In this January issue are some updates on a number of projects and services underway in Administration and Finance.

- Winter started early this year and it appears it will be a winter with lots of snow. Please refresh your memory of our Inclement Weather Policy which can be found at http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/buspolletter/administrative/Inclement-Weather-Policy.pdf. Please note the different ways in which we handle cancellation of classes versus closing the university. As an FYI we are in the process of revising this policy in an attempt to broaden it given we have used it periodically to deal with power outages. A big thank you to our grounds crew for all their work to keep our walks, lots, and campus streets plowed!

- Some of you have noticed the new lighting on Sports Drive area between the Ewigleben Center and West Campus Community Center. We have received numerous points of positive feedback on this improvement for our pedestrian safety. Due to a long lead time in the order of the permanent light poles, the current poles and fixtures are temporary ones and the permanent ones will be installed later in the year when the parts are available.

- The university is constantly looking for opportunities to be more energy efficient while still meeting the practical needs of the campus. Did you know that even given the growth of our enrollment over the last decade, our electrical consumption has actually decreased by 9.5%? Similarly, our consumption of natural gas has decreased by 18% over the same 10 year period. For a more complete graphic representation of these utility consumption issues and more, please visit the Physical Plant website at the following link http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/adminandfinance/physical/docs/FSU-Energy-Trends-Poster-2012.pdf.

- Over the last couple of years all of us have been looking for many ways to help reduce costs to help make the outstanding Ferris State University education affordable to our students, and to do so without our students taking on increasing amounts of debt. One of the ways in which our division assists in this process is through significant student employment opportunities that are critical in helping students afford their education, but also incredibly important in allowing us to deliver the level of services we do for you. During the 2013 fall semester, we had 1,294 student employees in our division who collectively worked 219,480 hours. These individuals represented approximately 56% of the university’s total Big Rapids student employees during that period.

- Our Finance staff began the roll out of the Concur system in August 2012, after a significant amount of input from a 20-25 person advisory group of users across many departments. The implementation was completed in November 2012. Since this implementation some of you have found it to be a very helpful asset in taking care of this part of your operations. At the same time we recognize it has created significant frustrations for some users, and particularly infrequent users. To help us move beyond the anecdotes that we hear, both from satisfied and frustrated customers, our Finance staff will be launching a Concur satisfaction survey of faculty and staff this semester to get a broader and deeper understanding of your level of
satisfaction (or frustration) with the system. While we know that you are very busy, we would really appreciate hearing from you during this survey process.

✓ We noted in a couple earlier issues of The Scoop that we had a **2013 grant program** in place to encourage employees in our division to identify ways that we could improve our productivity and/or customer service to the campus. With the completion of the program in December 2013, I thought that I would simply inform readers that during the nine months when we ran this program we received 44 proposals, with 17 or 39% of them being fully or partially funded. One stipulation was that the funds have to be spent by June 2014 and so some of the following items have not yet been implemented but will be over the next six months.

A few examples of proposals that were funded include the following:

- A new software package to allow the purchasing staff to more effectively track contract expiration dates in our relationships with outside vendors
- The acquisition and implementation of “digital store front” software to streamline the processing print jobs in the university Print and Copy Center
- Purchase fatal vision goggles for student educational programming to simulate different levels of intoxication to demonstrate how difficult tasks become with different levels of intoxication
- On-line bicycle registration system starting for the fall 2014

Thank you to all the employees that submitted proposals and to the review committee members who studied and evaluated the proposals. Well done!

✓ Many of you are aware that President Eisler has shared with the campus the **budget reductions plan** as a result of our number of credit hours being down in the fall semester. These budget reductions will be revised based on the number of credit hours taken by our students this spring term. Some in our division have asked, given our need to make some budget reductions, why we continue to spend money on capital improvements, renovations, and equipment purchases. This is a great question. In general these capital improvements are being done through one time reserves and carryover dollars which do not help balance the base budgets. By thoughtfully spending some of our reserves we will continue to improve the teaching, learning, living and working environment for our students, faculty and staff so that we continue to be an attractive place to study, live and work.

✓ A task force chaired by Tamie Grunow, Associate Vice President of Human Resources reviewed our current administrative and administrative support **performance evaluation forms**. This task force brought forward some thoughtful new forms which have been approved by the President’s Council. HR is in the process of holding multiple training sessions for supervisors on the new forms which will be used for employee evaluations later in the spring. Please take advantage of one of these training sessions if this applies to you!

✓ **What is convenient, relatively painless, and will help you fulfill your New Year’s resolution** to do more with wellness and drop a couple pounds? You can join 60 of our colleagues that are using payroll deduction for a membership to the University Recreation Center and the Racquet and Fitness Center. As a reminder the university provides a membership discount to employees and an even deeper discount to participants in our Healthy U Wellness Program!
Maybe you have been wondering how laying block and -20 degree wind chill temperatures go together. The short answer is not well. But in spite of the tough winter weather, University Center project progress is being made. In December, when the wind chill temperatures were around zero, workers were laying blocks in their short sleeves inside the visqueen enclosed temporary weather barriers. As an FYI, the structural steel you see going up, and the block walls near that part of the building are part of the support areas for the new large multi-purpose meeting rooms. The construction of the actual meeting rooms will continue to the north and east of the construction you can see to date. In spite of having to temporarily stop the masonry work, it will resume once the temperatures get back into the 20s. Over the next month you should see more of the masonry and steel go up.

*We know and appreciate that our people make the difference in the projects and services that 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! I also want to add a special thank you this month to our many student employees as well!*

Jerry L. Scoby

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Vice President for Administration and Finance