

**Ferris State University
Academic Senate Retreat
August 24, 2010
8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Granger Center, Ferris State University main campus**

Executive Summary*

I.	President Haneline called the retreat to order at 8:35 a.m. He established his theme for the retreat: how can we live up to our roles as Senators in the 24 hours of face-to-face meetings we will have this year?
II.	Attendance: since this is not an action meeting, attendance is not recorded.
III.	President Haneline recognized University President David Eisler who welcomed the Senators and guests. President Eisler addressed several topics:
	A. Managing challenges to the University budget: including forging opportunities for the University within a geographical location with a low economic base, and having fewer experienced people to do the same work as a result of buy-outs
	B. Aligning the activities of SPARC with the administrative plan, and positioning for a new strategic plan next year
	C. Focusing on student success; especially attracting students to the main campus. He reported that the University has hit an all-time record total enrollment, but on-campus enrollment remains relatively flat
	D. Taking the opportunity of three Deans retiring to think about the organization of the University
	E. Building on the momentum of last year to address the curriculum
	There were questions from the floor concerning 6 th year graduation rates and General Education.
	A. Provost Erickson reported that the 6 th graduation rate for the University is 47%.
	B. President Eisler encouraged the Senate to look at how General Education can balance depth and breadth both across the curriculum and within specific programs.
IV.	President Haneline introduced guests for updates on University activities.
	A. Angela Roman, Director of Career Services , directed the Senators to the link to the Professional and Career Leadership Conference scheduled for Sept. 29. She emphasized that the purpose of this conference and her office is to demonstrate how “out of classroom” activities should work with the curriculum
	1. She introduced Student Government President Morgan Toms who described the advertising strategies in place to attract students to the conference.
	2. Allyssa Witucki, Director of Student Leadership and Activities , explained the incentive for students to attend at least two sessions to participate in the “etiquette dinner”.
	3. Several Senators offered comments and concerns.
	B. President Haneline recognized Provost Erickson to brief Senators on activities from the Faculty Center , supporting the student success theme; especially the new Degree Works software which will enable students to monitor their academic progress more actively. Two links to information about initiatives from the Faculty Center were provided.
	1. Several Senators offered comments and concerns.
	C. President Haneline recognized Matt Waggenheim, new chair of the Academic Program Review Council (APRC) . President Haneline reported that the Senate Executive Committee has authorized Chair Waggenheim to proceed with orientation for programs designated for review this year using the proposed revised manual, pending formal Senate adoption of the manual revisions at the Sept. 7 meeting.
	D. President Haneline reported that two additional action items will be on the Sept. 7 agenda:
	1. Appointment of the “Rules” Committee, to monitor the Senate Charter and Policies and

		Procedures, and to recommend revisions, as needed
	2.	Establishment of a Senate Committee Review Task Force
V.	President Haneline introduced SPARC chair Dr. Leonard Johnson . Dr. Johnson directed Senators to two links relevant to the strategic planning process.	
	A.	Dr. Johnson led a conversation about the role of SPARC and issues that Senators would like the Council to address. Several issues surfaced during the robust conversation.
	1.	Attention to the campus facilities
	2.	Defining student “success”
	3.	Online instruction
	4.	Student engagement
	B.	Dr. Johnson committed to providing updates at Senate meetings.
VI.	President Haneline introduced Dr. Fred Heck, chair of the General Education Task Force .	
	A.	The goal for the year is to address Learning Outcomes. Dr. Heck introduced the LEAP philosophy guiding national trends in General Education and directed Senators to two links.
	B.	Dr. Heck led a conversation about the status of General Education review. Several issues surfaced during another robust conversation.
	1.	Linking current outcomes to assessments. Dr. Heck directed Senators to the TracDat software.
	2.	Providing new faculty and new students with information about General Education
	Dr. Heck encouraged Senators to participate in Town Hall meetings more actively.	
	Discussion including encouragement of more integration between academic outcomes and student activity outcomes. Vice President for Student Life Dan Burcham and Associate VP for Student Life Mike Cairns joined the discussion.	
	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Don Flickinger reinforced Dr. Heck’s invitation for active participation by Senators in the General Education review process.	
VII.	President Haneline introduced Dr.’s Christine VonderHaar and Mike Cairns, co-chairs of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Steering Committee .	
	A.	They invited Senators to discuss the summary document linked to the agenda. They explained that this discussion was the first of 34 sessions scheduled to meet with all constituents before the HLC Site Visit in April. Dr. VonderHaar explained the “ground rules” for all of these meetings: participants’ comments will be recorded for a “Reflections” supplement to the full HLC report.
	1.	There was discussion of the process and timetable for the HLC visit.
	2.	Inquiries were made about the potential outcome of the visit.
	B.	Dr. VonderHaar opened the Focus Group session, asking the Senate as a governing body, “How are we doing as an institution?” While there were some specific items identified; in general, Senators seemed unfamiliar with the data-based findings contained in either the summary or the full HLC report.
	C.	Senators were invited to review the summary and to participate in future Focus Group sessions.
VIII.	President Haneline introduced Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Fritz Erickson .	
	A.	Provost Erickson focused on the question, “What is student success?” He provided comparative data about graduation rates, isolating demographics like race and family income as contributing factors.
	B.	He observed that parents define success differently from students. He invited Senators to think about how we measure success in the academy; pointing beyond graduation rates to NSSE data about job satisfaction and alumni engagement. He offered a number of provocative questions and asked Senators to engage in the search for answers. Many Senators contributed their observations.

IX.	President Haneline challenged Senators to participate in formulating goals for the Senate for 2010-2011. He returned to his opening question about how we should use our time together productively.
A.	Several Senators offered observations.
The Retreat adjourned shortly before 4:30 p.m.	

*Summary subject to addition or correction

Sandy Alspach

Secretary