State of the University Address

On Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2008, I presented my annual State of the University Address. I was impressed by the large attendance and I’d like to thank those who came for their interest and support. The speech can be viewed at http://www.ucmo.edu/about/president/2008state.cfm.

Student Affairs – 2008/2009 School Year

With the start of the 2008-2009 school year, University Housing expects occupancy totals to exceed last year's numbers. Same-day comparisons from one year ago and same-day comparisons of the past three-year average indicate higher totals this year.

Student Employment opportunities are a high priority for UCM and its students. In an effort to do the very best job possible in helping students find jobs, Vice Presidents George Wilson, Betty Roberts and Rich Morrell have asked an inclusive and representative group led by Teresa Alewel, director of Career Services, to identify and recommend to the President's Cabinet ideas that will lead to UCM becoming a state and regional leader in helping students find part-time jobs.

The new UCM ID Card implementation is well underway. A new and more functional card is being made available to students, faculty and staff. New UCM members are being issued the card and others are encouraged to get re-carded before the end of the fall 2008 semester. Your old card will work with its present functionality until a future announced date. The new card has a new look and will be more accommodating to various kinds of campus financial transactions.

President’s Annual Welcome Back Picnic

On Wednesday, Sept. 3, I will host a “welcome back” picnic for faculty and staff. The event will begin at 4:30 p.m. and be held in the campus mall area just outside of the Elliott Union. I look forward to seeing everyone at the picnic.

Dale Carnegie Training

In preparation for offering Dale Carnegie Training on campus, Dale Carnegie & Associates offered a condensed version of its primary workshop, usually 12 weeks long, on campus Aug. 11-13. The session was for faculty and staff members interested in teaching the course, or
for those wanting to gain a better understanding of the program. Although a fee would usually be charged for the course, Dale Carnegie & Associates offered it at no cost to UCM participants.

**Ben Wesly Visit**

Ben Wesly will visit UCM Sept. 22-25 as a guest lecturer. Most of you are aware that UCM has a long-standing relationship with Ben and his wife, Bella. They are the benefactors of the Maastricht Friendship Tower and more recently, the new Presidential Medallion. Additionally, Ben, a prominent European businessman, has been a guest lecturer at UCM for many years, where he speaks to the students in the university’s business and Hotel and Restaurant Management programs.

**President’s Commission on Sustainability**

Vice President Betty Roberts is in the process of establishing a President’s Commission on Sustainability comprised of select faculty, staff, and students who support the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment signed by me in 2007. To achieve the objectives of the Commitment, the committee’s charge will be to devise a plan that helps identify, evaluate and prioritize measures that UCM will employ to minimize global warming emissions directed toward achieving climate neutrality.

**AlcoholEdu Program Update**

In 2005, UCM implemented AlcoholEdu, a state-of-the-art alcohol education program. The program was implemented to ensure students have a clear understanding of the risks involved with consuming alcohol in an unsafe manner and to help them make mature decisions regarding alcohol. All traditional first-year students are required to complete AlcoholEdu, which has two components. Part 1 must be completed before the student arrives on campus for the new academic year, and Part 2 must be completed within 45 days following the completion of Part 1. Positive outcomes realized from the program include students reporting:

- Their intent to support the choice not to drink and to contribute to a healthier and safer campus environment regarding alcohol use.
- The program has prepared them to help in situations where they have identified an alcohol overdose.
- An increase in their use of protective factors including setting personal limits on the number of drinks they will have per occasion, and alternating non-alcoholic beverages with alcoholic drinks.

A vast majority of incoming freshmen for the 2008-2009 academic year have completed Phase 1 of the program.

**One Flight Higher Groundbreaking Ceremony**

On Aug. 6, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at Max B. Swisher Skyhaven Airport. This groundbreaking launched the beginning of a long-term, multimillion dollar expansion detailed in the airport master plan. The investments being made will allow UCM to better serve the interests of local business, industry, and private aircraft owners, but more importantly ensure UCM students are well prepared to serve many facets of the aviation industry.
Missouri Safety Center

The Missouri Safety Center (MSC) has been moved under the College of Health and Human Services. From its origins in 1967, MSC’s mission has been to promote safety nationally and in the state of Missouri. The Center is led by Interim Director Terry Butler. The Center provides core services in the areas of instruction, research, publications, and public services activities.

Nursing Program Open House

UCM’s off-site nursing program has relocated from North Kansas City Hospital to the UCM Summit Center. An open house and reception are planned for 5-7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 19 at the Lee’s Summit facility.

Harmon College of Business Administration Center for Internships

The Harmon College of Business Administration's Center for Internships had another successful summer in placing interns. The center placed 93 interns who generated 426 credit hours. The students worked a total of 38,508 hours and earned $489,986 in salary. Sixty-eight percent of the interns received offers of full-time employment upon graduation. The number of summer interns increased almost 15 percent and credit hours produced increased 18 percent from summer 2007. When compared to summer 2007, student hours worked increased 16 percent and total pay increased by almost 44 percent.

Get the Red Out Event

The University of Central Missouri and the Warrensburg community will come together in celebration of a new academic year during the "Get the Red Out" street fair. Activities are planned for 4-6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 28, on Holden Street, between South and Clark streets. The event also kicks off the beginning of the 2008 football season as the Mules play Minnesota State University-Mankato during the first home football game of the season at 7 p.m. at Walton Stadium.

Debate Teams

Two UCM Debate teams – Mark Wannacott and Janis McCambridge, senior team status; and Andrew Foring and Zach Dodson, junior team status – were accepted into the 2009 World’s University Debate Championship hosted by the University of Cork in Ireland. The tournament will take place Dec. 26, 2008 – Jan. 4, 2009. The tournament, which is for the World Championship, attracts entries from colleges and universities from around the globe. Only 300 teams are accepted, two of which will be from UCM.

U.S. News & World Report Rankings

I am proud to let you know that UCM continues to be ranked among the Best in the Midwest by U.S. News & World Report. In its 2009 edition of “America’s Best Colleges,” UCM ranks in the top 19 Midwest public master’s universities this year as compared to among the top 18 last year. Although our rank edged slightly down, the majority of our measures in the methodology actually improved. It’s just that some other institutions improved more.

In addition, we remain as the Midwest’s number one university for least debt of graduates, and rank 14th nationally among all public colleges and universities for lightest debt load.
Chief of Staff Position

In direct correlation with the University of Central Missouri moving forward on many fronts, the volume of information coming into my office and the demands on my time have increased dramatically. It is apparent I need to employ a strategy that will allow me to concentrate on priorities, as well as, spend crucial time with faculty, staff, students, alumni, community colleagues, and donors. To that end, I am implementing a Chief of Staff position within my office to help me manage day-to-day operations and communications with colleagues and constituents. I have asked Ann Pearce to be my Chief of Staff, and she has agreed.

As Chief of Staff, Ann will be my liaison with the university’s executive officers as well as others. She will assist me in establishing priorities and agendas, and in keeping lines of communication open. Ann will also coordinate the completion of special projects which cross organizational lines, research issues of importance, and produce briefing materials on significant matters that require my attention.

This is not an additional staff position, but rather a realignment of Ann’s duties. Throughout my tenure here, I have called on Ann several times to assume additional responsibilities, and am looking forward to working with her in the Chief of Staff role. However, it is clear that she cannot be successful with this expansion of duties without relinquishing something. For that reason, we will determine new oversight for the university’s governmental affairs activities. Most likely, this responsibility will be part of our new General Counsel’s duties, as is the practice at many universities throughout the country.