

I hope things in the classroom have settled down as we begin the spring semester. The weather certainly hasn't! I have several items to review in this report, so I'll get right to them. The items I'll discuss are the renovation of Michigan and East Halls, HLC activities, sabbatical leaves, and our nominee for the Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year Award. I'd also like to remind you of some funding opportunities.

### **Michigan and East Hall Renovation Plans:**

Academics experienced several staffing vacancies this year. These were both administrative and faculty positions. Due to these vacancies, a one-time savings was realized and I have asked that those funds be reallocated to renovate both Michigan and East Halls. Both the Shared Governance Oversight Committee and the President's Cabinet reviewed the request and provided their support.

East Hall will be renovated to serve as our next childcare facility. We were approached by an external agency to provide this service for LSSU and are working out the final details. The external provider is the EUP Learning Center (EUP-LC). They will also offer after-school tutoring for K-12 students. Our School of Education and our Early Childhood Education programs will be working closely with the EUP-LC to provide a unique learning environment for the childcare and tutoring services.

Michigan Hall will also undergo renovations. Its future use is still under review with at least three possible scenarios being studied.

### **HLC Reports:**

As I mentioned last month, we have four monitoring reports to complete before February 2013. I have charged the Assessment Committee to develop the plan and write the monitoring report dealing with campus wide assessment. The Faculty Association and LSSU Administration will work together to address the evaluation, tenure, and promotion plan and report. The Shared Governance Oversight Committee will be charging a group to address the required report on shared governance. The final plan and report (dealing with IT) will be created by a committee which has not yet been fully populated.

If you feel a strong desire to be involved in any of these committees, please contact me.

### **Sabbaticals:**

At the January 27<sup>th</sup> LSSU Board of Trustees meeting three sabbatical leaves were approved. They were:

#### **Dr. Dennis Merkel** (1 year sabbatical)

Dr. Merkel will use his sabbatical leave to investigate correspondence between soil survey leaders (in particular, J. O. Veatch) and the Bureau of Soils in the National Archives, which will be the basis of an article and contribute to a book on Veatch. Veatch was the soil survey leader for the State of Michigan, overseeing all survey work from 1921-1950. During this period there was a fundamental shift in our perception of soils. This work will, from the perspective of the soil survey leaders, provide insight into this revolutionary shift in Michigan and the United States not available from other sources.

In addition, this sabbatical leave will give Dr. Merkel the singular opportunity to work alongside faculty in the Department of Environmental Science & Technology at the University of Maryland which has extended an offer to teach an upper level undergraduate soils class and either a Graduate Seminar or a Capstone Project.

#### **Dr. Aaron Westrick**, (1 semester sabbatical)

Dr. Westrick's proposal describes a compilation of academic work that has been gathered through force investigations and research to be completed for publication during the sabbatical term. The first objective (presently under development) is to complete book chapters based upon research and hundreds of case investigations. The second objective is to research and develop a theoretical model regarding the "interrogation" of police officers during investigations. The author has hypothesized that traditional interrogation methods are not accurate when applied to suspect officers. These two lines of research branch across the social and physical sciences utilized in the (criminal) investigation. This research driven (book) project will include both qualitative (case study) analysis and quantitative

analysis based on the temporal and environmental variables of the fatal force events. Some research and study will take place at Wayne State University as an associate researcher and law student. Environmental and temporal variables will be analyzed through the use of contemporary Department of Justice Crime Stat data processing. This advanced study will be of benefit to the criminal justice and investigation disciplines; particularly to Lake Superior State University students participating in police procedure, legal and investigation courses.

**Dr. Greg Zimmerman, (1 semester sabbatical)**

Dr. Zimmerman's sabbatical follows on research he has been doing over the past few years in the area of using local weedy grasses for pellet fuels for heating. Dr. Zimmerman has verified that reed canary grass can be made into serviceable pellets at low cost compared to wood pellets. Since then he has shown that the wetland invasive plant Phragmites also makes good pellets. The next step in scaling up the process beyond the bench top and into quantities needed for use in heating requires additional time not available while Dr. Zimmerman is teaching classes. This one semester sabbatical will allow him to investigate how the process can be scaled up to become a part of the local economy and to assess the potential for economic returns to invasive species removal projects.

Congratulations to each of you on your successful applications.

**Professor of the Year Award:**

Every year the Presidents Council: State Universities of Michigan (PCSUM) accepts one nominee from each State University for the Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year Award. Selection of the award recipient by the PCSUM is based on the candidate's contribution to student learning, interactions with undergraduate students, incorporation of experiential learning into the classroom, academic advising, the undergraduate research opportunities provided to students, and scholarly activities. I am very happy to announce that this year's LSSU nominee is Dr. Ashley Moerke from the School of Biological Sciences. Please congratulate Dr. Moerke on this nomination.

**Funding Available:**

I'd like to take a few minutes to remind the campus of funding opportunities that exist every year, but are not always fully utilized.

**Culture, Art, Issues:**

Websites are available for submitting proposals for funding cultural, intellectual, and arts oriented events. Funding is provided through the LSSU Cultural Affairs Fund, the Issues and Intellect Fund, and the Duncan MacLaren Family Fund for the Performance Arts. The sites can be accessed via the A-Z links or directly from the Provost's webpage (<http://www.lssu.edu/provost/funds.php>). A brief description of how funds can be expended, and an online application are available for each fund. Please take a look at these and submit applications well before the event is planned.

**Speakers Bureau:**

There is travel funding available for those of you that have registered for the Speakers Bureau and have then been asked to speak. Contact the Provost's Office for reimbursement details.