Call to Order

President David L. Eisler called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

In Attendance

Tom Adams, Dan Burcham, Dave Eisler, Fritz Erickson, Karen Obermier, David Pilgrim, Miles Postema, Jerry Scoby, Allen Sutherby, Tom Weaver and John Willey.

Discussion Notes — the discussion notes from October 7, 2009 were reviewed. No changes were noted.

Academic Affairs update — Fritz Erickson. Yesterday the Academic Senate approved the Ed.D. in Community College Leadership. It is our first doctorate that is outside of Pharmacy and Optometry; the first cohort is this summer.

Administration and Finance update — Jerry Scoby. Jerry reported that the construction projects are on schedule and under budget; the Optometry project is moving along nicely. There were some excavation challenges, as this was a former gas station, and there used to be a ravine running through the site. The contractors started pouring concrete last week. With residence halls they have set up four town hall meetings with students, addressing two primary questions: When you get to the point when you decide to live on or off campus, what are the key factors? What are the improvements that you would find to be of most value? They found some common themes – paint with colorful pigment, carpet replacement in lobbies, lobby furniture replacement. Additional discussion included proactive strategies that make it appealing to students to stay on campus; and right sizing our housing stock. The new apartment complex is coming in under budget. During summer/early fall of 2009 the Energy Task Force put together a report with recommendations. The recommendations will be available to campus early next year. A Pedestrian Safety Task Force has been created. The first campus forum is tomorrow from 11-12. The new stop sign by the Pharmacy building was planned and placed in cooperation with the City of Big Rapids and the University. Flashers have also been ordered for some areas. Cramer Circle is now a one-way circle. Additional discussion included timing of the light at the corner of State Street and Perry, and use of the parking lot below the Rock.

General Counsel update — Miles Postema. Miles reported that planning for the Friends of Ferris Dinner/Auction has begun. The date is Feb. 26, 2010. Miles encouraged all to participate in some manner (auction items, tickets, sponsorships). Bargaining is underway for the Ferris Faculty Association. The full teams have met several times. These have been good, open discussions. Three subcommittees have been created (Human Resources, Summer, and
Promotions and Merit). At this point there have been over 20 meetings total for the team. Discussions are positive.

Student Affairs update – Dan Burcham. Dan provided an overview of the fall enrollment numbers. Discussion included challenges to enrollment due to the state’s out-migration; applications are down about 114 for fall while offers are up over 560. Hard work is underway on Dawg Days and daily visits. He reported they are going to free up about 11 parking spaces in lot 37 for campus visitors. The United Way campaign continues. A few last activities remain, but we made our goal. There have been significant donations for food pantries, collecting around 4,000 lbs. of food. Student Government is selling apple cider and hot chocolate; the RSO’s are contributing dollars to the student campaign. Planning is underway for The Big Event with expectations of working with 100 houses this year. There are now 717 students in the TIP program. Dan noted that we have a competitive edge with 46 two-year programs.

Diversity and Inclusion Office update – David Pilgrim. The Diversity and Inclusion Office newsletter, Vol. 1, Issue 2 was distributed for review. The Diversity Planning Committee has one more meeting and then it will be disbanded. He is creating an Inclusion Council that will start working in January. The Wall Project is being led by two students in residential life. There is video about the project on YouTube. Michelle Richardson organized an event with the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan. There are numerous stories of people here on campus who are affected by this. The Diversity reports are due from across campus. All will be posted on the web within the full document. The Globalization Initiative – David extended his appreciation for having an event in the Rock with Lars Rensmann, who was on campus for a colloquium series for globalization. Three to four individuals from Turkey will be coming to Ferris. They will be speaking on campus on February 9th. Naomi Tutu, daughter of Desmond Tutu, is coming to campus on March 2. The Martin Luther King events will be Monday through Thursday in early January.

AFSCME update – Tom Weaver. Tom reported that he met with Steve Stratton to discuss the Other Eligible Adult benefits program. The union will move forward to accept the policy into their bargaining agreement. It was well received within the union. The AFSCME Christmas party is Dec. 21 at Center Ice, 2-4 p.m.

Clerical Technical Association update – Allen Sutherby. Allen is hoping to have some conversations with the union regarding the Other Eligible Adults benefit program. Dave Eisler explained the process for other collective bargaining units to participate in the OEA program and encouraged council members to express their appreciation to members of the Board of Trustees for approving this.

University Advancement and Marketing update – John Willey. John noted that their initiatives are continuing to unfold regarding building market share in a soft economy. He provided information on the new billboards located in Grand Rapids, Lansing, Dowagiac, and Flint. The messages displayed have been crafted to line up with each location. The University magazine has been redesigned – so has the website. The Foundation Benefit – 540 people attended for dinner – the net income was over $90,000 into the Foundation for scholarships and grants. They had a good fall this year. David Pilgrim extended his appreciation for how diversity and
inclusion are used in our marketing efforts and of the idea of focusing on Grand Rapids as the “UN” university. John Willey mentioned the new 30-second ad on TV – it starts out with a string, makes a map of Michigan, goes into cities and trees, etc. It focuses on the need to look at Michigan’s future and rebuilding Michigan – FOR Michigan – for 125 years.

President’s update – Dave Eisler. Dave reported that the next SPARC meeting is this Friday at 3 p.m.; Leonard Johnson will be the next leader of this group. He has been out visiting with the campus about the budget, three open forums have been conducted so far. He distributed and reviewed a document that is being discussed at the forums. Another series of budget forums are scheduled for January. These will include discussion of net assets at the University, which are down about $10 million this year. He will be discussing next steps in the budget and is committed to sharing budget efforts in an open and transparent manner. Because of proactive steps, we are positioned well as compared to other institutions. Dave reviewed the items that will be discussed during the Special Board Meeting on December 19. The issue of Community Colleges offering baccalaureate degrees is still being promoted in the legislature. We will continue to keep an eye on this important proposed legislation. Holiday receptions begin at 3 p.m. on Thursday of this week. Tom Weaver noted there is a committee within AFSCME that is hoping to meet with Jerry Scoby and/or the SPARC members to discuss some budget reduction ideas, including a reduction in hours, look at furlough days, and other possibilities. In addition, they want to encourage work to be done in-house. They do asbestos abatement and noted the savings for the university from this.

Allen Sutherby inquired about the proposal regarding allowing students to carry concealed weapons, and if our own policies can supersede an action such as this. Should this go forward we will most likely not be able to do so.

Adjournment: At 10:00 a.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: Karen K. Obermier