

News from Academic Affairs

An Occasional Communication from the Office of the Provost



May/June 2006

Office of the Provost (570) 662-4804
<http://www.mansfield.edu/~academic/>

Mansfield's "Happy Thoughts"

In the Disney movie version of *Peter Pan*, children could fly when they found their happy thought. Somehow, that seems an apt metaphor for a university. When we remember to celebrate the things that matter – our happy thoughts – it lifts us all up. This last issue of "News from Academic Affairs" for the 2005-2006 year will depart from the format we've established in order to focus on the remarkable achievements of the Mansfield University community, some involving multiple divisions, in this year.

Before beginning, though, I will claim a bit of space to say thank you to the entire Mansfield community for making my first year here so worthwhile.

Now, please join me in congratulating the Mansfield community, including those whose accomplishments wouldn't fit in this space, for their work this a year.

- Michael Renner

☺ In the past year 658 persons earned Mansfield University degrees, including 25 Associate's degrees, 511 Bachelor's degrees and 122 Master's degrees.

☺ The Mountie Leadership Program had a successful first year, with 70 certificates awarded to students from 16 different majors. Over 70% who began a certificate program successfully completed it. Students in the program have a mean GPA above 3.0. We are truly making leaders.

☺ Dr. Linda Rashidi, from English and Modern Languages, has been named a Fulbright Scholar, and will spend the 2006-07 academic year in Bulgaria.

☺ Fall-to-spring retention of first-year students rose from 84% in the 2004-05 academic year to 88% this year.

☺ Information Technology replaced 240 computers on faculty-staff desktops and in student labs in 2005-06. Over 80 software applications are available to desktops via the campus network. Our campus has been computer virus-free for over 24 consecutive months.

☺ In the wake of our enhanced summer school academic programs and the "free room and board" initiative for full-time students, summer enrollments have increased 14%.

☺ The library has added a number of new electronic databases, including JSTOR, the CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics Online, RILM (Music), Bio-One Online, and Middle Search Plus (Education).

☺ The students and faculty from our Music department remain our most visible ambassadors, performing before over 60,000 people, including appearances in many Pennsylvania counties, other states, and several countries.

☺ This spring, Mansfield recognized 111 students for their academic accomplishments as part of the annual academic honors ceremony and reception.

"How can anyone rationally argue that a baseball player should get a college scholarship, but not a piano player? What does it say about a college's regard for art, literature, drama, and music if young painters, writers, actors and musicians are not eligible for the same rewards as are athletes?"

- Frank DeFord (Senior writer, *Sports Illustrated*)

☺ Mansfield is the host academic institution in planning a Keystone Innovation Zone to enhance university-business partnerships in this region.

☺ Wireless access is now available across the campus. Students and faculty made nearly 10,000 wireless connections to the network during the academic year.

☺ Many of Mansfield's accredited programs, including dietetics, nursing, social work, teacher preparation, and others hosted successful site visits by their respective accrediting agencies.

☺ The Student Success Task Force has identified over 170 actions for improving student experiences and supporting success from recruitment through graduation.

☺ A team from the Admissions Office, Multimedia Services, and the IT Department have produced Mansfield University's first video postcard. This is being sent to 50,000 prospective students for Fall 2007 via e-mail. (Relax, they won't *all* come!)

☺ Mansfield University was selected by the McKelvey Foundation to host the McKelvey Summer Abroad Program. This year's inaugural class, including 18 students from Mansfield and 10 other colleges, is just back from three weeks at Lincoln University in England, under the guidance of Professor Joe Murphy of our Music Department.

☺ The number of students given direct instruction in library use increased 99% over the previous year.

☺ Eleven students finished the honors program during the 2005-06 academic year. The Honors Program includes collaborative and innovative projects as well as field-based educational experiences culminating in a Senior Research Project presented to the community during the senior year.

☺ At the SpringBoard technology workshop in May 2006, 45 Mansfield faculty members learned about what their colleagues are doing with technology tools in their classes.

☺ We have improved numerous academic processes, including the review of academic integrity violations, review of student petitions, the Academic Standards Review Board, and required reviews of temporary and post-tenure faculty.

☺ Mansfield has established international student exchanges with 12 different countries for the 2006-07 year.

☺ We successfully initiated a comprehensive program of data collection, including a senior survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement, survey of first-year students, and an annual alumni survey. This information will provide valuable decision support and assessment information for accreditation requirements. There is also now an institutional fact book, updated annually.

☺ From the new senior survey, we learned that 89% of new graduates are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience at Mansfield University, and 93% are satisfied or very satisfied with their major.