Special Presidential Update
March 3, 2009

President’s Message on Hiring

The Missouri House Sub-Committee on Education Appropriations has adopted a report that recommends no cuts to items in HB 2 (K-12) or HB 3 (Higher Education). This continues the stream of good news for higher education coming out of Jefferson City. As before, the budget outcome is still uncertain, but the probability of a flat budget for the next fiscal year grows stronger.

It seems prudent at this point to make adjustments to our hiring strategy. Provost George Wilson and I agree that we should proceed with all faculty searches for budgeted positions that we wish to fill by next fall. Some searches that are of the highest priority can be filled sooner, but we will need to wait before making an actual offer on most. Nonetheless, given the timeline for faculty searches, it would be a good idea to begin now. I hope that we can interview and make offers before the spring semester concludes. Given the economic climate in higher education, I believe we will find excellent candidates even at these late dates.

The vice presidents agree that the same holds for staff positions. Managers should make judgments about the length of time it will take to conduct a search so that actual offers and hiring will not be done until late April or early May. I will work with Betty Roberts, vice president for administration and finance, to ensure that we do not hire prematurely. This timeline may grow shorter if news continues to improve and as we grow more certain of our situation for the fall.

Let me apologize for the changing circumstances and somewhat ambiguous timelines. We are striving to create the best future while at the same time manage the risk of being wrong and then finding ourselves in an untenable situation. I appreciate your patience.