Discussion Notes of a Meeting of the  
Leadership Council  
Wednesday, October 7, 2009  
Timme Center for Student Services

Call to Order

President David L. Eisler called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

In Attendance

Dan Burcham, Dave Eisler, Fritz Erickson, Claire Gould, Don Green, Diana Hepler, Jim Nystrom, Karen Obermier, David Pilgrim, Miles Postema, Jerry Scoby, Melissa Sprague, Allen Sutherby, Tom Weaver and John Willey.

Dave Eisler greeted the group for its first meeting in FY 2009-2010. The council provided individual introductions.

Discussion Notes - the discussion notes from April 8, 2009 were reviewed. No changes were noted.

Student Affairs Update - Dan Burcham distributed a document explaining the expansion of the Great Lakes Scholarship. We are going outside of the original states. We have many ties in Florida. Dave Eisler noted that one of the reasons we need to do this is because Michigan’s population continues to decline; we have the highest out-migration in the country; for every truck that comes into Michigan, two leave. They take their children with them. We are looking at going to other states to get their students to come to Ferris.

A document showing billboards around the Chicago area was distributed. Dan Burcham reported on the extensive recruitment efforts. Five colleges have embedded an admissions officer to their college. They have added one more person out on the road (into Ohio). They have added three alumni to work for us: Libby Schmidt, Michelle Stearns, and Dana Bissette. The next initiative is with athletics. Two alumni are coming back that may help us in California. Demetrius Wallace and Amber Balmer will likely recruit. Dan reported that we have the best United Way system set up since he has been here. Offices are tied together. The student campaign is going to help us a great deal this year. It will be a tough year. Dave Eisler noted that he sits on the statewide board for Michigan United Ways, and only three or four organizations in the entire state met their goals last year. Our local United Way was one of them. Dan noted that Dawg Days has begun. The Deans are there. They had a very big show on our first Dawg Days with 145 people in attendance.

Birkam Health Center update - Melissa Sprague indicated that Paul Sullivan has been putting updates out to campus. They have had flu cases and H1 cases, and some positive Flu A’s. Last week they saw 46 people with flu-like symptoms. They have seen 18 cases so far this week. The
students are handling it well. Parents are calling. They appear more concerned, but the Health Center cannot talk about their patients. The kits they are giving out include some fever reducers, tissues, mask, instructions on how to take care of themselves, electrolyte replacement packets, disposable thermometers, etc. Most of the professors are handling it well, but some professors are making the students come to class. Flu vaccines – they had the employee flu clinic and still have over 200 doses available for students. Next week the health department will have the H1N1 nasal vaccine, but we don’t know if we will be able to administer it at our health center. Jerry Scoby indicated he noticed more areas are putting out hand sanitizers. Melissa said they are using them extensively at the health center. Dave Eisler said the advice is still to stay at home for a week until, without taking Tylenol, you have no fever for 24 hours. Melissa indicated that one student went home and one nurse was out for two days. It is not bad as long as you do not have an underlying illness.

Administration and Finance update – Jerry Scoby distributed a flyer and reminded the council of the Benefits and Health Expo, scheduled for Wednesday, October 14 in the Dome Room. A number of vendors and benefit partners will be there to share information on benefits available through their companies. If anyone has questions, please contact Human Resources. The new Optometry building is out for bids now; they are due at the end of the month. We are expecting shovels to be in the ground at the end of this month or early next month. The expanded parking lot 5 is now open. The temporary lot on the north side of Allied Health Sciences should be open at any time. The East Campus Apartments project is going nicely. Building O in South Campus is now leveled (that was the one the crane hit). The building on the corner of Ives, south of Damascus, is coming down now. Numerous projects are continuing to move forward. Tom Weaver noted that the new Rock Café is a beautiful building/“eatertainment” place. It was very well done. Jerry Scoby extended his appreciation to the AFSCME employees for their excellent work.

Student Government update – Claire Gould indicated that the Ferris Student Government has come a long way. The Blues and BBQ event raised enough money for student scholarships. They are ready for the campus wide holiday food drive. Last year they gathered 6,000 lbs. of food – they want to do more and hope to have different academic college compete against each other. They are going to ask that when they have events they promote bringing food with them for the food drive. The Student Government is involved with the Big Rapids community on helping with the census – they have a complete count committee. Ferris students count in the Big Rapids area census. They came up with a campaign, “Ferris Students Count Too, Big Rapids is Counting on You.” April 1, 2010 is the census date.

Dave Eisler noted that we are going to lose one congressional seat, but we don’t want to lose two seats because of the census count. The Census is extremely important. Students do count in this community – it doesn’t matter where they are from. We need to get that information out to our students. He extended his appreciation to Claire for her efforts on this.

Claire continued her report, providing information on the Bulldog Bonanza event. They had a huge piece of butcher block paper where students write something they like, or want changed.
There was parking on there; many compliments on the Rock (probably 35 compliments), and notes on skateboarding. They reviewed the comments, and the campus affairs committee will look at the issues. Fritz Erickson extended his congratulations to the Student Government on their representation in the Academic Senate, noting how important it is to hear directly from students.

**Academic Affairs update** - Fritz Erickson provided comments on his initial impressions after three months. “The University is unique – in our academic programs, in what we do, our facilities, etc. One thing that strikes me is the near universal commitment toward the students. It is in every one of the areas represented around the table. I have been told that no matter what job they have here they believe they have a role in educating students, more so than any other University that I have known.” Regarding Washington representation – we started a process to look at how we might be able to increase our federal opportunities. We were with a group lately that worked with us to look at what we have and how it can be packaged to gain more opportunity for funding. Collaboration across units can drive opportunities for funding.

**Ferris Faculty Association update** - Jim Nystrom indicated they had a Board meeting last night. They heard concerns about the State of Michigan and funding, and concerns about health plans. He does not know what the State is going to do in this last month, but the issue with the Promise Grant will hurt morale. As far as an update from the bargaining committee, the administration is sending out notices on the bargaining committee; they are keeping optimism in the process; they do have a “good cop/bad cop” going on in the process. There are concerns about the process, but not at all can be done by next spring. The team is open to meeting dates. Comments came up related to an MEA bargaining conference in town. There was discussion on tenured versus adjunct teaching. Jim noted that while the administration needs some flexibility, quality and quality control is questionable in utilizing adjuncts. For example, Jim has more leeway in working with the students; adjuncts are at the will of the students and administration. The faculty has mentoring in tenure; in the contract you can review them after a certain amount of time. We are here for the students. Sometimes there is a little bit of a difference with adjunct faculty early on. Tom Weaver inquired when the contract expiration is. Jim indicated it is next summer (June 30, 2010). They are monitoring what is happening at other universities. The trend is at zero, but they are maintaining some optimism.

**Clerical Technical Association update** - Allen Sutherby expressed his concern about the economic state we are in. He hopes we retain jobs. He is concerned about the recent activities with the budget going after the K-12 teachers. They are working through some issues.

**UCEL/CPTS update** - Don Green noted that Community College enrollments have swelled over the last year. We are reaching out to our partners with three messages: you still can get the on-campus experience being in Big Rapids; you can enter programs through our associates; you can stay where you are and we can bring programs to you. Dave Eisler noted that through President Obama and the Macomb American Grad Initiative and the American Community College initiative – we apply to both of these and can be an example of both of these. That bill is through the House and the Senate is immersed in health care. Don Green extended his appreciation to those from Student Services and Admissions. Because of the economy we see many individuals
from Michigan Works coming back. The process of Michigan Works puts our staff through hoops. We have great partners across the state. We have new partnerships and many collaborations.

University Advancement and Marketing update - John Willey provided an overview of the marketing approaches currently being used by the University. Discussion included items relative to the soft market; the shifting of environmentals; systematic visual branding; focus on the understanding of opportunity; influencing the environment so we can capture it when it shifts; a program of targeted vigorous annual giving; asking people targeted questions: Will you help us with your leadership? What do you think a university should look like? How would you like to participate in building that? We are determined to identify those individuals that can help us do this in a soft market – building market share. John noted that he went to the Bay City/Midland area with the President. He is asking people, basically, “what do you need to animate your private life and business life?” They will be doing this across the state. They are reshaping the University magazine – it is no longer just about alumni. It will be a University vehicle in talking about the University in ALL of its diversity. They are looking at the University website and how we can break things down and be very intentional.

Jim Nystrom inquired as to our job placement rates. Dan Burcham responded that they have gone down to 97%. Jim noted that he had not seen the number in a while. Dan noted that the national average is 35-40%.

AFSCME update - Tom Weaver reported that the local 1609 continues to do many things. There was a lot of support for Friends of Ferris. He extended his appreciation for bringing back three people who were retired. He noted that it was very helpful that Jerry Scoby provided a report that indicated what jobs were lost here. As the duties get transferred, sit down and be fair about the extra duties. He still believes that voluntary incentive plans should be necessary. People are not leaving now because of their loss in the market. Think about the person that has waited here for a long time and their retirement went south. Concessions have been made.

Public Safety update - Diana Hepler reported that all is going well at Public Safety. They have one new officer that started a few months ago. They are still down two officers, one is on disability and one position has not been approved. Crime is steady and about the same as it is every time this year. Two of their officers, Jim Cook and Mike Chamberlain, took first place in a state-wide shooting competition.

Diversity and Inclusion Office update - David Pilgrim distributed the Fall 2009 Diversity and Inclusion newsletter. Monday at 5:30 pm is the Take Back the Night March. The website is up with the Writing on the Wall Project. The idea is, during October 18-22, to have students paint what hateful things have been said about them/happened to them. Then a ceremonial pulling down of the wall will happen. Career Services did not have a lot of employers come through there when Fritz and David came through there, but he was pleased to say that 30-40 of the students who went to career services, the First Lady’s Attic supplied them with the suits and dresses to wear. There are many good things going on. He noted that there is a report in the newsletter on the TIP
program. We are now talking about millions of dollars bringing students into Ferris. The Battle of the Ballpark event - the Superintendent of the Grand Rapids Public School system is now on board with sending students our way. Each time a student comes to a table, we can let them know about the TIP program; that program is driving a fairly large portion of our enrollment. Felice is doing a good job in Muskegon. Dave Eisler noted the extensive amount of events on the last page of the newsletter.

**Governmental Relations and General Counsel update** – Miles Postema had nothing to report at this time.

**President’s update** – Dave Eisler noted that if you hear a common tone, it is in looking at how we develop resources for the University. State support is now at 27%. There is no single bigger factor than enrollment right now. That is why our actions have to focus on that. 125th anniversary events - all bulldogs are going to be pulled through the parade on Saturday. The State budget: the Legislature did not come through yet - looks like a continuation budget through the end of October. The tie bar is the replacement of the Michigan Promise Grants. Revenue has to be found. Speaker Dillon came out with an idea to reinstate the Promise Grants, but we don’t want to send out a bill to the students. The actual cost is $1.3 million. The Michigan Competitive Grants are mostly need based - they are another $900,000. We are going to do the best we can to help the students. The budget is no different in terms of what the State did in February. Some items are determined by the stimulus funds. The hard part is what is ahead. Once the budget is approved we will have open forums. The real question is, when does the state begin to look at this? We are looking at diminished resources for next year. We are committed to being open. We are in a good fiscal position. If you have a question and you represent a group of people, please come to me.

Dave extended his appreciation to the council for everything they do every day to help students. He extended an invitation to everyone to have lunch with him sometime at the Rock.

Tom Weaver inquired if there was anything that could be reported in the future that we have done/implemented and it has worked. Jerry Scoby will share the information he has with Tom.

**Adjournment**: At 9:55 a.m., the meeting was adjourned.

**Submitted by**: Karen K. Obermier