Discussion Notes of a Meeting of the
Leadership Council
Thursday, December 8, 2011
Timme Center for Student Services

Call to Order

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

In Attendance

Tom Adams, Danielle Balmer, Alice Bandstra, Mike Cairns (for Dan Burcham), Dave Eisler, Don Flickinger (for Fritz Erickson), Don Green, Dorothy Hart, Karen Obermier, David Pilgrim, Miles Postema, Jerry Scoby, Melissa Sprague, Tom Weaver with Terry Pierson, and John Willey.

Discussion Notes – The discussion notes from April 20, 2011 were reviewed. No changes were noted.

Nurses Union/Birkam Health Center Update – Melissa Sprague. A new practice management system and an electronic medical records (EMR) system are being implemented. The practice management system will go live in January 2012, followed by training on the EMR system. The new systems will provide improved statistical data, and in the future students will be able to schedule their own appointments from their laptops or home computers, etc. The health center now has a system of formally assessing learning outcomes with their student workers. Flu vaccines are still available. Patient assessments have started. There have been no major medical issues so far this semester.

Student Government Update – Danielle Balmer. Membership is over 45 members with only one member graduating this semester. Warm Up with a Cup will be held Thursday and Friday from 6 to 11 p.m. $1 per cup proceeds will go to the United Way campaign. Strong relationships continue with the Academic Senate and SPARC, with five members scheduled to attend the SPARC meeting regarding the University Center Visioning Committee. The Finance Committee faces some challenges but is still allocating funds. The 5th Anniversary of The Big Event is scheduled for April 14, 2012. The goal is to reach over 2,000 students. The event is for any Big Rapids resident. Monday night, December 12 from 11 pm to 12:30 am is Pancakes with the President.

AFSCME Update – Tom Weaver. Tom expressed his concern regarding erosion of work and removal of processes within bargaining groups, in addition to a reduction in membership. Tom noted his availability to meet with anyone, as part of the opportunities allowed by the collective bargaining agreement, and encouraged more frequent communication between the union and administration. A request was made to start negotiations in December, but it appears it will not be until February. Tom expressed concern regarding the portrayal of the collective bargaining units by the Governor and current issues being discussed in Lansing relative to a Right To Work state. Suggestions were provided regarding cost cutting on health insurance, including increasing communication to find out where the problems are and continuing efforts on our
health and wellness program. The physical plant’s work order system indicates there are not many work orders out there for carpenters, but campus carpentry work is being done. Tom expressed concern if others are doing the work or the system is not being used and noted the time and the workforce are not in place to make the electronic system successful. If anyone is having difficulties with the electronic system and/or with your work being completed, please let those in the physical plant know.

**Nontenure Track Faculty Organization Update** – Alice Bandstra. Contract negotiations started in February. Tentative agreement has been reached on a fair amount of non-economic issues, including appointments and reappointments, grievance procedures, professional development, academic freedom and responsibilities, performance evaluations, sick leave and bereavement leave. Three big issues remain including health insurance benefits, decisions about non-reappointments being brought to arbitration, and salary increases. Another session is scheduled for December 15, 2011.

**Student Affairs Update** – Mike Cairns. Commencement is approaching, with two ceremonies on December 17 at 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Dawg Days have gone very well. A new student reception is scheduled for December 10 in Detroit. The Student Affairs Diversity Report has been completed. All areas of Student Affairs are engaged in assessment, and there is much excitement about the work being done with student learning assessments.

**Administration and Finance Update** – Jerry Scoby. The current phase is being wrapped up in the Capital Renewal and Deferred Maintenance (CRDM) program. Through our Housing Investment Plan, current focus has been on the halls surrounding the Rock Café. Bus service to and from Grand Rapids has been launched. An additional stop by Kendall College of Art & Design will be tested. Work is being done on the development of a 3-year IT plan for campus. Time is being spent on the University Center project. Challenges include issues related to Westview Dining and the Bookstore. Our 1977 University bus will be replaced with a newer used bus, utilizing one-time funds. Work continues on the Jim Crow Museum and the 7th Floor of 25 Michigan in Grand Rapids. The Federal Building is on schedule for completion in March 2012. Our wellness plan has been put out in the market for bids. Information on this will be provided in the near future.

**Extended and International Operations Update** – Don Green. **Extended Operations:** Tomorrow will be the signing of the agreement with Wayne County Community College District to begin offering courses across the Detroit area and also for the reverse Associate’s degree. This where students can leave the community college earlier and come to Ferris. They get some of the different coursework done, then they can transfer back to get their Associate’s degree. An interesting partnership has developed with Lansing Community College (LCC) and Ferris/Western Michigan University. The partnership is to promote Western and Ferris to students at LCC, which places Ferris and Western ahead of the other universities at the University Center in Lansing. Renovations have started at our Mott Community College location. Next week there are graduation events at both Traverse City and Grand Rapids locations. **Online Learning:** Assessments of our online learning were made last year, and work is being done to bring the national Quality Matters program to campus. A best practices piece out of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning is helping faculty to see what excellent
online instruction looks like from their peers at Ferris. **International Operations:** We currently serve students in 28 states with our online instruction; however, a challenge with this has been with the federal government’s determination of state’s rights on allowing/offering education on other states. We are required to go to every state and determine if we have the right to teach their students, including an evaluation of the cost in some states to do so. We have the largest growth of international students in 11 years. We now have the largest enrollment yet in the Intensive English Program, and we will have 25 more next semester. These students are struggling, but they need our help. We now have domestic students who excel in particular academic programs sitting down with international students in that program to help them understand the vocabulary of their particular majors. The domestic students doing this earn a type of “frequent flyer” miles they can apply toward overseas study. **Entrepreneurship:** An Entrepreneur Institute has been created at Ferris. In addition, a student organization called CEO (the Collegiate Entrepreneur Organization) held 4 days of presentations on entrepreneurship. A traveling presentation is being made to all the colleges on our new international initiatives, Ferris First, the Academic Incubator, the Entrepreneur Institute and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. If you have people in your area, or know of individuals or groups who may be interested or would benefit from this information, please contact Don. Scheduling is flexible. The presentation is one hour, and food will be brought in, or it can be done over a lunch hour.

**Academic Affairs Update** – Don Flickinger. Thank you to everyone involved in the Higher Learning Commission’s accreditation process. Good news is the University received its 10-year approval. The core review process took place last spring. The next step is a review of the recommendations so they can be moved forward for Board approval in March. Dean searches continue. Congratulations to Steve Durst as the new Dean of the College of Pharmacy. A search firm will be assisting the University in the searches for the Deans for the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Allied Health and Engineering Technology. The position announcements have been made both nationally and locally. Michael Cron has announced his resignation so the search for a new Dean of the Michigan College of Optometry will begin soon as well. The search for the Director of Grants has not been successful as of yet. Efforts continue on the search for a coordinator or director of the Transfer Center. The committee formed for Don’s replacement is at the decision-making process. The intent is to have this transition during next semester.

**Governmental Relations and General Counsel Update** – Miles Postema. The next Friends of Ferris Dinner/Auction event is scheduled for Friday, February 24, 2012. The next Legislative Luncheon is scheduled for April 19, 2012. The search for an Equal Opportunity Director is being re-launched.

**Clerical Technical Association Update** – Dorothy Hart. Membership is down from 220+ to around 160, but student enrollment numbers are up. The question has been raised in contract maintenance meetings on who is doing the work. Current members have indicated they are working through lunch hours, working through breaks, etc., but hours for part-time work have increased. Departments have several part-time workers rather than full-time workers, and services are affected. For example, in the library, students express concerns that the same services are not provided for different shifts of part-time employees. Dorothy expressed concern that there is not a constant level of service, and this also applies between departments. She noted the membership numbers need to increase in order to keep up with the increased
enrollment. Dorothy expressed her concern regarding the use of extensive email exchanges rather than face to face communication (ie, the length of time it takes to address issues, the potential for a breakdown in the accuracy of information transferred). She expressed her appreciation for the format of today’s meeting, but inquired as to what is done with the information after these meetings. President Eisler indicated the intent is to have this group’s members share the information they have heard with the members of their own particular group/area.

Diversity and Inclusion Update – David Pilgrim. The Michigan Teen Conference held every spring will now be hosted by Ferris. Central Michigan University hosted this conference for many years. December 15 is the tentative deadline to get your Diversity Reports in. If you need help in finishing your report, please contact David for assistance. The faculty and staff in-service reading is part of the Martin Luther King events held each year. David extended an invited to all to attend, in addition to an invitation to be a reader. This event will be held on January 16, 2012. If you are interested in being a reader, please contact David. Thanks to Jerry Scoby and his staff for their assistance in this project. Thanks to the library staff for their patience throughout the project. The grand opening of the new facility will be April 26, 2012. David encouraged suggestions for future use of the museum as a resource for various groups around the country, even around the world. Think BIG. Grants are currently being written related to the museum. Exploration is being done on a “virtual museum.”

President’s Update – Dave Eisler. The attitude toward higher ed in Lansing is very strained. The biggest issue currently is the bill from the community colleges to provide Bachelor Degree programs. Part of the testimony prepared was regarding what happened in Florida with the same type of legislation. The bill outlawing partner benefits is still being circulated. This appears likely to pass. There is strong discussion on performance funding. There are challenges relative to Pell Grant support, and Ferris has over 50% Pell recipient students. Everyone is invited to attend SPARC meetings. The focus of SPARC is to advise the President about the strategic direction of the University. The Pharmacy space in Grand Rapids is exceptional. We were able to get the same pricing on furnishings as we had for the Optometry building. The dedication was February 3. We have now raised $2 million in support for the Federal Building. It is anticipated we will dedicate the building on the first Tuesday in May.

In reviewing how the Leadership Council is comprised and its purpose, your input is requested in looking at further defining the group and its focus. The pressures on the institution to restrain costs are going to be immense. There are and will be pressures on us to restrain tuition and keep health care costs down. The manner in which these pressures are going to be applied are in student debt. Forums are being held to discuss student debt, but there is an opportunity to focus the Leadership Council meetings on topics such as this. We could also keep the Leadership Council meetings as information-sharing sessions, as we have done in the past. However we cannot do both, or we will do neither well. Karen will call you to determine your schedules and to set up a one-on-one conversation with the President to discuss your ideas on the group.

Adjourned: 9:33 a.m.

Submitted by: Karen K. Obermier