

Discussion Notes of a Meeting of the
Leadership Council
Wednesday, October 19, 2005
Timme Center for Student Services

Call to Order

President David L. Eisler called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

In Attendance

Rob Bowers, Dan Burcham, Roxanne Cullen, Adnan Dakkuri, Rick Duffett, Dave Eisler, Raymond Gant, Don Green, Maria Knirk, Karen Paine, Miles Postema, Mike Ryan, Allen Sutherby, and Tom Weaver.

Discussion Notes – the Discussion Notes from the 9/7/05 meeting were reviewed. No changes were noted.

AFSCME update – Tom Weaver inquired as to the appropriate protocol for addressing his concerns, and how to receive feedback. Dave Eisler responded that this council is for any member to express concerns regarding the entire University and gives the members an opportunity to share whatever they would like. After discussion, it was recommended that Tom follow up on any concerns that are extended to the council with Rick Duffett.

Dave Eisler noted that in response to state reductions, the University is not funding those items that affect our base. Tom Weaver extended his concern regarding the ability to meet future needs for expansion. Dave Eisler responded that renovations are easier to address, and that a steam return line issue needs to be addressed.

Administration & Finance – Rick Duffett reported that they have completed their year-end audit; some projects are underway, such as the studies on facilities and infrastructure; and the Banner project is moving forward. Dave Eisler reported that WebCT has been purchased by Blackboard. We currently use the WebCT campus edition, and he does not know what they will continue to offer.

University Advancement & Marketing – Rick Duffett reported that there is a Pistons basketball event on Nov. 2. He reminded the council of the Nov. 4 Foundation Benefit Dinner (if you need tickets, please contact U A & M). He extended his appreciation to Jeremy Mishler, the students and staff for of all their hard work during Homecoming this year. There is a Ferris Foundation Board meeting this Saturday. In response to an inquiry from Miles Postema, Rick reported that the deadline is this Friday for recognition in the program for Foundation Benefit sponsors. Rick reported that a media plan has been developed that will be shared with the President's Council.

Student Affairs – Dan Burcham reported that this year's Homecoming events were the best we have ever had. He noted seeing a changing culture with few reported incidents of misconduct. President Eisler noted that he received numerous comments on how beautiful the grounds were; that the parade was great; and that the dance floor was full on Friday evening. Mike Ryan reported on a suggestion for next year, that the faculty could march in the parade and gather somewhere at the end. Dave Eisler welcomed this idea. Dan Burcham reminded everyone of Dawg Days. He will be attending a meeting of Chief Student Affairs officers at Northern Michigan University, where the discussion will focus on issues related to suicidal students. He reported that the University now has a room set up in the Birkam Health Center for observation of students with these types of issues. They utilize volunteers, and the plan is to have the student observed until their family arrives by the next day.

Health Care Concerns – Adnan Dakkuri opened discussion regarding any plans the University may have in addressing the bird flu. Mike Ryan reported that the University used to have an infectious disease task force and suggested that they may want to re-activate that task force to address this. Additional suggestions were made regarding health care, including the encouragement and posting of notices regarding hand washing; encouraging an environment of taking time off when you're sick; and planning, if necessary, for an abbreviated winter semester. Rick Duffett reported that we do have a Crisis Management Team at the University that meets on a semi-annual basis and suggested that this team be the one to handle this issue. Mike Ryan suggested that the University could have speakers on campus and utilize our electronic communication systems to provide a slow awareness of issues such as the bird flu, and not wait for the government to step in to advise us.

Tom Weaver reported that a previous issue with an international student has come to light again. It is the same student, taking less than 12 credit hours. He has no money and is not allowed to work. Tom is looking for suggestions on how to deal with this type of situation.

Academic Affairs - Roxanne Cullen reported that they are establishing a new structure for getting the international program going, and they are gathering candidates for the International Student Advisor position. They hosted a tailgate party for international students, and they have a Study Abroad Fair coming up. She reported that the move of this area to UCEL has been successful. They are researching what the international students need. They are reviewing potential architects for the IRC renovation project and are working on their division's website. In response to an inquiry from Tom Weaver, Raymond Gant reported that the University does bring Hispanic students together when they arrive on campus.

Minority Affairs – Raymond Gant reported that the student Hispanic organization is growing rapidly, and there are more demands on his office for presentations at different locations. He reported that the homecoming activities were great – SEMBAA had a tailgate party and toured the Jim Crowe Museum; the free bowling event was a success;

and, they are concluding the activities for Hispanic heritage month. He extended his appreciation to the Ferris Foundation for providing the grant for him to capture the history of black heritage at the University in his book, "Leading Challenge." Copies of the book are available at Barnes and Noble bookstore. Criteria for a scholarship fund are being developed where the proceeds will go from the sale of this book. Mike Ryan provided his observation that the effect of cultural movements do not hit here until decades later, that we don't necessarily learn from the national scene. He suggested that the University may need some type of system ("antennae") out there to get a leg up on things.

Student Government – Maria Knirk reported that homecoming was great, the dance was great, and it was nice to see more non-Greek events this year. Student Government membership is up to 35, the biggest membership ever. The SGFSU retreat is this weekend. Jon Gaskell will take over as the new President of SGFSU in December 2005. They are not selling as many discount cards as they had hoped and may need to pursue other methods to sell them. The students love the Readership Program (newspapers); however, they have not been able to secure long term funding for the program. In response to an inquiry from Dave Eisler, Maria reported that the cost is 35 cents a paper for USA Today and 40 cents a paper for the NY Times. They currently receive 400 papers but would like to increase that number. Adnan Dakkuri suggested a method to increase readership is to have the papers near areas where there is coffee and/or where people are waiting to hear lectures. Maria reported that their technology and communications task force is addressing several grievances, trying to determine the cause of some communications issues.

Ferris Faculty Association – In opening, Mike Ryan offered his assistance and that of Walt Hoeksema, should there be a task force formed to address the bird flue issue. He reported that FFA concerns are usually dealt with during other discussion, but they will have two items coming forward. His concerns included services provided by a faculty member on a 9-month contract; continuing discussion on the international program; ensuring faculty satisfaction on contractual agreements; the concept of buyouts; and keeping trust in an environment with natural growth, but still experiences program closings and buyouts. Tom Weaver noted that contract maintenance is a good venue for trying to resolve issues and maintain trust.

Academic Senate – Adnan Dakkuri reported that as of the November 2005 meeting of the Academic Senate, Dr. Andy Purvis will be represented in the new permanent seat for Grand Rapids.

Clerical Technical Association – Allen Sutherby reported that by the end of this week they should have the collective bargaining agreement's proofreading done and the document signed. He reported that they have eliminated some part-time positions to create full-time positions. Dave Eisler reported that they have converted two positions to contract positions and there is a possibility of a couple more.

FSU-Grand Rapids – Don Green provided information on the West Michigan College and University Presidents' Compact on Diversity group. He noted that the association is fairly weak; they had little on diversity, but they are stepping things up a bit. Don noted that any costs will be paid out of Grand Rapids. Don extended an invitation to the council to attend an interactive presentation on Nov. 2 called Natural Step, conducted by a spokesperson with expertise in greening campuses. It is a co-sponsored event with Aquinas, GRCC and the Grand Rapids Business Group. It will be held from 1-5 pm in the ATC; it is limited to 40 people; and there are 10 spots left. Please e-mail Don if you wish to attend.

Governmental Relations and General Counsel – Miles Postema provided an update on the search for the position of Director of Labor Relations. He reported they are looking at bringing in 3 to 4 candidates on November 14, 16 and/or 18. There will be an open forum where all can attend. The search for the Governmental Relations position will kick off in the next couple of weeks. In response to an inquiry from Mike Ryan, Miles reported that the Friends of Ferris Board will be invited to attend the open forums. Miles reported that regarding the Friends of Ferris, he appreciated the warm welcome he received from the group and noted that they are looking at the creation of second event, possibly a wine tasting. Adnan Dakkuri recommended that any positions that are posted that have a search committee formed include a link on the web page to a list of those serving on the search committee. That would allow others to contact someone on the committee should they have any questions or concerns.

President's update – Dave Eisler reported that the next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on November 11, 2005 in the Multipurpose Room of Kendall College of Art & Design in Grand Rapids. He expressed his concern regarding future utility costs and reported that an energy conservation piece will be issued. He also expressed concern regarding the impact of recent developments on the state's economy. He reported that as of today, we employ 72 people less than 4 years ago, with the largest percentage cut in administration. Tomorrow he is hopeful to get the IRC renovation project through the Capital Outlay Committee. Tonight he will be in Howell for an opening at the MTEC center, and tomorrow he will issue a memo to campus about this year's task forces. The accreditation task force will continue through March, to create a discussion on if we follow AQUIP or the higher learning commission. Our accreditation doesn't happen again until 2010-2011. Mike Ryan extended his concerns regarding AQUIP. Dave Eisler responded that the task force is set up to encourage everyone to provide their input and concerns. He provided an overview of the University's task forces and their progress. He reported that the Ferris Foundation has many campaigns underway, including the Jim Crowe Museum and need-based scholarships. Mike Ryan reported that their annual appeal for union-based scholarships now includes the Jim Crowe Museum. Dave extended his appreciation to the Arts & Lectures department for bringing in performer Tommy Emmanuel. He provided numerous examples of the increase in student engagement.

At 10:05 a.m., the meeting adjourned.
Submitted by: Karen K. Paine