

Presidential Forums to Introduce and Explain UCM Contract for College Completion Initiative

In an effort to keep the campus community updated on a new initiative designed to help the University of Central Missouri graduate more students on time and enhance the value of their college degree, President Charles Ambrose will conduct two campus forums to introduce and explain the overall concept of the “Learning to a Greater Degree Contract.” All faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to attend the events that are planned for 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 10, in Hendricks Hall, and 9-10:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 16, in Elliott Union 240.

In its most general form, The Learning to a Greater Degree Contract concept is a tool that includes specific actions that students can undertake to ensure their overall success at UCM. The contract also details what the UCM will do to help students achieve their own education goals, while also enhancing their overall collegiate experience. Parts of the contract will apply only to students who enter the university in fall 2013 or after as first-time freshmen. Other enhancements to be made by the university will benefit current students as well.

While providing the introduction and explanation of the initiative, President Ambrose will also share information related to UCM Board of Governors action and discussion regarding the contract and outline what it means for students, faculty, staff, and the entire UCM community.

Here is a brief summary of key contract points, which will be addressed during the campus forums:

- Progress toward degree attainment depends on students who are committed to taking an adequate number of college credits each semester and maintaining regular class attendance, which national research shows is a strong predictor of their ability to complete a degree. UCM’s Learning to a Greater Degree Contract encourages and incentivizes students to average 15 credit hours per semester, follow a more focused course schedule for at least the first two semesters, and regularly attend class.
- While students will be expected to meet with their academic advisor at least once a semester, the university’s commitment to students includes ensuring advisor loads are reasonable and consistent, implementing eAdvising, obtaining additional tools that complement advising, creating an advisement infrastructure that fosters strong communication with students, and also helping students enter majors as early as possible. Additional advisors also will be hired by the university.
- Co-curricular initiatives will enhance the student experience at UCM. The university will provide opportunities for students to be engaged in a variety of experiences outside the classroom so they graduate with a student engagement portfolio that details their involvement in campus organizations and service opportunities that further enhance the value of their UCM degree.
- Based on national research indicating strong retention and academic performance by students who live on campus, UCM will extend its residency requirement from one year to two years for the entering freshman class.
- Institutional initiatives will create a university environment that supports a growing campus student population. Among such efforts, the university plans to build a new 320-bed state-of-the-art mixed-

use residential and retail facility, which is expected to open in the fall of 2015. The university plans to provide more opportunities for students on campus that include dining, recreational, and other experiences that are suited to a “24/7” student population, while also keeping tuition, room and board costs as low as possible for students.

- The university will provide a financial incentive, the “15 to Finish” scholarship, awarded to students who use the contract tool and graduate on time.

Please plan to attend the forums April 10 and 16 in order to have the benefit of Dr. Ambrose’s explanation and discussion of the Learning to a Greater Degree Contract and implementation schedule.