CAS Report to the UFC

Prepared by Dean Keith Mellinger

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A big thank you to the more than 40 faculty, representing almost every department and program, who delivered presentations as part of the *COVID-19 in Context* summer course. Over 1900 people registered for the course, including about 650 alumni, 500 community members, over 200 of our incoming first-year students, and over 400 continuing students. In the end, 639 UMW students earned academic credit for the course. It is worth noting that, although advertised as free, registrants were invited to make a small donation at the time of registration (suggested amount was only $30). In the end, registrants donated just over $15,000. Also, a big thank you to Anand Rao for helping to facilitate the course delivery and to Betsy Lewis who helped with much of the back-end work.

I have been working with the Office of Advancement on several new initiatives, some spurred by the success of the COVID course. Although the $120,000 Undergraduate Research budget for students in Arts and Sciences was completely eliminated this year, the $15,000 in donations generated by thecourse are being used to support the students who most need funding to complete capstone and honors projects this year.

The damage to our undergraduate research fund this year has prompted me to work with Zach Hatcher in Advancement on a strategy to raise money to support a new endowment for student research and learning. We have a fall campaign in place with a goal of raising $100,000 by the end of 2020 and a long-term goal of $1 million. We already received a lot of positive feedback from alumni, and many have pledged to support the initiative. We need to build a more sustainable model for supporting this most critical piece of our mission.

We are in the final stages of an agreement with Virginia Tech for UMW students interested in earning a Master of Engineering degree in Computer Science and Applications. The agreement would allow up to six credits of select advanced courses in the UMW computer science program to satisfy graduate credit in the VT program. Therefore, a student at UMW could potentially graduate from UMW with six credits toward a VT MEng degree already completed. The agreement should be finalized soon.