UMKC Retirees in Jefferson City: Three Views

THOUGHTS ON UM LEGISLATIVE DAY 2008
By Marty Hatten

The beautiful Missouri Capitol, constructed in 1918, is like a bustling city during the legislative session. State officials hurry from their offices to the legislative floor, administrative staff cram themselves into small hallways, groups of children arrive in school buses, and we from UMKC joined the crowd for UM Legislative Day. We were warmly greeted in the Rotunda by Governor Blunt, new UM President Forsee, and the leadership of the House and Senate. Then we were off in teams to meet with KC area legislators. Our job primarily was to highlight a variety of legislative priorities for UM programs and budgets, including faculty compensation, a new health-care initiative, and certain building needs. Beyond that we were to be the faces of UMKC.

I was teamed with Walt Rychlewski, Interim Dean of the School of Computing and Engineering--a tall, gregarious man who ran into people he knew around every corner--and Newt Campbell, UMR/UMKC alum and retired CEO of Burns and McDonnell. We managed to personally see our assigned legislators--Representatives John Burnett, Jason Holsman, Kate Meiners, and Trent Skaggs--plus Walt's rep from the Liberty area and mine, Jenee Low, whose brother we discovered is a UMKC Engineering alum. Walt and Newt also informed them about UMKC's growing computer science and engineering programs. State

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CALENDAR

June 4
All-UMKC Retirees Reception 4 pm – 6 pm in Pierson Auditorium

August 6
Board Meeting

August 14
Student Move-In-Day (To volunteer, call Kim Rudolph at 235-1561)

September TBA
Celebrate UMKC Convocation (To volunteer, call Joan Bubacz at 235-1611)

October 2-5
Homecoming Weekend (To volunteer, call Kathryn Young at 235-5606)

November 5
Board Meeting

November TBA
Retiree Benefits Meeting

December 6
Holiday Party Pierson Hall 11am – 1 pm
Senator Yvonne Wilson warmly greeted us all over boxed lunches outside her office.

The beautiful marble hallways are lined with pictures of the legislators through the years. It was gratifying to see in these pictures the increased presence of women and ethnic groups who were long absent from earlier montages. Though it was a long and hurried day, I was thrilled to be able to share with policymakers a little of what being a part of UMKC means to me.

LEGISLATIVE DAY 2008
By Leo Sweeney

I was one of the UMKC alumni and retirees who participated this year. The overall goal of such days is to interact with the state’s elected officials on the funding needs of the University.

Ron Given, a UMKC alumnus and current President of the UM Alumni Alliance, and I were one team that visited several legislators in their offices. Retired Judge Thomas Sims, another UMKC alumnus, and I also as a team visited several legislators, even venturing into the Senate area. We were able to discuss both UM and UMKC programs and needs and even able to correct misinformation and present missing key information in several instances.

The day was a full and long one: from boarding a bus on the UMKC campus at 5:45 am until returning to the campus around 5:00 pm. However, it seemed well worth the effort and would be a volunteer duty that I would be willing to repeat.

LEGISLATIVE DAY 2008
By Dale Neuman

Several RA Board members joined with others from UMKC and other UM representatives to take part in this year’s legislative day. I was at times paired with others and at times on my own to help make the cases for those issues of most concern to the University.

But two different experiences were the highlights of my day. The first one occurred when my partners and I had to call a legislator from the floor to the lobby to visit. It was one of my former students and he commented that the internship in Washington, D.C. that I had arranged
for him many years ago had led him into his life of public service. That was reward enough for the trip! But then after I had made all of my assigned office visits, I returned to sit by the very attractive display set up by the UMKC Advancement Office in the Rotunda area. As I sat there, people passing by stopped and talked with me. One was a father there to visit a legislator about a matter and wanted to know more about UMKC because his son had mentioned that it was one of the schools he was interested in attending when he graduated from high school. Another was a group of students from St. Louis visiting the Capitol. One had already been accepted to UMKC and she wanted me to tell her friends all about it from my association with it. I gladly obliged and found myself proudly talking about the campus and its programs. I believe all of us who went not only felt part of something important, but came away with renewed pride in the UMKC we had served and continued to serve.

**Nelson Atkins Museum of Art Program**

*By Nancy Mills*

Approximately 20 UMKC retirees attended a program and tour at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art on March 8th. Marilyn Carbonell welcomed our group, and presented an overview of the holdings and services of the Spencer Art Reference Library located on the second floor of the new Bloch building. The library staff provides services for visitors and scholars researching art history. In fact, they are planning to offer free sessions on doing research in the Spencer. Anyone interested in using these services is invited to call Marilyn at 816-751-1381.

Mary Beth Rohlf, Manager of Volunteer Services, invited retirees to join the family of volunteers at the Gallery. A broad range of volunteer options were presented such as assisting with exhibits, becoming a trained guide, and working at the visitor services desk. Call Mary Beth at 816-751-1307 to get involved. Two of our members, Bob Brazelton and Merton Shatzkin, are already volunteers at the Nelson.

Lunch at the beautiful Rozzelle Court was followed by the tour “Art and Architecture of Bloch,” a fascinating look at the building’s features and the collections it contains. It was very informative.
Join the all-Retiree Reception June 4

On Wednesday, June 4, 2008 the UMKC Retirees Association and University Advancement will host a reception for all UMKC University Retirees. The reception will allow fellow Retirees to reconnect, share memories and celebrate the 75th Anniversary of UMKC. There will be remarks by Chancellor Guy Bailey as well as a 75th Anniversary Toast.

The event will be held in Pierson Auditorium at the University Center from 4:00-6:00pm. To RSVP to the event please call 816.235.6060.

Meeting with President Forsee

By Nancy Mills

On April 22, 2008, representatives from the four UM retiree associations met with President Forsee. Goals of the meeting were to gain an understanding of the vision President Forsee has for the University, to discuss how the RA’s can support that vision and to discuss how the University can enhance support of the University retirees.

President Forsee outlined five area of focus for the University over the next few years:

1. The State will view the University as an essential economic engine in Missouri.
2. The four campuses of the UM will have unique goals and plans based on strengths of each campus.
3. Student access will be a priority (i.e. cost, and access through distance learning systems).
4. Faculty salaries will become more competitive.
5. The value of higher education for our youth should be fostered throughout the state of Missouri.

Retirees can support the University by continuing to support its goals, volunteering in support of University activities and providing suggestions for reducing costs, such as health care costs. In response to the request for all retirees to have access to the University e-mail, President Forsee asked Blake Danuser, Vice President, Human Resources, UM to explore that option with Gary Allen, Vice President Information Technology, UM.
DID YOU PAY YOUR 2008 DUES?

If you are an annual member, your dues were due in January. We forgot to put a reminder in the February Newsletter and so a number of annual members have not yet renewed. If you are a life member, you do not pay annual dues. If you do not know which you are, look at the mailing label on this newsletter. If there is an L on the label, you are in for life! If you need to pay, please make your check for $10 payable to: UMKC Retirees Association and mail it to: UMKC Retirees Association, 5100 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110.

UMKCRA Finances---May, 2008

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Net Assets $10,779.84

*Travel is covered by the Chancellor’s Office for one car to go to meetings with other campus retiree officers and to out of town Curators Meetings. The current rate is 50.5 cents a mile so the RAUM estimate is low. The money will flow through the MO Code account. Also, there is a designated memorial account that is part of our assets.

Notes from the President:
By Dick Hetherington

I am excited to be working with such a talented, energetic and committed group of retirees on the UMKCRA Board and the various Association committees this year. Among the challenges we will be addressing are amendments to our constitution, the appointment of new Benefits and Communications Committees, and the enhancement of the Association’s image as a valuable contributor to the mission and goals of UMKC.

Constitutional amendments (both editorial and structural) are being prepared by an Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Merton Shatzkin. The recommendations will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. The Board’s recommendations will then be distributed to UMKCRA members at least three weeks before a meeting at
which the eligible members may vote. We hope to complete this process by the end of the year.

The Benefits Committee, chaired by Sandy Salz, will make current information about pensions, health plans, system wide and campus specific benefits available to all retirees. They will also schedule a Retiree Benefits presentation on campus each fall before the annual Benefits Change Period.

The new Communications Committee is an expansion of the former Ad Hoc Website Committee. By adding the Newsletter Editor position and the production and distribution of the paper and web newsletter as responsibilities of the committee, UMKCRA communications will be more effective. The UMKCRA Website will officially launch in August.

Enhancing the image of our association is an ongoing challenge. In addition to recording the growing number of volunteer hours donated by retirees to the University, we are starting to collect data about the number of retirees who remain engaged in University endeavors after retirement, who donate money to the University, and whose success after retirement continues to enhance the reputation of UMKC.

Please share your ideas, comments or suggestions, and I look forward to a productive year.

**RA Member Bob Farnsworth in the KC Star**

A front page story in the Kansas City Star on April 25, 2008, featured a photo of Bob visiting with the son of Melvin Tolson, a noted African-American poet. Bob had written a biography of Melvin, a poet and graduate of Kansas City’s Lincoln High School. Tolson went on to be a college professor and debate coach whose team’s 1935 national championship story was retold in the recent movie *The Great Debaters*.

**2008-2009 Board and Officers Elected at April 5th Luncheon**

The slate of new officers and board members presented by the Nominating Committee was elected on April 5 at the meeting in Pierson Hall. Newly elected or reelected to their positions are: Nancy Mills, VP and President-
Elect for 2009; Bob Brazelton, Treasurer; Paul Haigh, Secretary; Sandy Salz, Ted Sheldon and Dan Tira, Board Members.

Dick Hetherington moved up from VP and President-Elect to President. Dale Neuman was presented with a framed certificate of appreciation signed by Chancellor Bailey and Dick Hetherington for his service as RA President in 2007-08.

The event was attended by more than 90 members seated around tables each with a floral display created by RA Board Member Marj Finley from her garden.

It featured remarks by UMKC’s new Provost, Gail Hackett, who used the opportunity to recognize many of the recent achievements of UMKC that continue to make it a major force in higher education in the region and beyond. In particular, she reported that two UMKC faculty were just announced as Guggenheim Award winners - one in Arts and Sciences and the other in the Conservatory. She went on to note that some universities never gain such recognition and those that do usually only get one. To get two in the same year is extraordinary. The Provost encouraged those present to continue their support for the campus citing the many volunteer hours that had accrued in just the past year from among its ranks.

Editor’s Note

By Dale Neuman

I have agreed to stay on and help move the “new” newsletter into the electronic era. No, I am not going to work on the web page. But, I am going to try to recruit a cadre of reporters who can collect information for both the newsletter and the webpage. Since a webpage can be turned to for information at the point it is needed, and a newsletter only comes out quarterly, the webpage has a marked advantage in presenting “news.” We hope to have it also assist in the RSVP process for events, volunteering for events, and for dues or event reservations payments.

We realize that many of our members do not use the web, so we will try to keep the newsletter as current as we can and as full of news that is important to retirees as we can. This is where you can help. I need you to let me know what you find useful, what you would like to see more (or less) of in your newsletter and, report news that you learn of that I and the reporters might miss! As editor, I will try to respond as appropriate to all comments and suggestions and I do reserve the right to edit all submissions that we choose to include.