Presidential Update
February 24, 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

Board Approves Demolition of Interior Morrow-Garrison

The Board of Governors held a special teleconference Feb. 17 in which it unanimously voted to authorize UCM to enter into a contract with B&R Insulation, Inc., Lenexa, KS, for the interior demolition of Morrow-Garrison. It is anticipated that demolition will begin within the next week.

Budget Update

On Feb. 18, I testified before the House Education Appropriation Committee regarding the impact of 15, 20, and 25 percent budget reductions. The presentation went very well. The committee chair provided an update on the current budget situation including the committee’s understanding of the stimulus package which includes some funding for education. The committee chair believes that education will receive a flat budget as recently proposed by Governor Jay Nixon.

UCM’s mandatory costs and other dollars needed to stay on track in making greater progress in our strategic plan would still necessitate some reallocation (cuts to some; increases in others). The campus needs to continue sharpening its pencils and looking for greater efficiencies. By implementing a hiring freeze, we will likely have positions open in the event we close some positions. Remember that the hiring freeze is about next year’s budget. Units were asked not to make permanent hires that would encumber next year's budget because of the uncertainty about the level of cuts. As time goes on, we will be able to gain greater clarity, and searches can begin as long as no hires are made until we are certain of our financial base.

As a reminder, I am holding town hall meetings in order to engage the campus as we prepare for the FY 2010 budget. The first meeting, Feb. 19, was well attended by faculty and staff and included some good dialogue following my presentation on UCM’s budget forecast for FY 2010. A second meeting is planned for 3:15 – 4:45 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, in Nahm Auditorium, W.C. Morris Building. If your schedules permit, I invite you to attend.
Jefferson City Travels

This Tuesday, Feb. 24, presentations will be made in the Missouri Senate. The Council on Public Higher Education (COPHE) asked that the president of COPHE have more time to present. Senator Gary Nodler requested that all presidents attend, which we plan to do to show our support and to answer specific questions. Following testimony, I will attend a COPHE meeting, and then have lunch with the Missouri Biotech Association, where I serve as a board member. I will also visit various legislators’ offices to provide proposals for use of portions of the stimulus funding. I will share these with the UCM Board of Governors when it meets Thursday, Feb. 26.

Groundbreaking Ceremony for Route 13 East Loop

On Feb. 21, I joined Senator Christopher Bond and other dignitaries for a MoDOT groundbreaking ceremony for the first leg of a new Route 13 East Loop. The new Route 13 will move through-traffic away from downtown Warrensburg in an effort to reduce the stop-and-go congestion. The ceremony was held south of the Route 50 and Route HH intersection.

General Faculty Meeting

Twice each year, a General Faculty meeting is held where, as president, I am invited to address the faculty. The spring meeting is scheduled for 3:15 p.m., March 11, in Elliott Union 240.

Other Noteworthy Items

Below are some other items I want to share with you:

- The Byler Distinguished Faculty Award is named for William H. Byler, and is the top award presented annually to faculty. This year’s recipient(s) will be announced during a special reception at 3:30 p.m., April 10, in Elliott Union 234A.

- UCM’s College of Education submitted its NCATE Institutional Report earlier this week and is now preparing for the site visit scheduled for March 28-April 1. NCATE site visits are made every seven years, with the last being conducted in 2002. UCM has been continuously accredited since 1954, an outstanding legacy!

- UCM joined educational institutions in the National Teach-In on Global Warming Solutions Feb. 5 to raise awareness of issues of sustainability and to offer ideas and solutions to the campus and the community. Faculty gave presentations related to global warming and the effects on modern society. This effort was coordinated by UCM’s Student Government Association.

- The Corporation for National and Community Service on Feb. 9 named UCM to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The annual program recognizes colleges and universities for their commitment to service learning and civic engagement. The program is the highest federal form of recognition an institution can receive for service learning.

- The Honors College Faculty Advisory Committee has selected Professor Lee Liu, associate professor of geography, and Eric Honour, associate professor of music, as the Honors College Faculty Fellows for the 2009-2010 academic year. As Fellows, Dr. Liu will offer Honors colloquia devoted to issues of sustainability and Dr. Honour’s colloquia will address issues of creativity and the arts in the digital age. They will present public lectures as part of the inaugural Honors College Lecture Series.