



I cannot believe we are already at the end of the academic year. It seems to me that the older I get, the quicker a year passes. I'm intentionally keeping this President's Update very brief but didn't want to end the year without sharing a couple of items, especially the anonymous questions that I have received since the Town Hall.

Years of Service:

Congratulations again to the employees who are celebrating Years of Service milestones this year and I would like to give special recognition to the individuals retiring this year. They have combined service to Jefferson College of 319 years of service. We wish you nothing but the best.

Roger Barrentine
Michael Booker
Tracy James
Kathy Johnston

Connie Kuchar
Kathy Kuhlmann
Dave Leonard
Diane Marquart

Sheba Nitsch
Shannon Schoenky
Lisa Vinyard

For your enjoyment, [view photos](#) taken at the Years of Service and Retiree reception held after the Town Hall meeting. If you were not able to attend the Town Hall on April 30, here is the [Google Meet recording](#) from that meeting.

Anonymous Questions:

Since the Town Hall, four additional anonymous questions have been received. Rather than wait until the next Extended Cabinet meeting in September to answer these questions, I thought it best to include it in this President's Update, the last one before we break for summer.

Q: Has it been considered to replace/repaint the Viking Woods sign at the entrance of Mel Carnahan Drive? The sign is looking like it has seen better days.

This signage is quite aged and dates to the installation of the Viking Woods buildings in the early 2000s. As part of the Facilities Master Planning and budgeting processes for 2024-2025, the institution will be pursuing a new entry sign for Mel Carnahan Drive that will be engineered to be much like the one being completed at the Observatory/softball entrance at Farm Rd. This will be a component of a larger investment in outdoor signage over the coming year.

Q: I would like to inquire about the college's policy regarding insurance deductibles for employees whose vehicles are damaged during weather events. Could you please provide clarification on how deductibles are handled in such situations? Any information you could share would be greatly appreciated.

The College does not cover any damage caused by the weather to personal vehicles or belongings during a storm. Weather occurrences are considered acts of nature, beyond human control. To hold an entity accountable for the damage, they must have directly been involved in the cause of the damage. The weather event did not result from any action by the College, and as a result employees and students are directed to contact their insurance carrier for guidance on how to proceed with damage to vehicles or belongings.

Q: Faculty are in negotiations for a large raise (rumor is 7%) for the coming fiscal year. With that in mind, staff are wondering if they will at least get a COLA this year, as nothing has been mentioned. With the price of goods and services, staff is hoping for a wage increase as well, at least a COLA, if nothing else. Thank you for your time.

Employees are our greatest asset and we want to responsibly grow wages for all employees. In the past two weeks, I have met with constituent leadership for Classified Staff, Certified Staff, and Faculty Senate. In each of these meetings, I have explained that Cabinet is planning to include raises as part of the FY2025 budget that will go to the Board of Trustees, but exact amounts have not been communicated to employees.

Multiple factors go into planning and discussions around wages. The Missouri State Budget is just being finalized and faculty negotiations are still occurring. The Board and Administration Team (BAT) takes seriously its responsibility to negotiate in good faith. It is challenging to finalize raises for staff prior to also finalizing raises for faculty. Therefore, administration is postponing making a final recommendation on salary increases for all employees until faculty negotiations are complete or a tentative agreement on raises is signed by both parties. Both teams are earnestly working to complete negotiations.

Q: Is there any chance the College will revert back to having set tuition reimbursement amounts? Currently, we have to look up the tuition fees from UMSL and Mizzou. It would be much easier if we had a set per-credit-hour rate again.

The College is proud of its generous tuition reimbursement opportunities. The Board of Trustees policy and procedure (II-020 Reimbursement of Professional Study Expenses) ensure support for employees pursuing additional higher education each year. While remaining fiscally responsible, the College wants to maintain this benefit for employees. We recognize the challenges in aligning reimbursements for tuition with current rates at Mizzou and UMSL. However, since this has been established as a Board of Trustees policy and procedure, having set per-credit-hour rates would require that the Board vote on and approve any changes to the set rates each time rates are adjusted. Aligning with a specific institution in place of a dollar amount, allows more flexibility when tuition fees rise.

As a reminder, an employee can submit an anonymous question at any time via this [Google Form](#). This link has also been placed on the College's website on the President's page.

May Board Updates:

At Thursday's Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved two furniture requests. Both action items address some of the furniture needs for areas currently under construction. The first item was to address some needs at JCA because of the expansion. A combination of existing furniture at both Arnold and Imperial, as well as new furniture, will be utilized to supply the renovated building. Office furniture and replacement of aging and broken furniture systems were the targeted inventory for this purchase. The second item includes furniture for the Jefferson College Police Department. Furniture currently utilized by the department is significantly aged, and several pieces will not conform to square footage requirements of the new office that will be located in the new Viking Woods building.

Additionally, I would like to congratulate two employees who were approved by the Board of Trustees for new positions last night. Mark Smreker will be the director of information technology, filling the vacancy created by Tracy James' retirement. Carrie Greer has been appointed as the Senior Director of Enrollment Management due to Kathy Johnston's upcoming retirement. Congratulations to Mark and Carrie!

Commencement:

Almost there! As we make the final push toward commencement on Saturday, I want to thank everyone for their commitment to our students over the past year. The excitement and anticipation of Commencement serves as a reminder of the responsibility and value the College has in our community. It is so easy to see how we live our mission and values every day on our campus. I'm so lucky to be a part of the Jefferson College family and have such pride in the important collaborative work that we all do to support our students.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Cabinet, thank you for your cooperation and excellence. Have a great summer!



You can view previous editions of the President's Updates (January 2023 - present) on the President's Office webpage. As always, I am a phone call or email away.

I look forward to our collective success.

- Dena

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