



Office of Academic Affairs

VCAA News September 2007

Dear Colleagues,

READY AND EXCITED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!! That's the rallying call of the faculty and staff who spent the summer under the tutelage of Professor Randy Isaacson exploring ways to achieve higher retention among under-prepared students in English and mathematics. Each of the faculty and staff was invited to participate in this pilot program of using U100 as the focus of the university's retention efforts. Randy, an expert in cognitive development, led many animated sessions with the group on what motivates students, how they learn and on effective strategies to student success. Throughout the semester, the faculty will work in cross-disciplinary teams, focusing on student learning and examining what works and what interventions will be needed to achieve student success. I was privileged to be part of the on-line discussions among the faculty throughout their summer seminar and I can vouch with confidence that they are indeed ready and excited to make a difference. Here are just a few of the comments from participants:

- As the older teachers we appreciate the new ideas that the peer mentors bring to this program;
- As someone who has taught before I am excited about tweaking how I teach;
- I have served as both a peer mentor and an instructor. I think this program is an example of what this campus is all about – professionalism and working together;
- We are all interested in retention and this helps me understand what students need;
- I like that we are a team, learning and working together;
- We are building upon the last ten years. We have new instructors and I am excited to work with new people.

I look forward to comparing notes with the U100 instructors as they assess their efforts at the end of the semester. My hunch is that the U100 students will have higher retention than in previous years.

As you heard from the chancellor's all-campus remarks, the academic year is off to another grand start. The construction of student residential housing, the opening of the Elkhart Center, the imminent initial phases of the administration renovation, new degrees in dental and nursing, budget stability, and fundraising for the Natatorium portend well for IU South Bend's future.. In the colorful vernacular of Southern Louisiana, *Who would have think it?* Just five years ago, none of these seemed within grasp. The next five years appear even more promising as we focus on new strategic initiatives that strengthen academic programs. We'll begin this process shortly after the Higher Learning Commission's team visit in November. Our new strategic plan starts with an environmental scan that will enable IU South Bend to understand the external environment and its relationship to institutional planning. More on this topic will be forthcoming within the next few months.

If you have not done so, I encourage you to take a drive to downtown Elkhart on Franklin Street to visit the newly completed IU South Bend Elkhart Center. It's a beautiful and functional facility designed to provide increased access to higher education to the citizens of Elkhart County. The Center already is experiencing increases in enrollment and student credit hours. We are grateful to the pioneering vision and generosity of the Elkhart business and civic leaders who saw a need for their community and worked with the chancellor and others to make this building a reality. Kudos to Jackie Neuman and her team and to Vice Chancellors Bill O'Donnell, Pat Ames and Ilene Sheffer whose staff worked diligently to prepare the Center for opening day.

During the week of October 13, IU South Bend will be participating in a system-wide program celebrating excellence at Indiana University. Our week of festivities will begin with a concert performance by the newly arrived string quartet whose musical selections complement our campus theme of sustainable communities. Throughout the week there will be faculty and student forums on the theme and the week will conclude with, "Paragon Springs," a theatrical adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People."

Some of you may have read recently the cover story of The Chronicle of Higher Education on undergraduate research. Although, national attention is being focused on undergraduate research, and the article mildly rebukes educators for half-hearted efforts in this regard, I am proud of the long history of responsible engagement of faculty and students in undergraduate research at IU South Bend. Indeed, in our deliberate conversations on mission differentiation, undergraduate research remained clearly one of the hallmarks of an undergraduate educational experience at IUSB. Recently, a group of faculty, led by Associate Vice Chancellor Salina Shrofel, attended a regional conference centered on best practices in undergraduate research. Following Salina's advice, I appointed a faculty committee on undergraduate research whose primary purpose is the enhanced engagement of faculty and students in collaborative research. The committee chaired by Professor Johnny McIntosh, includes Professors Bruce Spitzer, Grant Black, Andrew Schnabel, Gretchen Anderson, Cynthia Sofhauser, Andrea Rusnock, Isabel O'Connor, Marta Makielski, Lee Kahan, James VanderVeen, and Rebecca Torstrick. Erika Zynda will serve as ex-officio and provide support to the committee. Currently, the group is planning an undergraduate research symposium for the spring. Stay tuned for more details.

At the All-Campus meeting last week, the chancellor gave an update on the building reconstruction of the Engmann Natatorium in the West Washington neighborhood of South Bend. This unique partnership among IUSB, the City of South Bend and the South Bend Heritage Foundation is an excellent example of town-gown interconnectedness. The once segregated Natatorium will be part of the university's Civil Rights Heritage Center and will serve as a cultural and historical reminder of humanity's common destiny and a symbol of racial harmony and fraternity. This morning I co-chaired with Dina Harris, our new director of foundations, a breakfast meeting of community leaders to plan and begin our two-phased fundraising drive. The initial, short-lived, phase consists of raising \$200,000 to complete interior renovations of the building and the second, more long-term phase, is to raise 1.5 million dollars to endow the center for programming and cultural activities. I invite you to join this historical campaign by making a financial contribution or by assisting us in identifying individuals or organizations whom we might approach for funding.

Last year the Academic Cabinet and I focused our attention on defining the vision, mission and values of Academic Affairs at Indiana University South Bend. I encourage you to review our statements on the [Academic Affairs](#) page.

Kudos to Marta Makielski for her receiving the "Spirit of Women in Action" award presented by Memorial Hospital. The award honors the notion that how one "clearly and passionately performs as an individual determines how we perform as a community."

Kudos to Grant Black for his leadership of the IU South Bend Center for Economic Education. The Center has been selected to receive a Peter V. Harrington Award for Excellence in the Number of K-12 Teachers Trained during the 2006-07 academic year. Grant Black, with teacher advocate Kathy Heyse (Elkhart), continues to reach out in significant and creative ways to bring in teachers to the workshops in economic development. The Center will receive a plaque and a check for \$1500 to use for the advancement of economic education in the region. The Center will be honored at the annual awards program of Indiana Council for Economic Education on November 2, 2007.

Best wishes for another outstanding academic year.

Sincerely,

Alfred J. Guillaume, Jr.
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs