The Faculty Senate met for its first regular Summer session, exceeding its quorum, and discussed the latest Budget crunch, a new UM System Copyright policy and the newly designed Fall Convocation. An agenda item added at the last moment, made the Senate almost sound like British Parliament with cries of "Shame, Shame, Shame" from all around the tables when we learned that the College of Arts & Sciences had been unable to hold an election for the last full year to replace the Senator representing their science departments and now was failing again to hold elections to replace their retiring Senator representing the Humanities and Fine Arts. All admonished the remaining representatives of the College to help the College shape up. This opinion likely would have been different had our regular Secretary not been abroad. ;-)

1. UM Copyright policy (action item). A copy of this draft document, including all legal language, is available on the Faculty Senate website at http://www.umkc.edu/fsenate

Explanation of the default assumption ‘all copyrighted materials produced by faculty belong to those faculty unless …’ was accepted as a new and fair basis for classic and new electronic production of copyrightable materials by faculty. The three ‘lawyer’ Senators discussed some detailed phraseology but all agreed that the draft, as proposed, would be acceptable to UMKC.

2. Budget (information item).

The budget discussion covered two areas: the recent history as discussed by the Senate’s budget committee with Vice-Chancellor Larry Gates and as reported by the committee chair to the Senate; and the current budget crunch of the end of Fiscal Year 2002, the 6 weeks between now and June 30, 2002.

FY2002 saw the transition from a central to a distributed budget model, complicated by the discovery of many unbudgeted costs, the distribution of a very large central reserve to many units across campus with associated responsibilities, and budget rescissions and cuts in July 2001, January and March 2002. As discussed below, the latest chapter of FY2002 is still being written. One of the Senators on the budget committee is currently trying to condense the 6 pages of numbers that took the committee hours to understand into an informative, correct and complete overview. We wish him strength.

The Chair reported the latest information from the Chancellor’s Cabinet. Despite the fact that the Missouri Legislature “solved” the budget for next year, FY2003, higher education is holding the bag for the end of this year. It will cost UMKC $7.4 million, more than all salaries for the remaining 6 weeks of the year. Options have been discussed among General Officers of the University, within the Cabinet at UMKC, and the Chancellor had asked all Deans to discuss the reality of the current crisis and the limited options to respond with their faculty. Apparently, this call had fallen on deaf ears in most academic units.
Discussed were options of furloughs and limits on expenditures, the freeze on any hiring through June 30, and the application of tuition surcharges for upcoming Fall and Winter semesters. However, high tuition programs like the Medical School program apparently are being considered for no or reduced surcharges. A discussion on any hiring offers for new personnel for the upcoming semester made it clear that all offers for employment that have been made will be honored.

3. UMKC 2002 Convocation/Day of Learning (discussion item).

After discussion of the diminishing number of Senators from the College, an extensive discussion ensued on the plan for the new Convocation, scheduled for Friday August 23, 2002, just 2 days after the start of the Fall semester for most schools or during Orientation for others. The issue was raised whether it was appropriate to cancel classes for all students during this day which aims to engage entering Freshmen into UMKC’s culture, as reported by Assistant Provost Larry Kaptain, and to remedy the reported very low student retention rate at UMKC. The discussion made clear that many different schools, for reasons of accreditation or other concurrent activities, including essential class instruction, would most likely ignore the instruction to cancel classes for the day. It was noted as absurd that, in order to have a “Day of Learning” one would cancel classes.

In general, the concept of the new Convocation, and its goals, were widely supported. It was suggested to move it completely or partially to the next day, a Saturday, or to the prior Tuesday; to make class cancellation for this year optional; and to build a day for Convocation into future Fall semester schedules so that the required number of classes that students purchase would be delivered. In the current situation of budget problems one should avoid the accusation that “UMKC cancels classes while students pay more”.