In Attendance:
Cathy Archer          Jim Jones
Dan Burcham           Kristen Motz
Bob Eastley           Matt Pinter
David Eisler          Miles Postema
Fritz Erickson        Jerry Scoby
Don Green             Michele Stone
Kim Hancock           John Urbanick
Leonard Johnson       Robert von der Osten
Michelle Johnston     Leroy Wright

Guests:
Mike Bouthillier, Mike Cairns, Deb Cox, Rick Griffin, Susan Hastings-Bishop, Cindy Horn,
Fernando Labra, Nancy Lashaway-Bokina, Carol Quigley, Todd Sanislav, Mark Schuelke,
Robbie Teahen, Shelly VandePanne, Allie Witucki

Action:
1. November Meeting Summary
   SPARC members reviewed and approved the minutes of the November 9, 2010 meeting.

Topic: Student Engagement

2. What do we mean by student engagement?
   Chair Johnson distributed a one page summary on student engagement, including the
   Chickering and Gamson (1987) proposed seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education, all of which are related to student engagement. They are:
   1) Student/faculty contact
   2) Cooperation among students
   3) Active learning
   4) Prompt feedback
   5) Emphasizing time on task
   6) Communicating high expectations
   7) Respecting diversity

3. What are we doing to promote student engagement in the formal curriculum? (PEP, Internships, Academic Service Learning, etc.)
   Rick Griffin shared the Political Engagement Project (PEP) Annual Report for 2009-10. During Fall 2009 and Spring 2010, 30 faculty members offered 62 PEP course sections that enrolled more than 1,500 students; this represented 5 colleges and 24 degree programs to enrich both the classroom and the co-curriculum. He then reported on several events in which PEP has students involved. He believes the key to success has
been the University-wide participation and awesome speakers for special events. Administrative support has been very good; more resources are always welcome and will be necessary to continue the project. Dr. Griffin would like to see all courses inject a piece of political engagement, although some professors will not feel able to add more content. There was a suggestion to add a workshop through the Faculty Center on ways to add engagement to classes. There was a caution to return to data, specifically NSSE data; simply doing things we find engaging do not always translate to student engagement or increase graduation rates. Students who are attending class are more engaged than those who do not attend.

Mischelle Stone informed the group of the Pay it Forward Grants from Michigan Campus Compact in which students learn to engage in acts of philanthropy and service learning projects. CJ students received a $50,000 grant; they actually determine criteria, review applications and dispense the funds. Susan Hastings-Bishop shared that recreational leadership courses will also be receiving a student-initiated Pay-it-Forward grant this spring for fishing resources, community gardening, fitness and wellness. The Dental Hygiene program is very involved in service learning; all students are expected to participate in providing free services as they see more than 100 children during a specific event, using the Pay-it-Forward grant. Second year students volunteer during Spring Break on an international trip to treat patients with dentists. As a student, Cindy Horn received this grant. She was pleased to report that Ferris has become much more helpful to students who are writing grants. It was mentioned that a new Grants Office could be a good resource for these students.

Many faculty members in Arts & Sciences have research projects in which students assist in the research, providing learning outside the classroom. In College of Business, students have a final poster presentation during the Commencement reception; classmates and families elevate the level of energy and effort. Internships are a way to grow engagement; many programs have one (or more) internship requirement(s). According to surveys, students want internships and enjoy making actual work connections during internships. Another way to engage new students would be to pair each with a Ferris employee during their first week. Providing more jobs on campus for students would also get them involved more in the University and provide a deeper connection to Ferris.

4. What are we doing to engage students in the co-curriculum? (FSUS, First-Year Experience, Volunteer Center, Org Sync, etc.)
Cindy Horn shared that University Recreation is one of the largest student employers on campus and makes it a point to engage their student workers in many ways. They have conversations during training regarding leadership and the fact that employment is a complement to the academic experience. Students receive continual feedback relating to workplace, academic success and how it relates to future employment.

Allie Witucki and Mark Schuelke presented OrgSync (a co-curricular transcript and Registered Student Organization management software system) and its functions. This software has been well received by our students (more than 8,000 users including alumni) as it tracks volunteer hours, memberships in RSOs, campus employment and learning outcomes. It is also used as a social network; RSOs use this as a recruitment tool. Many students prefer to receive information on the organizations before attending, so they can “ease into” the group. Targeted messages/surveys can be sent through OrgSync; in fact, overnight 200 responses were received to a recent survey. It is
possible to have a portal for each academic program, providing a unique opportunity to connect and communicate with specific students.

Shelly VandePanne stated that the FSUS 100 class encourages students to get engaged in campus history, life and events. Even students who really don't want to get involved are later admitting that they enjoyed the events and would not have attended if not “forced” to do so. The FSUS engagement is wonderful and needs to be carried throughout the curriculum. The engagement is not only providing a connection between the student and the University, but translates into a life-changing experience. It would be interesting to survey the same students as seniors to see if they continued to attend events through their University life and if the experience has made a difference.

Leroy Wright gave information on the First Year Experience in residence halls, which offers a sense of belonging to new students. It also helps them to develop relationships in a positive way and develop academic confidence. They build a core group of friends in this living-learning experience, learn leadership skills and how to communicate effectively. There was discussion regarding if the program could be expanded – maybe bring students to campus before all the upperclasspersons arrived to make connections.

Everyone leaves Ferris with experiences that connect them; we need to make sure these are good experiences and include encounters with the community, businesses, agencies, etc. There is a place for general ed in this discussion; how do we deliver on engagement where it has relevance?

Dan Burcham remarked on the unique quality of students, each one dealing with a complex set of life situations and change. As Chickering stated, each individual is different and everyone reacts to things differently. The first 42 days makes an important connection. There could be a value in making FSUS an intense one week class to begin that critical bond. Initiating the co-curricular transcript early would give individual identity to the new students and acquaint them with many curricular and co-curricular options. It would also assist them in realizing the relevance of all events to their academics, career and resume. We must prepare students to articulate to employers, presenting good communication skills, effectively showing how they engage with others, work together, make good decisions and use skill sets.

Every program has learning outcomes, but we don’t require students to have individual learning outcomes or learning goals. They should be encouraged to be responsible for their outcomes. If students are not engaged in class, they will not be engaged outside of class, and we will lose them.

We tend to focus on the Big Rapids population; how do we apply engagement to other students? Many of the students at sites across the state are adult learners and understand the global world and that there are resources for them; they already have personal learning outcomes. Another important group to engage will be the part-time students. It is important to engage all of these students with those in Big Rapids to provide an intergenerational community of learners. There could be a way to market to students by informing that they will interact in a meaningful way.
5. **What are some strategies we might initiate/support to better integrate the two?**
   (Two possible models worth consideration are “Interdisciplinary Thematic Units”
   and “Writing Across the Curriculum.”)
   Students need electronic access to grades throughout the semester; not all faculty are
   using FerrisConnect, and there are still some issues with that program. Continuing to
   improve the technology infrastructure and training are important. Connecting curricular
   and co-curricular through general education requirements will be important.

   Chair Johnson provided a model for cross-curricular student engagement using
   Interdisciplinary Thematic Units. Students from many disciplines would be involved in
   one project; example being a Frisbee golf course. The potential to engage a great many
   students with a model such as this is one approach for Ferris.

**Updates**

6. **“Ferris First” (aka “Blue Sky”) - Update**
   Don Green shared an update from the last meeting of the group that will foster
   innovation at Ferris. They received information concerning administrative processes,
   admissions, etc. They began discussions of how to communicate new ideas with each
   other and will be using Mind Master, an online software. The group will meet weekly for
   lunchtime brainstorming sessions, which will be open meetings. If you are interested,
   contact Don so that he can purchase enough licenses for the software. Susan Jones is
   co-chair and is extremely helpful and excited.

7. **Pharmacy in Grand Rapids**
   President Eisler reported that the Michigan legislature recently passed a Capital Outlay
   bill including $6.6 million for the pharmacy building project in Grand Rapids.

8. **Review of Academic Organization**
   Provost Erickson distributed a handout that he will present to the Academic Senate this
   evening regarding reviewing our academic organization. Developing a process to
   identify a core review team, their charge and outcome will be part of the discussion. All
   are invited to attend.

**Closing / Next meeting date:**
   Chair Johnson thanked members for their participation.
   The next meeting will be January 18, 2011, 3-5pm in WCCC.

Adjourned 4:45pm
Submitted by Elaine R. Kamptner