Call to Order

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

In Attendance

Tracy Busch (for Alice Bandstra), Dan Burcham, Dave Eisler, Fritz Erickson, Doug Haneline, Karen Obermier, Miles Postema, Jerry Scoby, Melissa Sprague, Morgan Toms, and John Willey.

Discussion Notes – The discussion notes from February 9, 2011 were reviewed.

Student Government Update – Morgan Toms. Elections were held with Danielle Balmer elected as the new Student Government President. The Big Event was very successful with over 1,500 volunteers. While enjoying continued community support for this event, Student Government Alumni are now returning to help. The Women’s Conference was held this fall with Stephanie Leonardos as the keynote speaker. Danielle Balmer will be working with the Pioneer on having them offer their newspaper on campus.

Nurses Union/Birkam Health Center Update – Melissa Sprague. A newsletter has been started, with the latest month’s issue highlighting over-the-counter medications. An outside group will be coming in to evaluate the Health Center, with the focus likely to be in the area of billing. Many students with viral illness have visited the Health Center recently.

Academic Affairs Update – Fritz Erickson. A small group from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has been on campus for the University’s reaccreditation visit. The level of turnout, engagement and involvement from the colleges, faculty and others has been significant and universally positive. The HLC’s final presentation will be held today at 11:00 a.m. in the Interdisciplinary Resource Center (IRC). The entire campus community is due a thank you for their efforts and accomplishments.

Student Affairs Update – Dan Burcham. Thanks to Morgan and Danielle of Student Government for their flexibility in putting together a student group meeting with the HLC team. Enrollment is looking very strong with 686 admits ahead of last year; for sign up (continuing) students for the fall, we are up 200 students; and orientation is running about 400 students ahead also. The Dawg Day Team won the Distinguished Team Award. There is also a special award going to the 125th Anniversary Committee. The recognition event is April 27 at 3:00 p.m. A luncheon is held in May each year for the individual awards.

Governmental Relations and General Counsel Update – Miles Postema. The Friends of Ferris event in February was successful, raising $22,230,000 with approximately 260 attendees. Friends of Ferris raised considerable funds; they made a deep impact; and they helped with the Pharmacy
space project in Grand Rapids. The Legislative Luncheon was well attended with 30-40 legislators and the same amount of assistants and other officials from Lansing, as well as over 50 University, community and business leaders from Big Rapids. Ron Snead did a nice job standing in for the President. People were more engaged; we showcased Criminal Justice, Pharmacy, Digital Animation and Game Design, and Kendall College. It was a great event, even with the Capital filled with protestors. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Nontenure Track Faculty Organization Update – Tracy Busch – Alice Bandstra is retiring after well over 20 years at Ferris. Negotiations have been going on for three months and they are still on the boilerplate items. The FNTFO feels stalled and feels the part-time temporary definition does not apply to the vast majority of the members. One member’s job definition is listed as “temporary,” and her bank is foreclosing on her house because they do not accept the job as a “serious” job, even though she has been here 16 years. The number one issue is job security. Health insurance is another issue, and there are a couple of people with serious health care issues. They delayed their treatments because there is no health insurance and no sick leave pay. One individual delayed their cancer treatment for several months until the semester was done, jeopardizing her own health. The FNTFO would like to get these items addressed as quickly as possible.

University Advancement and Marketing – John Willey. Ferris is growing in terms of its public positioning and strengths. Much of the effort in this area has been driven very intentionally and aggressively. We have had possibly the most aggressive advertising component on TV than any other University in any state in the last decade. It is done with the idea to convert the understanding that Michigan needs to be rescaled, rebuilt and reanimated. Ferris is an affirmative aggressive advocate of our new Michigan. The ad that shows up in 30 seconds began sometime in the middle of November; it had over 12 million possible saturations, reflecting over 3 million Michiganders. We have also articulated things with billboards around the state. They are not necessarily targeted to students; they are things that are conditioning the public. There were only 18 people from the UP who notified us they were upset with the mitten ad. We are changing public attitudes in a major way. On a public level, education is going to be in a bad slot. If we are going to advance the opportunity of the University, it will have to come from independent sources. We are trying to build our resources through contributive gifts.

Morgan Toms indicated she has heard from several students a concern about the new billboard campaign. They are embarrassed that words are misspelled within other words. President Eisler noted any public messages placed by the University are put through an assessment process as to what is the effectiveness of the message and what markets does it reach.

Academic Senate Update – Doug Haneline. The Academic Senate will hold their last meeting of the year on April 26. At the 10:00 hour they will conclude the last business of the year. At the 11:00 hour they will hold their elections. The activities for the year had two themes: 1) To give good and timely advice, and 2) to reach out to invite people to the meetings. Our committees are 100% filled. The Academic Senate has reached out by opening the floor of their meetings to others, and by establishing that a member of the Student Government attends Senate meetings and reports to them, while members of the Executive Committee take turns attending the Student Government meetings. There is some business to finish on April 26, but overall they have done
their homework. The Senate did endorse the general education outcomes. They met yesterday with the team from the HLC. They are going to be receiving the recommendations from the core review team regarding the structure of Academic Affairs, sometime after May 15. The Senate will need to have a special meeting in May so the core review team’s recommendations can be presented to the Provost. The main thing on the Senate’s plate has to do with various reviews. In the curriculum review process, one issue is trying to grasp how many people should be in an online class and how to make that decision. This issue will be presented to the Senate at their retreat in August.

Administration and Finance Update – Jerry Scoby. The Energy Task Force report will be issued in the next few days. The Auxiliary Enterprises Associate Vice Presidential search is well underway. It has been narrowed to eight candidates. On campus interviews will be held in the month of May. Work continues in trying to fill positions vacated by the Early Retirement Incentive Program. Two areas hit very hard were the Physical Plant and Information Technology. We are looking to put one position into energy conservation, to help us be better stewards of energy and of financial resources as well. While it is good to hear the enrollment numbers, the room sign-ups for East Campus Suites is soft. Because of this, we are dropping the price $500 from what the planned price was for next year, and adding some targeted marketing. Changes are being made to parking for the fall. Parking by Hallisy will be turned into residence hall parking. The lot behind Masselink and Carlisle halls will be closed. More parking will be added where Pennock Hall was.

President’s Update – Dave Eisler. The Employee Service Awards will be held Wednesday, April 26 at 3 p.m. in Rankin Center. We have had success in terms of raising funds for the Federal Building in Grand Rapids. We have received notification of a gift of $200,000.00 from the Grand Rapids Foundation. We also received news that the Steelcase Foundation is giving us $200,000.00 for the Federal Building. Grand Rapids is the second highest rated in philanthropic giving in the country. Monday, May 2 is Pancakes with the President. Everyone is invited to attend. The Federal Government has become a far more important funder of our students. It appears the Pell Grant has survived. A year from now it could be substantially different. It is obvious within government there is not a clear understanding of what a career technical and professional education is, and how it is structured. Additional efforts in Washington will be made to address this. The message from the Governor regarding the 15% cuts to Universities versus the smaller cuts to others was basically, “We protected you from the larger cuts by giving you larger cuts.” Also, “When there is more money, we are not the top priority.” Thank you to everyone for the good work you do for our University. Please pass this along to your colleagues as well.

Morgan Toms shared the story of her initial orientation at the Maritime Academy in Traverse City, where she met President Eisler. She extended her appreciation for the outreach and attitude of the President and those in numerous areas of the University throughout her time at Ferris. The open doors and outreach is and has been greatly appreciated.

Adjourned: 9:33 a.m.

Submitted by: Karen K. Obermier