Call to Order

President David L. Eisler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

In Attendance

Amber Balmer, Dan Burcham, Rick Christner, Dave Eisler, Rick Griffin, Karen Obermier, David Pilgrim, Miles Postema, Melissa Sprague, Tom Weaver and John Willey.

Dave Eisler provided an introduction and welcomed John Willey, the new Vice President for University Advancement and Marketing. John Willey indicated he looks forward to counseling with each member of the Leadership Council as quickly as possible. He is very excited to be here.

Academic Senate Update – Rick Griffin extended his appreciation for the effectiveness and efficiency of the Academic Senate and the work of the University Curriculum Committee. The Academic Senate passed a resolution allowing them to work with Don Flickinger to create a General Education task force. They hope to have the task force complete by the next meeting. David Pilgrim recommended that someone be involved in this task force who is actively participating in the Diversity efforts/planning on campus, such as a member of the Academic Senate’s Diversity Committee. Dave Eisler said he was impressed with their work on the Academic Policy letter.

Academic Affairs Update – Dan Burcham noted that he has gone through the Academic Program Review process again and said it was the most professional group of meetings he has seen for as long as he has been here. He hopes this process might be emulated elsewhere. The Higher Learning Commission process is at the point where the processes have to go down to the program and professor-specific work. While understanding the challenges at that point, the work will be reduced as we get through fall. Dawg days are going very well. Dave Eisler noted if anyone wishes to come to Dawg Days, join in with Dan. Dan noted that the new student receptions are already overloaded. Regarding international student recruitment, additional emphasis is being made to accommodate the students. Scholarships are increasing drastically. We will see more pressure from the economy; however, in terms of offers, we are up substantially.

AFSCME update – Tom Weaver requested corrections to the 12/3/08 Leadership Council notes. Tom indicated that he understands that funds are tight right now, but they are looking for $28,000 annually to bring people that retire back to work in the summer. It eliminates overtime and the administration has indicated that outside help is a necessity. The contractors cannot
handle some things, so the trades people put out fires. They need the one-time funding to get the retirees in again for the summer. The busy time is coming. They are preparing a dining services reorganization to facilitate the new Rock Café. On the good side, it will keep us at a competitive edge from being privatized. He spoke with the General Counsel’s office and AFSCME representatives will be meeting with them on the 11th. They want to know how the new Rock Café will affect them. Tom indicated they are looking to work together well. They will make concessions, but he doesn’t want it to come back and bite him with an erosion of his people. Regarding Friends of Ferris – he has not received a lot of “no’s,” but a lot of “maybe’s.” Everyone needs to buy tickets and push the process. They will be meeting on the 10th. Although not looking so good now, ticket sales should improve. Auction items are needed.

Student Government Update – Amber Balmer reported the ending total from the food drive was almost 7,000 lbs of food. She noted that amount was bigger than the donation receives from Wolverine. It will supply the food pantry for 3 months. They made it into Points of Pride publication. Miles Postema noted an organization called Second Harvest and asked if Amber would be interested in going down there to talk about the drive. She said yes. The Student Government started a new program called the RSO Tour, which is an outreach program for student government. They will come to a student organization and talk about student government. They already have 2 RSO’s scheduled. The Big Event is happening again this year. Amber introduced Clare Gould, Vice President and Chair of the Community Service project. Last year teams of students went to 28 houses in the community doing odd jobs. They are planning on doing 50 houses this year. The WILL conference planning is coming along. It is scheduled for Thursday, March 26. It will be at the Holiday Inn, and Kaci Kegler is one of the speakers. This year’s theme is “Changing from College Life to Professional during Economic Hardship.” For the Higher Learning Commission self-study, Student Government participated in the discussion and provided input. They are looking for donations for the Readership Program again. They had to cut circulation because the price of newspapers went up. They spend $20,000 for 3 papers: the NY Times, Detroit Free Press, and USA Today. They believe the price of papers will go up again. More people have been getting refunds for their student government fees. Laura Steelhead provided a presentation about the benefits of the Readership Program during an Academic Senate meeting. Dave Eisler noted that Amber has done some skillful work in keeping the Student Government budget under control. In response to an inquiry from John Willey regarding issues with Native American students and the Indian Tuition Waiver, no one had been in contact since the last meeting with students that had issues, and Melissa Sprague noted that she knew a Native American student but they did not have any problems in that area.

Diversity Office Update – David Pilgrim extended his appreciation to Dan Burcham for meeting with Rick Christner to deal with the international student issues. The University Diversity Plan is current and will be placed on the website today. The document is an evolving document. It is flexible. He extended his appreciation to those who provided comments and encouraged all to feel free to continue to do that. He will be providing a report before the Board on Feb. 20. The Diversity Office is the major sponsor of the Vagina Monologues theatrical production, which will be held on Feb. 19 at Williams auditorium. David was filmed for a television show this week in which that production will be the topic. He held two meetings to identify a core value
that might be an umbrella for the University. He ended up with 20 people attending, using a good cross section of campus. The consensus was if we are to emphasize something for the next academic year, that core value should be opportunity. Use less duplication in programming and look at opportunity for some programming to be aligned with that core value. The Jim Crow Traveling Exhibit will be at the Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids this month. This will allow the Grand Rapids Press to highlight the exhibit. David will be giving a lecture there on March 4. He is working with the Higher Learning Commission group on their diversity section. The First Lady’s Attic’s Grand Opening is Feb. 12 from 11am to 1 pm; the Diversity Office will pay for a student to work there from 1-5 pm. He extended his appreciation to the welders and to Dan Burcham for their assistance. The Martin Luther King weekend activities were a big success. He encouraged the council to extend their thanks to the students from the Office of Multicultural Student Services (OMSS) if you can. The Diversity Office funded the Soul Food Dinner – they had over 200 in attendance. Dave Eisler notes that it was great food. David noted that almost all of the events for the OMSS were well attended. David provided an idea for Amber Balmer: Take a Student Government Leader to Work Day – a good mentoring opportunity.

Birkam Health Center Update – Melissa Sprague indicated they are seeing a little more gastrointestinal cases, but not many. They have had their first flu case, but not many of those cases either.

Administration and Finance Update – Rick Christner noted that the work plans are underway for the Rock employees; the dining services people are working on that. Regarding projects – they are moving ahead with the Rock Café project during Spring Break; they expect it to be open in August. They are working on the green space development south of the Rock; they plan to take to the Trustees on Feb. 20 the development of the East Campus Apartments. They are working on the exact configuration. They have had the gmail conversion for students, which replaced the Imail system. It went quite well. Warren Hills and Mike Cairns are working on the next Summer University, with the date expected to be early June.

University Advancement and Marketing Update – John Willey noted that fund raising right now reflects the strain in the economy. Annual fundraising is down around 17%; initiatives are underway to follow up so we can move ahead. He extended his concern with staff and reaction to the media. He noted that great things can happen in unlikely circumstances, and there are tremendous opportunities out there. We will continue to move forward in expanding our overall funding base. Whatever happens with the economy we need to capitalize on our external base. Regarding our comprehensive campaign – we don’t know what the feasibility is right now. We are still looking at things. We are quietly building common cause with individuals. We need to build an expanded case for FSU, a public appreciation for us and where we are going. We need to listen to people, asking what do you want for a University that will be helpful to the community, for the future. We are trying to understand what others’ dreams are and how we can capture that here. We at the same time will shape our reputation, based on authentic issues from the past. A vision for what a University for Michigan in the 21st Century would be, what it would look like. The 125th celebration of heritage is approaching. Many things will converge. He will be able to speak more specifically to this in the next 60 days. Right now they need to
address immediate fiscal objectives, at the same time, shaping the pace of what will happen in the future.

David Pilgrim noted that when he is traveling he is very cognizant that he is there for Ferris. He doesn’t know if we have a mechanism in place that talks to people about when they are out in other areas, how do they represent the University? Is there intentionality? In Advancement and Marketing – is there a communication in place where we are represented all the time around the country/world? Who is where today talking on behalf of the University? David also noted that we are going to build some new facilities and we don’t take naming opportunities. He has not heard one suggestion on possible naming opportunities for new buildings or areas. John Willey indicated that we need to look forward to private generosity. The scale of what is permitted is enormous. He suggested that instead of all going to media training or message training workshops, possibly the best way may be, in the process that will unfold around the 125th Anniversary, discuss what should be the accomplishments of each area. Out of that discussion, (which allows us to celebrate student opportunity here) it will provide us sustainable and natural messages that people will feel great about. They will get into words that people are really comfortable within the institution. Then they would be more comfortable taking those outside. Then marketing would be a resource, not an instructor.

Tom Weaver indicated that we need to be resilient to changes in policies. The opportunity to be able to build a personal agreement with the community people – we can take small steps with the community itself. It will reinforce who we are now and in the future.

Dan Burcham noted that we are in a better place than we were. We have moved away from individual program marketing and moved toward image marketing. Also now, core values are driven down to program and professor level, and it works. Many things we can do need to be done at a level where the person doing it has the specificity to speak about it.

Governmental Relations and General Counsel Update – Miles Postema extended his appreciation to Tom Weaver for addressing the Friends of Ferris event. As an FYI, he noted that this is the political action committee that supports legislators that support the University. They raise about $30,000 with this event. We are in the top 100 in PAC fund raising. This is our 20th Anniversary. Tom Weaver is set up for auction to do harness racing. Tickets are $50; Tom Weaver encouraged all the ask people for things – tickets, money, auction items, etc. The Legislative luncheon is tentatively set for March 31; President Eisler appeared at the Rockford Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Shibler, President of the school district, asked whether President Eisler would be a keynote speaker. He appeared on the same day as the day they had an issue with Wolverine. President Eisler complimented Rockford on their programs and complimented Dr. Shibler in an exemplary way. He highlighted good things that were going on; he provided a message of hope when a lot of things did not look hopeful; and they appreciated him for doing that. Miles extended his appreciation to the Student Government for their efforts on the Pancakes with the President event. He noted two things from that night – the night shift employees come in there to eat, so they get to see them; and you do see how much diversity we have in our student body during this event. Amber Balmer indicated they want to encourage more faculty to participate. Regarding the 125th anniversary event – Miles is co-chair of the
event. They are planning a number of events, focusing on things that we can do well. On Founders’ Day – there will be a symposium and community dinner; they will invite former FSU Presidents to speak of the past and the future; and they are preparing a book featuring FSU over the last 125 years and looking toward the future. Miles is planning a reception for Michelle McManus when she runs for Secretary of State. We will have a fundraiser for her in March. He is also looking to raise $10,000 in the Big Rapids area to donate to her campaign. Representative Darwin Booher is on his last two years of his service as Representative; he will be running for the Senate. We will support him as well.

Dave Eisler extended his appreciation to the Council for meeting and indicated that in his University Wide Notice there will be an analysis of the governor’s State of the State Address.

Adjournment: At 10:03 a.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: Karen K. Obermier