

Message from the Chancellor – Summer Update | July 29, 2015

Hello!

I hope your summer is going well! I want to update you about several campus issues, including the budget outcomes following the June Regents meeting. As you know, Provost Doug Knerr has begun his work on campus and I am so appreciative the Search Committee identified someone so aligned with our campus mission. It is great working with him!

The campus is very busy with various summer programs underway, New Student Orientation sessions and prospective student visits. It is fun to see all of the visitors enjoying campus. The campus is beautiful and you may have seen the stories about the Pavilion being painted Blue!! It is hard to believe how much positive feedback we are getting as we Go Blue!

This year we provided an opportunity to hear from both campus and community members about priorities. I am happy to report that while the language may change here and there... there is a strong campus wide alignment about what is important at UM-Flint. We will continue to prioritize the following:

- Enhance academic excellence through focus on faculty research, support and increasing student achievement
- Improve affordability and completion for UM-F students
- Build an increasingly diverse and inclusive academic community
- Increase UM-F's reputation state wide and regionally as a leading regional university
- Enhance community engagement
- Develop educational programs that serve the community/region to enhance regional quality of life

After reviewing budget proposals by each budget officer the CAC/BSP recommended a budget with commitments to:

- Improved retention/graduation rates

- Continued investment in faculty lines, development and research
- Strategic investments in financial aid

I appreciate the CAC/BSP giving such a thoughtful review of the budget proposal and accepted their recommendation of these priority commitments. Thanks to out-going chair, Adam Lutzger for his leadership.

This budget includes an increase of over 16% for institutional financial aid and an additional \$300,000 for faculty research and support. Six new positions were funded out of the general fund and resources for several other faculty lines were identified in the colleges. This year we will continue to look for ways to identify resources for core academic priorities. This will include looking closely at what we are currently doing for cost effective alignments as well as raising external resources.

This year we developed the UM-Flint Innovative Impact Award and of the many excellent ideas submitted, two were selected for implementation:

Sandra Alberto proposed improving wayfinding signage on campus to enhance the culture, climate, and overall navigability.

And another group proposed improving the appearance and function of the Harrison Street Parking structure, as well as promoting environmental sustainability, healthy activity, and campus spirit. This group included Greg Rybarczyk, Theresa Landis, Raymond Hall, Mary Hall, and Rebecca Pettingill.

I have spent a great deal of time visiting with others around conceptualizing the best ways to organize our staff in service of putting the University in the strongest position possible. The Capital Campaign will launch October 12 - save that date!! Linda Moxam and her team have raised just over 16 million dollars to date. As the feasibility study was completed and external reviewers interacted with us regarding the staffing of the development/advancement functions currently in place, they identified two critical weaknesses in our structure.

The recommendation was accepted to refill the VC for University Advancement, a position that had been vacated several years ago. The second recommendation we are implementing is to increase support (staffing) for alumni programs. To that end we have opened a search for the

VC position and the advisory committee met to review applications. There will be open forums for the campus to meet any candidates invited to campus and I encourage you to attend.

To meet the second recommendation, Dr. Mary Jo Sekelsky will be moving into the role of Executive Director for Alumni Relations. I can think of no one better to work with alumni as we begin to build a stronger connection to UM-Flint. From this position, she will also coordinate campus efforts to increase internships, strengthen mentoring programs and develop a proposal for a 21st century career center. I am appreciative that she is willing to take on this crucial role as we launch the campaign.

Diversity and inclusion remain a central priority for the campus. The VC of Student Affairs position will expand to include a focus on creating an inclusive campus community for all. This newly re-conceptualized position includes a focus on creating an inclusive learning environment for all members of the community, supporting student success, and ensuring that inclusive practices are embedded in the education and business practices at UM-Flint. In light of this reconceptualization and a fairly specialized position, the VC for Campus Inclusion and Student Life, will be a three-year contract position. An advisory committee will be formed soon.

We have hosted two Go Blue BBQs in the ally across the street, if you are around August 27 come on over for dinner, music and fun with friends as we host our final event for the summer.

I appreciate the work you do on behalf of our students.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Susan Borrego, Ph.D.
Chancellor