

To: UFC

From: Tim O'Donnell

Re: October UFC Report

Date: October 13, 2025

I hope you had a good break and are looking forward to the second half of the semester. As we enter advising season, we should pause to acknowledge the extraordinary work that our faculty do in advising students. Our commitment to faculty advisement is one of the many things that set us apart. For many of our students, these interactions are formidable. Thinking back to my own undergraduate days, I can still recall in rich detail so many of these crucial conversations that shaped me as both a student and a person. I know you are making a similar impact at each advising appointment. Here are a few updates:

Title II/Digital Accessibility: A group of individuals from across campus continues to make progress on curating resources and tools to support digital accessibility for all of our materials, including our courses. YuJa Panorama is a leading LMS accessibility platform that integrates with Canvas to improve the accessibility of digital media and course content. It will be available once procurement is complete, and we can expect to hear more soon as we prepare our spring courses.

SCHEV and programs: Thanks to Debra Schleeff and Kevin Caffrey for their continued persistence in working with SCHEV on a variety of proposals. We are waiting to hear if the MSN proposal will be on the October Council agenda. The first draft of the MS in AI in Business proposal is nearly complete and ready to be shared with SCHEV staff. Other proposals are either before SCHEV staff or will be soon.

Strategic Planning: University-wide strategic planning around the four goals outlined by the President earlier this semester is gaining pace. Academic Affairs is represented by several individuals, including UFC chair Jonathan Levin, who serves on the steering committee, as well as others from across the division. There will be opportunities to participate in this focused effort to chart the course of the next several years, including what new academic programs we might want to establish.

Enrollment and Admissions: As we all know, the demographic cliff has arrived. As the market tightens and competition increases, we are doing several things beyond building new programs. These include increasing “top of funnel” efforts to grow the number of applicants, improving the financial aid experience, and creating program-specific yield events and programs.

AI tools: The AI Task Force continues to receive and evaluate proposals for enterprise-wide adoption of AI tools for the university, to make them available by the spring semester.

Faculty Awards: It is time to start thinking about nominations for faculty awards. The call will go out from the committee in the new year. However, there is no reason not to consider and begin preparing nominations for the Grellet C. Simpson Award, the Graduate Faculty Award, the Outstanding Young Faculty Award, the Topher Bill Award, the Waple Professional Achievement Award, and the UMW Board of Visitors Faculty Leadership Award. We will also be searching for the 3rd Anderson Professorship this spring.

Sabbaticals/Jepsons: 18 sabbatical applications and 1 Jepson application were received by the deans and reviewed by the committees. We expect to have final decisions made and shared by November 3. Once again, Christy Irish and the entire committee are doing excellent work, and I am grateful for their efforts.

Animals on campus: The Office of Human Resources has asked that we share our [Animals on University Property policy](#). The policy prohibits individuals from bringing animals, including pets, into any building or other controlled spaces on University property, except for those permitted to bring service Animals and Support Animals, per university policy.