Section 1:

Executive Summary
Objectives and Methodology

Brailsford & Dunavey was retained by Ferris State University in the Summer of 2011 to conduct visioning and market analysis for a new University Center.

B&D’s scope of work included strategic analysis, focus groups, and an on-line survey sent to students, faculty/staff, and community members from Big Rapids and the surrounding areas. B&D analyzed all of the data from the survey and focus groups, combined with the strategic objectives outlined by the Visioning Committee, and developed the recommendations listed in this section.

Summary of Findings

Strategic Analysis

B&D conducted a Strategic Asset Value (SAV) session with the Visioning Committee to identify strategic project objectives in order to develop the vision for a new University Center. The results of this session can be broken down into four categories.

- **Priority order of Space Needs / Project Concept** – The Visioning Committee stated that the most important objective for a successful University Center will be to serve as a gathering place for students. Comfortable places to meet, relax, study and socialize during weekdays and weekends are critical. In addition, the facility should serve commuter students with a dedicated commuter lounge and a computer lab. The University Center can foster student leadership by providing student organizations with appropriate space to meet and recruit new students. In addition, the facility needs to have the right mix of retail options to appeal to all campus constituencies and foster interaction between faculty/staff, students, and community members.

- **Architectural & Construction Quality** – The University Center will serve as a recruitment tool for incoming students and should be featured as part of the campus tour. As such, the facility should be an architectural showpiece that anchors the campus quad. Architectural and construction quality should meet or exceed the standards set by Ferris Library for Information, Technology, and Education (FLITE), Interdisciplinary Resource Center (IRC) Connector, the Timme Center, and the College of Optometry.

- **Target Markets / Campus Location** – Ferris State University takes pride in the close relationship it maintains with Big Rapids and surrounding communities. As a result, the University Center should serve Ferris students and faculty/staff while including spaces that appeal to the local community as well. The University Center should provide services to the north end of campus while tapping into the flow of students travelling from the south end of campus, through the Quad, and up to the Arts & Sciences Commons. As a result, the current location of the Rankin Center is an appropriate location for the new University Center.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Operating Paradigm / Financial Performance** – A variety of funding sources for the project will need to be explored. These include fund-raising campaigns, speculative revenues from operations and, possibly, the implementation of student fees.

**Focus Group Analysis**

Students and faculty/staff expressed dissatisfaction with the current Rankin Student Center. The facility has a confusing layout, is physically unappealing, and does not provide the right mix of dining and social options to be relevant with the student body. Specifically, students commented that the campus lacks a facility to serve as a social hub for interaction with their peers and faculty/staff, both during the day and on evenings and weekends.

Many believe remodeling the Rankin Student Center is not a viable option, but felt the current facility is in the right location. Participants felt a new facility should be a focal point for the campus and should be built to a level that matches FLITE, Timme Center, and the new College of Optometry building. Students believe the facility will assist the University with recruitment and retention and increase participation in the Ferris State community. Improved dining options on the north end of campus, specifically a food court that works for meal plan and non-meal plan students, coupled with study space, leisure activities and student organization space, will assist in making the facility a successful addition to the campus quad.

**Survey Analysis**

An online survey was sent to Ferris students and faculty/staff, as well as community members from Big Rapids and surrounding areas, during the month of September 2011 to understand their experiences with the current Rankin Student Center, as well as preferences and ideas for a new University Center facility. Several conclusions were drawn from the results:

- Housing (both on and off campus), the Rock Café, and FLITE were the most popular places for studying and spending free time. Students rarely use the Rankin Center for either of these functions.

- When students visited the Rankin Student Center, they were typically visiting the Bookstore, getting something to eat, or attending a meeting/event.

- Faculty and staff were not frequent users of Rankin Student Center.

- Overall, survey respondents were somewhat ambivalent to Rankin Student Center. No factors/amenities in the current facility were satisfactory to any survey respondents, with the possible exception of the bookstore. All survey respondents indicated a measurable level of dissatisfaction with outdoor amenities, retail options and student organization space.

In addition, all survey respondents were asked to determine how frequently they would use specific spaces inside a new University Center. These spaces, or program elements, were then prioritized based...
upon "Depth of Demand," representing the number of people who will utilize a program element at least twice a week, and "Breadth of Demand," representing the number of people who will utilize a program element even if only occasionally. Exhibit 1.1 below displays the prioritization for each program element for all three survey demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee House</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Court</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab and Go/Convenience Store</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Exercise Room</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight and Fitness Area</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Student Lounge</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Study Rooms</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Alley</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games/Informal Recreation</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Lounge/Gathering Area</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater/Auditorium</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy/Print Center</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose Ballroom</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet Study Lounge</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit-Down Restaurant</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exhibit 1.1: Program Element Prioritization – All Demographics*
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision and Recommendations

B&D's recommendations address the major strategic objectives identified by the Visioning Committee. In addition, the focus groups and survey data provide both qualitative and quantitative rationale for the project. The recommendations are as follows:

1) University Center – The Visioning Committee and focus groups highlighted the strong relationship Ferris State University maintains with the surrounding community. As a result, the project should be a University Center that targets Ferris students, faculty/staff, and members of the surrounding community with programs and services tailored to these groups.

2) Location – The present location of the Rankin Student Center is appropriate for the new University Center. The facility will serve as a strong anchor on the northeastern end of the Quad while tapping into the heavy foot traffic generated from students moving between the south end of campus to the Arts and Sciences Commons. In addition, planned demolition of Masselink Hall will provide adequate parking and access for the new facility.

3) Program - The University Center should incorporate the following program elements:
   - Bookstore
   - Coffee house with live performance space
   - Food court with a mixture of national and self-branded concepts
   - Convenience store
   - Social lounge areas
   - Commuter lounge
   - Computer lab
   - Theater (seating for 300 to 600) with live stage and movie screening capabilities
   - Student organization office space
   - Meeting rooms
   - Ballroom / multi-purpose space

Though not a priority, several additional program elements should be considered for incorporation
   - Writing/tutoring center
   - Childcare services
   - Satellite recreation center
   - Administrative offices for the Division of Student Affairs