IFC Retreat – September 24, 2012

Attendance: Nancy Stancel (UMKC-minute taker), Harry Tyrer (MU), Gordon Christensen (MU), Michael Davis (MS&T), Susan Brownwell (UMSL), S.N. Balakrishnan (MS&T), Kattesh Katti (MS&T), Mark Fitch (MS&T), Chris Spilling (UMSL), Chris Weisbrook (UM System), Steve Graham (UM System), Steve Moehrle (UMSL), Carole McArthur (UMKC), Gary Ebersole (UMKC), Steve Owens (UM General Counsel), Jana Moore (UM System), Tim Wolfe (UM President), Katie Markie (UM System)

V.P. Academic Affairs Steve Graham - Introductions were made and ground rules set.

President Wolfe & the role of governance discussion

President Wolfe would like IFC to draft a document suggesting what areas/topics can be considered under shared governance. It is the responsibility of IFC members to communicate with faculty at all levels. NTT and Domestic Partners are good examples of how IFC was able to come together to tackle tough issues. President Wolfe said good communication and trust is critical. We need to express, advise and collaborate on issues then decide what steps are needed in the process. Leadership from IFC members can help to eliminate friction on topics. Best practice on shared government document needs to be created. There was a discussion that President Wolfe will announce a decision to withhold from each campus 5-10% of the state allotment. It would be returned to campuses based on the competitive success of each campus to achieve its strategic goals.

Amendment 2 (August 7, 2012) Right to pray (passed by 82.2% majority)

General Counsel Steve Owens introduced Kate Markie from his office and Hayley Hanson and Maurice Watson (Husch Blackwell) who specialize in higher education issues. At “The God Amendment’s” core is the desire to create new rights around religion that we didn’t have before. We already have ample protections under the First Amendment in the United States Constitution. In Marsh v. Chambers (US 1983) the courts were split where one religion is represented more than others. A student may pray voluntarily at any time, alone or with fellow students on the same terms and conditions as other conversation or speech. Universities may not deny students free speech. There is language that excuses a student from assignments that are inconsistent with a student’s religious beliefs. It states: “…that no student shall be compelled to perform or participate in academic assignments or educational presentations that violate his or her religious beliefs …” There is no federal protection for this. Alternative assignments may be given instead. We need consistent application of the law for such requests. There may be no requirement that a student believes or accepts a belief but the course requirement states that a student must understand this information. It is too soon for case law that would interpret the law’s meaning. There is no injunctive relief on this issue. We need to develop a system “excuse” policy to apply as an alternative. If a faculty encounters an issue with this, inform General Counsel immediately.
IFC Actions for this year

The suggested paradigm for IFC action this year consists of four areas: 1) providing big ideas, proactive collaboration approach to aid university for priorities and strategic planning; 2) understanding what issues should come to IFC; 3) don’t assume that Provosts and Deans speak for the faculty; 4) develop proactive collaborative visions from the ground up

Academic calendar 2014 start date

The University Registrar provided a handout with the options of choosing start dates for the fall, spring, and summer calendars for 2014-15. Option 1 is a start date of August 18 and option 2 is a start date of August 25. If we move to August 25th the summer session gets squeezed. Do the campuses need to be in sync to move to this? Also, such a move may create havoc with students who have varying schedules. The required 16 weeks is set by MDHE. It is based more on student contact time per hour rather than number of weeks school is in session. For this semester we need to let campuses do what they need to do. If we do nothing campuses could decouple the start dates. We would like to see IFC provide guidance on this. Each campus needs to come back with its recommendation. We can ask Registrar Brenda Selman to come to the next IFC meeting to give us the pros and cons for the two start dates.

Steve Knorr V.P. Governmental Affairs

V.P. Knorr reviewed the last legislative session. There were 100 out of 1,000+ bills filed which affected UM. There were green standards for buildings. There was a modification of the Sunshine Law to charge back hours to labor for requests. UM receives about 7 requests a week. Higher education received level funding (in actuality it’s a 1% cut of $4 million). Higher education 50/50 cost share funding on capital projects was approved. “New bond initiatives and the Higher Education Capital Fund will enable 50/50 partnerships between the state and private donors” (Knorr, 9/25/12 “University of Missouri System Legislative Priorities for 2013”). Congress passed the stem initiative with matching funds to the Department of Higher Education for endowed professorships, youth camps, scholarships, etc. The Extension proposal did not pass. This year Tim Jones is the new Speaker of the House and he understands university issues quite well. We have an elections race this year. Of the 197 members of Congress, 58 will be new. Prior to the election, 2/3’s of the whole body will have 2 years or less of congressional experience in the legislature so there is a learning curve for new members. The Tobacco Tax will be on the ballot. It has been on the ballot twice before and has failed by 51% to 49% both times. It would comprise $300 million total, 30% to higher education; 20% of that must go to health professions and can be used for capital projects. The Bush tax cuts will most likely lapse which means all of us would see a rise in taxes in our paychecks. Sequestration kicks in with a January 3rd expiration date for the existing tax breaks. Any financial aid (64% or $23 million) may be deeply cut. This is a real threat because in the last five 5 years UM has been in the bottom 5% in raising tuition costs. Between 1985-2005, the average cost of higher education has increased by
439% and health care costs have risen 239%. On the federal side, the Pell grants need to be protected and we to make sure our completion rate improves. We do a good job with this in the university system. Tom Dempsey from St. Charles is the new leader of the Senate. He visited MU and toured the Engineering building. These visits make tremendous impact on legislators. He saw the need for capital funds by witnessing 20 students standing in the back of the classroom taking notes. The lack of classroom space had a powerful impact.

V.P. Betsy Rodriquez – total rewards (will give us handouts)

Faculty salary update: UM campuses are generally losing ground and campus rankings with respective peers remains very low. Turnover is increasing in most positions across campuses. Two years ago turnover rates dropped in half probably in fear of losing jobs due to the economy. Low salary is the least reason why faculty comes to or leaves the institution. On retirement costs, there is a 73%/27% (employee contribution) split. Retirees’ costs are based on years of service but average 50%. 91% of our employees take medical insurance which is much higher than other employers who average about 70%. We need to think about where we want to spend the money. Do we want to have low salaries but have a good benefits plan or do we want to equal it out more? $300 million out of a billion dollar payroll (1/3) costs goes towards benefits. In the last 10 years we have doubled what we’ve spent on medical dollars and it will double again in next 10 years. 58% of employees make less than $50,000 but pay over 9% of salary on medical care. That rises to 18% of salary if you earn $25,000 or less. Big changes are coming for 2014 because health care reform goes into effect. Part time employees will generate the biggest cost increase. Cost will be based on how many hours worked not whether you are considered a temporary worker. For UM this will mean a 3% increase in costs for 2013. Reserves will be used to cover this. We are encouraging people to move into the high deductible plan. System will be reviewing retiree benefits this year. There was a 30% participation rate in the UM health care survey. Of those who took the survey, about 31% received the $100 for the wellness program. 24% of employees create excess costs in health care due to life care choices that harm their health. This probably understates the data. The largest complaints were neck/back pain and neuromuscular issues; second highest risk is high blood pressure, and third is depression (self-reported conditions). It was probably the healthier population who filled out the survey and all of these conditions are improved by exercise and eating healthier. One of the top three drugs employees reported taking are for anti-anxiety and anti-depression. About 20% of employees result in 80% of the claims. Of the 19,000 UM benefit eligible employees, 4,000 are faculty.

V.P. Information Technology Gary Allen

V.P. Allen gave IFC the annual report on accessing faculty computers. Most instances were due to the death of employee. There was a university network penetration audit done and we did fairly well. There were no security breaches over the past year but we need to strengthen our efforts and take proactive steps to secure it. One recommendation calls for an annual attack and penetrate exercise. Another is the purchase of an IT system inventory tool. Most threats are
internal from people having access to sensitive information. His office is buying scanning security assessment tools so that this can be an automated operation rather than a manual one. Some campuses are considering security certification of its IT employees. IFC received a handout which defines cyberinfrastructure. The NSF document outlines the vision, mission, strategies, outcomes and planning factors for IT in its March 2011 document. We are in a time period of collaborate or perish. We need a standardized process for very large implementations of IT. Otherwise, it varies from consultant to consultant. We have 13 data centers across our campuses but we only need 2 to 3 data centers for the system. We can consider creating our own cloud environment for computing which would be more secure. Mary Lou Hines Fritz is leading the project to reduce costs and simplify IT environments. We are creating portals for E-learning and administrative functions that need to be intuitive. This requires standardization in architectures. An IT plan was presented to and approved by the General Officers and Chancellors. System will get one-time money of $500,000 for the data consolidation project. His office is starting on a plan that will replace FAS. Whatever replaces it will need to migrate existing data into the new system.

V.P. Research & Economic Development Mike Nichols

We are expanding research and economic development by looking at research pathways to commercialization. He listed and described the intramural programs available for faculty. There is a $1.5 million fund for such programs in the system. There is a new program for interdisciplinary and intercampus research. V.P. Nichols described a new program for translating faculty research into commercial product development using external private venture capital funding. Funding can go as high as $500,000.

Online courses

IFC will discuss this issue. It affects faculty down to the departmental level. Faculty need realistic time lines and confidentiality on sensitive issues. There needs to be a balance between traditional classroom instruction, labs and online courses. Perhaps a boot camp could be held to refine what the rules and boundaries should be and how departments should run online courses. We need to develop a set of general guidelines.