



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

December 9, 2016

From the desk of UCC President Debra Thatcher

Dear Umpqua Community College Community,

I can hardly believe the fall term is coming to an end! The past five months have flown by, and my days have been filled with learning about the College and higher education in Oregon, getting to know you, visiting schools, and meeting people in Douglas County. I've challenged you to help identify the College's needs, respond to accreditation requirements, rethink our organizational structure, and keep our students at the forefront of all we do. Thank you for your thoughtful responses and for steady progress on our priorities.

I would like to take this opportunity to share some information about current work, restructuring, and the governor's budget.

1. **CAMPUS PRIORITIES.** The Senior Leadership Team solidified priorities for the year. Areas of focus include strategic planning, student success, accreditation, recovery, and efficiencies/improvements. The priorities are listed in the attached document.
 - a. **STRATEGIC PLAN.** We are currently laying the foundation for our strategic plan in a number of ways: collection of information through the essential practices survey; the accreditation committee's work on our mission and core themes; and earlier information that you provided me regarding restructuring. I expect to be ready to proceed with strategic planning when faculty return in early January.
 - b. **STUDENT SUCCESS.** Student success efforts have focused on improving our relationships with high schools; re-imagining the new student orientation; fully utilizing the resources in our newest building; continuing to develop programs; and focusing on student retention. Improvement in our retention is significant: Students are more likely to complete programs the longer they persist, and increased enrollment has positive budget implications. Here's an interesting fact: ***If we retain an additional 1% of students from fall to winter term and again from winter to spring term, our budget will see an increase of \$86,000!***
 - c. **ACCREDITATION.** An accreditation committee has made great strides in bringing us into compliance with accreditation requirements. The Fall 2016 report on two policies (academic freedom and hazardous waste) was submitted on time and I expect the Commission will be satisfied with our work. The one-year report on UCC's mission and core themes coincides with our requirement to examine the same items for an ad hoc report, both due March 1. Work is proceeding on a plan to be more transparent about budgeting and resource allocation, and we are in the midst of creating a more collaborative environment to fulfill our mission (partially tied to restructuring and reallocation of space). We are also working on developing governance that is more inclusive and participatory. I especially appreciate the work being done to improve assessment. This work is designed to meet accreditation requirements, but it also results in improved

programs and it contributes to a culture of continuous improvement – an exciting prospect for us and for our students.

- d. RECOVERY. Recovery efforts have been notable, from increased staffing for counseling and security, to enhanced lighting, more effective emergency communication, and the deconstruction of Snyder. Snyder reconstruction plans remain on track, with construction expected to begin in April/May and completion expected in December 2017. We are making a legislative request for continued security and IT personnel, and we are part of a community legislative ask that includes a full-time victims' mental health therapist and a part-time victim accommodation specialist for the College. We also anticipate additional College recovery funds as part of a Department of Justice grant that addresses community-wide needs.
 - e. EFFICIENCIES/IMPROVEMENTS. We are putting a lot of effort into making Umpqua Community College stronger. As the loan default rate continues to drop, I want to give thanks for your help in directing students to SALT and Financial Aid to explore ways to better manage their expenses. Many policies are being updated and created, a process that has involved multiple committees working diligently and thoughtfully. The search for a new Communications and Marketing Director is on track, with the final interview taking place next week. Two significant strategies for increasing enrollment are under consideration: increasing the number of athletic teams (thanks to Craig Jackson for a strategic approach to growth that minimizes investment and promises a significant return) and building student housing - a concept we have explored repeatedly in the past and are once again investigating.
2. RESTRUCTURING. As a result of meetings held across campus earlier in the term, I received 83 recommendations for restructuring in order to better serve our students (The 42 ideas for space utilization were sent to the Space Utilization Committee, and the other 91 suggestions are still being considered). The most frequent restructuring recommendations were to reduce the number of vice presidents; reduce the number of administrators; eliminate duplication of jobs; simplify Student Services administration; combine catering, special events, SOWI and Information Desk into one unit; place all "miscellaneous" instructional areas under one dean; eliminate deans and give their work to chairs; eliminate chairs and hire assistant deans; make miscellaneous changes to reporting lines; and eliminate/add miscellaneous positions.

So what is happening with these suggestions? Many are under consideration and hold promise for making operation of the college more efficient and effective. The one immediate change I will implement is the merger of the vice president positions for instruction and student services. As some of you know, I advocated for a reduction of the number of vice presidents during my interview, and I myself served in a position that was responsible for both academic and student affairs. ***As of this writing, I am creating a position listing for a provost/vice president for academic and student services, and I am determining the composition of a search committee. The hope is to submit the listing for publication next week, followed by one month of advertising. I plan to begin the first round of interviews in February and complete the second round by mid-March, with an anticipated start date of July 1.***

3. GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

Governor Brown's proposal included a flat-funded budget of \$550M for all community colleges, with a promise to continue the discussion with the legislature for increased funding. (The Fact Sheet regarding the governor's recommended budget for higher education can be found at: <http://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Documents/Commission/COMMISSION/2016/12-Dec-8-16/7.1-GRB-Fact-Sheet-2017-19-final.pdf>). The actual hold-even funding is \$634M, due to increased costs beyond our control – such as PERS (about a \$300,000 increase for UCC), compliance with state and federal mandates, and health care. The good news is that the governor supported funding 11 of 13 community college capital projects; Umpqua's industrial arts building is at the top of the list! (Jason Aase and Jess Miller have been working with faculty and staff to update our plans for the IA building.)

In conclusion, I urge you to continue reading the monthly reports to the Board of Trustees and notes from various groups (Senior Leadership Team, College Council, etc.) to remain aware of campus activities and issues. As always, please let me know if you desire clarification of reports, want to dispel rumors, or have suggestions for Umpqua Community College's growth and improvement.

I wish you a joyous and re-energizing winter break!

Warm regards,



Dr. Debra Thatcher, President
Umpqua Community College