President Update  
September 12, 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. - Aaron Podolefsky

University Climate Study

In late spring and early summer, UCM students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to respond to a university-wide climate study. I want to thank everyone who took time to complete the questionnaire and, particularly, members of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). The PCSW began the initial dialogue about a need to assess the university atmosphere as it pertains to human diversity and employee satisfaction issues.

The Colorado-based firm Amplify Communications worked with a team of university personnel and also led focus groups to develop a survey which was sent to campus students and employees. Data has been collected and is being compiled with a final report expected sometime in October. Once the results are in, I plan to share them with the university and address areas of concern.

Outreach Initiatives - Kansas City

Over the past 1-1/2 years, UCM has held a number of meetings with constituents from different ethnic and minority communities in the Kansas City area as part of its outreach initiatives. We have successfully developed and strengthened good relations with individuals and organizations, which have resulted in collaborative efforts to instill in Kansas City’s youth the importance of education and the pursuit of higher education. These efforts have been particularly successful in the Hispanic community. On Friday, Sept. 19, UCM will host a gathering of UCM administrators/staff and representatives from the different constituencies within the Hispanic community at the Guadalupe Center in Kansas City. The meeting will include introductions and a dialogue about the future course of UCM’s relationship with the Kansas City Hispanic community.

Also as part of UCM’s outreach initiatives, the university participates in key community events. On Friday, Sept. 5, I and other university administrators attended the Guadalupe
Center’s annual celebration –  *Blanco Y Negro* – held in the Junior Ballroom at Bartle Hall in Kansas City. UCM has participated in the event for the past several years and has been recognized during the event for its support.

**Master Plan Space Needs Analysis**

UCM contracted Paulien and Associates, Inc. of Denver, Colo., to conduct a campus-wide academic space needs analysis as part of UCM’s master planning effort being conducted by Gould Evans of Kansas City, Mo.

Paulien’s report was recently issued to UCM. It details the findings from a classroom use and space utilization study along with a review of UCM’s existing facilities. The findings were used to quantify the institution’s current and future space requirements based on projected enrollment growth over a 10-year time frame. The report will be used to refine campus standards for space utilization and to assist in the determination of the adequacy of current space to meet the needs of campus departments. This report will be made available after a final copy is received.

**Morrow-Garrison and Student Recreation and Wellness Center**

Design work continues on this project. The basic design of the building is complete and the detail design of the interior and exterior has begun. Once completed, sufficient information will be available for construction managers to bid on the building project. Completion of the Morrow-Garrison academic component of the project is still slated for the beginning of the fall of 2010 semester. The student recreation portion of the project is also due to be completed in the fall of 2010, in time for the start of indoor activities dictated by the cold weather season. Final design plans will be presented to the Board of Governors for approval at its Sept. 17 meeting.

**Warrensburg Area Partners In Prevention and Student Activities**

Warrensburg Area Partners in Prevention (WAPIP), a group dedicated to advocating for and creating a climate of responsible use of alcohol, met on Thursday, Aug. 28 to observe late-night activities at entertainment venues in the Warrensburg area. Many UCM representatives, as well as other community leaders, are members of this group. The purpose of the first “Warrensburg After Dark” tour was to gain firsthand insight and understanding into issues related to alcohol.

**Elliott Union Bowling Area Refurbishment**

The Elliott Union bowling area is Warrensburg's only bowling venue. The bowling area, which is smoke and alcohol free, was refurbished this summer to include the installation of new pin scoring machines, new lanes, and new flooring in the lobby areas. This bowling area provides a special and fun venue for students, faculty and staff and the rest of the Warrensburg community.
The bowling refurbishment also offers a positive entertainment option in light of a new Warrensburg city ordinance that prevents people under age 21 from entering many of the entertainment venues that serve alcohol. This is in addition to efforts by the UCM Office of Campus Activities to enhance options for late-night entertainment that are alternatives to events centered on drinking of alcohol.

**International Center Update**

On Sept. 4, I signed two new institutional exchange agreements, expanding international educational opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. One agreement is with the Zagreb School of Economics Management (ZSEM), a private non-profit institution of higher education which is noted as the first in Croatia to become a member of AACSB International - the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The first exchange student from ZSEM is attending UCM this fall. Future plans include UCM hosting a visiting professor of management in spring 2009; ZSEM hosting a UCM professor of accounting in summer 2009; and UCM students attending ZSEM summer school from June to August 2009.

The second exchange agreement is with the University of Seoul (UOS), UCM’s first partner in Korea. UOS is a public university founded in 1918 and has a student body of approximately 10,000 students. The school began as an agricultural college and later evolved into a comprehensive university serving as an international center for the urban sciences as well as the arts, humanities and engineering. Semester and summer programs will allow UCM students to experience a wide range of courses in Seoul and faculty exchanges will soon follow.

On another positive note, international student enrollment has increased 12 percent over fall 2007 enrollment.

**MDHE Program Approval**

UCM received notification that the Missouri Department of Higher Education has approved (1) a change to delete the option of “English (functional major)” under the BSE, Secondary Education; and (2) a change of title option of “English (major)” to “English” under the BSE, Secondary Education. Approval is subject to final authorization by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

**Update on SB 389 - Posting Student Information**

In compliance with SB 389, faculty credentials (name, academic rank, highest degree, institution granting highest degree) are accessible to the public through the UCM course schedule (online). This information was posted in accordance with guidance and deadlines established by the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE).

During the fall 2008, UCM will initiate a process for collecting and posting “student rating of instruction” as required by SB 389. Five instructor rating dimensions (questions)
have been determined in consultation with the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association. The survey questions to be used by UCM are similar to those under development at other state institutions.

Software to conduct the evaluation process has been purchased. During the latter part of the fall 2008 semester, each student will have the opportunity to access all courses in which he/she is enrolled to complete the instructor rating survey. In accordance with SB 389 and MDHE implementing instructions, rating results (by instructor and course) will be available to students before the opening of fall 2009 enrollment.

**Update on House Bill 1549 - Monitoring Undocumented Students**

As requested by MDHE, we have certified that to the best of our knowledge all students enrolled at UCM for fall 2008 meet the citizenship and immigration conditions required by HB 1549.

UCM’s undergraduate application currently asks for country of citizenship and immigration status. Based on discussions with MDHE, we are meeting the requirements of the new law without causing unnecessary application and admission barriers for our students.

UCM, along with MDHE and other state universities, is reviewing the requirements imposed by HB 1549 and the appropriate actions necessary to satisfy those requirements. MDHE representatives have indicated that MDHE/CBHE will not develop or recommend a statewide strategy or system for institutional compliance. Rather, this will be left up to individual universities to develop compliance processes. As noted above, UCM’s undergraduate application currently asks for country of citizenship and immigration status. Therefore, we can identify students who may have compliance issues as they enter the system. A remaining question is whether students must present appropriate documentation at the time of application to the university or at the time of acceptance by the university. MDHE has stated that HB 1549 is not intended to restrict the application or admission of international students who come to the United State on F-1 visas and are, therefore, vetted through INS processes.

The most recent conversation has centered on the distribution of “state support” (i.e. state grants and scholarships). We are in the process of developing the infrastructure to implement validation processes for students receiving “state support,” but do not believe this will be a problem for UCM.

**MEW Local No. 1**

UCM’s bargaining unit is represented by MEW Local No. 1. Prior to Larry Cowan’s death, I had appointed him to serve as the MEW liaison. With Larry’s passing, I have asked Dr. Paul Page, interim vice president for University Advancement, to serve in this capacity.
Chair Appointments

Dr. Steven Del Vecchio has been appointed chair of the Department of Accounting effective Sept. 1, 2008. Dr. Del Vecchio replaced Dr. James Hopson who resigned the position effective Aug. 31, 2008.

Dr. Scott McKay has been appointed chair of the Department of Biochemistry, Chemistry, and Physics, effective at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year. Dr. McKay will replace Dr. Wayne Stalick who plans to retire at the end of this academic year.

Blackboard

UCM’s Blackboard Learning System continues to see record use. On the first day of classes, the platform experienced the most hits it has ever had in a 24-hour period with 124,476 hits. The second day of classes set a new record of 126,001 within a 24-hour period. Since the start of the 2008 summer session, individuals from all 50 states and 20 different countries have used UCM’s Blackboard Learning System.

For anyone unfamiliar with Blackboard, it is used at UCM by instructors to provide course material, conduct tests and surveys, and communicate with students in a web-based, online environment. Additionally, students can submit homework assignments and communicate with their instructors and fellow classmates. UCM's Blackboard platform can be accessed with an Internet connection from anywhere in the world.

TRIO-Student Support Services Grant Award

UCM received notification that its TRIO-Student Support Services will receive a grant award of $305,109 for the 2008-2009 academic year. This is a 5.25 percent increase for year four of a four-year grant.

Alumni Choir and Big Band Dinner Dance

More than 200 people came together Saturday, Sept. 6, for a tremendously successful UCM Alumni Choir and Big Band Dinner Dance in the Elliott Union. Generations of Central Missouri alumni, faculty, and friends participated in the alumni choir performance, with vocalists ranging from the class of 1951 to the class of 2003. During the final number, they were joined by members of UCM’s current Concert Choir. The group was led by Conan Castle, professor emeritus of music, and Lisa Fredenburgh, newly appointed director of choral activities. To cap off the evening, Russ Coleman, professor emeritus of music, and the UCM Faculty/Alumni Big Band got the crowd on its feet for an evening of dancing. The event raised funds for the fine and performing arts, in particular to help facilitate expansion of the university’s music technology program, which has grown from eight majors at its inception in 2000 to 80 majors today. The program has quickly developed a reputation for excellence and has outgrown its current space.