

Student Government Works on Several Resolutions

January 30th, 2006 - The Student Government of Ferris State University's general assembly met this past Wednesday to discuss several resolutions on the table as well as progress of the various committees formed.

Executive Vice President Michael Finch and President Jonathan Gaskell introduced a piece of legislation that would encourage faculty to cancel classes due to inclement weather. The resolution, which was introduced as a first reading (cannot be adopted at this meeting), outlined the frustration that many students faced on the icy Tuesday that occurred several weeks ago in Big Rapids that caused the entire town to close down, except Ferris. Students became frustrated with the fact that some classes were still in session and had stated that attending a class on hazardous travel days is inappropriate. The resolution will undergo its final reading at the February 1 meeting. If passed, it would be distributed to all deans and other academic administrators to encourage cancellation of classes if travel is unreasonable.

Representative James Mikula introduced a first reading regarding legislation to urge the University to establish an office of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) affairs, as well as hire a staff member to head this office. The legislation will be up for final reading at the February 1 meeting and will be discussed and will be up for motions to approve. A mission statement for Student Government, which is ever-changing with time, was approved on Wednesday. The new mission statement will now be used in several Student Government documents that require an explanation of Student Government's activities, including press releases. The mission statement is cited at the end of this release.

Associate Vice President for Public Relations Zack East reported on the disbandment of the Parking Ticket Funds committee, which originally worked to research the revenue taken in by the University in regards to parking violations. East, who was a catalyst of the idea, along with the committee, had the charge of seeing if approximately 25 to 30 percent of the revenue from parking violations could be given to the Student Activity Fee, which assists in campus programming and funding for student groups. In 2005, a General Assembly meeting attended by Director of Public Safety Martin Bledsoe shed light on the fact that the funds were returned to the University's general fund. This year, however, the results had changed; the revenue was now part of DPS and was unable to be used by the committee. This resulted in the disbandment. The

committee will be replaced with a committee to assist in researching information on t-shirts for Student Government members to increase awareness of the organization among students.

The Finance Division approved funding for student groups on campus at their January 19 meeting, including funding of \$39,950 to Entertainment Unlimited for Ferris Fest 2006; \$1,120 to YBBW's Fashion Show; \$13,815 to Entertainment Unlimited's winter entertainment series; \$2,700 to the YBBW Women's Conference; \$1,000 to the Student Volunteers in Optometric Services to the Community for event travel expenses; \$1,000 to the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality; \$675 to the International Student Organization; \$44,960 to Entertainment Unlimited's fall entertainment and Speaker Series program; \$1,000 to the American Chemical Society for travel expenses; and \$402.23 to Sigma Pi fraternity for travel expenses. The Division of Finance meets bi-weekly on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm.

Several committees also updated the general assembly on their progress. The Readership program, chaired by representative Maria Knirk, explained that the New York Times and USA Today are now available again this semester on campus and that they are working to interact with students and offer a small breakfast snack on a morning in the near future at several buildings where the papers are displayed.

Housing committee chair Gregg Ketoskey and the members of the group are working to build a website that will contain information on house and apartment rentals in the Big Rapids area available to students. The information, which was often only available in the form of advertisements from local newspapers, has not been readily available, accessible and unbiased for students. The committee is hoping to have the website launched before the closing of oncampus housing's contract renewal cutoff date in late February.

Associate Vice President of Technology Charles Peirce reported to the general assembly that his recent meeting with Jeff Spedowski in Information Services and Telecommunications yielded positive news as the University recently upgraded their firewall technology and increased internet bandwidth to allow for faster access. Unfortunately, many students complaining of an inability to sign on to AOL's Instant Messenger service, AIM, did not wield positive results. According to Peirce, many Universities across the country are suffering the same

problems and a solution to the problem is a long ways away. Many Universities cite an inability to get in contact with AOL regarding the situation.

Students are also encouraged to change their passwords as soon as possible via MyFSU to avoid being locked out of their accounts. The University, which will opt to force users to change their passwords every 120 days for security reasons, stated that lockouts will begin soon if students do not change their passwords.