The Scoop
on Projects and Services in Administration and Finance

It is awesome to see our students and faculty returning to the campus for another academic year! I hope you had a great summer and are looking forward to another year to either directly or indirectly transform the lives of our students. While the temptation with this issue is to look backward and talk about some of the great accomplishments by the staff in our division this summer, I am really committed to trying to use The Scoop as a forward looking communication tool to help provide the reader with insights into programs and services we are working on to help serve the campus.

✓ Some of you have noticed a tunnel project going on north of the Student Recreation Center. This is to replace some of the steam and condensate distribution system for the campus, and this particular section was beyond its useful life. While the Physical Plant project management and contractor efforts have been focused on getting this project done before the start of the fall semester, there have been some challenges getting all of the needed materials and so at this point our best estimate of the completion time for this project is between September 4 and mid-September. We apologize for this inconvenience and assure you we will wrap up this project just as quickly as possible.

✓ The collaborative efforts between several of the academic colleges, the Physical Plant, and IT in completing the Shimadzu Research Center in the Arts and Sciences Commons is now complete with the ribbon cutting scheduled for September 23. Congratulations to those involved in making this Center a reality and best wishes to our faculty and students who will be conducting collaborative research in this Center.

✓ Three of our academic college deans have been partnering with the Physical Plant and IT on a renovation of the Business 111 auditorium. This space is of a type and size that is somewhat unique on campus and therefore gets used extensively. The sense from some of our historians is that this space had not been renovated in two or three decades and it was ready for some upgrades. This renovated space will be available for campus use late in the fall semester.

✓ The Top Taggart track resurfacing project has been underway since May and is nearing completion. Because the finish layers are very weather dependent, it is difficult to give the campus an exact completion date, but the current estimate is early September. Thank you to our coaches, summer sport camp staff, and others for your patience and flexibility while this project was completed during the summer.

✓ In a prior issue of the Scoop we shared with you our plan to build three or four additional buildings at West Campus Apartments. The update on that project is that the design/build firm has been selected for pre-construction services and will be recommended as the construction firm as part of the October Board of Trustees meeting agenda. The goal is to start the construction in October or November and have it substantially complete by August 1, 2016 for student occupancy.
The Housing Visioning process is wrapping up, with an expected completion by mid- to late September. This process will help inform how we move forward with the major housing redevelopment effort conceptualized in the university’s Master Plan. The next project beyond the new buildings at West Campus Apartments will be the replacement of Taggart Hall. The plan is to start that project in the spring of 2016 to bring the beds on-line in the fall of 2017.

The May 2015 Board approved Master Plan identifies a number of capital priorities for the university over the next five years. Following are some of the project where we are beginning to do some early project scope definition as foundational steps to allow us to complete these projects over the next few years.

- The Master Plan identifies a priority to move our intramural fields from West Campus to the area south of the recreation center, which is currently used as our intercollegiate soccer field and practice soccer and football fields. We are currently refining the scope for this project and will work to seek Board approval for professional services to assist us in developing the site plan, which will include the broader site where south campus apartments currently stand. Those apartments are scheduled to be razed next summer.
- Our intercollegiate women’s soccer field is large enough for regular season games but is not large enough to meet the NCAA requirements to host post-season competition. Given our commitment to address this issue and the synergy with the intramural item noted above the preliminary planning is underway to define the scope and to move toward site planning to put the intercollegiate soccer field on the west campus site currently serving intramurals.
- We are beginning the early stages of planning to do an addition to and selective renovations to the Sports Complex. This preliminary planning is being done in concert with donated services from one our alumnus who owns both a construction company and a development company. This preliminary planning will help us finalize the scope, get a rough project budget and provide some renderings to support the fundraising that will be needed to help make this project a reality.
- While part of the item immediately above, the cornerstone of the Sports Complex project will be the addition of a strength and conditioning space appropriate to support our Division II athletic programs as well as our Division I hockey program. We do not have a strength and conditioning space today and have a very small weight room. We recognize that there are many high schools across the state that have better weight or strength and conditioning spaces than we have today and we are looking forward to being able to create a strength and conditioning space for our student athletes.

Some readers of The Scoop have a keen interest in the project management work we do and have given us constructive feedback over the last two or three years about the desire to be able to complete capital projects more quickly than we have been able to accomplish. After looking at numerous alternatives we have decided to add a continuing senior-level project management person and a four year temporary mid-level project management person in the Physical Plant to significantly increase our ability to partner with other divisions and colleges to help deliver the capital projects results that you have been seeking. While it will
take a few months to complete these searches and get the appropriate personnel in place, we are excited about the additional capacity that this will provide in our project management area. The Clark Construction project management model will be phased out this fall.

✓ Our IT staff is working with five pilot groups to test the new TimeOffManager software for administrative and administrative support employees. The phased rollout plan is to complete the pilot program with the five early adopters in August, train and rollout the software in September to other users that were using the leave time software as part of the former Lotus Notes system, and then roll it out to other users that may be interested in October and beyond.

✓ Thank you for the numerous responses received for nominations to the Sustainability Task Force that we are creating to launch this fall. We are currently finalizing the membership of that task force to simply make sure we have a good balance across the campus and look forward to announcing the membership of this task force in September.

✓ As we strive to increase our sustainability efforts on campus, a new focus for the Physical Plant is to provide six additional large recycle bins (dumpster size) before the residence halls open. There will be promotional efforts with students to put cardboard and other recyclables in these containers as part of the move in process.

✓ The State of Michigan Bureau of Fire Services updated their fire prevention code in March of this year. The primary reason behind these updates was to address the lack of regular fire drills within Michigan Universities. The simple summary of the changes is an elimination of required fire drills in academic and administrative buildings but increases the level of training required for faculty and staff on fire safety issues. Our Safety, Health, Environmental and Risk Management (SHERM) department is collaborating with Academic Affairs and our Staff Center for Training and Development to provide training to keep us compliant with the modified fire prevention code.

✓ A new Concur user group is being formed to help ensure that future system changes are in line with what users want and need. Initially the group will be focused on the unique needs of infrequent users and making the system and processes easier for these infrequent users. If you are interested in being a member of the group please contact Emily Zoet in Financial Services at EmilyZoet@ferris.edu. We look forward to some of you helping us improve this system in a way to make it more useful for the campus.

✓ With the major changes that have and continue to occur in the health care industry and the changes that are occurring with the use of technology, there are some amazing new tools available at your fingertips to make it relatively easy to do research before you have medical procedures done. These tools will help you make sure that the provider you are considering has a record of providing quality procedures and that the rates charged are cost effective. One such example is Priority Health is making available their Medical Bluebook, which is a pretty intuitive web-based tool and can be accessed by logging in to your Priority Health account on-line and clicking on Healthcare Bluebook to see costs and quality.
Let the busses roll! With the start of the fall semester, the Rapids bus service from Grand Rapids to the Big Rapids campus will start on August 26 and the local DART shuttle bus will start the regular route on campus on Monday the 31st.

It is interesting to observe the ebb and flow of workloads across the various parts of the year for different parts of the campus. For a number of units in Administration and Finance the summer is actually busier than the more normal routine of the academic semester. As a result the members of my leadership team will join me in hosting a Thank You Celebration Tailgate BBQ for Administration and Finance employees and their families prior to the September 12 home football game against Northwood University. We hope to see many of our Administration and Finance employees and their families at this fun event!

I am very appreciative of all the work by our regular staff and student employees, who make the difference in the projects and services we provide for you every day. 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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