May 15, 2015

To: The Campus Community

The academic year is coming to a close rapidly, and soon we’ll be celebrating the graduation of a large number of our students. Our congratulations extend to all the students receiving degrees and credentials and to the faculty and staff members, families and significant others, friends, and community members who have supported the students and take great pride in their accomplishments.

I want to provide a quick update on a number of initiatives and activities occurring during this past year, many carrying forward into the coming year:

- I continue to be indebted to the University Budget Advisory Committee for its commitment to thorough review of the budget and consultation with the campus community. We remain in tough financial times. UBAC’s approach signals both the gravity of the times and the importance of the potential manner in which we address our challenges.

- In a related vein, I am grateful for the work of the Committee for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan. The committee is now receiving comments from the campus community regarding its potential recommendations to me. I appreciate the current focus on priorities and assessment regarding strategic objectives for the University.

- Thoughtful, well-executed advising remains the key, especially with first-generation college students, to academic success – mastery of basic knowledge and skill sets, academic performance, time to graduation, and so forth. The University Task Force on Advising has been working diligently this year to produce recommendations to guide the campus’s efforts to provide effective and engaging advice to our students. I appreciate the efforts of the Task Force members.
• Parking plans and fee schedules have been addressed this year by way of thoughtful recommendations from the Campus Ad Hoc Parking Task Force. We now have an approach that brings consistency and predictability to the next seven years but also provides the capacity to alter direction should the need arise. I appreciate the hard work of the Task Force members and the input of those who were part of the consultation process.

• The Cross-Divisional Collaboration Committee continues to research and suggest efficiencies in how we do business across campus divisions. Among this year’s efforts was the streamlining of various HR processes such as reporting/funding changes and separation/clearance activities. Also in the works are the streamlining of the fee waiver process and an analysis of the results of the electronic communication survey.

• Finally, the vice presidents and their staff members have worked hard this year on updating policies such that our approach to campus needs and system directives addresses contemporary challenges and solutions. The cross-divisional nature of so many of those needs and policies brought home quickly to all involved that we lack a centralized, electronic archiving system that makes all of our University policies easily accessible and current. Numerous persons have been working on such a repository, and we hope to roll out the first iteration at the start of the semester in the fall.

Thank you for your attention. Look for another President’s Update to follow soon regarding progress on other fronts during the academic year just concluding.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Sheley, President