Memo from the Chair

This year has been somewhat trying for the department. Two retired physics faculty members, Louis Lund and Malcolm Cole, passed away (see related articles elsewhere in this newsletter.) They will be missed. In addition, Chancellor John Park was diagnosed with lymphoma last summer. He continues to work and maintain great spirit, but he is undergoing a series of radiation treatments which necessarily limits his direct interaction with colleagues. Few other details about his situation have been released.

The university's budget has also been tight since increases in state expenditures are seriously limited by the Hancock Amendment. Thus, although the state is collecting large tax sums, it can't spend much of the increase, as it must be refunded to the taxpayers. Raises for faculty and staff were only $400, which barely paid for the increase in health cost coverage. The limit on state expenditure increases is likely to continue. In order to reallocate some funds, the university is offering a special retirement plan until March 2000. The plan has various facets, but is about a 10% increase in benefits over normal retirement. Seven physics faculty are eligible, but who will sign on is unknown. Retirements will not be as extensive as those in 1992 when five faculty retired (Drs. Richard Anderson, Robert Bell, Harry Brown, Otto Hill, and Charles McFarland; all but Dr. Brown are still alive and active).

I will be retiring myself this summer. It has been a wonderful eight-year run as Chair. I don't think the decade of the nineties saw quite as much positive change and improvement in the department as did the decade of the sixties, but it was certainly a great time. Recruitment of outstanding undergraduates became a priority for me and for the university. For several years now the Physics Department has had the best group of undergraduates at the university. As you probably know, Physics has recruited the only three "perfect ACT/SAT" students ever to come to UMR. Your support of our phonathon and special scholarships has been most helpful in this recruitment. Physics has hired some outstanding replacement faculty in recent years - six all told during my term. And, of course, there was the major grant from the National Science Foundation to upgrade and modify our research laboratories. This made a significant improvement to our building.

I plan to remain in Rolla and am likely to be in my office on a regular basis. Please stop by to see the department and visit us. During my years as chair we have enjoyed making friends (and renewing friendships) with returning alumni. If you need a place to stay let us know, as we can recommend a nice bed and breakfast in Oak Knoll.

P.S. The Order of the Golden Shillelagh will be celebrating UMR/MSM's successful fund campaign during the weekend of May 19-21. (We met the goal!) Please consider coming. It will be held in downtown St. Louis at the Adams Mark hotel.

To Contact UMR Physics

If you would like to contact us for any reason, you can reach us by phone at (573) 341-4781 and by e-mail at physics@umr.edu.

You are also cordially invited to check out our evolving Web page at http://www.umr.edu/~physics

Physics Full Circle Campaign Update

In October 1997, MSM-UMR announced its first ever comprehensive private fund raising campaign. Now with over $57 million raised towards the $60-million campaign goal, we expect to surpass the goal one year ahead of schedule! Alumni support has been tremendous, with more than 40 percent of MSM-UMR graduates having contributed to the campaign.

The Physics Department established an objective of raising $1.1 million toward the Full Circle Campaign effort. These funds will be used to establish endowments to secure scholarships, provide faculty and department support and program enrichment, facilities and equipment, as well as annual unrestricted support. As of this writing, the Physics department has achieved 87% of its goal, over $967,000. We express our sincere thanks to those who have participated in this effort. We are especially grateful to Chuck Rice, who has contributed $4,000 towards scholarship funds this past year.

Although we are close to attaining our department goal, 75% of these contributions are deferred estate gifts to faculty and department support, leaving us over $200,000 short of meeting our goal for scholarship endowment. We need you to help "complete the circle" before the campaign closes June 30, 2000.

We are now expanding our efforts to secure endowments for scholarships, as well as for facilities and equipment and program enrichment. As you make your annual commitment to the department, please give some consideration to starting an endowment in your name or the name of a loved one, and your gift will still be making a difference when your great grandchildren come to UMR. Your gift to the university will bear your name or the name of a loved one in perpetuity.

The Physics Department has the benefit of the University of Missouri's Balanced Pool Income which has grown from $150 million in 1994 to more than $450 million today. The objective of the pool is to provide income for expenditure while preserving the purchasing power of the endowment principal. The fund employs a total return approach, with a strong emphasis on equities, and distributes 5% annually of a trailing 12-quarter average of the endowment's market value. It is invested for long-term growth, with diversified investments to reduce risk. Last year the returns were 15.6%; the pool has maintained a 13.3% return over a ten-year period.

For purposes of the Full Circle Campaign, UMR has established commemorative naming opportunities. Consider the impact of leaving an endowed scholarship or lecture series in your name. With an initial gift of $10,000 (which may be started with $2,000 and a pledge of $2,000 annually over the next five years), you can start a gift from which generations of students will benefit. The fund will generate approximately $500 initially, and will continue to grow as the principal grows. UMR has several donors who have been adding to their endowment funds for many years. In fact, we have donors who have started various endowments for the benefit of the university community.

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