



Dear Curators of the University of Missouri,

We are writing to you as the UMKC Faculty Senate on behalf of the faculty of the University of Missouri-Kansas City. This letter was approved unanimously at a meeting of the full Senate on July 14, 2020.

Our concern is with the proposed merger of two leadership positions: President of the University of Missouri System and the Chancellor of the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) campus.

We gratefully acknowledge your service to the University of Missouri system, the State of Missouri, and the students we teach and prepare for professional careers. As we all struggle with how best to move forward in light of the massive disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are appreciative of the significant time and energy you devote to preserving a quality higher education system in Missouri. Such education is, as you know, essential to our economic and social recovery from this pandemic.

We have reviewed the resolution of July 2, 2020 passed by the Faculty Senate of the Missouri University of Science & Technology, with which we are in general agreement. The concerns they articulated are as follows:

1. Given the potential for conflict of interest, how will a combined position maintain impartial oversight and leadership that is fair to all four universities in the system?
2. In what ways does the combined position create a flagship-satellite university system?
3. What is the cost-benefit rationale supporting this reorganization?
4. What are the long-term goals explaining why this leadership reorganization is necessary?

This merger risks undermining the outreach efforts and leadership capabilities of all four UM System chancellors. External stakeholders will want to connect directly with the person who is 'in charge'. The proposed merger has the potential to undermine the leadership effectiveness of three Chancellors while also weakening the efforts of the MU Chancellor.

We feel strongly that UMKC and Kansas City depend on a vigorous leadership presence from our UMKC Chancellor to connect with local area leadership groups and to the city as a whole. The Chancellor should serve as the public face of UMKC, participating and leading Kansas City Metro initiatives beyond those that relate directly to UMKC. The Chancellor should also spend considerable energy building and nurturing relationships with the donor community to enhance the fundraising efforts of the UMKC Foundation.

We should emphasize that, in spite of the conditions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, UMKC this year has seen:

1. Its highest fundraising ever,
2. Its highest research funding ever,
3. Solid community support in Kansas City,
4. Strong enrollment through a revived Admissions process.

Therefore, we urge you to consider this reorganization carefully.

We recognize that it is certainly within the authority of the Board of Curators to implement this position merger reorganization plan. Should you decide to proceed, please consider implementing the following suggestions:

1. Establish a Council of Chancellors that is the highest-level policy creating body in the UM System,
2. Maintain discrete and unique academic missions and Provosts for each campus, with reorganization focused on administrative and operational uniformity among the four campuses,
3. Acknowledge and emphasize that Chancellors for each campus are vitally important leaders for their universities and communities, and should not be marginalized as Vice Presidents,
4. Ensure that the University of Missouri system as a whole, with its four distinct campuses, is overseen and administered by the Council of Chancellors rather than a merged bureaucracy.

Thank you for your consideration and your service.

UMKC Faculty Senate
July 14, 2020

UMKC Faculty Senate Executive Committee
Johanna Nilsson, UMKC IFC Representative
Jacob Marszalek, UMKC IFC Representative, IFC Chair
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Stephen Dilks, Past-chair, Faculty Senate
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