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. Updates can be found at http://www.ucmo.edu/about/president/letters.cfm.

- Aaron Podolefsky

MDHE Facilities Review Site Visit

The Missouri Department of Higher Education has reinstated its facilities review process – a practice that was suspended when the department was hit by budget cuts early this decade. This summer, MDHE staff members are visiting each of Missouri’s public colleges and universities for a facility site review.

UCM’s site visit took place July 2, and MDHE staff spent about six hours with administrators discussing short-, medium- and long-range plans, initiatives and needs and how they fit into our institutional mission, in addition to touring our facilities. We were able to showcase our best assets and make our case regarding our problem areas. The visit went extremely well.

Following the facilities site reviews, MDHE staff members will produce a draft report for review by senior department staff and institutional administrators. MDHE plans to present a detailed facilities report to the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education at its Sept. 10 meeting.

Continuation of Lease for UCM’s Summit Center

I recently approved the continuation of an existing lease agreement with Townsend Summit, LLC for the UCM’s Summit Center. The original lease, approved by the UCM Board of Governors in March 2000, was signed on July 1, 2000 and expires June 30, 2015.
**Department of Nutrition**

In 2001, UCM was the recipient of a very generous gift from the Regina Myers McClain estate. In accordance with the gift, work has occurred over the past year to create a Department of Nutrition within the College of Health and Human Services. On July 1, the Department of Health and Human Performance was restructured into two academic units, the Department of Kinesiology, ([http://www.ucmo.edu/kinesiology](http://www.ucmo.edu/kinesiology)) and the Department of Nutrition, ([http://www.ucmo.edu/nutrition](http://www.ucmo.edu/nutrition)). The undergraduate curricula of Athletic Training, Physical Education (including Corporate Fitness, Exercise Science, and Physical Education K-12), Recreation, and Tourism, as well as the Master of Science in Physical Education, Exercise and Sport Science will comprise the Department of Kinesiology. The Department of Nutrition will offer undergraduate programs in dietetics and nutrition, hotel and restaurant administration, as well as health education.

**Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Grant**

UCM’s Department of Public Safety recently applied for and received a grant in the amount of $112,262.61 from the Missouri Department of Public Safety. The funds for the grant were made available from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program and will be used to purchase and install mobile data terminals (MDT's) in UCM’s patrol cars.

**VSAP Awarded Higher Ed Grant**

UCM’s Office of Violence and Substance Abuse Prevention (VSAP) represents one of 20 colleges and universities across the nation to receive a U.S. Department of Education grant for the prevention of high-risk drinking among college students. The one-year grant for $99,822 is for initiatives to be implemented July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. Capitalizing on the UCM Greek system values of leadership and responsibility, VSAP will partner with Residence and Greek Life to develop new bystander intervention training for Greek chapter advisers and members; collect college data regarding perception of drinking norms and develop a social norms clarification program for chapters; integrate use of brief motivational enhancement interventions in the judicial review board system; and educate chapter risk management chairs and presidents about effective alcohol prevention strategies.

The grant will also enable Warrensburg Area Partners in Prevention and VSAP to help increase community awareness about the enforcement of underage drinking laws, including promoting businesses which comply with the law, and increase the distribution of the House Party Guide, which explains to potential party hosts applicable laws and potential consequences, and tips for safer parties.

This is the first time VSAP has applied for and been awarded a Department of Education grant. Ninety-eight colleges and universities across the country applied for grant funding.
Honors College Partners with Jewish Vocational Services of Kansas City

UCM’s Honors College recently partnered with Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) of Kansas City to provide unique volunteer opportunities for Honors students in assisting JVS in its refugee resettlement program.

We are very pleased to be able to offer this unique and rewarding opportunity to our top-academic students. Through the program, UCM Honors student volunteers at JVS will work closely with a team of case workers and other support staff for a minimum of six hours per week to assist refugees in all aspects of their resettlement process. Specifically, student volunteers at JVS will work with case managers to develop targeted duties that complement the student’s strengths and match the needs of JVS; gain practical experience in all aspects of the refugee resettlement process; maintain direct interaction with refugee populations, including house visits, airport pickups, medical appointments, etc.; learn about the complex global forces (such as war, famine, political persecution, etc.) that necessitate refugee displacements; experience first-hand the diversity of refugees’ cultures, traditions, histories.

Student volunteers will likely provide assistance with client food stamp, Medicaid, and other applications; job placement for able clients; resume training, tutoring, and interview orientation; case notes and file management; and instruction in basic daily activities, such as shopping, education, bill payment, public transportation, etc.

UCM Graduate Employment Data

Despite discouraging news related to the economy that may create concern for graduates contemplating a job search, the news for UCM’s 2008 graduates is encouraging. For the 15th consecutive year, more than 90 percent of UCM graduates are employed within six months of graduation. The 2008 national average for all college graduates employed within six months of graduation was 80 percent. Data regarding UCM graduates is collected annually by the Office of Career Services, and is available in more detail at http://www.ucmo.edu/career/students/resources/stats.cfm.

Highlights from the data are:

- 79% of graduates employed in the state of Missouri
- 92.7% employed
- Survey response 62%
- Average salary for bachelor’s degree $32,037
- 22% post baccalaureate education

Although UCM’s Office of Career Services anticipates recent UCM graduates will have to work harder to find employment in a tough economy, we are still optimistic that persistence and educational preparation will pay off. Career Services offers a life-time service to our graduates in developing and executing their career/job search plan.
Wilson is PGSF 2009 Educator of the Year

Barry Wilson, associate professor of graphic arts technology management, was recently named the Print and Graphics Scholarship Foundation 2009 Educator of the Year. This award is unique in that candidates are nominated by students currently receiving a scholarship through PGSF. There are PGSF scholars at nearly 100 colleges and universities in the United States. The award recognizes excellence in educational instruction. Wilson will be presented the award during a special ceremony in Chicago, IL Sept. 12. In addition to Wilson receiving the award, UCM will receive a library of books and training material from Printing Industries of America.

Professional and Senior Professional in Human Resources Certification

UCM’s Human Resource staff recently spent several months preparing for Professional in Human Resources (PHR) or Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) certification examinations. The following individuals successfully passed the tests: HR Generalists Joyce Lawson, PHR; Jennifer Kunkel, PHR; Carlotta Underwood, PHR; and Jefferson Yoder, PHR; Academic Employment Specialist Katherine Chisom, PHR; and Staff Development Specialist Michelle Taylor, PHR. The certification reflects the knowledge and practical experience in human resource management and a mastery of the body of knowledge in the field that each person holds. They join Human Resources Director Rick Dixon, who recertified his SPHR designation and Assistant Director Cheryl Trelow who currently holds her PHR designation.

The HR Certification Institute is the credentialing body for human resource professionals and is affiliated with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the world's largest organization dedicated exclusively to the human resource profession. The institute's purpose is to promote the establishment of professional standards and to recognize professionals who meet those standards. To be eligible for certification, candidates must have at least two years experience in the HR field, pass a comprehensive examination and demonstrate a strong background of professional human resource experience. The HR body of knowledge is a constant state of change; therefore, certification is temporary and individuals must be recertified every three years to ensure they are current in the field.

Jennies and Mules Finish Third in NCAA Division II

UCM’s Mules and Jennies finished third in NCAA Division II in the 2008-2009 Learfield Sports Directors Cup final standings. UCM’s third-place finish ties the 2003-2004 Truman Bulldogs for the top finish by an MIAA school in the 14-year history of the event. UCM and Truman are the only two MIAA schools to ever finish in the top 10 while a member of the league. This is UCM’s eighth top-10 finish since the inception of the Directors Cup in 1995, and the eighth time UCM has finished at the top among MIAA members. UCM’s previous best finish was sixth in 1996-1997 and 2006-2007. Approximately 290 institutions competed at the NCAA Division II level in 2008-2009.
**UCM Alumnus Wins National Piano Competition**

UCM alumnus James Cockman, Pleasant Hill, recently won first place in the National Federation of Music Clubs Biennial Young artists Piano Competition in Orlando, FL. Cockman earned a Master of Arts degree in piano with a minor in organ from UCM and went on to earn a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Kansas. This is the third time he has competed in the competition and he was one of only nine from across the country selected to compete this year in the semifinal round of the Young Artists Piano category. He was selected based on an audition recording submitted to a panel of judges. As winner of the national competition, Cockman will make concert appearances in a variety of venues during the next two years. Earlier this year, he also won the Music Teachers National Association District Young Artists Competition in Minnesota, where he represented Missouri in the seven-state competition. He then traveled to the national competition in Atlanta, where he claimed third place in the Young Artists Piano category.

**2009 Impact Freshman Leadership Retreat**

UCM’s Office of Campus Activities will conduct a comprehensive “Impact Retreat” leadership program July 29-31 for first-year students at UCM. In addition to attending breakout sessions, participants will have an opportunity to meet and network with other first-year students and 30 upper class students, and interact faculty and staff. The program is limited to 150 students.

**UCM Athletic Auction**

UCM’s annual Athletic Auction is set for Friday, Aug. 14. It promises to be a fun-filled evening with a silent auction from 5:30-7:30 p.m., dinner from 6:30-8 p.m., and a live auction 8-10 p.m. Visit the web at [http://www.ucmo.edu/athletics/](http://www.ucmo.edu/athletics/) for more information.