



From the President's Desk – Campus Climate & Culture Study *November 2, 2011*

Dear Colleagues:

Together we embarked on an intentional, comprehensive and transparent study of the campus climate and culture at Florida Gulf Coast University, and I want to thank you for being a part of this important initiative. When I announced the University would develop and conduct an employee survey and study that would be followed by focused discussions and recommendations by faculty and staff, I described it as an opportunity to assess where we are now and where we can go moving forward in our continuous quest to always be better in all that we do at FGCU. The process and outcomes have been valuable, and they have guided my Cabinet and me in decisions during an especially challenging fiscal period with significant State budget cuts.

First, I would like to thank the CORE Planning Group for the Campus Climate and Culture Study. This representative group of faculty and staff worked tirelessly under the leadership of co-chairs Dr. Amanda Evans, and Dr. Helen Mamarchev, who assumed the duties of Dr. Charles McKinney upon his retirement. During the study, the CORE Group was comprised of Lisa Banks, Neela Chevli, Jennifer Crabill, Dr. Elizabeth Elliott, Dr. Kathy Hale, J. Webb Horton, Carole Kaptur, Mary Reed, Dr. Hudson Rogers, Tim Shannon, Dr. Paul Snyder, Dr. Halcyon St. Hill and Dr. Michele Yovanovich. The CORE Group worked closely with the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Advisory Council, and I also would like to express my appreciation to these groups for their important participation.

The Cabinet and I recently met with the CORE Group for a final meeting, where I thanked the members for their diligent work and commitment to the project, and released them from my committee charge. During the meeting, I provided a rundown of the actions taken in support of the University's faculty and staff. The CORE Group asked me to share this information with you, and I'm pleased to have this opportunity. While not an exhaustive list, it is representative of the continuing and key emphasis my administration places on supporting the hard working faculty and staff who make FGCU what it is and set the foundation for what it will continue to become.

- **Utilized the University Planning and Budget Council I Instituted upon Arriving at FGCU.** This broadly representative group of faculty and staff reviews, deliberates and makes recommendations on budgetary matters and strategic planning.
- **Made NO Employee Layoffs, Furloughs or Terminations in response to Budget Cuts.** Despite State budget cuts of more than 25% of our annual operating budget over the past few years, FGCU through fiscally conservative operations has been able to maintain the employment positions of our hard working faculty and staff. The significance of this cannot be overstated, especially when viewing other organizations in Southwest Florida and beyond.
- **Increased Employee Compensation.** Providing pay increases and one-time lump sum bonuses for FGCU faculty and staff has not been easy. And, we have made decisions to forego other worthy needs in order to make employee compensation our first priority.

Although the State increasingly has been unable to provide compensation increases, FGCU has awarded its employees a pay increase and/or a bonus in 7 of the past 8 years.

- **Supported Tuition Waiver Program for Employees and Dependents.** FGCU's program of providing employees at no charge 6 undergraduate credit hours per semester for employees and their dependents, and 6 graduate credit hours per semester for employees continues to be very popular. In 2010-11, FGCU awarded employee tuition waivers in the amount of \$372,220, and in 2009-10, \$367,968 – for a total of more than \$740,000 for employees in the past two years.
- **Restored Employee Life Insurance.** Last year the Legislature reduced the State Basic Life Insurance for employees to a flat coverage amount of \$25,000. FGCU was able to fund the program so employees are able to maintain their existing coverage of 1.5 times the employee's salary.
- **Implemented Personal Leave Donation Policy.** A few months ago we implemented this new policy that allows faculty and staff to donate personal accrued leave to another employee who is experiencing, or who has a family member experiencing, a serious medical condition.
- **Opened Internal Employment Positions to OPS Employees.** The University's Search and Screen Guidelines have been amended to now allow OPS employees who meet the criteria to apply for internal vacancies.
- **Expanded Employee Professional Development Programs and Training.** FGCU's Human Resources, and Institute of Government are offering a large number of employee development programs for such things as supervisory skills, team building, managing performance, motivation for self and employees, and conducting performance reviews.
- **Initiating University Forum hosted by the President.** Before the end of the semester, I will hold a University forum with faculty and staff in a setting similar to a town hall meeting. This will provide an opportunity to share information and updates about University happenings, in addition to my "From the President's Desk" communications.

We will continue to look for other opportunities where we are able to expand support for FGCU's faculty and staff, where possible. The intangibles also are critical, and each of us at FGCU must do all we can to make the University an even better place to work. Collectively we define FGCU's climate and culture, with each of us responsible as a member of the University community. During our recent meeting, the CORE Group members said they appreciate the respect and support for FGCU's employees coming from the members of my Cabinet and me; at the same time, we were encouraged to ensure that this support occurs at all levels of the University. I made a commitment to them that we will do all we can to promote a work environment where *everyone's* contribution is valued. Please do everything you can to help us achieve this important goal for our FGCU community.

It was very gratifying to learn from the Campus Climate and Culture Survey results that 90% of our staff and 84% of our faculty said if given the choice to do it all over again, they would accept their current positions at Florida Gulf Coast University. We must embrace this strong commitment to FGCU, and not take it for granted but rather do everything each of us can do to continually improve our workplace. Our work toward this end is not done, and I ask each of you to recommit to our principle of valuing the contributions of everyone at the University – and to continue to make FGCU even better in all that we do. Thank you.

Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D.
President