

March 6, 2009

Dear colleagues,

It is hard to believe that Spring Break is already here, but it certainly is nice to have it welcomed with warmer temperatures.

When faculty and students return following the break, it will only be a matter of weeks until Commencement is upon us. I know this will be a very hectic time for the entire campus. While everyone will be working hard to complete various projects and responsibilities before the academic year ends, there will also be time to recognize the many accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff. Cheri and I are looking forward to attending as many of these celebratory events as possible.

The biennial budget process for 2009-11 continues, and Indiana State and its sister institutions will have budget hearings with the Senate Appropriations Committee on March 16. The outcome of these hearings is expected to vary greatly from the House budget with the differences to be reconciled through a conference committee.

Later that week, each vice president and academic dean will present their budget plans for the coming fiscal year. The hearings are open to campus, and notices of the entire schedule will be distributed via global e-mail. The hearings will take place from 1:30 to 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, and from 8:15 to 11:45 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. on Friday, March 20, in the State Room in Tirey Hall.

As I indicated in an earlier newsletter, the University will need to identify approximately \$10 million in budget reallocations over the next three years to overcome the shortfall that might occur if the Governor's budget is approved while also providing funding for priority issues and unavoidable cost increases.

As part of this planning effort, the Division of Business Affairs has recently realigned several functions to maximize contributions from existing staff in key roles and create the teamwork necessary to provide services to students, faculty and staff. Designed to promote efficiency and encourage collaborations, these changes include:

- Purchasing and central receiving and debt management responsibilities will now report to Jeff Jacso, as associate vice president and university controller.
- Dom Nepote will assume responsibility for insurance and risk management, worker's compensation and space utilization as associate vice president for finance and assistant treasurer.
- Budget implementation and monitoring has been assigned to Chip Rogers, as director of budget and payroll and assistant to the vice president.

In addition to their new assignments, these individuals will remain responsible for their previous duties. The position of associate vice president and university budget officer, to whom many of these functions formerly reported, has been reallocated to provide cost savings for the University.

Other updates I would like to provide:

RETENTION COUNCIL – This recently formed group met for the first time on Tuesday, March 3. Chaired by Bob English, associate vice president of academic affairs, the Council will be working to implement both short and long-term strategies to impact retention. Indiana State University's retention rate from first fall to second fall has remained in the low-to-mid sixties for the past several years.

While the retention committee recognizes there are a multitude of factors that contribute to students dropping out, transferring to another institution, or being academically dismissed, it also recognizes that there is room for improvement. Improving student retention, while maintaining high standards and challenging classroom environments, will serve both our students and the university well.

One of the first actions of the council will be to set a realistic retention goal. This goal will be determined by looking at peer institutions, defined in this instance as institutions with a similar student demographic, who have successfully improved their student retention rates. Audits conducted in the past suggest that this rate will fall somewhere between 72 and 75 percent (an approximate ten percent increase from our current rate).

At the next meeting, the committee will also be reviewing the attendance patterns of students who were permitted to return this spring after being academically dismissed in Fall 2008.

The Retention Council plans to share regular updates of their work. I would like to thank all those who are serving on the Council for leading the work to address this most important issue.

STRATEGIC PLANNING –A university-wide Strategic Planning Retreat, led by the STRATUS team who is assisting us with this process, will be conducted on Thursday, March 26, and Friday, March 27. This will be an important opportunity for campus representatives to contribute to the development of our strategic plan. More information regarding the retreat will be provided on the strategic planning website, http://www1.indstate.edu/strategic_plan/, prior to the retreat.

POLAR PLUNGE – Indiana State University continued its support for the Indiana Special Olympics, the state chapter which was founded on our campus 40 years ago, with the first-ever ISU Polar Plunge on February 28. Fifty-two brave individuals raised a minimum of \$75 each for the honor of plunging into a pool filled with water on a day of near freezing temperatures. Special recognition goes to Patty Cottom from Union Hospital for best costume (the chicken); Dever Distributing for the company which raised the most money; ARC of Vigo County for the team that raised the most money; ISU Alpha Sigma Alpha for the sorority or fraternity that raised the most money; and Bill Mercier, director of ISU's Office of Public Safety and an organizer of the event, for the individual who raised the most money. This entertaining event garnered nearly \$9,000 in support of this most worthwhile program. Thanks to all of the participants, organizers and donors.

NATIONAL PUBLICITY – Accolades also go to Jean Kristeller, professor of psychology and co-director of Indiana State’s Center for the Study of Health, Religion and Spirituality; Nancy Merritt, dean of the College of Business; Rocco Gennaro, professor of philosophy; and Justin Boyles, a doctoral student in biology, for recently garnering national publicity.

Kristeller’s research into the link between spirituality and health is featured in February 23 cover story of Time magazine. The article cites Kristeller’s development of a guide for doctors who want to explore how cancer patients are drawing on their religious and spiritual resources.

Merritt was featured in the February 20 edition of Business Week as part of an article on the trend of women increasingly taking on leadership roles in business schools. The ISU dean was included in a slideshow of 12 female deans at top U.S. business schools that accompanied an article about women shattering the “glass ceiling” by assuming roles historically held by men.

Gennaro was quoted in a humorous column that appeared in the New York Times about memory loss at middle age, a topic about which he has written extensively.

Boyle’s research into the mysterious deaths of thousands of bats plagued with White-nose syndrome in the Northeastern U.S. and Canada and his plan that could help save the bats until a cause and cure are identified for the disease that is killing them has appeared in more than 100 news outlets so far including the National Geographic and Audubon magazines. The coverage followed the publication of a study by Boyle and Craig Willis of the University of Winnipeg in Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment e-View. Boyle works with Professor John Whitaker at ISU's Center for North American Bat Research and Conservation.

Have a safe and enjoyable spring break.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Bradley
President