Presidential Update
December 5, 2008

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. These campus updates can be found at http://www.ucmo.edu/about/president/letters.cfm.

- Aaron Podolefsky

UCM Campus Climate Study

Last year, the President’s Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) requested that the university conduct a campus-wide study focused on discrimination in the work place and the climate for women and minorities. UCM contracted with Amplify Communications of Boulder, CO, to conduct a confidential survey, and Vice President Betty Roberts appointed an internal committee to facilitate the process. Research was conducted over the course of several months and interviews were completed in July. We have received the final reports and data sets and I have asked the PCSW to analyze these reports, review the findings and generate recommendations for the campus community. Given the high level of ownership the commission has of this project, we would be remiss not to honor the original process. This is valuable work for the entire campus community and we look forward to the PCSW analysis and proposed next steps.

The recommendations of the PCSW will complement actions we are already taking to improve the campus climate and communications. I have asked Sonny Castro, chief diversity officer, to evaluate and revamp, if necessary, the existing procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination. Also, the Office of Human Resources has been directed to develop a plan to offer diversity training to all faculty and staff. We have implemented a more proactive communications process, including these Presidential Updates. In my last update I announced the formation of a President’s Commission for a Positive Workplace Environment to address the issues of respect, communication, physical working environment, organizational working environment, salaries/benefits, awards and recognitions.

I remain committed to making UCM a great place to work, live and learn. Please be assured we will take action based on what we learn from the study and your continued feedback.
**Informational Meeting with Governance Groups**

On Friday, Nov. 22, 2008, I met with representatives of the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Council, Support Staff, and Student Government Association, as well as some of the deans to discuss the FY 2010 budget outlook for the state of Missouri and the implications it could have for higher education and UCM. Representatives were asked to share this information with their respective governance groups. I will keep you informed as I did with the special update a few days ago.

**Town Hall Meeting – “Progress at UCM”**

Members of the campus community attended the public Town Hall meeting Dec. 1 in the Elliott Union Ballroom. A “draft” of the new university Master Plan was shared by UCM’s consultants. Updates were also provided on major university initiatives including the Morrow-Garrison/Student Recreation and Wellness Center complex and the potential energy services contract.

**American Democracy Project Sponsored Programs/Events**

Shari Bax, professor of political science and campus coordinator for the American Democracy Project (ADP), provided the attached summary of ADP-sponsored programs and events held during the recent election. (Scroll down to pages four and five for summary.)

**Department of Aviation**

- The King Air, the Department of Aviation's turboprop aircraft, has been sold to make way for an updating of the training fleet. The department is working on an aggressive plan to modernize the existing fleet of 32 aircraft in an effort to continue offering students the latest in technology.

- The Department of Aviation's nationally recognized flight team has returned from the regional competition of National Intercollegiate Flying Association. The flight team placed third overall, earning a place in the national competition. The team placed first in Ground Events and received the Region VI Safety Award. Student Allie Engle placed first overall in the female individual events, and students Aaron Walker placed sixth and Zach Baum placed 12th in the male individual events.

**Missouri Safety Center**

The Kansas Department of Health's Breath Alcohol program donated 149 breath alcohol testing instruments to the Missouri Safety Center's Breath Alcohol Instrument Training program with an estimated value of $431,000. The Breath Alcohol Instrument Training program is one of the many federally funded grant programs at the Missouri Safety Center designed to provide
instrument training, placement and repair to all of Missouri law enforcement agencies, except the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

**Potential David Cook Concert**

There is considerable interest across campus to host a concert by UCM alumnus and American Idol winner David Cook. David has expressed interest in returning to UCM to perform. A committee has been formed to explore possible dates and to work with David's booking agency. Depending on his availability, we are looking at a potential show in the fall. This is only in the preliminary stages, but we will keep you posted as this effort progresses.
American Democracy Project Update

During the 2008 fall semester, the American Democracy Project (ADP) at the University of Central Missouri focused its efforts on assisting, informing, and engaging students in the November 2008 election. Over 40 voter registration programs were conducted on campus. These programs occurred in classes, residence halls, and student organizational meetings. Based upon lessons learned through participation in the 2006 American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) multi-state non-partisan grant project, undergraduate students Nicholas McDaniels, Caitlyn Adams, Jamie Shockley, Alex Klang, and Michael Rau served as peer registrars, giving presentations and assisting students with voter registration and absentee ballot requests. One residence hall program, conducted by Nicholas McDaniels and Michael Rau, was nominated for and received recognition by the National Association of College and University Residence Halls as the campus program of the month. In addition, several student organizations worked with ADP to provide voter registration at tables around campus, and voter registration was offered at a wide variety of campus programs, including the Constitution Week events. ADP and the Office of Community Engagement also sponsored a week of campus programming focused on voter registration Sept. 22-26, which included events involving College Democrats, College Republicans, Students for Nader, the Student Government Association, Alpha Sigma Alpha, and Association of Black Collegians. Cumulative attendance for the week’s events was approximately 180 people. Through all of these efforts, ADP helped over 500 students register to vote and almost 300 request absentee ballots. Moreover, for all voter registrations and absentee ballot requests databases were maintained allowing follow up with local election authorities as necessary to inquire about the timely processing of students’ registrations and requests.

ADP also made a considerable effort to inform the campus about the candidates on the ballot. In September, ADP hosted an Election Information Fair to which every candidate on the ballot in Johnson County was invited and which many attended. This afforded campus community members the opportunity to meet the candidates and discuss the issues and upcoming election with them one-on-one. ADP also sponsored two Presidential Debate Watches and a Vice Presidential Debate Watch with attendance for each subsequent event growing by at least 50 percent. These programs were co-sponsored by the Political Science Students Association and the Student Government Association. Student members of the ADP Steering Committee were instrumental in staffing these events and providing feedback allowing for continuous improvement from event to event. The final Debate Watch, for which attendance neared 200, featured a pre-debate involving College Democrats, College Republicans, and Students for Nader. It also included presentations by faculty from the Department of Communication before and after the Presidential debate. Working with the Johnson County Economic Coordinating Board, ADP hosted two open forums; one for the local Missouri House candidates, and another for the two Senate candidates. College Democrats and College Republicans were instrumental in maintaining a bi-partisan approach for each forum. Each forum drew attracted at least 60 campus community members, and the community reach of the forums was extended by the fact that both forums were recorded and broadcast on the radio by KDKD, Clinton.

Finally, ADP sought to engage the campus in the election. “Vote” t-shirts featuring a logo designed by undergraduate student Marie Knobbe were distributed highlighting the date of the
Transportation to the polls in Warrensburg was coordinated with the Office of Campus Activities. An Election Watch was hosted in the Elliott Union that evening for campus community members wishing to watch the returns with approximately 60 people attending throughout the night. And ADP, once again, coordinated with the Johnson County Clerk to employ 31 students as customer service agents in the precincts around Johnson County on election day thereby providing the Clerk’s office with much needed assistance and UCM students with an opportunity to gain first-hand experience and knowledge as to what is required to make our electoral system work.