

From the President

Todd Parnell

These past six months have flown by. I have lots of “new” to report to you!

We have a new Strategic Plan in place, approved by the Board of Trustees at their fall meeting, which will be shared with you in detail in a subsequent edition. We will be offering a new master’s degree in Studio Art and Theory next summer and ten new Edward Jones Minority Scholarships next fall. We have a new Lady Panthers softball team ready to compete next spring and a new lacrosse club team on campus. Even iconic Stone Chapel will have a new elevator and a new geothermal, energy efficient air conditioner in place by the time warmth returns to the Ozarks. To those of you who have sweated through countless hours of Stone Chapel discomfort, we say “No More!” thanks to the Springer and Russell families. Finally, new visuals abound, including a new university logo and Web site featuring a scholarly crest, a new athletic logo and Web site with a very mean looking panther, and a new Edward Jones Center Web site. I encourage you to check them out online.

What then about the four priorities we established as points of focus for this academic year? How are we doing? A sampling of positive steps include:

Student Safety and Achievement: Between an emergency text messaging system, improvements in lighting and access along Calhoun Street, thumb locks on all classroom doors, and updated crisis planning and training, our campus is considerably safer than it was last spring. Monthly Crest of Excellence Awards now honor a student or student group with recognition and financial incentives.

Communication: Open book management, or the sharing of university financial performance on a monthly basis, has been initiated. Incentives tied to cost control are in place, with monthly tracking available to all budget managers. A semiannual mini-survey from my office to all faculty and staff provides valuable campus input into areas of need. Sunday night dinners with faculty and students and Tuesday morning coffees have provided relaxed venues for exchanging ideas. My Faculty/Staff Advisory Board members have been honest and tireless in their efforts to help me better connect with all segments of the campus community. Finally, Trustees devoted a considerable amount of fall board meeting time interacting with faculty, staff and students to the enjoyment of all.

Collaboration: Most recently, Drury has joined with OTC, the city, the county, City Utilities and Springfield Public Schools to establish the Central Street Recycling Coalition. Going it alone is simply not an option in the world in which we compete.

Entrepreneurial Thinking: With new niche master’s programs leveraging existing resources and new executive education initiatives launched by the Hammons School of Architecture in China, creative thinking remains alive and well on campus.

We repeat those four simple priorities over and over again: Student Safety and Achievement, Communication, Collaboration and Entrepreneurial Thinking. This is our direction for the remainder of the year, and we are making good progress.

As Drury University heads toward its 135th year with its roots and traditions firmly in place, we look to the future with optimism, energy and sound academic and financial plans.

Betty joins me in sending holiday wishes to you and your families.

