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

✓ The **campus shuttle** has now been in place for nine weeks. I thought you might be interested in knowing how well it is getting used. We have data for the first seven weeks of usage and in every week there were more riders than in the prior week. The ridership during the last week of February was 255% more than the ridership of the first week starting January 12. Over the first seven weeks of the semester there were 14,430 riders and during the last week of February the average ridership for the Monday through Thursday full day schedule was 748 riders per day.

✓ From time to time we get questions about whether the **shuttle from Grand Rapids to the Big Rapids campus** is working and are we going to continue it. I am pleased to be able to share with you that the ridership this academic year on average per week is up 14.2% over a year ago. The average weekly ridership for this academic year through March 6 was 232 riders per week. We continue to look for additional ways to grow this ridership. We would appreciate hearing from you if you have thoughts on this topic. We will continue this shuttle service next academic year and intend to offer it indefinitely.

✓ Have you ever thought ahead one, two or ten years and wondered what you will do for **health insurance in retirement**. We know a number of our employees are asking themselves this question and our Human Resources Benefits staff is working with Priority Health to deliver some educational programming to help employees who are not part of the Michigan Public School Employee Retirement System (MPSERS) think through this question and their options. Look for this educational programming in the fall.

✓ Can you believe it is time to kick-off the 2015 football season already? Well not exactly, but it is time for the football team to have their **spring football game** at Top Taggart field after the Big Event. Please come out and enjoy an early glimpse of your Bulldog football team for 2015 on Saturday, April 18.

✓ We are in the process of cleaning out some of our **excess furniture storage** spaces in housing and dining and will be having two on-line sales via Marketplace this spring. The primary focus of these will be to get rid of excess beds, dressers, chairs, and furniture from housing units, and tables and chairs from closed dining units. The initial sale focus will be on things that are currently in storage, and the May sale will include furniture from Helen Ferris Hall and Taggart Hall that we do not intend to repurpose. Stay tuned for additional information and the exact dates as they are published and communicated by the Physical Plant staff.

✓ The development of our next **Master Plan** is on schedule with the plan to complete it by mid-April. The next step in the process is we will be holding two campus forums to share
the latest draft of the plan with the campus before we finalize it in mid-April. If you are interested in coming to learn more about what is in the draft plan please attend one of the two forums scheduled for 4-5pm on Monday, March 30 or 11am-12pm on Tuesday, March 31, both of which will be in the University Center 202C.

✔ One of the significant items in the new Master Plan will be a major re-envisioning of our on-campus housing. We have hired Brailsford & Dunlavey to help us think through the critical issues important for the future. Our challenge in this regard is not to try to understand what our current students want for on-campus housing but rather to think through what Michigan’s current second graders will want 10 years from now. While we have invited over 100 individuals to be part of this process, if this is a topic of interest to you, and you were not invited to be part of the March meetings with Brailsford & Dunlavey, please let me or Jim Hessler know and we will look for a way to plug you in to the process at some point in the future.

✔ The Helen Ferris Hall demolition project is on schedule with the project fence set up scheduled for the week after Commencement in May. The demolition and site work will continue throughout the summer and be substantially complete by mid-August.

✔ Prior issues of the Scoop noted a Cramer Hall first floor renovation project to become the new home of our Housing and Residence Life staff. This renovation project is on schedule to be completed in April with the Housing and Residence Life offices and staff moving to Cramer around May 1.

✔ At a recent meeting with Priority Health, we were reminded of the importance of generic drug utilization when and where effective for our employees. Some brand name drugs are now costing $7,000, $8,000 or more per prescription. While we enjoy a good utilization rate of generic drugs by our employees on the Priority Health plans at 86.1%, this is a little lower than the average with all their accounts. We asked Priority Health to tell us what the financial impact would be if we could raise that one more percent, and they indicated each percent increase will save the plans $62,000. These kinds of saving opportunities will help lower future premiums which will mean savings for employees as well as the university.

✔ Priority Health has reminded us that the most expensive point of entry into the health care delivery system is through the emergency room. One of their strategies to help individuals and employers manage cost is the rollout of the new opportunity they have branded as MDLIVE. This tool provides employees the opportunity to have access to a doctor through virtual doctor visits 24/7 including nights, weekends, holidays, or while traveling. The care provided through this new delivery methodology is from doctors who are U.S. board certified and state licensed. To learn more or to schedule a virtual doctor visit, log onto the Priority Health website at priorityhealth.com, log in to your user account, and then click on the MDLIVE link.

✔ One of our process improvement efforts through Human Resources is to improve the timing of communications with our retirees as they leave the university. As we strive to improve the timing of these communications in relation to an employee’s retirement date,
please consider doing the retirement Personnel Action Form (PAF) as soon as you know an employee is retiring. This will allow a more seamless transition for the retiree and improved communications as we help employees transition from the university to the next stage in life. Thank you for your consideration!

✓ With winter now officially behind us I want to **publicly thank our many employees in the Physical Plant** whose jobs become more challenging during the winter months. I want to extend a big thank you to our custodians for all their extra work due to the snow, salt, and sand that tracks into our buildings, as well as our grounds crew for getting up in the middle of the night to be here to plow our sidewalks and parking lots while many of us are still sleeping so we can enjoy the benefits of their work when we come to start our work day. Thank you!

✓ The bill containing the **Swan Annex Project** planning authorization was approved by the Joint Capital Outlay Subcommittee on March 11 and it now moves to the House and Senate for their consideration.

*I am very appreciative all the work by our staff and student employees, 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

Jerry L. Scoby
Vice President for Administration and Finance