

December 12, 2008

Dear colleagues,

The end of the semester is here, and I would like to start this greeting by thanking all of you for your hard work and dedication. The breadth of your knowledge and the depth of your enthusiasm and loyalty serve our institution and our students exceptionally well.

Cheri and I would also like to thank everyone for making our first five months at ISU so enjoyable. It was great to see so many of you at the holiday reception at Condit House on Wednesday. While all the boxes are not yet unpacked, we are getting settled and are happy to be living in the midst of campus.

In addition, Cheri was overjoyed with the response to the first Women of ISU event on Monday. Around 200 women took advantage of this opportunity to network with each other. They brought nearly 300 gifts that have been taken to the Council on Domestic Abuse and Bethany House for distribution to women in need. It is amazing the impact that this single event will have. Cheri and I extend our appreciation to everyone who participated. I would also like to brief you on a few other items:

- **STRATEGIC PLANNING/NCA:** The kickoff of the Strategic Planning and NCA Special Emphasis Self-Study also drew great participation from campus. More than 180 people attended the plenary session and around 140 of them stayed for the break-out sessions that followed. Many good ideas were generated, and I believe we are off to a good start. The STRATUS team will be returning the week of January 12 for a number of individual and small group sessions as well as another open forum for anyone who was not able to participate last week. We are also working with SGA President Michael Scott and Associate Professor Linda Maule to involve more students in the process. The list of questions used in the break-out sessions is available at: <http://www1.indstate.edu/president/strategic%20planning%20questions.pdf>. Anyone who would like to provide feedback on these questions may do so by emailing president@indstate.edu. The questions will also be available on the strategic planning website which will be launched before the new semester begins.
- **BUDGET PLANNING/REVIEW OF OPEN POSITIONS:** The economic times we find ourselves in are a cause for much concern and a time for proactive measures. In conjunction with the State revenue forecast issued yesterday, all public institutions of higher education have been asked to revert one percent of their 2008-09 operating appropriation and 25 percent of the allocated repair and rehabilitation funding (R&R). We will know more about the 2009-11 budget as the legislative session unfolds. In the meantime, I ask for your understanding and continued good stewardship of all university resources.

The University is not in a hiring freeze, but I have asked the members of my Cabinet to carefully review any open positions and to justify the need to fill any vacancies. We will be somewhat conservative in our hiring during the coming months and may delay or prevent the filling of some positions.

- **RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS:** The benefits ISU supplies its employees and retirees are an important part of the compensation package that ISU uses to recruit and retain employees. None of these benefits are viewed to be as important as health insurance. I take very seriously, as does our Board of Trustees, the promises that ISU has made with regard to health insurance. I have received the report from the Benefits Committee and want to thank its members for their hard work. It is becoming increasingly clear that to maintain a health insurance plan for both active and retired employees that is both comprehensive and affordable, we will need to be creative and nimble. I see two areas that we need to begin investigating immediately:
 - Developing plans for retirees 65 and older who are covered by Medicare and another for those under 65.
 - Providing a vehicle to obtain coverage for retirees 65 and over who were hired after January 1, 2005 or who will not achieve 20 years of service prior to retirement.

I have asked Vice President Diann McKee and her staff to start developing proposals to address both issues. Once they are in draft form, sometime in spring 2009, we will have meetings with employees and retirees to obtain feedback.

- **SUMMER FLEXIBLE HOURS PROGRAM:** We are also moving forward with implementation of a summer flexible hours program which will allow employees the opportunity of a four-day schedule by working longer days four days each week. The guidelines for this program also will allow non-exempt employees who would like a reduced work schedule during the summer to do so without pay without impacting health insurance benefits. Other benefits such as sick leave, vacation accrual, and PERF contributions will be adjusted based upon hours worked and dollars paid. This program is being offered to recognize and reward employees for the extra effort put forth during the regular academic year and allow more flexibility during the summer months. The complete guidelines are available on the Human Resources website at: <http://www1.indstate.edu/humres/Flexible%20Hours.htm>
- **NCAA CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP:** Indiana State continues to receive accolades for hosting the 2008 NCAA Division I Cross Country Championships at the LaVern Gibson Cross Country Course. Both the President of the NCAA and the CEO of the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association wrote me specifically to praise the overall management of the championship. Meet Director Geoff Wayton, Athletic Director Ron Prettyman, Technical Manager and Coach John McNichols, Assistant Meet Director and Coach John Gartland, Meet Sports Information Director Mike Williams along with Angie Lansing, Angie Martin, John Sherman and Brad Yeargin were commended for their exemplary work. In addition to raising the profile and reputation of Indiana State, this event is a major boost to our local economy with many expenditures at area hotels, restaurants and retail establishments. Thanks to everyone involved. We look forward to another great event next year!
- **MOTORSPORTS:** Indiana State's motorsports program and our Team Sycamore Racing are participating in the International Motorsport Education Forum this week in Florida. Associate Professor Joe Harder is speaking on "The Benefit of Competition" at the forum. The students involved in Team Sycamore Racing have the ISU dragster on display and are networking with the other exhibitors and attendees in search of internships, jobs and sponsorships. It should be noted that those students attending the forum arranged to take their finals BEFORE leaving for Florida.

I hope to see many of you at tomorrow's Commencement ceremony. Best wishes to all of you for a wonderful holiday season. Enjoy your break, and we'll see you in 2009!

Sincerely,
Daniel J. Bradley
President