



# CURRENT

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March 2009

## A Letter from the President

### 2008-09 KACRAO Newsletter

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Please e-mail  
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you have any suggestions for  
future newsletters.

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**G**reetings my fellow KACRAOnians:

Benjamin Franklin said “be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich.” Like all of you, I have been pretty industrious in my profession and most definitely frugal when it comes to my offices’ budgets for years. If looking at one’s retirement account this year is any gauge of wealth, I know for sure that all of my hard work has not made me rich! How about you?

Without question, the recession has hit our state and many of our institutions are starting to feel the effects of the down economy. One way that we can leverage our resources is by continuing to advocate for the importance of higher education to the economy and our citizenry.

For example, my institution’s primary mission is to provide health care providers (allied health therapists, medical doctors, and nurses) to the state of Kansas. Due to the budget cuts, some of our programs are being forced to reduce their class sizes. While reducing class sizes helps our campus “balance the books,” its residual effects are tremendous. Some of you are all too familiar with the shortage of health care providers in the state when you try to book an appointment. Reduced class sizes mean fewer nurses, physical therapists, and other health care providers who are ready for service in areas that have health care provider shortages and to replace an aging work force. All of our campuses have ways that budget cuts and reductions in services affect the communities that we serve. One way that we all can utilize our “knowledge capital” is to talk to your elected officials about the importance of higher education to our communities. At local and state government budget levels, once entitlement programs and K-12 funding are taken care of, there is very little money left for higher education, roads, prisons, and other services.

From personal experience, legislators appreciate and need our expertise. By helping inform officials about the importance of our institutions not only to students but to the betterment of our communities, we can help ensure that higher education funding is viewed as vital to the “health” of us all and not as a luxury.

My best wishes to all of you this spring,

*Chris Meiers*

2008-09 KACRAO President



**Chris Meiers**  
**KACRAO President**  
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## Leading in Challenging Times By Pat Long

**V**irtually everyday I receive an e-mail or read in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* another open letter from a president of a public or private institution outlining the steps being taken to stabilize our budgets during these challenging economic times. In the last few weeks, I have had to write a similar letter to Baker's constituents, and as comparable as all of our communications seem to be, they are still extremely difficult messages to write and deliver.

None of the options we as institutions are considering seem positive: cutting programs, reducing the workforce, rolling-back salaries, unpaid furloughs, hiring freezes, cutting operational budgets, increasing employee contributions to retirement or health benefit, and on and on. Individuals and their families are being impacted with each action being taken. That weighs heavily on the hearts of leaders. When I spoke at our University-wide forum following 23 lay-offs, I suggested we as an institution were going through the various stages of grief outlined by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross: Denial (this isn't happening to me or my colleague or Baker), Anger (why is this happening to us here), Bargaining (I promise I'll work harder if...), Depression (I don't care anymore), and Acceptance (I'm ready for what comes). Eventually, we must get to not just acceptance but hope for the future, and during this time we need strong leaders throughout the institution. In terms of leadership at the institution or unit level during this time, the following are actions I believe are important in times of crisis.

**Communication is key.** Over communicating is essential. When a rumor arises, address it immediately. Whether at an institution-wide basis or on departmental level, individuals will fill in the gaps with stories—many untrue and much scarier than the reality. Communicate with all constituents: alumni, donors, trustees, students, prospective students, faculty, staff and the local community. And communicate often; offer avenues for feedback so all constituents may feel heard.

**Hope for the future is a must.** Each of our institutions has much to be proud, initiatives that must go forward. Talk about the positives, pick at least one initiative to continue and to promote it in all communications. Be visible on campus. Your confidence in the future is essential and displaying that confidence helps others believe.

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challenging  
times, and now is  
the time for true  
leadership to  
emerge.”

**Decisive leadership, that fits the culture of the institution, is imperative.** Potential solutions should be vetted and ample input is needed. However, in the end, we as leaders must be able to make the hard and unpopular decisions to move the institution forward.

**Expert advice is available and asking for help is important.** There are alumni, donors, supporters, trustees and community members who have expertise and are willing to help. People are willing to give of their time, talent and treasure, and sometimes they just need to be asked.

**These are challenging times, and now is the time for true leadership to emerge.** Individuals in Admissions and Records will be instrumental to our institutions' success. Your leadership and work with prospective and current students will be imperative to instilling confidence for the future of your organization. Our institutions have survived many levels of crises before; change is inevitable. Baker University is 151 years old. Think of the major events experienced in that timeframe: wars, depression, and terrorism. As difficult and challenging as these times are, I take comfort in knowing that we have survived much and believe with the commitment, integrity and hope of individuals, many of whom are found among your ranks in KACRAO, our institutions will not just survive but will thrive. Wishing each of you all the best and Godspeed during these challenging times.



**Pat Long**  
President  
Baker University  
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Former KACRAO Member

## Being Resourceful in a Changing Economy

*In lieu of the challenging economy and its effects on higher education (i.e. state funding, institutional budgets, forecasting issues), many institutions of higher education are focusing on resourcefulness. Dennis Dutton, Bobby Gandu, Lisa Kirmer and Glenn Lygrisse share their insight as to what their institutions are doing to adjust to and solve the economic issues concerning professional development, travel, office morale and general budget constraints.*



**Bobby Gandu**  
Director of Admissions  
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**T**hink fast... in the last 72 hours, about how many times have you participated in a conversation that featured the dismal state of the economy? Regardless of whether you were talking about your personal financial situation or budget matters relating to your institution, I'd bet what little money is left in my 403 (b) retirement account that you've had such a conversation with colleagues, family or friends within the last few days. Assuming I have another one coming to me, I'd bet my next paycheck that your conversation ended with you scratching your head for answers and continuing to wonder if our economy has hit rock bottom just yet. Unfortunately, I don't have any answers for you but rather comments and perspective regarding how you might help your college continue to move forward, despite the economic times.

First and perhaps foremost, frequent and open communication amongst staff is critical. In the state system, for example, I frequently learn about the latest budget news from an online newflash rather than from Wichita State or the State of Kansas. Realizing

that isn't necessarily anyone's fault, I try my best to share information with the Admission staff as I learn of it. By their nature, staff will become worried about news and rumors – with the two often becoming blurred - when there is no official word. Budget officers should share information as they learn of it from the administration and, if possible, involve staff and managers in budget decisions. In turn, staff should ask managers and budget officers about rumors or share their concerns; simply spreading unconfirmed information only fosters more stress and discomfort.

Second, staff members should work together to determine what potential cuts could be made and the corresponding impact they would have. In the Office of Admissions at WSU, our management team discussed numerous ideas from printing on recycled paper (to reduce paper purchase and consumption) to hosting fewer programs to consolidating print publications. No idea is too small as every savings in dollars and resources can result in additional savings downstream. One note of caution I'd extend to other institutions is that I'd be careful about cutting professional development expenses. That does seem like an easy solution and could be justifiable in many cases; however, having aboard a staff aware of the latest in higher education trends and able to bring fresh ideas to the table is

critical.

Finally, it all comes down to how the economic ripple will impact your staff, your students and your institution. Cuts in staffing and programs could obviously negatively impact student service on many levels. How might your office offset some of those concerns? What new communication mediums can employees utilize at little or no cost to ensure they are still reaching out to students? Facebook, instant messaging, Twitter and blogs come to mind to lessen the blow from lost resources. Are employees and managers working together to keep morale high for the staff and the students? Students aren't going to be excited about attending an institution where all they hear about is budget gloom and doom; likewise, staff members don't want to work in an environment where they are consistently fearful of losing resources or even their job!

At the end of the day, we each can only control so much. My encouragement to each of you is to continue to work hard and serve your students and colleagues as best you can. To a certain degree, your fate is out of your hands but if you do everything you can to advance your institution, you can leave work each day with your head held high and proud of the job you've done for your students.

**I**n relation to Professional Development we are looking for economical ways for our staff to connect with others and to expand their skill set, primarily through webinars and directly with some of our contractors (web developers, web-based recruitment efforts, etc).

In relation to budget we are always

looking for ways to cut expenses. We are relying more heavily on emails, FACEBOOK-type communications than on "snail mail" and telephone these days.

Office morale is probably the most challenging thing to deal with in relation to price-tag. As a private school it is sometimes a real challenge to help families consider

the "bottom line" – what their cost will be with scholarships and grants - rather than the initial price-tag.



**Dennis Dutton**  
VP for Enrollment & Marketing  
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## Being Resourceful in a Changing Economy (continued)

**P**rofessional development: We look at each individual request for training and professional development to determine if it is absolutely necessary. Sometimes we only send one or two people for training/professional development and then they train other staff. This approach has worked really well for us and our staff has been very understanding and flexible.

**Travel:** We have limited all travel to in-state only. We are relying more on web-based trainings and have recently trained some Student Services staff in Jenzabar using their web tutorials. Again, our approach has been to train one or two and have them train the rest. Our IT staff have been very resourceful in finding web-based trainings that meet our needs and eliminate travel expenses.

**Office morale:** We recently had a Student Services staff retreat off campus. We incorporated motivational activities along with goal setting and strategic planning. Student Services staff members came up with a variety of fun, inexpensive activities focused on students that we can incorporate throughout the remainder of the semester and during the fall semester (i.e. faculty appreciation days, student appreciation days, theme days, etc.). The activities create a fun, light atmosphere in Student Services and it is something we all look forward to. We also have bi-monthly staff meetings and spend the first 30 minutes discussing what each of us is working on. Staff meetings allow staff to step in and help a co-worker if necessary, vent frustrations and creates empathy for each other.

**General budget constraints:** We have been very creative in

combining positions, if possible, and utilizing student workers to help with large projects. Institutionally, we have focused much more on cutting back on facility expenses and encourage all employees to turn off lights when they leave a room, turn off computers nightly and be more conscious of utility usage. We are also trying to create more revenue to offset budget cuts. We are creating new classes and programs to bring more revenue to FHTC.



**Lisa Kirmer**  
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**A** sign of the times is that even if we show enrollment increases, we are faced with budget constraints at best and budget rescission most probably. So, how do we adapt? I have heard of some institutions in other states are undergoing very significant cuts in programs and outreach. Some of these seem to run counter to the institutional mission. So, what is our status and response?

Here at Butler Community College, not unlike most institutions, we have been asked to identify areas of potential cutbacks. We all have places where we could see cuts and not miss them; however, they tend to be in areas other than our own. So, I ask myself: "How can I move forward in the face of

cutbacks?" One thing our Enrollment Management area is implementing is a better use of technology vs. some assumed face to face options.

Our institution is a multi-campus institution, and that brings advantages and disadvantages. How can I utilize the expertise of an individual at our parent campus when the need today is a site "X" and site "Y" tomorrow? We are now in the process of installing a system of headphones and cameras attached to strategic PC's within Enrollment Management. With this option students can do "face to face" interaction at all our sites even though the expert may be at the parent campus. I feel that this not only cuts some transportation and time loss costs; it also serves the student better.

Initially, this began within our Registrar's office to serve VA student needs, but we are expanding into all areas of Enrollment Management.

So, my words of "advice" are, use these times to think creatively. However, use service to students as the target and cost savings as the by-product, not the other way around.



**Glenn Lygrisse**  
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## 2009 KACRAO Conference

For your \$90 Registration Fee, you will receive the following:

- ◆ New conference format which will maximize professional development opportunities
- ◆ Chance to network with your colleagues
- ◆ Dynamic opening and closing speakers
- ◆ Outstanding lunch and dinner menus from one of Wichita's finest caterers
- ◆ Entertainment options include music from one of the area's most popular bands (Big Fat Fun), tours of the Museum of World Treasures, exploration of historic Old Town and performances by students from local universities
- ◆ Transportation to all of your conference activities
- ◆ Pre-Conference activities include a tour of the Kansas Aviation Museum, a Wichita State University Outdoor Sculpture Tour, a trip to see the Wichita Children's Home (our community service project – see link below) and the annual Golf Tournament\* at Tallgrass Country Club. \*Greens fee not covered by registration.

For your \$73 (+tax, per night) hotel room rate (based on a double-occupancy room), you will receive the following:

- ◆ Recently renovated guestrooms
- ◆ Wireless high-speed internet access
- ◆ iHome capability
- ◆ Full service business center
- ◆ Concierge services
- ◆ STARBUCKS coffee- in the lobby – on site – enough said
- ◆ Heated indoor pool and whirlpools
- ◆ Fully equipped health club
- ◆ Jogging on the expanded Riverwalk
- ◆ **FREE SELF-PARKING FOR ALL OVERNIGHT ATTENDEES**

If you have any questions about the 2009 Conference, please send an email to either Kim Sandlin ([kim.sandlin@wichita.edu](mailto:kim.sandlin@wichita.edu)) or Neal Hoelting ([neal.hoelting@wichita.edu](mailto:neal.hoelting@wichita.edu))

**We hope you plan to join us in Wichita in September!**  
Kim Sandlin and Neal Hoelting, LAC 2009

## AACRAO Annual Meeting | April 13-16, 2009

There's still time to make plans to attend AACRAO's 2009 Annual Meeting: Charting the Path to Institutional and Student Success. The meeting will be held April 13-16, in Chicago (cheap flights!). Featured speakers include Bruce Weinstein, Ph.D., The Ethics Guy®, E Gordon Gee, among the most highly experienced and respected university presidents in the nation, and Saul Geiser, research associate at the Center for Studies in Higher Education at UC, Berkeley and former director of admissions research for the University of California system. And last, but not least, KACRAO's own Heather Eckstein is serving as Program Chair! You can search the program online and build your own personal AACRAO schedule at [www.aacrao.org](http://www.aacrao.org). Rooms are still available at both conference hotels.

Already planning to attend? Even if you have visited Chicago multiple times, you probably haven't experienced all of it. While you are at AACRAO, you can check out Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio, take the classic Chicago City Highlights Tour, or visit the sites described in Erik Larson's recent novel on The Devil in the White City Tour. See the AACRAO Web site for details.



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