

**The  
UMKC  
Faculty  
Senate**

# **Report**

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

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November 19, 2002

## **The Budget: Planning for hard times**

The Chancellor and Provost spoke with the Senate. Though they didn't know yet if there would be budget cuts, or what the magnitude of possible cuts would be, it seemed prudent to prepare for potential reductions. The most likely scenario seemed to be a 5% cut in state funds this year [Other sources have stated that the funds would be reduced by 5% to 10%.] and an additional 10 to 15% rate cut next year. UMKC gets about half of its operating budget from the state.

Gilliland and Ballard said they intended to shield the academic units from the full impact of the reductions. A disproportionate amount would be taken from Administrative Services, Advancement and Student Affairs, though Gilliland thought this would probably harm their ability to serve the academic units. Additionally, the units would be directly impacted. On top of the direct cuts in allocations, there is supposed to be a 4% salary increase this year. No new funds are available to pay for the raise, and the UM central administration won't be able to cover it, so that if we go ahead with it the money will come out of the campus' operating budget. [Several Senators discussed the issue after the meeting, and it seemed to be a lose/lose situation. Either alternative would have a strong negative impact.]

The Provost said that he wanted faculty and students to be involved in discussions on the budget issues. On Nov. 20th he would meet with the deans to discuss the budget. Some have argued that certain units [like the library] should be held "harmless" but that action wasn't likely to be popular with other deans. He expected that the deans would share data and options with the faculty. He also wants to meet with the faculty, possibly in open forums (or the deans might call open forums) or with an advisory committee. Students, who might have their fees raised again, also had to be brought into the discussions.

Some suggestions were made from the floor: reduce admissions to the university in order to maintain quality (but that would cut down on revenue and probably invoke the ire of the politicians); join with K-12, and talk about K-16, since the university will always lose if it is seen as being in a battle with K-12; have a massive publicity campaign in the state about the harm being done to the university and the value of the university. Some people commented that the governor isn't a friend of higher education and seems to believe that the state's universities and colleges are inefficient with a great deal of duplication. The higher education budgets were about 50% of the true discretionary budget (the part of the budget that people in Jefferson City were actually willing to cut).

Towards the end of the discussion, some Senators said that this type in funding is cyclical. At some point funds for higher education would increase, and they thought we should discuss the type of university we'll be when we come out of this. The Chancellor commented that people have been thinking about this, and that a report entitled *UMKC 2006: Our Emerging Future* had been written with the help of numerous people and was being submitted to the board of Curators. The Senate, which had participated in some stages of drafting the report, unanimously endorsed it.

## **Discussion of Extended Cabinet**

The Chancellor said that the Extended Cabinet needed to be reorganized. The original group (chosen by lot from a list of volunteers) had done a good job of developing ideas and had been instrumental in developing the components of the UMKC Vision. The need now was to legitimize the group as a part of the institutional governing structure of the university. She wanted representatives from each unit, from the Senate and the Staff Assembly, with some community and student representation. The hope was to open communication and get beyond the silo mentality. Senators said they thought the organization would have more legitimacy if people were elected to it, but the Chancellor said that elections tend to encourage loyalty to the unit that elected them and that she wanted people to be able to rise above unit.

The faculty is not the dominant group in the Extended Cabinet, and some Senators thought they should have a larger role since faculty was at the heart of the university's mission. Others said that the purpose of the group was vague, and it was hard to design an organization without having a clear idea of its purpose. Senators also mentioned the need for the Extended Cabinet to communicate effectively with faculty and staff. Some comments focused on the proliferation and redundancy of committees, arguing that these were a drain on time. Perhaps we should abolish some groups as we extend others. One suggestion that the Senate had made in a previous discussion of the subject - that the schedules of extended Cabinet meetings be made shorter and more flexible so that faculty members could participate more easily - is apparently going to be implemented.

## **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

The survey was designed to augment other surveys (like *US News*) and measure how satisfied students were with the education they were getting. Students were asked about five areas: the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interaction with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and whether there was a supportive campus environment. The survey was done with entering freshmen and seniors who had taken at least 30 hours at UMKC.

UMKC does not do particularly well on the survey - it is about average when compared to other urban campuses, and ranks below liberal arts colleges and residential campuses like UMC - and there is some concern about that. One possibility, of course, is that the test accurately reflects the attitude of students here. Another is that students are subject to a variety of exit tests when they leave, and that these tests have no apparent importance, so students just blow them off. Some Senators suggested that we try to improve the tests by the addition of a section in which students could write about their experience rather than simply answering multiple-choice questions. They thought that would also have the side benefit of convincing students that their views had some importance. Another set of suggestions concerned improving the environment at UMKC, either by involving the student government in suggesting changes, or by involving faculty (and changing the reward system to encourage faculty engagement with students) or by using the New Faculty Teaching Scholars group to make/suggest changes. Contact Jennifer Spielvogel if you have any ideas, or just relay them to your Senator.

## **Part-time faculty ID cards and library privileges**

It seems that part-time faculty are not in the UMKC faculty database and so do not automatically have the privilege of borrowing books from the library. They also aren't given UMKC ID cards, and those are sometimes desirable.

Helen Spalding, the Associate Director of the Library, spoke with the Senate. She said that the library is glad to give borrowing privileges to part-time faculty if they are identified to the library either by a department chair or a dean. (The identifying unit would also be held responsible if part-time faculty didn't return library materials.) Part-time faculty couldn't automatically be put in the library's data base as faculty because they weren't clearly identified in the university's PeopleSoft software. Senators and librarians agreed that part-time faculty needed access to the library, so a resolution to that effect seemed unnecessary. An efficient way of doing that needed to be worked out.

Discussion turned to the issue of the university's apparent inability to identify part-time faculty, or to issue ID cards to them, or automatically grant them parking privileges. It seemed as if these were routine tasks. In fact, the university can't seem to clearly identify who its students and employees are, and there are constant glitches in this area. The Senate passed a resolution instructing the Chair of the Senate to speak with those responsible for identifying people and issuing ID cards to "solve the damn problem." We didn't know what the solution was, but it shouldn't be hard to issue ID cards to employees, to grant parking privileges to part-time academic employees and to correctly identify the people associated with the university.

## **Administrative evaluations**

There has been some trouble identifying faculty that were eligible to participate, but the process is underway.

Respectfully submitted,

Harris Mirkin,  
Senate Secretary