In Attendance:

Dan Burcham
Mike Cron
David Eisler
Fritz Erickson
Claire Gould
Don Green
Rick Griffin
Kim Hancock
Mike Hughes
Michelle Johnston
Ken Kuk
Sheila MacEachron
David Pilgrim
Matt Pinter
Miles Postema
Mike Ryan
Kristen Salomonson
Jerry Scoby
Luzia Tartari
Nate Tymes
John Urbanick
Robert von der Osten
John Willey

Discussion/Action:

Recommended Structure, including Membership, Charge, Timeline, Chair:

- Chair von der Osten presented a recommended membership structure for SPARC. A revised list based on member suggestions will be prepared and distributed for discussion and approval at the October meeting.
- Selection of the Chair was discussed; the President will select and recommend an employee of Ferris to serve as Chair, and then the SPARC membership will vote. If the person is not confirmed, there may be a second vote; if still not confirmed, the President will seek a different candidate.

  **Vote:** The former SPARC Chair will act as mentor for the new Chair rather than appointing a vice chair. **Unanimous**

- A timeline for appointing members and chair will be further discussed at the October meeting.
- The SPARC charge was presented for review; the charge was last modified on 3/29/08.

Budget Discussions:

- President Eisler reviewed the status of the budget, starting with distributing and reviewing information from a copy of the “Opening Statement – Our Budget and Our Future” from the February 18, 2009 budget forum and the “Budget Reduction Guide – SPARC Priorities with Open Budget Forums Review” dated May 4, 2009. The President shared recent budget reduction numbers; the current year state budget situation, Promise Grant and possibilities for an executive order, including distributing “State budget deal may unravel” from the Detroit News; an update on the stimulus dollars for Michigan; and implications for Ferris.
- In the December SPARC meeting, it is proposed that there will be discussions on how to position Ferris and what are opportunities for online in this economy; how to determine locations, curriculum and technology requirements for online classes; and if our online policies and procedures help or hurt us.
Retention Initiative:
- This initiative will guide Ferris to take the steps necessary to improve retention. Retention is the responsibility of the whole University – not one specific office. Ferris already has many programs started to assist retention – SLA, FSUS, tutoring center, etc.
- Chair von der Osten requested that SPARC members identify some starting points for the initiative in small table discussions by identifying principle processes and factors for retention strategies and key things to look at in developing a retention plan.
- The list of processes and factors:

  Retention Initiative
  Draft from group work

Processes
- Establishing research data on why, when losing students.
- Collaborative across divisions/colleges.
- Exit interviews/ Call back/demographic analysis of those leaving.
- Where are current/past reports of retention efforts? Consolidate reports.
  - What worked and didn’t?
- Benchmark success stories and adapt where possible
- Track students’ progress from beginning – program level; mentoring program rather than advising

Factors
- Placement – relationship/match between student and program.
- Redouble/review efforts in advising – where, how, what is need?
- Need-based scholarship - need to resolve cost issues – textbook cost
- “Culturation” – student misunderstanding of value of education or educational costs
- What does retention mean? Continuation with other options (online, etc)
- Contracts with students
- Change advising with online model availability to students
- Advising Center – “homework table” – work smarter rather than harder – more effective interactions
- Timetable – “flow thru” issues – promise student to complete degree in 4 years
- Curriculum relevance – relevant to needs of today
- Prereq courses – build track record
- Ease and acceptance of transfer classes – perception of being well treated (Int’l students, also)
- Build better relationships between hall directors, RAs, and programs (ex: deliver stressful classes in the dorm)
- Students to be more engaged and bonded at the University and its activities – feel identity
- Extensive student involvement in retention process.
- Link fin aid with SLA, if gpa drops
- Match student info with right orientation (ex: pre-pharm doesn’t like science; criminal background can’t consider at certain positions)
- Do we treat students as well as we think we do??
- Allocate more money for student employment

Next meeting date:
The next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2:30-4:30pm in Founders’ Room.

Adjourned 4:40pm
Submitted by Elaine R. Kamptner