

July 11, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

Here are some updates on activities over the past couple of months. As always, please feel free to email me with questions or comments at: [president@umsystem.edu](mailto:president@umsystem.edu).

Stephen J. Owens  
Interim President

In the wake of the devastation caused by spring tornadoes and floods across the state, our unique service mission as a land-grant university was "front and center." We are all proud, humbled and appreciative of all those across our system who have reached out to our fellow citizens during these disasters. I made a point to recognize our people and their efforts during my remarks at the June [Board of Curators meeting](#).

The care and compassion of our people for their fellow Missourians was extraordinary—from MOREnet's provision of on-the-ground official state communications...to goods collected, services provided and monies donated by our faculty, staff and students...to the Delta Research Center that assisted flood victims...and to MU Extension specialists who continue to provide on-site assistance as well as ongoing training and education to communities, on topics such as ensuring a safe food and water supply; repairing and rebuilding homes, farm structures and small businesses; insurance issues; budgeting; replacing lost

We have started the [search](#) for the next Missouri University of Science and Technology chancellor. At the recent board meeting, curators passed a [resolution](#) that praised the significant achievements of Chancellorhn82.4t7Fæ ol(o)7(1e)-3l(o)



Board of Curators Chair Warren Erdman recently announced that the curators are reviewing a pool of about 140 university system presidential candidates and that the search process is going well. Chairman Erdman tells me that the board is pleased with the number, quality and diversity of the people represented in the pool. He is optimistic about the search timeline and says the involvement of stakeholders from across the state has been robust. For updated information throughout the presidential search process, please visit: <http://www.umsystem.edu/ps/>.

The UM Board of Curators last month voted to change the UM retirement plan for new employees hired after September 2012. After intensive study over the past two years, the board's decision clears the way for university administrators to work with the Retirement and Staff Benefits Committee to develop an alternative retirement program for new employees that includes a combination of both defined benefit and defined contribution features.

As promised, the current UM defined benefit plan for existing employees \_\_\_\_\_ by this action. Detailed reports and independent actuarial analyses have confirmed that the current plan will not be harmed by closing the plan to new employees next year.

Our goal is to bring a recommended plan design to the board of curators at its upcoming October meeting in Kansas City.

started, with about one-third of them available to students this fall.

On Aug. 15, a luncheon will be held where faculty will introduce their new courses and share with colleagues what they've learned along the way—sharing lessons learned, teaching techniques and tips.

If you're interested in attending the luncheon, or if you would like to learn more about our eLearning advances, please call Jana Moore at 573-882-6398 or email [moorej@umsystem.edu](mailto:moorej@umsystem.edu). The luncheon speaker will be UMKC's Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, Wayne Vaught, who will talk about a "5:1 return" on the online course investment in his area.

As part of our efforts to grow small businesses across the state, two years ago we launched an Advocacy-Mentoring Program for firms owned by women and minorities. The first graduating class of these organizations and their mentors were honored recently when four businesses completed the program and five new firms took their place. This program's goals include increasing the number of competitive women- and minority-owned firms that do business with the university. The UM System has increased procurement, architecture, engineering and construction awards to women- and minority-owned businesses to more than 9 percent, or about \$42.5 million. For more information,

please

visit: <http://umurl.us/FAepy>.

Outstanding undergraduate education is central to the UM System's teaching mission. During the most recent curators meeting, chancellors from each of our four campuses highlighted programs that advance undergraduate education, including programs that engage students in cutting-edge research, build leadership skills, and develop students personally through mentorships,