

Report from IFC Meeting of January 19, 2007

The meeting was devoted almost exclusively to a discussion with Donald Walsworth, Chair of the Board of Curators, during which he outlined in broad terms the search process for the next UM President. Curator Walsworth stressed that the goal was to engage all constituencies in the process, saying that all of the Curators will be involved, along with representatives of the faculty, alumni, and students. He said that the Board's desire was to recruit the best man or woman for the job and that that person may or may not be an academic; he/she could come out of a different background, but must be able to manage the growth of a \$2.5 billion company with \$5 billion in investments. The person hired must have a passion for higher education, be able to engage with Jefferson City, and with the people of Missouri. However, he/she must also be able to facilitate research and use it to enhance the economic development of the state. The time frame that Curator Walsworth outlined was, to editorialize just a bit, pretty ambitious; he said that the goal was to move as quickly as prudence allows, speculating that completing the process by March might be possible. Representatives of the Board meet with the Atlanta-based firm hired to spearhead the search later this week. There currently are at least six major universities searching for a new President.

The remainder of the IFC meeting was taken up with various discussions that ended without resolution, such as how best to handle vacation/sick leave policy for NTT faculty (further research and discussion needed) and what Matt Bartle's filibuster portends for the current legislative session in terms of issues like MOHELA and stem cell research (unclear). Finally, there was a discussion of academic pluralism (some call it intellectual diversity) in light of the introduction of House Bill 213. A panel on academic pluralism, which will include presentations from several UM faculty, will be convened later this week for the Board of Curators. The goal is to get out ahead of this issue.