call Kathleen Schweitzberger to volunteer…. We briefly discussed the University’s website, which we generally thought to be unattractive and difficult to navigate. If the website is the front door to the university, it needs modification. The design for a new website was presented at the all-faculty meeting. (See below.)

ALL-FACULTY MEETING

The Chancellor and the Provost were at the meeting, and most of the questions and discussions with them focused on budget. Many of the questions and comments have been covered in previous editions of the Report. [Note: It is now official that there will be no salary
increases, except for promotions.] Briefly, the current budget situation is bleak, but the Chancellor remains optimistic if we look beyond the next 18 months. She said that more people within the urban area are coming to appreciate the need for a great university and are coming closer to aiding us. The faculty asked how we ended up in our current position, and wanted to know why the cuts to the units seemed to go beyond the state cuts to the university. The administrative answer (printed in previous editions of the Report) is that the university over-committed itself to projects, and that revenue was smaller than expenditure. We need to raise revenue by recruitment, retention, streamlining business procedures and increasing Continuing Education revenue. If the faculty wants them there will be more budget workshops.

Provost Ballard was asked how his office had the funds to send a plethora of unsolicited books when the university didn’t have money for needed projects and expenses. He thought the books advanced an important university objective, but others thought a notice could have been sent out that several copies of the books were in the library.

The last part of the all faculty meeting was devoted to a preview of a proposed new Web Site for the university. The Web Site gets 52,000 page views per day, the majority from off-campus. We discussed the new Web Site design and thought it was excellent, but unfortunately there isn’t enough money to implement it at this point. The proposed new design will be posted, and comments are welcome.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

A special meeting to discuss academic freedom was called after the House decided to withhold $100,000 from the university budget because they didn’t like an article written on the patterns of political reaction to sexual issues, including homosexuality and pedophilia. After some discussion the Senate unanimously adopted the following resolution:

We, the Faculty Senate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, deplore the attempt of the Missouri House of Representatives to reduce funding to the University because of articles authored by Professor Harris Mirkin. Open and free exchange of ideas, even controversial ones, is a fundamental tenet of all universities. Affirming this principle, the University of Missouri Board of Curators has stated in its Collected Rules and Regulations (310.010): "Institutions of higher education are established and maintained for the common good, which depends upon the free search for truth and its free expression. Academic freedom is essential for these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth." The same themes are reflected in UMKC’s core values which "encourage free, honest and candid communication" and "foster academic and intellectual freedom." We strongly support Professor Mirkin’s right as a scholar to express his views and find reprehensible the attempt by the Missouri House of Representatives to stifle academic freedom.

The resolution was sent to the Speaker of the Missouri House; the Senate leader; all UMKC faculty; Chancellor Gilliland and Provost Ballard; Steven Jacques; The Missouri Association of Faculty Senates; the chairs of the Senates at UMC, UMR and UMSL; President Pacheco; The Chronicle of Higher Education; The Kansas City Star; Rep. Vickie Wilson (sent with a thank you note to the only Representative to speak up for academic freedom during the debate); the University News; and the Missouri AAUP.

Chancellor Gilliland sent the following letter to the Senate:

This is the statement I sent to the press today.

"Our professors have a right to conduct research, publish their findings and exercise free speech, just as they have an obligation to teaching and to serving the best interests of the community. Institutions of
higher education have no less an obligation to defend those rights, even if we do not agree with the views being expressed. The integrity of our educational system and our democracy depend on it.

While I personally find statements attributed to Dr. Mirkin by the press to be offensive and highly insensitive to the magnitude of this critical issue, the conduct of legal and ethical academic research should not be subject to censorship by a university administration. Peer review and the court of public opinion determine the validity and acceptance of academic work.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City supports the fundamental principles of a free and open society. Among these principles are the right to independent thought, the right to criticize, and the right to hold unpopular views."

President Pacheco sent the following response:

Thank you for sharing the resolution. It certainly is consistent with what the Chancellor and I are trying to convey. I have tried to make the distinction between personal views about the issues and the right and responsibility of faculty to conduct their research unfettered by political or unpopular considerations. Unfortunately, that distinction is not often made by legislators and many of the citizens of the state. It is difficult for many to understand that everything is always open to both discussion and research. Please thank your colleagues for their expressions of support for this basic tenet of academic freedom. MTP

The AAUP passed the following resolution and sent it to President Pacheco, Chancellor Gilliland, Provost Ballard, Gov. Holden, the Curators, the speaker of the House and Senator Kinder.

The official handbook of the American Association of University Professors, "Policy Documents and Reports" (1995 edition) states: "Freedom of thought and expression is essential to any institution of higher learning. Universities and colleges exist not only to transmit knowledge. Equally, they interpret, explore and expand that knowledge by testing the old and proposing the new... Views will be expressed that may seem to many wrong, distasteful, or offensive. Such is the nature of freedom to sift and winnow ideas" (p.37). A University professor also possesses the right to freedom of speech as provided under the First Amendment.

We, the members of the AAUP Chapter of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, protest in the strongest possible terms public statements by certain members of the Missouri House of Representatives which attempt to censor and intimidate Professor Harris Mirkin, and the punitive vote by the House based on these statements severely reducing funding to the University. Such actions constitute a reprehensible attack on the principles of academic freedom, freedom of speech, and the integrity and probity of university faculty. They affect not only Professor Mirkin but all his colleagues at UMKC and all faculty in the University of Missouri system, at other Missouri schools, and throughout the U.S.

We urge that all those whose responsibility it is to protect academic freedom and freedom of speech, including Chancellor Gilliland, the Curators of the UM system, President Pacheco, and elected officials in and from the state of Missouri, join us by issuing strong public statements in defense of these principles.

[Note: Professor Mirkin told your Secretary to express his great appreciation for all the support, and said that the attitude of faculty, staff, administrators and students made him feel good to be associated with the university. :-) ]

Respectfully submitted,

Harris Mirkin,
Faculty Secretary