

August 22, 2008

Dear faculty, staff and students,

Welcome to the start of a new academic year! I am honored to be joining you as the eleventh president of this great university. My wife, Cheri and I, are both thrilled to be here and are looking forward to getting to know more of the people who make up ISU.

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet some of you at last week's kick-off picnic. I would like to thank Provost Jack Maynard and his committee for organizing this great start to the school year. It was a lot of fun to see the Commons packed with so many people, including some of our athletic teams, the Sparkettes and the Marching Sycamores.

I also enjoyed meeting some of our new students and their parents during move-in weekend. I know that many people have worked tirelessly to prepare for the students moving into the residence halls, the distribution of laptops, the orientation events including Sunday night's opening convocation and of course, the official start of the semester and classes. Thank you for your efforts in providing the best experience possible to our students. Helping our students succeed is the most important job we all have. I would like to pay a special thanks to ISU Alumnus Jim Lewis, President of the Disney Vacation Club, who gave an inspirational address at Sunday's new student convocation. I would also like to thank the faculty who dedicated a portion of their weekend to welcoming the class of 2012.

I am pleased to be participating in the various opening meetings for our Colleges. In addition to being able to meet the faculty and staff in these areas, I have enjoyed being able to physically visit the facilities in which these programs are housed. I look forward to learning more about our program offerings as I meet with each dean in the coming weeks.

This week, I was able to meet with both the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Support Staff Council Officers. Both of these units play an important role in our governance structure, and I am looking forward to working with them.

I have also started meeting with state leaders and legislators. There continues to be concern about the level of appropriation per student that Indiana State University receives which remains higher than other state institutions. This high per capita funding is made worse by declining enrollments. Enrollment and retention remain our top priority, and while we are optimistic about the official numbers of entering freshmen this fall, there is work to be done. I have asked Provost Maynard and Vice President John Beacon to convene a special task force to develop five to ten strategies which we could quickly implement that will directly impact enrollment and retention for fall 2009. If you have any ideas for this group, please send them to Jack and/or John as soon as possible. Improving enrollment and retention is part of everyone's responsibilities.

We will also begin a comprehensive planning effort this fall to build upon the work already completed and integrate planning across the university. This process should be launched early this fall and will be an important part of our preparations for our NCA accreditation.

In addition, I plan to move quickly to address two areas of primary concern – affirmative action and diversity. I intend to separate these functions into two offices with a director of affirmative action and a separate director of diversity. The affirmative action director will report to my office through the legal affairs area where assistance in the area of compliance will be readily available. I appreciate the quick (and positive) response of the Faculty Senate Administrative Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on this issue. We will be posting this position for an internal search today.

We also will be launching a national search for the director of diversity position which will also report to my office. This position will design, develop and manage programs with respect to diversity; develop key relationships with internal and external constituencies; collaborate with faculty and university departments to develop programs and support grant writing activity; and provide advice and recommendations to the administration on long-term strategies to enhance diversity across campus and to help develop an environment of understanding and appreciation for a diverse world. It should be noted that diversity will be defined in a broad manner to include ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, etc.

I will be addressing these and other issues in my fall address at 3 p.m. on September 9 in Tilson Music Hall. The address will be followed by an opening reception for faculty and staff. I hope to see you there.

Lastly, I plan to utilize this communication to regularly recognize the accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff. I have recently received word that our Alpha Lambda Delta Chapter earned a Gold Award from the National Council of Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society for the 2007-2008 academic year. The national organization cited the chapter's 88 percent increase in membership as one of the reasons our chapter was recognized. Congratulations to Chapter Adviser Greg Bierly, the student officers and members!

I plan to distribute this newsletter every other week. If you have items that would be appropriate to share in this communication, please send them to me at president@indstate.edu.

Cheri and I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome we have received. We look forward to working with all of you to advance our University and better serve our students and the State of Indiana. Best wishes for a successful and productive year!

Sincerely,

Dan Bradley
President