

THE UMKC FACULTY SENATE

REPORT

January 20, 2004

Secretary's apology :- (Two Senate Reports from the end of last year are missing – they will be completed as soon as I have time. I thought it best to keep current rather than playing catch-up and remaining behind. I apologize for the delay.

This meeting was filled with fairly routine business. Chancellor Gilliland gave a brief report on the status of next year's state budget (it might be higher, lower, or about the same) and we discussed Latin Honors. Chief Shelton of the UMKC police department gave a report to the Senate on why we don't have more campus police (\$\$\$\$), and the Provost discussed the creation of a committee to identify programs that are well positioned to become nationally prominent.

STATE OF THE STATE & UNIVERSITY

Chancellor Gilliland gave a short report on the state budget. Missouri revenue has not increased, and last year the state covered expenses by using one-time funds that aren't available for this year. So this coming year looks relatively bleak – flat, most likely, though there are various predictions that it will go up or down. State revenue is still an important part of the UMKC budget, though tuition now pays a larger share. Hopefully, things will get better after next year.

The Chancellor said that the top projects of the university were the restoration of the core cuts, the Life Sciences, certain capital projects and continuing with matching funds for the endowed chairs program.

Provost Ballard spoke about the Miller Nichols Expansion Task Force. Joan Dean (English) and Laura Gayle Greene (Library) are the two Senate contacts, and faculty can speak with either about creating a good learning/research environment. People are also needed for focus groups.

A committee is being created to identify programs that are well positioned to become nationally prominent. The Provost said that the committee needed to be in place by Feb. 1. Appointments should be people with experience in reviewing programs, and the Provost said he would like recommendations from the Senate.

There was a brief discussion about the Day of Learning, mostly to note that a committee is looking at improvements.

LATIN HONORS

Should we move to a system of Latin Honors (Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude) rather than the English Honor system (Graduated With Honors, Graduated with Distinction)? The students have requested the Latin system since it is more widely recognized, and the Senate seems generally sympathetic. The Academic Standards Committee presented a detailed proposal to the Senate. To prevent too many honors from being given out, limitations were placed on the types of honors that could be given to small graduating cohorts. Several Senators noted that this had the unfortunate side effect of preventing outstanding students in a small group from being given their degree with a Magna or Summa Cum Laude designation. Various types of cures for the problem were presented. One was a proposal to maintain the current rolling three-year system rather than switching to a semester system to establish criteria for honors. That would increase the number of students considered for awards. Another suggestion was to limit the total number of Latin Honors that could be awarded, but not specify the number of Magnas, Summas or Cums. There was some discussion of these proposals, as well as a discussion about whether the final semester's grades should be used in the calculations for honors. We finally decided that the Senate should not act as a committee of the whole in making major changes to the resolution. The proposal was sent back to committee for them to consider the problem and recommend a solution. They will report back at our next session.

CRIME ON CAMPUS

There are numerous stories of expensive equipment being stolen from rooms on the campus. Some seem to have involved many trips to a car, and yet the thieves were not stopped. Senators thought the number of police should be increased, and argued that it would be good to have the police on foot or on bikes rather than in cars where they couldn't really see what was going on. On weekends the campus is wide open. There was a considerable cost to the campus, both from equipment that was stolen and work that was lost.

The police chief (Scott Shelton) came to the Senate meeting. He acknowledged the problem, but said the police were working with very limited resources. There are normally 3 policepersons on duty, 2 on the Volker campus and one on the Health campus. They have too much ground to cover to use bicycles or go about on foot, and they have a lot of duties. He said the officers we have are woefully underpaid (starting salary is \$14,000). There is a commitment to train them. Senators expressed surprise at the low salaries. They also suggested that the resource issues might be mitigated if we pooled resources with other area institutions, like Rockhurst, MRI and St. Lukes. Other possibilities mentioned included linking the resources for campus police with enrollment management. Then when enrollment increased so would the funds for police. Other options were to institute a card system to enter buildings, or install surveillance cameras. Shelton said some of these had been explored, and were good ideas, but there weren't enough funds to implement them.

Senators acknowledged the resource problem, but still thought low cost measures could help alleviate the crime problem. The meeting with Shelton was an exploratory one and the Senate might revisit the issue at a future meeting.

QUICK TAKES

The Provost said the search for a Nursing Dean would soon end with an appointment (subsequently announced)... The Law School Dean search will restart after two of the top candidates withdrew at the end of last semester. They expect to have interviews and a decision in the second half of March.... The search for a Vice Chancellor for Research is still ongoing.... The need for a drop-off day care center for student and faculty kids was brought up and briefly discussed. The issue will be on a future agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Harris Mirkin,
Faculty Secretary