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

State of the University Address

On Aug. 18, I presented my fifth State of the University Address, titled Unchartered Waters, to the campus community. The event was well attended by faculty and staff. If you were unable to attend, but would like to view a video or printed copy of the speech, you may do so by going to http://www.ucmo.edu/about/president/2009state.cfm.

UCM Among “Best in the Midwest”

For the fourth consecutive year, UCM has been named one of the best Midwestern colleges by The Princeton Review. UCM is one of 158 institutions profiled by the education services company in its “Best in the Midwest” section of its web site featuring 2010 Best Colleges: Region by Region. The Princeton Review describes UCM as an institution that offers “top-notch, affordable education, with many academic degree program choices, and friendly faculty.”

According to The Princeton Review’s Vice President of Publishing, “regional best” colleges were selected primarily for their excellent academic programs. Selections include a range of institutions by size, selectivity, character and locale. Schools are also selected based on institutional data collected from several hundred schools in each region, visits to schools over the years, and the opinions of independent and high school-based college advisors.

Survey Reveals Students Satisfied with UCM Experience

During Spring 2009, approximately 1,700 UCM undergraduate students completed the Noel-Levitz Satisfaction Inventory Survey. This is an instrument that is widely used in higher education and covers a wide spectrum of university life and helps measure the extent to which
UCM meets or exceeds its students’ expectations. It also benchmarks their responses against those from a national sample of four-year public university students.

According to Matt Melvin, UCM’s associate provost for enrollment management, when compared to national four-year public institutions, UCM had higher levels of satisfaction than national four-year public schools on 67 of the 73 survey items, with 56 of those having statistically significant levels of improved satisfaction.

Eleven expectations of greatest importance to UCM students and highest satisfaction were:

- A safe and secure campus for all students
- Excellent instruction in a student’s major field
- Adequate library resources and services
- Adequate and accessible computer labs
- An opportunity for students to experience intellectual growth
- A commitment to academic excellence on campus
- Students are made to feel welcome on campus
- Reasonable class change (drop/add) polices
- A good variety of courses provided on campus
- Faculty who are knowledgeable in their field
- Availability of faculty after class and during office hours

**H1N1 Influenza Update**

With the beginning of a new academic year, campus activity will increase with student-filled classrooms and large social gatherings. This also means that the influenza (flu) season will soon be upon us. It is uncertain how the new H1N1 influenza will impact communities. We expect people to become ill with the regular seasonal flu and now added to that, will be the H1N1 influenza. No doubt, a campus community is especially susceptible as students live, learn and socialize in congested, large groups, making it more important for individuals to take precautions to limit the spread of illness. Persons experiencing influenza-like illness should avoid contact with others and self-isolate either in their residence hall room or at home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone.

The H1N1 virus vaccine is currently in production and should be ready in mid-October. However, the available quantity and a recommendation for who should receive the vaccine are not completely known. Last week, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that 19-24 year-olds (about 24 million) should be part of the first priority group to receive the H1N1 vaccine. The H1N1 vaccine could not be incorporated into the regular seasonal flu vaccine because the seasonal flu vaccine was already in production. So in this regard, separate vaccines will be given for the seasonal and H1N1 influenzas. Additionally, the H1N1 vaccine will require two vaccines to provide immunity from the new virus. In total, this means three shots this year for influenza immunity.

Campus health officials will monitor the availability of the new vaccine and communicate its availability to faculty, staff and students once it is known. The seasonal flu vaccine has already
been ordered and the Health Center staff will let the campus community know when it is available. Campus officials will also continue to monitor influenza activity as the season approaches and will keep the UCM campus community informed.

**Parking Update**

Due to construction projects, some faculty and staff parking spaces continue to be unavailable the first few weeks of the fall semester. Parking updates, including information about services such as the shuttle to the Multipurpose Building, are being shared via GroupWise. Anyone who has questions in relation to parking is urged to contact Parking Services at 543-4098 or email parking@ucmo.edu. I understand the inconvenience these temporary changes in parking may cause, and value your patience as we move forward with project completion which will allow spaces to reopen.

**ESCO Updates**

UCM and Trane developed a web site to help keep the campus and the public informed of progress related to the campus-wide energy savings project. At the site, you will find links to ESCO Facts, a photo gallery, news archive and the Clinton Climate Initiative. I invite you to visit the web site at http://www.traneucmesco.com.

**Todd Dining Renovation**

Ongoing construction continues on the new flagship resident dining program being developed for Todd Dining Center. Renovation began June 1 and the first meals are expected to be served beginning Aug. 24. The newly refurbished venue will feature five restaurant-quality destinations with each providing exhibition-style cooking in an all-you-can-eat, set-price program. The five dining options will be: The Flying Star Diner, Magellan’s, Bella Trattoria, Panino’s Deli, and The Wild Mushroom. This dining option will provide students, faculty, staff, and visitors a unique dining experience offering freshly prepared food in a vibrant new atmosphere. The attached PowerPoint offers a view of the work that has occurred.

**BIO Benchmarking Tour Visits UCM**

As you know I serve on the Missouri Biotechnology Association Board. Therefore, I was very pleased to have 13 state legislators and representatives from Governor Jay Nixon’s office, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce, and Missouri SCOPE (Science and Citizens Organized for Purpose and Exploration), visit UCM July 28 as part of the BIO Benchmarking Tour of Missouri. The five-day event sponsored by the Missouri Biotechnology Association promoted engagement between Missouri’s policymakers and the state’s biotechnology leaders while broadening awareness of biotechnology’s economic impact across Missouri.

UCM hosted a breakfast for the state officials and provided demonstrations at various campus locations. Topics of discussion/demonstration included innovations in science education; UCM’s energy-efficiency initiative; Center for Alternative Fuels and Environmental Systems; UCM’s
developing Energy Park and Learning Center; Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies and Development; and Alternative Fuels/Automotive Research Laboratory.

The initial feedback we have received has been very positive, and we plan to follow-up individually with tour participants.

**IREM Awarded State Contract**

UCM’s Institute for Rural Emergency Management (IREM) was awarded a $40,000 contract by the State Emergency Management Agency to provide first responders in Missouri with training on the Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System. IREM also provides state-funded training on the Missouri Emergency Response Information System (MERIS).

**Missouri Safety Center Receives MoDOT Grants**

The Missouri Safety Center was notified that it will receive 11 highway safety grants from the Missouri Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Division. These grants, which total $1.5 million for FY 2010, will allow the MSC to continue vital state programs such as the Breath Alcohol Lab, the Driver Improvement Program, the Missouri Motorcycle Safety program, as well as Sobriety Checkpoint and Crash Reconstruction training. They will also allow the MSC to conduct several important seatbelt usage observational surveys for the state. Three additional grants are still under review.

**Get the Red Out**

In celebration of a new academic year, the Warrensburg and UCM communities will join together to host the annual “Get the Red Out” street fair on Thursday, Aug. 27. Activities are planned from 4 to 6:30 p.m. between South and Clark Streets. The event also kicks off the beginning of a new athletic season as the Fighting Mules play Southwest Baptist University during the first home football game of the season. The street fair will feature live music, a variety of games, and hoop-shooting contests with the Mules and Jennies basketball teams. Additionally, student non-profit organizations will sell food and beverages, and members of the UCM retailers group will display and sell merchandise and apparel with UCM marks. If your schedules permit, I hope that you will come out and join in the festivities.

**Recycling**

UCM’s campus recycling initiative, led by students Nicholas McDaniels of St. Louis and Manuel Abarca of Kansas City, included a pilot program during the month of July. The Initiative is now moving forward with a goal of having all academic buildings online with recycling by mid-September and all residence halls online by November. Prior to the start of the program, it is estimated that recycling efforts resulted in four tons of recyclable material per week. Since the inception of the program two months ago, we are now recycling approximately eight tons per week, for a total of 41.54 tons of recyclable material. It is anticipated that we will surpass earlier estimates of 200 tons of recyclable material for the year, which will result in significant savings.
to the university. Recycling dumpsters have been located outside of most of campus buildings including Administration, Dockery, Grinstead, Ward Edwards, Wood, Elliott Union, Kirkpatrick Library, as well as Ellis, Fitzgerald, and Todd residence halls. Additionally, bins have been placed in the library and the Elliott Union.

Vice President for Administration and Finance Betty Roberts has worked closely with the students, and I believe this project will be sustainable over time. Our students, Manny and Nick, have worked with off-campus businesses and organizations to handle the distribution of recycle bins and pickup of recyclables, in addition to making plans for training the appropriate staff who are involved with the initiative. They have also initiated educational components such as the distribution of informational fliers and email alerts to keep faculty, staff and students informed about the effort. These students developed the program after looking at other programs across the state and are to be commended for all of their hard work.