

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT

August 14, 2008

**TO:** University of Michigan-Flint Faculty and Staff

**FROM:** Vahid Lotfi, Interim Provost

**SUBJECT:** Update from Academic Affairs

The summer months are rapidly coming to pass and the campus is getting ready to start another academic year with a promise of excitement and new developments. We will welcome the arrival of Dr. Ruth Person, our new Chancellor on August 18. We will also witness another historic event, the opening of our first residence hall and the presence of about 310 students on campus, 24 hours per day and seven days per week. As I prepare to transition back to the Office of Graduate Programs, I wish to acknowledge and thank Sue Fabbro and Ginny Sollinger for the outstanding support they afforded me in the Provost's Office over the past 15 months. Their dedication and hard work made my job exceedingly more manageable. I also wish to thank Chris Waters for stepping forward and assuming my duties with relatively little advance notice. Chris has done an excellent job, leading the Associate Provost Group and serving as the Graduate Dean. We all owe her a debt of gratitude.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Daniel C. Adams as the **new Director of the International Student Center (ISC)** effective August 25, 2008. Dan comes to us from the Ann Arbor campus where he has been the Associate Director with the Office of Student Activities and Leadership since 2003. Prior to that, Dan served as Assistant Director within the same office for four years and was the Program Manager in Michigan Leadership Initiatives from 1996 to 1998. In addition, Dan has a variety of professional experiences in international education and intercultural program development including founding and directing the Intercultural Leadership Seminar, a six-day program designed to increase understanding of cultural influence in regards to leadership behavior. Currently in its 12th year of operation, program alums often cite this program as one of the most significant experiences of their college career. Dan has a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Intercultural and International Management. Please join me in welcoming Dan to our campus.

I wish to offer many thanks to Ms. Kim Butka for an excellent job of serving as the Interim Director of the Center while continuing her duties as Associate Director in Undergraduate Admissions since March 2008. She brought strong leadership and much needed calm and stability to the Center. I also wish to thank members of the search advisory committee: Brad Maki (Chair), Patrice Campbell, Mary Deibis, Ernest Emenyonu, Pat Slackta, and Ghada Sharif.

The **Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Project** continues to make very good progress. Recent activities include: the release of the first draft of the self-study report to the campus; visit by our HLC liaison, Dr. John Taylor; completion of the faculty/staff survey with excellent participation rates; creation of a communication committee; and adoption of a project planning software to improve the monitoring of the project timeline. The Steering Committee is developing plans to meet with a number of university committees in September to discuss the results of the faculty-staff survey. The timeline for these meetings will be rather tight. I ask that respective committee chairpersons kindly accommodate our requests for meetings and placement

on their meeting agendas. We need your full cooperation and assistance on this matter to meet our timeline without delays. Once again, please note that the **on-site visit is scheduled for October 26-28, 2009**. For additional information including the most current draft of the report, please visit the project Web site at: <http://www.umflint.edu/hlc>.

**Emergency Notification System** – With the new academic year fast approaching, having the Emergency Alert System in place is even more imperative than ever. The University of Michigan-Flint Emergency Alert System allows faculty, staff, and students to sign up to receive voice or text messages to their cell phones and smartphones. The University will continue to send emergency messages via email, as well as posting information on the university website, official University of Michigan-Flint MySpace ([www.myspace.com/um\\_flint](http://www.myspace.com/um_flint)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/profile.php?id+654391316](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id+654391316)) pages, and make announcements using the campus public address system. The new notification system will be used when it is believed that a life threatening event is about to happen, is currently occurring, or has the high potential to happen in the near future. Examples of when the system may be activated include an active shooter and/or hostage situation, a tornado warning, or a major hazardous material/chemical spill on or near campus.

I strongly urge all members of the campus community to sign up for the new notification system immediately. This system is not only for your own safety, but it is also for the safety of those that may be under your supervision. You're not being plugged into this system, in case of an emergency, could be detrimental to you and anyone under your charge who is not registered in the system as well. In order to receive these urgent notification alert messages, faculty, staff and students may register up to three communication devices, such as text message devices, cell phones or other phones. Registration is easy, takes only a few minutes, and is available on *Wolverine Access* for UM-Flint faculty and staff, or through the *Student Information System* for UM-Flint students. General information and Frequently Asked Questions about the system can be viewed at the following website, [www.umflint.edu/emergency](http://www.umflint.edu/emergency). Communication during an emergency can make a life-saving difference.

#### College of Arts and Sciences

**Mathematics Department** – Mathematics students Stephen Bennett, Joshua Harvey, and Celeste Thornburg conducted a research project on Linear Codes over General Rings during spring and summer terms under the direction of Ricardo Alfaro. They are currently preparing their results for publication.

#### School of Management

**Dr. Clement Chen** – will be honored with the Scholarly or Creative Achievement Award at the Fall 2008 Academic Affairs Convocation on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Dr. Yener Kandogan** – The School of Management's grant proposal titled "Entrepreneurship Education in Flint" to Michigan Initiative for Innovation and Entrepreneurship has received \$76,500. With the funds, SOM will be hiring an Entrepreneur-in-Residence who will have one-on-one sessions to provide mentorship to students in their business development initiatives by teaching them best practices of starting a business, providing insight to specific industries and markets, ideas and feedback on students' business concepts, including business plan review, help

solidify their business strategies, identify a market position, securing their intellectual property, help obtaining funding, help networking and developing professional relationships, including potential collaborative projects students can contribute, organize meetings with experienced, innovative and highly successful entrepreneurs to learn from their experience.

**Dr. Seyed Mehdian** – was invited to give lectures at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, Romania in April and May of 2008, under a Fulbright Senior Scholarship Grant. He has also been appointed to a three-year term as Vice-President of Public Relations for the Midwest Finance Association, a prestigious regional association for the finance profession.

**Dr. Mark Perry and Dr. Madhukar Angur's** article "India's New Class of Billionaires Are Builders, Not 'Robber Barons'" was posted in the *Investor's Business Daily* on April 16, 2008.

**Dr. Mark Perry** was interviewed about oil and gas prices on Seattle's KVI-AM on June 12<sup>th</sup>. His discussion on gas prices was part of ABC 12's *Newsmaker* program that aired on June 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. and on June 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. In addition, Professor Perry's article, "Windfall Oil Tax Fuels Foreign Dependency" was featured in the *Detroit News* on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A research paper on the Romanian stock market written by Professors Mark Perry, Seyed Mehdian, and Anamaria Ciobanu from the Academy of Economic Studies (Romania) was presented at the international conference in Bucharest, Romania in June 2008.

SOM is planning two international study trips for 2009: a) one to Taiwan and Japan, taught by Jacob Peng and Seyed Mehdian, and b) one to Russia, taught by Mark Perry and Greg Allar, both scheduled for the spring of 2009.

#### Acting Associate Provost and Graduate Programs

**International Student Center** – The ISC is preparing to welcome and assist a bumper crop of international students this Fall and also is involved in the planning of three international recruiting trips: one to India, another to Canada and a third to South America.

**English Language Program (ELP)** – has seen growth and change during the spring and summer semesters. We welcomed students from Shanghai, China, and Seoul, Korea. In addition to increasing their English language proficiency, the students have participated in a number of social and cultural activities both on and off campus. The ELP students have enjoyed The Farmer's Market, The Robert T. Longway Planetarium, the Ann Arbor Art Fair, and a tour of the UM campus, as well as participating in the Urban Alternatives House 'clean up' project. Current developments include an Extensive Reading Program and increased use of computer technology in language learning to better meet the needs of our students. Enrollment for the fall semester is robust. We look forward to welcoming students from many different countries to the UM- Flint campus.

**ITS** – has installed Banner 8.0 in a test environment so that our users can start testing the new systems features and functionality. They will be implementing Microsoft Exchange 2007 email servers this summer. Employees will see their mailbox size increase as well as a brand new web mail interface. A new email encryption system will allow employees to secure sensitive data

while it is being transmitted. The computer labs in the William S. White Building (Rooms 3174, 3175 and 3153) will receive new computers this summer. As of Fall semester all of the open computer labs (MSB 206, FH 205 and 459, and WSW 3153, 3174 and 3175) will be running Microsoft Windows Vista Enterprise Edition. Given the success of the student computer purchase program over the past two years, ITS in conjunction with Financial Aid and the Cashier's Office will once again be selling old computers to students at a very discounted rate to put funds back into the Technology Fee budget as well as provide computers to students that otherwise would not be able to purchase one of their own. New Crestron mediated equipment will be put in place in the general classrooms in French Hall as construction is completed. On the staffing side, Joshua Weber was hired as the new data security analyst to assist ITS in fully implementing the campus data security plan.

**OEL** – To date, there are over 3,393 individual online course enrollments for Fall in 136 sections, with 212 on waitlists; last year there were 3,511 enrollments on 10th Day. To date, we have a little over 807 in mixed mode in 18 sections, with 64 on waitlists. Last year, there were 667 by 10th Day. The NetPlus! enrollments have yet to occur and nursing students typically register late. OEL is requesting additional sections to meet waitlisted student needs.

**Graduate Programs** – is very busy with applications for the upcoming year. As of July 30, a total of 905 people have applied for graduate admission for Fall 2008. This compares to about 700 people who had applied for Fall 2007 on the same date last year, a near 29% increase in applications. It is difficult to predict graduate enrollment with any degree of certainty, but we are fairly confident that there will be a double-digit increase by the 10th day of classes this fall.

Graduate Programs will be launching an online letters of recommendation tool for applicants early this fall. The system, designed and programmed by ITS, will allow applicants to list references and their email addresses, then email those references with a username, password, and link to a secure website where they can fill out the recommendations online. We believe faculty who complete many of these recommendations on paper will appreciate the convenience of the online system.

Graduate Programs welcomes Patty Tracy to the staff as a Student Administration Assistant. Patty comes to us from the automotive and advertising industries and is assisting prospective graduate students with their applications and questions.

As Chris Waters prepares to return to the faculty from her post as Interim Associate Provost, she is ramping up her work as an artist. Earlier this summer she had paintings included in an exhibition, "Petty Treasons" at Red ink studios. UM-Flint alum Amanda Simons (BFA 06) was also in the show and a play written by UM-Flint alum Jennifer Sikora (BA 06) was performed during the opening. Jennifer was also the very first admit to the new MLS Theatre and Community program. Chris is also currently in an exhibition, "They Practice What They Teach" at the Saginaw Art Museum. The show closes September 7, 2008 and consists of examples of contemporary painting being produced by members of the painting faculty in Michigan colleges and universities. Seventy works by more than 30 artists currently teaching in 20 Michigan academic institutions are on display.