

AUGUST 2008

# Academic & issues & ideas

*Notes from the Wichita State University  
Office of Academic Affairs and Research*



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## **My HOPE** for this newsletter

One of the most rewarding parts of working at Wichita State University is interacting with the Wichita community. Few universities can claim the kind of partnership that WSU has with the city of Wichita and the surrounding areas. It seems that nearly everyone here feels that they are a stockholder in WSU.

Good partnerships thrive on good communication among the partners. One of my obligations as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research at WSU is to foster dialog about the academic mission and initiatives of the university and to bring the community up-to-date on issues that affect higher education. I will use this newsletter to discuss those issues with the hope of developing an even deeper understanding and partnership between Wichita and Wichita State University.

## **URBAN SERVING DESIGNATION**

Over the past two years, President Don Beggs and I have articulated a clear role for Wichita State University, as the only urban serving research university in Kansas. In this role, we accept special obligations and face special challenges. The designation is important both nationally and locally. WSU is a member of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities whose membership includes some of the most prestigious city-based institutions in the country. As part of this group, we are very actively involved in working toward a national agenda for urban higher education that focuses on developing human



**President  
Beggs**

capital for the modern workforce, promoting public health and sustaining urban communities. Dean Sharon Iorio of the College of Education, Dean Peter Cohen of the College of Health Professions, Andy Schlapp, our new Executive Director of Government Relations, and I are involved in this organization nationally.

## **LOCAL IMPLICATIONS**

Our mission as an urban serving research university has important implications locally as well. Our unique position among Regents universities requires that we work toward the strategic goals of the Kansas Board of Regents within the urban context of greater Wichita. We are very much involved in strategically focusing our research programs to support



**Dean Iorio**



**Dean Cohen**



**Schlapp**



Dr. Miller interviewing Dr. David McDonald during taping of the new television show, "Wichita State & The World."

## ON TELEVISION AND YOUTUBE

The Provost is hosting a new show, "Wichita State & The World," featuring interviews and information about WSU's urban serving research mission. It will appear regularly this fall on WSU TV, Channel 13 on Cox Cable. Segments of the show appear on YouTube and can also be found at [www.wichita.edu/provost](http://www.wichita.edu/provost).

The pilot, broadcast in the spring, featured an interview with Dr. David McDonald, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. That show also included an interview with Dr. Paul Wooley, Kansas Bioscience Eminent Scholar.

Guests on "Wichita State & The World," this fall include Dr. Elizabeth King, president of the WSU Foundation; and professors Deborah-Ballard Reisch and Greg Meissen, discussing their community-based research.



Greg Matthias, WSU Manager of Video Services, works the control board for "Wichita State & The World."

## LEARN MORE *on the web*

THE KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS  
[www.kansasregents.org](http://www.kansasregents.org)

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
[www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com)

SEDGWICK COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
[www.sedgwickcounty.org/workforce\\_development](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org/workforce_development)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR AVIATION RESEARCH  
[www.niar.wichita.edu](http://www.niar.wichita.edu)

the local aviation and health professions in addition to supporting a full range of research programs in the fundamental disciplines. We are working very intentionally to increase the number and quality of accountants, engineers, health professionals and teachers. We continue to develop and sustain partnerships with government, business and industry through our educational and outreach programs. I will write about some of the most exciting of these endeavors in future editions of this newsletter.

## OBLIGATIONS

As an urban serving university, we also face special obligations. It is essential that we understand the diverse context of our urban environment and embrace that diversity. It is extremely important that we continue to work as a full partner with the local school district – one of the largest urban districts in the country – to deploy programs that give every child a chance to succeed and to become a productive citizen. We operate in the most complex higher education environment in the state and we must continue to advocate for interactions that increase access to higher education and ensure student learning and success.

A special challenge in the Wichita area is the challenge of developing and sustaining the highly trained workforce that will be required to meet the needs of the aviation, health and service sectors of the local economy well into the future. The need for technical training related to aviation manufacturing is particularly critical.

## INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

In one of the most important and innovative higher education partnerships in the nation, WSU has joined with Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita, the Wichita Area Technical College and the Sedgwick County Technical Education & Training Authority as a partner in the development of the National Center for Aviation Training. The National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) of WSU will work hand-in-hand with technical instructors in what will be one of only a handful of research-based technical training programs in the world. The idea is to let the latest in research knowledge – provided by NIAR – drive the training of the workers of the future. NIAR will have research space at the new center to be built at Jabara Airport. Students and instructors will have direct access to researchers and the latest ideas as they train for the high paying technical jobs of the future.

There are many forces that direct our activities at the university. Some of them are national movements in higher education. Some are forces for change based on the local economy. Some are strategic directions of the Board of Regents. Our success in navigating these forces in order to educate students for the future will depend on how well we interact with the Wichita community. I hope that this newsletter will be one way in which we can maintain an open dialog about our work together in this community.

*Gary L. Miller*