

Date: October 23, 2002

To: Summer Task Force  
Tom Oldfield, Chair                      Jennifer Hegenauer  
Karen Norman                                Matt Klein  
John Vermeer                                Gina Knight  
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Mitzi Day                                      Dick Hawkins  
Joanne Gerst                                 Susan Starkey

From: Barbara Chapman  
VPAA

Re: Summer Task Force Recommendations

First, let me thank all of you for serving on the Summer Task Force last year, and for the final report that you sent to me this past March. Your hard work and thoughtful responses to the Task Force charge are greatly appreciated. I understand from the cover letter accompanying the report, that your discussions were lively and there remain some differences of opinion among Task Force members, particularly relative to the length and matrix for summer session offerings.

I was pleased that you provided a variety of opportunities for faculty, administrator, and staff input as you carried out your charge. These included distribution of a draft document for review and comment and two university-wide open forums for further input and discussion of the draft document.

The final Task Force report has been shared with the Deans' Council, the Academic Senate, and I also placed it on the VPAA website. I invited comments on the report as I considered the Task Force recommendations. And, prior to finalizing my response, I sought comments/feedback from the Academic Senate at their annual retreat, held in August 2002.

I think that the best way for me to respond to the recommendations is to address each one in turn. My responses are intended to provide guidance and direction for enhancing summer school at Ferris.

### Goals of Summer School

I agree with the Task Force that the goals of FSU's summer school credit offerings are to provide learning opportunities for students and to maximize campus facilities usage during the summer.

Although it is not necessarily one of the major goals of summer school, I think that we should also be cognizant of the fact that summer school teaching provides an opportunity for additional earnings for academic year faculty. This can be a significant factor in faculty recruitment and retention. And finally, a robust summer school will generate revenues for the University.

### Summer School Curriculum

After considerable deliberation and consultation, I have concluded that the best course of action relative to the length of summer session and the matrix for course offerings is to continue what we have been doing. The "norm" for summer courses will continue to be a twelve-week session. Variations, such as nine weeks, six weeks, or other configurations shall require a positive recommendation from the dean and approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee. The designee may well be the Summer School Coordinator, discussed later in the memorandum.

I would, however, encourage the Summer School Coordinator to explore the potential market for courses that would be of interest to high school students, if the start date could be after high schools are no longer in session. This would mean that such courses, targeted for high school students and marketed to these students and their parents, would be nine-week courses, starting in June.

As you recommended, Ferris should identify a list of core courses for summer school that have a track record of achieving critical enrollment numbers. It should be known well in advance that these courses will consistently be offered in the summer, so that students and advisors can count on their availability.

The Task Force rightly pointed out that the importance of schedule coordination within and among colleges is critical to increasing summer school enrollments. The Summer School Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating and ensuring schedule coordination.

### Summer School Marketing

The student market for summer session has traditionally been FSU students desiring to accelerate or needing remediation. Serving these two student groups will continue to be important.

In the past we have not marketed summer session to currently enrolled students, their advisors, or their parents. We have not developed or executed a summer school marketing plan. Marketing summer school to current FSU students as well as to other student markets is a priority.

There are several other potential student markets for summer school enrollment. One market consists of Big Rapids area students who attend other universities during the academic year and return home for the summer. Another potential student market is Big Rapids area high school seniors and spring graduates who might enroll in basic university and general education courses that meet Ferris requirements or that will easily transfer to other universities. A third very promising group for expanded summer offerings and enrollments (on-line, compressed sessions on site, and mixed-delivery) is comprised of elementary and secondary teachers.

Exploration of each of these potential student markets, as well as others that might be identified, should be implemented right away. If any of these markets appear promising, courses should be identified and a marketing plan should be developed and implemented. This will be one of the responsibilities to be carried out by the Summer School Coordinator or his/her designee. The Task Force report included a number of helpful recommendations for marketing forums/strategies.

### Position of Summer School Coordinator within the Office of Academic Affairs

Until such time as an additional position and funding are available, Summer School Coordination will need to be assigned to a current staff member in the VPAA's office. I have asked Associate VPAA Tom Oldfield to assume this responsibility. He will provide leadership for summer school coordination, planning, marketing, and outcomes reports. He will seek assistance from other administrators and staff as necessary.

I have urged Dr. Oldfield to work closely with the Summer Session Review Committee that is specified in the FSU-FFA Agreement and, if he determines that additional input/advice regarding summer school would be helpful, to establish a Summer Session Advisory Group that is somewhat broader in scope and membership than the Summer Session Review Committee.

Strategies for Increasing Summer School Enrollments

The Task Force identified a number of strategies to be explored in consultation with other campus units and/or summer session committees. Such exploration will probably need to be deferred until action has been taken on the other Task Force Recommendations described above.

Once again, thank you for serving on the Summer Task Force. Your report, along with the feedback from those who read it, has been very helpful as we put in place strategies and mechanisms for improving summer school here at Ferris.

- c. Academic Senate
  - Deans' Council
  - Dan Burcham, Vice President for Student Affairs
  - Ronnie Higgs, Assistant VP and Dean of Enrollment Services
  - Shelley Armstrong, Associate VP for University Advancement and Marketing