

## Tuition is up, what can you do about it?

*State Legislator, Marsha Campbell, Chancellor Martha Gilliland and UMKC students discuss recent tuition increase*

[Fadhel Kaboub](#) Apr . 05 . 2004

More than 30 UMKC students gathered on Friday for a thank you dinner organized by the Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM) to recognize Marsha Campbell, representative for Missouri's 39th District, for faithfully serving her community in the Missouri House of Representatives since 1996.

As a UMKC alumnus who got her M.A. degree in Political Science, and as a resident of Kansas City, Marsha Campbell has consistently pushed for more support for higher education initiatives to benefit Missouri students. She is currently serving on the Budget Committee, Tax Policy Committee, and the Committee for Appropriations for Health, Mental Health and Social Services.

The number one item on everyone's mind in the room was the recent 7.5 percent tuition increase approved by the UM board of curators Friday. "This is the third year cut to higher education from the State," said Marsha Campbell. "Most of this is due to the state of the economy and the decrease in capital gains in the stock market."

Marsha Campbell explained that the 2005 fiscal year (which starts in July 2004) does not look very good either as of now. She said that it takes about 16 months after the national economy recovers from the recession for the finances of the State to improve. "This is just the nature of budget process."

"Only 2 percent of Missouri's state revenues come from businesses, the rest comes from individuals, and that's where unemployment becomes very important; lower unemployment rate means more revenues for the State."

When asked about the possibility of raising taxes to help support higher education, Marsha Campbell said that there are 90 Republicans and 73 Democrats in the House, "and as long as you have more Republicans than Democrats, you'll never get a tax increase, they have sworn by blood never to do that."

Among the audience were UM student curator Shawn Gebhardt, UMKC Chancellor Martha Gilliland, and UMKC lobbyist Nick Benassi.

Shawn Gebhardt recalled Dr. Elson Floyd (UM President) quoting one of the Missouri legislators (that he did not name) saying "yes, we have failed, we're 47th in the nation at the rate of taxation, we should be 50th." The problem, said Gebhardt, is that legislators in Jefferson City are not hearing from students and parents about their concerns for higher education funding.

"In the past the UM system had only one lobbyist who represented the entire system, now each campus has its own lobbyist, this is a significant improvement," said Marsha Campbell.

Marsha Campbell urged all students to contact their elected officials and voice their concerns about higher education funding. She also urged them to ask their parents and relatives to do the



same especially if they live in the rural areas of Missouri.

"Talking individually to your elected officials, either by phone or email, is a good idea; but remember to put your address so that they know that you are in their district," said Campbell.

Students also raised concerns about UMKC's high tuition relative to neighboring University of Kansas. Chancellor Gilliland said that both UMKC and KU tuitions have been increasing over the last three years but KU's has been going up at a higher rate. She also highlighted the fact that "UMKC has taken a large portion of the tuition increase and reinvesting it in financial aid," said Dr. Gilliland.

**To locate and contact your representatives in the Missouri General Assembly visit:**

[http://www.senate.state.mo.us/04info/leg\\_lookup.htm](http://www.senate.state.mo.us/04info/leg_lookup.htm)

**Related article:**

[7.5% tuition increase proposed for UM system](#)

[www.kcaurora.com](http://www.kcaurora.com)

Copyright © 2004 The Kansas City Aurora