Faculty Senate Minutes  
Tuesday April 21st, 2009  
Administration Center,  
Plaza Room  
3-5pm


Visitors: Derek Simons

Excused: Krause, Davies, Humrichauser, Williams, Marken

Absent: Knopp, Madison-Cannon,

Welcome-3.05 pm. Call to order by the Chair, Gary Ebersole.

Information items:
Chair Ebersole reminded all about the required all faculty meeting on April 24th from 3:30-5.00pm in Haag Hall, Rm 301 Lecture Hall. A reminder will we sent out and the agenda. Members of the Executive Committee are expected to report on issues encountered during the year.

Request for additional items to the agenda: there were none and the agenda was accepted (Whitt/Fieldman, all in favor)

Acceptance of previous minutes: The revised minutes from the April 7th meeting were approved (moved/accepted/all in favor)

Provost Gail Hackett:

Provost Hackett reported that another Dean (Bloch School) had been hired and interviews were planned for a new Dean of Education. There are 3 good candidates and the Provost requested that senators make an effort to attend these presentations.

She added that she had been reviewing awards generally and found them not to be comprehensive. For example service awards appear to be absent, although they were given in the past, as well as awards for mentoring. She said she would discuss this with the Executive Committee with the goal to come up with a full range of awards. Convocation is also another issue that she wanted to discuss. She remarked that it is currently held at an odd time and that we need an event to honor faculty/staff. Senator Ziskin felt that orientation needed a “face-lift.” This was followed by a short discussion of the various ways different schools celebrate. All groups on campus planning this, such as Student Affairs, should co-ordinate efforts. There were requests for ideas and some suggestions that faculty awards needed to be in the middle of the year. She ended this by saying we should revisit this issue at the May 5th meeting. Senator Fieldman requested information on the status of an ombudsman; the Provost responded saying “we need to
get back to this”. Senator Potts raised the subject of teaching, how we connect with the local schools, and how we prove we are teaching “right”. The Provost said we have no specific person at UMKC who is designated to focus on the transition to UMKC.

Chair Ebersole introduced the HB 668 and presented a simple Sense of the Senate motion that UMKC opposes all legislative efforts to allow individuals to carry guns on campus. There is a national effort by the NRA to withhold funds from non-supporters. Senator Potts facetiously asked if one could carry a gun in the state capitol building and was told “no”. Senator George remarked that Chris Kobach, head of the Kansas GOP, is for it, arguing that if someone carries a concealed weapon, one can not see it anyway. The Provost raised the issue of the Virginia Tech tragedy and how anyone could identify the killer with the gun from others with guns. Chair Ebersole added that this is a serious issue especially in the dorms where there may be alcohol. There was further discussion about the wording in the bill, whether it referred to any weapons or just firearms. Basically the Bill appears to remove the provision that UMKC is “gun-free” and the age to carry is reduced from 23 to 21. Senator Sykes-Berry inquired if this made it a “local law” and if so what would be the implications of such. Chair Ebersole noted that if the bill passed into law we would have to restrict bags and coats in class rooms. Senator Fieldman reported that even today someone walked in off the street in a dark coat drawing attention to the fact that it is not only students who may bring in weapons. Chair Ebersole read the motion opposing this on behalf of UMKC faculty and staff. It passed overwhelmingly. There were no abstentions, but Senator Fieldman opposed the motion on the grounds that it needed to be worded more strongly and in a way that 1) directly countered the argument that if many people carried concealed weapons, campuses would be safer, and 2) raises the point that weapons are inimical to the fundamental role held by places of learning.

**Academic Issues Committee:** Senator Holsinger reported that the student petition had been discussed and that it was agreed that the rules should be tightened. The AIC plans to review these and bring them back to the Senate for review in the fall. There was general discussion about what occurred, whether this was accurately presented, how the current system works, and its shortcomings. Chair Ebersole reported that 2 years ago the AIC revised this policy. He added the importance of the impact of inflated grades given by non-regular faculty. Senator Yang mentioned the fact that there could be many of these cases which could burden the system and Senator Potts pointed out the disparities between grading systems. Senator George added that there is a certain % of courses which can be used when grades are transferred from another institution.

**Administrative Issues Committee:** Sue Sykes-Berry

Dean evaluation and electronic voting:

Senator Sykes Berry requested lists of voting faculty. In response to a question, Chair Ebersole stated if any individual held a more than 50% administrative appointment that individual could not vote in faculty elections. Senator Sykes Berry added that the Senate web site would be functioning by the summer.

**Recently invoked Benefits changes**
Chair Ebersole turned this issue over to Senator Price and the IFC representatives to initiate the discussion of whether there should be a “Sense of the Senate” motion sent to President Forsee in regard to this matter. Senator Stancel stated that there was no current move to change the benefits plan. The BOC has requested a meeting with the President and HR folks (there will be 3 new Curators) to obtain information and the IFC will attend this meeting. However, we do not know how/if this will change the plans. Senator Holsinger stated that he had heard Forsee repeatedly show concern about faculty salaries. He felt sure Forsee has received the message loud and clearly from us on this issue of benefits. Chair Ebersole stated that any proposed changes would be carefully vetted in the future and that 7-9% commitment has been able to “top up the plan” in the past. He added that, relatively speaking, our retirement fund is in good shape. Senator Potts made the important remark that we must educate the BOC. Senator Price felt that there had not been much progress between the IFC and Forsee and that he favored putting something in writing in spite of the possible “off the record discussions” for political expediency. Chair Ebersole said he felt that Forsee is trying to be careful and is well prepared to deal with the financial situation. Senator Price said he disagreed, but appreciated the need for “off the record” discussions. He added that 1-2% contribution/yr over the next 5 years to provide the 12 million could change to a huge contribution if the stock market did not rebound. He also remarked on the article in the February issue of the SL Dispatch which conveyed President Forsee’s position on this matter. Chair Ebersole reminded all that the IFC has 12 members vigilantly watching this issue at the places where these discussions occur. Senator Price felt that if we do not hold Forsee’s feet to the fire on the issue, the summer will go by and we will have lost momentum. Senator Beard raised the issue again of the “closed-door” meeting without a record and that we can not assign a value to the retirement benefit. Senator Honnigberg favored a polite statement regarding faculty governance and carried the sentiment of Senator Luppino that we should not have a “stick in the eye” statement. Senator Price read a resolution with 4 major points he and others had drafted. Chair Ebersole felt that #1 was a “no starter” with Forsee and would seriously alienate him from us. With regard to #2, 3, and 4, which dealt with shared governance, he felt the President would agree to them. Senator Price requested a resolution and this was moved by Taylor/seconded by Price. The recorded vote was 9/7 in favor and with Senator Fieldman’s absentee potential vote in favor which would result in an 8/8 tie. Senator Yang raised the question of the impact of a confrontational type of message and the concern that the date was not noted in the resolution. Others raised the position of UMSL, that was adversarial in tone and which no other campus supported. The meeting was adjourned with the motion still on the table.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.05pm