Looking Forward

We are completing another academic year at UW-Stout; a busy, challenging yet very exciting year. Our highest priority and our greatest challenge has been the budget. The state provided appropriations by nearly 16 percent. Unfortunately, the students bear the brunt of the cut. Even though the state provided more financial aid, that too came from fees already paid by the students into designated funds; or, in the words of one official, a “cash grab.” This must end if we are to provide student access to UW System resources that are critical for a healthy higher education system and for a robust economy.

We were also shocked and saddened with the tragic loss of UW-River Falls Chancellor Ann Lydecker, who was killed this democracy accident. This is a great loss to her campus and the university system.

With the bad news out of the way, there are some very positive things to report as well. Our e-Scholar initiative is going well. SASP approval also earns strong support for the laptop program.

Another exciting proposal is now before the Board of Regents. We are asking that the Board give UW-Stout a statewide mission to become the access portal for the technical college graduates.

We envision a seamless transition of courses and programs between the two systems, benefitting the state by providing more individuals with baccalaureate degrees, streamlining the “brain drain” and providing a well-prepared work force that can attract and keep high-paying jobs in the state.

Finally, we are engaging the campus and stakeholders in a planning process called “UW-Stout 2010.” We must look forward, plan for change, and adjust our structure and programs to meet the ever-changing needs of the 21st century. We have a vision that calls for this university, your university, to maintain a leadership position in educating men and women for this century, sharpening our focus on the “Stout Technology Advantage,” strengthening programs that relate directly to societal needs, and educating men and women for the civic responsibility this democracy demands.

As the UW System prepares for a leadership change with President Katharine Lyall’s retirement, we are preparing to become one of the premier universities in the country.

Academic programs receive accreditation

Several UW-Stout academic programs have been awarded accreditation in the past year, undergoing a rigorous review process that keeps them current and in line with professional and industry standards.

UW-Stout’s school psychology graduate programs recently received full approval from the National Association of School Psychologists. Fewer than two-thirds of the school psychology graduate programs in the nation are NASP approved.

“This means that our school psychology program has been exhaustively evaluated by professionals outside the university and has been found worthy of national-level recognition,” said Jacalyn Weissenburger, director of the program.

AAFA endorsement also allows students in the program to apply for scholarships from the association, said Christofersen.

UW-Stout’s packaging, graphic communications management and telecommunication systems programs met the National Association of Industrial Technology’s rigorous standards to achieve accreditation through November 2009.

“Being reviewed by outside professionals validates what we are doing right and offers us some constructive criticism,” said Steve Schloch, director of the telecommunication systems program.

“The NAIT accreditation review process is a key component in our continual quest to keep our packaging degree program relevant to our students and the companies that ultimately seek to hire them,” said Ken Neuburg, director of the packaging program.

This feedback ensures that our programs will continue to be among the best in the country,” said Christofersen.

New residence hall planned

Construction for a new residence hall on UW-Stout’s north campus is slated to break ground this spring as the first phase of implementation of the North Campus Master Plan.

Over a 10- to 15-year period, the North Campus Master Plan will redevelop north campus buildings, creating an innovative community that addresses the demands of today’s college students.

The new building will be a 296-bed residence hall with 75 suites, each containing four single bedrooms, a kitchenette, living area and bathroom facilities.

The new hall will be built on what is currently a parking lot west of Fleming, Holtod and Wigen residence halls. Completion on the hall is planned for the summer of 2005, to be ready for new residents that fall.

The estimated cost of this building is $16.6 million, which will be funded by user fees, not taxpayer dollars.