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## **Summer Task Force Final Report**

Dr. Chapman formed the Summer Task Force in January 2001 to address, in part, the Division of Academic Affairs' planning priority to enhance summer session credit offerings. The members of the Task Force were Karen Norman, John Vermeer, Cheryl Cluchey, Mitzi Day, Joanne Gerst, Dick Hawkins, Jennifer Hegenauer, Matt Klein, Gina Knight, Susan Starkey, Craig Westman, and Tom Oldfield, chair.

The Task Force was charged with developing a strategic plan for the summer session credit offerings. The plan was to include:

- goals and objectives for summer session
- scheduling that would meet FSU and non-FSU student needs and expectations
- identification of student markets
- appropriate summer course offerings
- coordination of course offerings between colleges
- length of summer session
- a marketing plan
- student load and financial aid requirements
- summer session administration and oversight

Additionally, the Task Force also reviewed strategies for offering non-credit programming.

The Task Force received its charge on January 31, 2001. During this meeting, it was decided that the charge would be divided between two subcommittees: a Curriculum Subcommittee and a Marketing Subcommittee. Cheryl Cluchey, Dick Hawkins, Matt Klein, Karen Norman, Tom Oldfield, Craig Westman and John Vermeer, chair, sat on the Curriculum Subcommittee and Mitzi Day, Joanne Gerst, Gina Knight, Tom Oldfield, Susan Starkey and Jennifer Hegenauer, chair sat on the Marketing Subcommittee.

### **Curricular Issues**

The Curriculum Subcommittee was charged with reviewing and recommending plans for scheduling that would meet FSU and non-FSU student needs and expectations, identifying appropriate summer course offerings, coordinating course offerings between colleges and the length of summer session. To assist them in their charge, the subcommittee collected and reviewed data on the number of students enrolled in summer sessions by college, by course and by time of day; the number of summer students off-campus on internship, clinical experience and externship; the number of students enrolled in twelve-week, nine-week, and six-week sessions (both session A and B); the number of

students who transferred summer credits back to Ferris and the types of courses transferred; and summer sessions at other Michigan two- and four-year institutions.

The Curriculum Subcommittee determined that the summer enrollments, both on- and off-campus, have remained relatively stable over the past five years. This may be due to a combination of factors that include the need for students to work in the summer and the limited opportunities for employment in Big Rapids, the cost of staying in Big Rapids for an extra semester, and the low tuition at community colleges. These factors are supported by comments from students in the focus group that was conducted by Kristen Salomonson and Jennifer Hegenauer and by a review of summer courses transferred back to FSU by our students. In the summer of 2000, 266 summer courses were transferred back to Ferris. Of this number 82% of the courses were taken at a community college and 95% of all courses taken were at the 100 and 200 level. The distribution of Ferris students transferring credits back to Ferris in 2000 were:

- Arts and Sciences - 16%
- Allied Health Sciences - 16%
- College of Business - 21%
- College of Education and Human Services - 22%
- College of Pharmacy - 1%
- College of Technology - 24%

There were also similar trends in each of the above categories for 1998 and 1999.

The summer enrollments, both on- and off-campus, for each college were reviewed. The following were the results for summer 2000:

- Arts and Sciences - 10%
- Allied Health - 15%
- Business - 27%
- Education and Human Services - 22%
- Optometry - 1%
- Pharmacy - 4%
- Technology - 17%
- University College - 4%

The subcommittee was not able to determine the number of non-FSU students who took summer courses at FSU.

The subcommittee also reviewed the data comparing students enrolled in summer courses by program. The following programs had over thirty students taking summer courses in FY00 (these numbers include both on- and off-campus enrollments as well as internships and clinical experience):

- Professional Golf Management - 228
- Nursing - 176
- Criminal Justice - 130
- Computer Information Systems - 123
- Business Administration - 117
- Radiography - 96
- Information Systems Management - 94
- Automotive Service Technology - 85
- Plastics Technology - 83
- English Education - 73
- Manufacturing Engineering Technology - 59
- Social Work - 59
- Health Care Systems Administration - 58
- Marketing - 49
- Automotive and Heavy Equipment Management - 47
- Geographic Information - 41
- Pre-Criminal Justice - 40
- Recreation Leadership and Management - 38
- Professional Tennis Management - 34
- Applied Biology - 33
- Pre-Pharmacy - 31
- Accountancy - 31
- Visual Communications - 31
- Human Resource Management - 30

These programs should be reviewed to determine if there is capacity and if in marketing these aggressively we will affect fall and winter enrollments. If there is minimal or no impact on the fall/winter enrollments, then a marketing plan should be developed in conjunction with programmatic marketing initiatives for fall and winter semesters. In addition, over 30 other programs have between ten and thirty students enrolled and should also be considered for a marketing program. Optometry and Pharmacy students are required to be on externships so that remains a static number. It should be noted that increasing the number of FSU students enrolling in summer classes has the potential to decrease enrollments during the fall and winter semesters.

The subcommittee reviewed the profile of students taking summer courses on and off campus, the courses that were taken, and the time of day the courses were taken. Approximately 75% of the summer 2000 enrollment was on campus. Of this number, approximately 25% of the students are on internship/clinical experience/externship. This

has been consistent for the past three years. The courses with the highest enrollments were:

- Arts and Sciences/General Education - 33%
- Education/Criminal Justice - 12%
- Pharmacy - 7%
- Computer Information Systems- 6%
- Information Systems Management - 3%

The times of day with the highest course enrollment were:

- 8:00 a.m. - 10%
- 9:00 a.m. - 9%
- 1:00 p.m. - 9%
- 6:00 p.m. - 8%

Twenty percent of the students were full-time, 35% of the students were enrolled for 6 to 11 credits and 45% of the students were enrolled for fewer than five credits.

Analysis of this information indicates that many students are enrolling in general education courses possibly to accelerate, to “catch up,” or to meet internship program requirements. Students appear to prefer early morning or evening classes and 80% are taking less than a full load. This may be explained by the focus group’s information that students are required to work during the summer to earn money for the following year’s tuition and/or they have no financial aid remaining. It is imperative that course scheduling be coordinated between the colleges offering the majority of courses.

The subcommittee also reviewed the length of summer sessions at the other fourteen state universities and the 28 community colleges. Six of the state universities offer two six-week sessions with a concurrent twelve-week session. Five state universities offer two 7-1/2 week sessions and a concurrent fourteen-week session. The other three state universities offer sessions that are nine weeks or shorter. There is significantly greater variability in the summer session offerings at the community colleges.

As an experiment during the past two years, FSU summer sessions were varied to include: one-week sessions, two six-week sessions, a nine-week session and a twelve-week session. This has allowed for significant flexibility in offering courses, but it has created several problems. These include scheduling courses so that there is not a schedule conflict if a student wanted to take a six-week, a nine-week and a twelve-week, or some combination of these courses. From the student focus group it appears that students prefer something less than a twelve-week session because it allows them time to go home and work and to “recuperate” before the beginning of fall semester.

The committee has also received input from faculty and department heads in the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences. Several programs in the College of Business support the 12-week semester to better meet the needs of their students and

programs. Others in the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences support a nine-week session. The rationale is that it allows for students to have over a month to work after completing the session while it still allows faculty more time to present material. There was also considerable concern about six-week sessions because the pace is too rapid for learning. This format restricts the number of courses that a student can take without being overloaded, and it is difficult to offer an appropriate mix of courses in the compressed schedule matrix required to meet the semester contact hours. However, there is one group of courses that require the six-week format, the yearlong course sequences such as accounting and biology.

After reviewing the format for summer sessions at other Michigan institutions and considering the issues mentioned above, the committee provides the following options framed around a 12-week summer semester:

1. All on-campus courses would be offered in a nine-week session with the opportunity for Extended Learning and FSU-GR to offer courses over the 12-week period. Within the 12-week semester there would be the opportunity for special sessions for targeted audiences, such as one- and two-week sessions for teachers and business people or 12-week courses for students in PGM. Special courses and graduate courses would have start and end dates within the 12-week timeframe. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or her designee must approve any on campus course offered outside the nine-week session.
2. All on-campus courses would be offered in a 12-week semester. Within the 12-week semester there would be the opportunity for special sessions for targeted audiences, such as one- and two-week sessions for teachers and business people. Special courses and graduate courses would have start and end dates within the 12-week timeframe. Year-long course sequences would be allowed to have two six-week sessions with the permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or her designee.
3. On-campus courses could be offered in either of two six-week sessions offered within the 12-week summer semester. Within the 12-week session there would be the opportunity for special sessions for targeted audiences, such as one- and two-week sessions for teachers and business people. Special courses and graduate courses would have start and end dates within the 12-week timeframe.

The option that would meet the needs of most constituents would be the first option; however, this will cause logistical problems in course scheduling for departments and the Registrar's Office staff.

The committee also recommends that a limit for full-time status be determined for summer that follows federal financial aid guidelines.

The subcommittee also considered how financial aid availability impacts student enrollment in summer sessions. The subcommittee learned that financial aid funds are available for one academic year, which would include summer. At FSU, 70% of our students are on financial aid and most of the financial aid is awarded for fall and winter

semesters. Since there are no additional dollars for summer session, the student must decide one year in advance to allocate financial aid dollars for fall, winter and summer. According to the Financial Aid Office, most students don't plan ahead for the next summer. Also, if the student allocates money for summer and then doesn't attend summer school, those dollars would not be available for the coming year. The allocation of financial aid dollars over the entire year reduces the amount of aid available for fall and winter semester. As a consequence, few students are on financial aid in the summer session.

### **Marketing Issues**

The Marketing Subcommittee was charged with conducting a market analysis of summer session needs and developing a marketing plan. To meet the first charge, the subcommittee conducted focus groups of FSU students who had attended summer school either at FSU or at some other institution. The focus group was to be randomly selected students who took classes at FSU during the summer of 2000 or who took classes at another institution and transferred them back to FSU. The response rate, nine students, was extremely low. However, the responses of this group were quite consistent with each other and with the previous survey conducted by Professor Panitz in 1996. The questions and responses were:

#### **Reasons students took courses on the Ferris Campus:**

- lighten their load
- graduate earlier
- already paid for Big Rapids housing in the summer
- didn't want to go to a community college
- shorter time for summer classes
- done in July

#### **Reasons students took courses at another institution:**

- Ferris courses more expensive
- wanted to go home
- no jobs available in Big Rapids

Subcommittee discussions on the marketing plan for summer school focused on target audiences and advertising and promotion. The subcommittee determined that there is little, if any, formal advertising of summer school. The summer session schedule of courses must be better marketed to both current and prospective students. The subcommittee discussed the possibility of identifying target audiences (other than current Ferris students) for advertising campaigns. The rationale for targeting non-FSU students is:

- The enrollments for summer are relatively stable; we have already drawn from that segment

- The non-traditional and continuing education market has not been thoroughly recruited and is a potential market for short-term courses
- If we recruit current students for summer, we may reduce the enrollments for fall and winter semesters

The subcommittee also discussed the following potential strategies for increasing summer enrollments:

- charge in-state tuition for all summer students
- provide a tuition discount for summer students
- modify the student recreation fee/computer fee for summer
- encourage programs to incorporate more summer internships
- educate students on summer financial aid
- distribute a one-page flyer to on-campus students explaining the benefits of attending summer school
- offer FSU general education courses at off-campus sites
- require colleges to work with Extended Learning to identify and expand off-campus graduate and continuing education certificate programs to meet business and industry needs
- expand one-week or other custom schedule summer offerings for teachers
- encourage Optometry and Pharmacy to consider development of on- and off-campus institutes for continuing education opportunities
- schedule one-week academic camps for parents that coincide with one-week sports camps for elementary, intermediate and high school students
- support the Summer Bridging Program

## **SUMMER TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

After review of the pertinent data, the Summer Task Force makes the following recommendations.

### **Goal and Objectives of Summer School**

The goal of FSU Summer School will be to provide additional learning opportunities for students and to better utilize the campus facilities during the summer.

Objectives:

- The summer offerings of credit courses will meet student needs for accelerated or remedial work.
- Credit courses will be offered at times that attract and meet the needs of FSU and non-FSU students.
- Non-credit course offerings will be developed.
- A coordinated marketing plan will be developed for credit and non-credit summer courses.

### **Summer School Curriculum**

- Summer semester would be 12 weeks in length with on-campus courses taught during the first nine weeks of the semester with special sessions for targeted audiences, such as one- or two-week graduate courses for teachers or 12-week sessions for approved courses. Any variation to the nine-week on-campus sessions must be with the permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or her designee. Off-campus courses would also be offered within the 12-week summer session. The Dean of the University Center must approve variations to the 12-week format for off-campus offerings for Extended Learning or the Dean of the College of Professional and Technical Studies.
- Establish a core course offering.
- Establish a new class time matrix for the nine-week session that includes special consideration for morning and evening classes.
- Course scheduling must be coordinated between the colleges.
- Programs should be reviewed for capacity for increased summer enrollments.
- Define full-time status for the accelerated summer session that follows federal financial aid guidelines.

### **Summer School Marketing**

- Promote the start of registration (*for each semester*) via Ferris Channel 7, the Torch, local radio and newspaper. Enrollment Services will provide this information to the University Advancement and Marketing Media Relations office that will coordinate the distribution. Similar promotions should be expanded for off-campus locations.

- These promotions should include registration dates, phone numbers and web address in all communications.
- Include links to information about summer academic and athletic camps, institutes, and special programming in the web schedule content. The completion of this recommendation would be coordinated between Enrollment Services and Extended Learning.

**Create the position of Summer Coordinator within the office of Academic Affairs.**

The responsibilities of this position would include:

- Support the efforts of The University Center for Extended Learning, serving as the liaison between the individual colleges and Extended Learning. In this role as liaison, the coordinator would work with all appropriate colleges and departments to identify needs for both credit and non-credit educational programming that can be scheduled during the summer semester.
- Coordinate the “packaging” of summer cohort programming. Examples of this type of programming can be found in the current Summer Institute for Teachers and other courses scheduled to meet the continuing education needs of teachers. In relation to this activity, develop alternative course scheduling that would make programs more marketable to the adult learner (i.e. one-week institutes, two weekends with time between, seminar formats, etc.).
- Look towards nontraditional markets that include adults, international students, and K-12 students. Provide this information to Extended Learning and support their efforts to meet the needs of the identified market.

In the short-term, this assignment may have to be assumed by a current staff person within the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**Strategies for increasing credit and non-credit summer school enrollments:**

The following strategies should be given consideration by the summer coordinator in consultation with other campus units.

- charge in-state tuition for all summer students
- provide a tuition discount for summer students
- modify the student recreation fee/computer fee for summer
- encourage programs to incorporate more summer internships
- educate students on summer financial aid
- distribute a one-page flyer to on-campus students explaining the benefits of attending summer school
- offer FSU general education courses at off-campus sites
- require colleges to work with Extended Learning to identify and expand off-campus graduate and continuing education certificate programs to meet business and industry needs
- expand one-week summer offerings for teachers
- encourage Optometry and Pharmacy to consider development of on- and off-campus institutes for continuing education opportunities

- schedule one-week academic camps for parents that coincide with one-week sports camps for elementary, intermediate and high school students
- support the Summer Bridging Program