Information Items

The Chair shared the draft of the call for nominations and the criteria for the Chair of the Chancellor Search and Screening Committee. There was some discussion of how the senate will select among the nominations for search committee chair. Nominations should be sent to Gary Ebersole. There was some discussion of the search committee.

The Information Technology Committee has five faculty seats and the senate needs to elect individuals for these seats. A call for nominations for these seats will go out also.

Discussion with President Floyd

President Floyd thanked the senators for all for coming to the meeting today.

The President began by expressing his desire to have candid conversations with the faculty senate. The campus has experienced some significant changes in recent weeks and there have been many expressions of concern about the future direction of the campus. President Floyd indicated that he wishes to work through the traditional mechanisms of faculty and university governance. To that end he has disbanded some of the committees that have previously existed including the Extended Cabinet and the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

President Floyd will rely on the Faculty Senate and its officers as well as the SGA and the Staff Assembly. There is a strong belief among some constituents is that the faculty wants to run UMKC. President Floyd believes that we need to reinstitute shared governance at UMKC. There is no intention to replace or remove any individuals. President Floyd stated that he will move the university forward with help from the faculty and other employee and student groups.

The President asked to hear what the senators were thinking about and concerned about. The following issues were raised by senators and responded to by President Floyd.
Budget Issues

Concern was expressed about the critical lack of funds for the campus in particular the expenditures in recent years on administration and the difficulty in finding accurate information about those expenditures. It is clear that the administration has expanded in number with increases in administrative salaries well beyond increases afforded to other employee groups for salary and to academic units for needed resources. It appears that merit raise policies have not been clearly explained or consistently followed.

President Floyd - We will have an open forum on the budget and insure that it is clear to all involved where our money goes. The senate is asked to be patient while the President and other leaders try to make adjustments. If the administration’s response is seen as inadequate he wants to know that but he asked for the time and support to re-stabilize the campus. The President sees the concerns about senate leadership as a part of the larger concerns and he and the current elected leaders also need time and support. It is disruptive when we don’t support leaders trying the make the adjustments and to re-stabilize the campus.

Academic Units

Senators asked that no academic unit be “picked on” in terms of resources or its role in academic and political issues.

President Floyd - We will return to a more traditional role for deans and will rely on deans to facilitate the communication between administration and the campus. He stated that we must inculcate a sense of civility in all we do and address all issues in appropriate language.

Administrative Accountability

Senators indicated that the faculty wants accountability from the administration. Instances of the lack of accountability in the recent past were cited.

President Floyd – President Floyd believes in shared accountability and agreed that it is essential. He wants to go back to more traditional ways of sharing responsibility.
Faculty Role

Senators expressed concern that the administration often tells faculty which issues are important rather than asking the faculty what the issues and concerns are. The faculty has been forced to re-act instead of having a pro-active role.

President Floyd – The administration will need help in knowing what faculty wants to know about before decisions are made so that the faculty can be ask. The President acknowledged that the administration will make some missteps and he asked the Senate for help in knowing what they are and how to correct.

Academic Initiatives

Senators indicated that the faculty wants to know about academic initiatives and expectations of the faculty to interact with community partners. We need to determine what the nature of that interaction should be and not get marching orders from the administration after decisions have been made.

President Floyd - The President agreed that proposed new partnerships need to go first to faculty, and that is in part the role of the deans. Deans and their faculties must determine what they can and cannot deliver on in terms of service and partnership in the community so that we can be open and honest with the community.

Overarching Goals

Senators asked if there are still overarching priorities for the campus or will there be a refocusing of priorities? Are the three identified by the previous administration the only ones?

President Floyd - Each academic unit knows their own core competencies. That is why he is asking deans to work with faculty and to share with him so that we can determine what each unit can offer the larger community, and how we can measure our success in those core competencies. There are certainly some things we must have to be a good research university like a good library and the traditional degree programs especially those in the college. Resources must be targeted toward these essentials things. This is why some of the expenditures like the Chancellor’s Innovation Grants are being put on hold, so that the campus can use every dollar to meet the essential of a good research university. The President asked the senate to support the idea that we must take care of the core areas of the university before we can develop other areas.
Administrative Positions

Senators expressed a wish that new positions in administration should be brought to faculty senate to determine if they feel the proposed position helps university’s mission. Faculty wants greater efficiencies in administration than they have seen in the past.

President Floyd – The administration is working on issues of efficiency. The President has asked the Executive Cabinet to determine what positions are currently open which could be combined and the senate will be given feedback on this.

Promotion and Tenure Procedures

Senators expressed great concern about P & T. procedures that were changed during the fall semester after the process had been begun in many academic units. There is a perception that Provost is being autocratic in this matter and the faculty has not had sufficient time to respond when these changes are passed down by the administration. Some specific concerns were cited including how votes are disclosed. The document from the Roles and Rewards Task Force was not presented to faculty for review, but was instead implemented without faculty comment. This was not what the task force intended to have happen.

President Floyd – The President asked for an opportunity to look into this and other issues and he reaffirmed that any reorganization planning is stopped. The academic units will remain the same and faculty will have traditional role in P and T. The President understands the concerns and asked for a change to “right the ship.”

Faculty and New Academic Initiatives

Senators express concern that the faculty is being characterized as opposing change, but there is a real problem when new academic initiatives are launched, directors hired and placed outside of academic units and faculty control. Centers should not institute curricular change without faculty involvement.

President Floyd – The President does not want to second guess decisions that were made but he stressed the need to have resources for solid foundations first before extras and non-essentials.
Status of the 5% Draw Down And State Funding

Senators asked about the status of the 5% draw down and predictions for future funding and state appropriations.

President Floyd - The 5% from each unit has drawn mixed responses from the deans. Some deans believe that the money has been taken and should be kept and used. Other deans want 5% returned. President Floyd is working on the issue. The concern is the need to complete health sciences unit. We must begin construction on the health science building and not delay any longer because of rising costs. The President may decide to return the 5% for now but will likely have to take it back from the units in the future. The state appropriations for higher education will probably hold steady. The tuition increase is a concern but we will not increase tuition any more than 3.5% and we will need to live within those numbers.

In the next fiscal year we will be focus on restoring academic stability but it will be tight. Costs are increasing greater than the 3.5% will cover and we will need to make some hard choices. There are budget issues at UMKC that are not a part of the general picture for the university system.

Closing Comments

Senators made it clear that we are proud of UMKC and want that to be known in the community. The senators asked that the administration be truly transparent and that information and decision making be shared.

President Floyd asked again for help from the senate in understanding what issues are important to the faculty.

Senators stated again, the need to fulfill our research mission and focus on academic excellence. We can’t just serve the community or let that be our only priority.

The President agreed and reminded senators that that is why the administration needs the faculty to help determine what we can and can not do as a university. The administration needs to know what each unit feels it can and cannot do. We don’t want to abandon the community but we need to determine how we can best serve KC. The city needs to understand the roles and the talents of the faculty.

The President asked if the conversation had been helpful to the senators, stating that he felt he has a better sense of the faculty’s concerns and issues. He asked once again for the faculty’s patience and support.
Adjournment


Excused: T. Cole, S. Dilks

Submitted by,

Kathy Loncar, Secretary
UMKC Faculty Senate