Presidential Update
January 12, 2009

Exciting things happen each day on the University of Central Missouri campus. These periodic updates share important news, recognitions, and progress reports regarding ongoing and new initiatives. Campus updates can be found at http://www.ucmo.edu/about/president/letters.cfm.

- Aaron Podolefsky

Happy New Year

I would like to begin this Presidential Update by welcoming you all back from what I hope was a joyous and restful holiday break. I appreciate all of your hard work in 2008 and wish each of you the best for 2009.

Budget Update

Nothing is more on the minds of presidents these days than the nation’s financial woes and the likely impact it will have on higher education. Private institutions are struggling with endowment losses and the revenues that these endowments generate. Harvard reportedly lost $8 billion in its endowment and has implemented a hiring freeze. Across the country, states are experiencing difficulties and since public higher education is typically considered a discretionary item in a state’s budget, it is particularly vulnerable.

There has been very little news in Missouri since we broke for the holidays. Prior to the break, UCM provided preliminary scenarios for 15, 20 and 25 percent budget reductions to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education and posted these on the web where you could view them. Some legislators have expressed concern about the future welfare of higher education, which is encouraging. Now, we wait to hear what will happen next. We continue to talk to legislators while we gather your ideas through the suggestion box. For the time being, things have not worsened. In sum, the news is that there really is no new news. As I learn more, I will provide updates to the campus.
Max B Swisher Skyhaven Airport Expansion Project Update

Goodrich Property Acquisition - On Dec. 18, 2008, significant progress was made on the Max B. Swisher Skyhaven Airport runway expansion project when UCM purchased two tracts of land (36.43 acres) needed for the expansion. The Missouri Department of Transportation will pay 90 percent of the cost, with UCM paying a 10 percent match.

UCM Email Regulations

I have heard recent concerns expressed about messages sent via our official faculty/staff email system, GroupWise. The number of messages sent to the GWUsers address group falling outside its prescribed use, and the content of some messages sent to that or other groups, is the cause for these concerns. UCM’s Email Regulations, posted at http://www.ucmo.edu/x11429.xml, contain a section titled, “Announcements via Email Systems” and establishes the criteria for sending to all active email account holders via GWUsers. I would encourage each person to review the regulations for proper usage. For those announcements that should not be sent to GWUsers, the Email Regulations also contain a section titled, “Alternate Communications Channels” that provides information about targeted listservs (common faculty/staff subgroups such as Teaching Faculty, Budget Managers, Departmental Support Staff, etc.). Again, I would encourage you to review these regulations and discuss any questions you might have about them with your supervisor. Also, the Information Services Help Desk at 543-4357 can assist with questions regarding the Email Regulations.

Closure of Administrative Offices/Departments

I have also heard recent concerns regarding the early closure of administrative offices/departments. I know there are circumstances under which it may be necessary to close an office for a period of time, but we must remember that our students, parents, and the public expect to be able to conduct business with the university during normal hours of operation. If a situation should occur that would require an office to close for any period of time outside of the lunch hour, I ask that arrangements be made to forward your phones to another office where the call will be answered by a person, and that a sign be placed on the office door stating the closure, who should be contacted in your absence, and when you expect to return. This will help to alleviate any potential frustration that may be experienced by an individual(s) attempting to conduct business with your office and the university.

MLK Celebrations

UCM has planned and/or will participate in different events this month in honor and memory of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I would encourage each of you to go to http://www.ucmo.edu/news/mlktickets.cfm to view a listing of the different activities planned, and to participate in as many of the events that your schedules will permit.
Thanks from the City

Warrensburg City Manager Jeff Hancock recently sent a letter to my office expressing his appreciation for the university’s decision to grant a request by the community to change the 2009 Homecoming date. He notes, “It is gratifying to both myself and the citizens of our community when they can see the united effort the leaders in our community put forth to accommodate our many activities.” I appreciate the work of our campus constituents who are making this change possible.

Again, best wishes for a prosperous New Year!