April 2014

The Scoop
on Projects and Services in Administration and Finance

In this April issue you will find some updates on a number of projects and services underway in Administration and Finance.

✓ We have shared with the campus over the last few months that we would be undertaking the process during 2014 to update our Campus Master Plan. Our intention is to still launch this process in 2014 but have delayed the beginning of that process to the fall. The thinking behind this change in timing is to make sure that the Strategic Plan work is completed and submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration at their May 2014 meeting. We also did not want to launch this process right at the end of the academic year when faculty and students are generally away from the campus and so we will begin the process in the fall.

✓ There are three positions in the Administration and Finance division that deal with various aspects of environmental health, safety, and risk management. Our risk manager position is currently part of the Finance unit. The manager of employee safety and training is part of the Human Resources unit and the environmental engineer position, formerly held by the late Roger Bula, is in the Physical Plant. After reviewing again the merits of leaving these three positions in three separate areas of Administration and Finance, the three Associate Vice President’s involved in these areas have collaborated and recommended the consolidation of these three positions into one unit. This unit will be led by Mike McKay, the resulting combined office will be located in the Prakken building 153, and will report to Pat Briggs, Associate Vice President for Finance.

✓ The University Center project has experienced some significant progress over the last few weeks in both the laying of masonry blocks as well as the erection of structural steel. Both of these trades have been challenged by the extreme cold and snow this winter. During the coldest days, the masons were able to move to the interior of the structure and have been able to complete a number of the interior walls. The Christman Company informed us that the project was 3-4 weeks behind schedule as of mid-February however they have multiple strategies that they will use over the next several months to get the project back on schedule for planned completion in December and opening in January 2015.

✓ The Physical Plant project management staff has several electrical systems related projects that they will be undertaking this summer including:
  o They will be replacing a section of approximately 50 year old high voltage cabling along Knollview Drive east of State Street.
  o They will work with an electrical engineering firm to assess the condition of the electrical system and related components on the west side of State Street. The foci of this work will be to diagnose the system for any system weaknesses and to design system repairs or improvements for enhanced system reliability.
  o There will be a planned power outage to replace the used transformer that was temporarily put into service during the power outage that the campus experienced in January 2014. This transformer is located on the north end of the Automotive Center.
  o Again with the assistance of an outside electrical engineering firm, the Physical Plant will study the reliability of the emergency back-up generators located in some of our facilities.
A portion of this study will also be to look at the design and cost to upgrade, increase the capacity, and/or add one or more generators to deal with the academic and academic research needs in sciences, health professions, and pharmacy.

✓ Mike Hughes and his staff have finalized the selection of a Capital Project Management company (Clark Construction) to augment our existing Physical Plant staff to allow us to be able to assist academic colleges, Auxiliary Enterprises, and other areas in completing additional capital projects this summer and preparing to do additional projects in the summer of 2015. The major areas of focus for these capital projects this summer will include academic classroom and laboratory renovations, classroom and laboratory health and safety related improvements, a significant number of housing facility improvements, and projects from our capital renewal and deferred maintenance initiative. We heard from some of our users on campus that there was a desire for us to be able to complete more capital projects than we could accomplish with our existing staff. While we are pleased to be able to respond to this issue, the new approach does come with a cost in the form of a feasibility study fee, and if the project is approved to move forward after the feasibility study there will be a project management fee charged to the capital project. These fees will be assessed on projects where the feasibility study is started on or after April 2.

✓ Thank you in advance for your flexibility and understanding as we partner with many areas on campus this summer to make these facility improvements to make Ferris an even better place to learn, live and work. I also want to note a big thank you to our Physical Plant project management staff and other regular employees that are involved in these projects as this is a different approach and a very significant undertaking for the institution.

✓ The Office 365 migration of individual’s mailboxes, calendars, to-do’s, and contacts are now complete. Thank you to all of our faculty and staff for your patience during this transition period, your participation in the many training programs offered, and your outstanding questions that helped us better serve users. Our IT staff still has some clean up items from the initial migration and many important services to complete to have a fully functioning new Office 365 system. These items include the electronic work flow process for requesting leave time, a new university wide notice solution, and migration of archived Lotus Notes. We are about 85% complete with the email replacement project.

IT will be working with users starting April 7 to migrate the archived Lotus Notes email files to Office 365. The Lotus Notes system is tentatively scheduled to be shut down on May 15, barring any unforeseen problems. I want to express a huge thank you to Jim Cook in IT who served as the project manager on this project, to Nate Wallace who was also a leader in this project migration, and all the other IT staff that had an active role in the implementation and migration of Office 365. Well done!

✓ The Physical Plant has been notified by the Michigan Department of Transportation that they will need to close northbound and southbound lanes on US 131 between Exit 139 (Perry Street) and Exit 131 (8 Mile Road, eight miles south of Perry Street). They are planning up to five closures between May 15 and August 20. They have indicated that these lane closures will most often occur Monday through Friday, and they will not close northbound and southbound lanes at the same time. During these closures, traffic from 131 will be re-routed away from 131 to Perry Street to Northland Drive to 8 Mile Road and back to the freeway. Please keep this
information in mind as you plan any summer events or activities for the university, or for your own personal planning.

✓ Many of you know by now that our City Watch system was replaced with a new system (**Rave Mobile Safety**) that went live at the end of January 2014 for emergency notifications through landlines, mobile communication devices, text messages, and email notifications. Our intention with the use of this system is to include all faculty, staff, and students emergency text alert numbers, office phones and email addresses in this system, to the extent that we have that information on each individual. If someone does not want to get these notifications, they have to take action to opt out of this system. Our bias is to make sure that we appropriately notify all of our faculty, staff, and students in cases of emergency and so we felt it most appropriate to adopt this “opt out” strategy.

If you are not receiving any of the above referenced communications when there is a campus emergency, and would like to begin to receive those notifications please go to MyFSU to access the Emergency Text Alert channel. When you follow the MyFSU Emergency Text Alert channel link you will need to click on “Current” under the “Mailing” header. Then look for the header “Phone Type”, click on the down arrow in the first box and select “Emergency Text Alert (Mobile)” and then enter your cell phone number. Don't forget to submit your changes. It takes one business day for emergency text alert number changes/updates to be active.

✓ The university put in place a **shuttle bus system** on campus from August of 2013 through December of 2014 to provide shuttle service on campus given the closure of the University Center, temporary opening of Westside Café, and the temporary relocation of the bookstore from the University Center to the mall on the south end of town. Since the shuttle service was put in place in August the average monthly ridership has been 6,600, and the average daily ridership has been approximately 360. It is amazing that there were 13,603 riders during the month of February.

✓ **The Rapid Shuttle Bus Service** from Grand Rapids to Big Rapids continues to struggle in finding ways to grow the ridership. We are in the third year of service of The Rapid Bus System however the utilization has been flat or only minimal growth since inception. If any of you have suggestions on how we might grow the ridership of this service in part so that it is of greater value to our students and our employees, and to help move it from a subsidized service to one that has enough volume to pay its own way, please share your ideas with Jim Hessler by dropping him an email note at JimHessler@ferris.edu.

✓ Our Dining Services department has been very pleased to be able to refresh and temporarily reopen the **Westside Café** to provide additional food service support for the campus during the University Center renovation project. Due to the relatively low demand for that type of dining during the summer months, Westside Café will be closing for the summer after commencement and will reopen in August for the fall semester.

✓ During the week of March 3 I committed an additional $62,260 of one-time funds from our division to create additional **summer work employment opportunities for students**. These additional dollars will primarily be utilized in Physical Plant and ITS. If you know of motivated students that will be in the area this summer and are looking for work please feel free
to share this information with them as these units will be looking to fill the vacancies behind these new dollars.

✓ We continue to look for ways to **enhance pedestrian safety** on the campus. The new street lighting along Knollview Drive from State Street to Sports Drive and north, northwest on Sports Drive to West Campus Community Center is nearing completion now that all of the new light poles and fixtures have been installed. The contractor will have to come back to complete the project once the frost it out of the ground so that they can remove the temporary poles and related fixtures and complete any remaining sight work.

*I am very appreciative of our staff, who make the difference in the projects and services we provide for you. I want to extend a big thank you to the many dedicated employees in Administration and Finance who work hard each day, throughout the year to provide quality services to the campus!*

**Jerry L. Scoby**

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Vice President for Administration and Finance