

Board Review

SPECTRUM

News from the March 14-15 Board of Curators meeting, UM-St. Louis

Much of the board meeting was devoted to financial issues, but UM System President C. Peter Magrath told the board that despite financial difficulties, the University must keep a sharp focus on its basic educational mission. "Our attention to immediate financial problems cannot be allowed to reduce the energy and priority we place on teaching and learning and the quality of the collegiate experience of our students," he said.

The University's operating budget for this year was spared from recent cuts by Gov. Ashcroft, Magrath reported, while an additional 2 percent of general operating money was withheld from most other state agencies. However, the governor cut funds for a repair project at UM-St. Louis, funds for the research park at UM-Kansas City and \$447,227 in promised funding for Missouri Research Assistance Act projects.

Action by the board means educational fees will increase 12 percent next year, instead of 5.8 percent approved last year, to help cover a \$14 million increase in operating costs. The larger fee increase was necessary, Magrath said, in light of the state's plans to appropriate less to the University than this year.

The increased fees will cover unavoidable cost increases next year. The income generated will not allow increases in faculty and staff salaries next year, Magrath told curators. "As I stated in January, there will be no general faculty and staff salary increases in the coming year," Magrath said. "This will place a hardship on our employees, and I regret that this action will be required." The board will approve the 1991-92 budget at its meeting in June.

Magrath updated the board on Sen. James Mathewson's bill to increase funding for education. The bill was passed Thursday by the Senate in a 24-10 vote and will be heard by a House committee after the General Assembly's spring recess. If lawmakers approve the measure, which passed the Senate with few amendments, the package will go to voters in November.

Reports on general education throughout the UM System were presented to the board by President Magrath, Vice President Richard Wallace and campus representatives. Magrath reiterated the University's first priority is to strengthen general education by improving the undergraduate curriculum. Each campus detailed current general education requirements.

The board passed a resolution that in May it will select a general education assessment plan to be implemented by the UM System. The decision will be based on recommendations from faculty and administrators. The board passed the resolution after hearing a report on available assessment methods and those in use at each campus. Faculty representatives called on the board to allow each campus to select the assessment method best for that campus.

Awards: Naomi Ritter, professor of German at UM-Columbia, was awarded the Curators' Publication Award for her book "Art as Spectacle: Images of the Entertainer since Romanticism." Charles Nauert, professor of history at UM-Columbia, was awarded the prestigious Thomas Jefferson Award. Nauert has been on faculty at UM-Columbia for more than 30 years.

Next meeting: May 2-3, Rolla

