Dear Colleagues,

I want to welcome you to the Fall 2008 semester! The beginning of a new term comes with new initiatives and opportunities. Our division has demonstrated that we are here for students in a variety of capacities; whether it is assisting new students with Move-In Day, guiding students to classes through Huskies Helping Huskies, or continuing to provide an open-door policy for students who enter into our departments seeking assistance.

The State of the Division highlighted our 2008-2009 annual priorities for the Division of Student Affairs. These priorities are as follows:
1. Identify and respond to students’ needs and expectations regarding technology.
2. Design and initiate a division-wide, competency based training and employment program for undergraduate students.
3. Institute and implement initiatives focused on the retention of students.
4. Launch a campus-wide initiative to elevate the dialogue on diversity, race, and conflict.
5. Introduce the Redefining Community initiative.
6. Develop and host the inaugural “Institute for Career Advancement in Student Affairs.”
7. Develop the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.

As a division, our strength and endurance has been highlighted through trying times, yet we return to this academic year with a renewed enthusiasm for our mission and core values. I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your continuing dedication to our students. We, as the Division of Student Affairs, have a lot of history about which we can be proud, but what I am most excited about is our future!

Let us continue Forward, Together Forward...

Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

Northern Pact

Committing to a community that is JUST, CARING, OPEN, DISCIPLINED, and CELEBRATIVE! The Northern Pact is a Student Affairs initiative designed to help students understand what is expected of them as members of the NIU community. This initiative involves a large-scale marketing campaign utilizing Northern Pact posters placed around the campus. Almost 5,000 students have signed the pledge and received a Northern Pact t-shirt and discount card for purchases from our local sponsors.

The Northern Pact Web site linked to the Student Affairs homepage contains entertaining videos featuring students and Student Affairs professionals illustrating the principles in short clips that mimic the Geico commercials.

Watch for additional activities that are being planned to keep the Northern Pact front and center throughout the year.
**NIU Selected for Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year Self-Study**

NIU will participate in a two-year guided self-study and improvement process designed to enhance the institution’s ability to realize its goals for first year students’ learning, success, and persistence. NIU staff and faculty will work in conjunction with the staff of the National Policy on the First Year of College, whose Executive Director is John N. Gardner, widely respected as the founder of the National Resource Center on the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

The **Foundations of Excellence®** process will enable NIU to take a sustained, focused look at all components of the first year to determine which are appropriate and working well, and which need to be changed. The engine of the process is the Foundations of Excellence® task force, a group that has broad representation across the University.

The work of the task force begins with a campus audit of the first year, continues with an in-depth process of the evaluation using the Foundations of Excellence® model and related performance indicators, and culminates in the development of an action plan for campus improvement. As part of the self-study, surveys are administered to faculty/staff and students to capture their views on the first-year experience.

Benefits of the process include:
- Revitalizing the campus’ approach to the first year;
- Considering retention in the larger context of first-year excellence;
- Extending beyond unit-level assessment to comprehensive assessment;
- Involving faculty in first-year reform efforts; and
- Linking Academic and Student Affairs in a collegial process.

Denise Rode, Director of Orientation & First-Year Experience, will co-lead the NIU self-study, which will involve a core group of faculty, staff, and students organized into task forces around nine “Dimensions,” the elements that develop a comprehensive approach to the first-year experience, which include:
- Philosophy
- Organization
- Learning
- Faculty
- Transitions
- All Students
- Diversity
- Roles and Purposes
- Improvement

For more information or ways to get involved with the Foundations of Excellence® at NIU, contact Denise at 753-6781 or drode@niu.edu.
NIU Campus Child Care Celebrates 30 Years

The NIU Shirley W. Nelson Campus Child Care Center is celebrating its 30th anniversary this fall. The Center opened in 1978 with the assistance of some local early childhood advocates. This group, along with the Student Association, felt there was a need to provide on-campus child care for student parents who were trying to pursue an education at NIU.

Following is a brief time line of the highlights and accomplishments of Campus Child Care throughout the years. CCC initially enrolled children ages 2.5 through 5 years of age, providing only part-time child care. The original location of the center was in Gabel Hall 170 (a former kindergarten classroom). A second classroom was eventually added; and full-time child care, along with a hot lunch, was introduced in 1987. The center was also renamed that year, in honor of Shirley W. Nelson, the wife of former President Richard Nelson, for her role in helping to establish the center. The Center was initially accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs in 1992, and recently achieved accreditation through a reinvented system and much more stringent process. In 1996 came the completion of a five-year playground project (replacement of old equipment and the addition of a bike path and dramatic play pieces). Planning for a significant expansion and construction of a new facility also began that year, with the final completion in June 2000. While the center initially provided care for approximately 30 children, enrollment now averages 130 children each semester, serving infants through five-year-olds. A summer program for school-age children was added in 2002.

Campus Child Care celebrated its 30th anniversary in many different ways, including an open house, a photo display of alums (past and present), trivia questions for current parents, t-shirts with a new logo design, and a display of children’s art work at the Holmes Student Center.

“Childhood is a journey, not a race.” CCC has been on a wonderful journey, providing quality care and education to thousands of children and families throughout the past 30 years.

Women’s Resource Center

If you haven’t stopped by the Women’s Resource Center lately, you’ve been missing out! The WRC has an exciting fall line-up of programs and events about which we are very excited, and we hope that you will be, too. You’ll also be seeing our undergraduate and graduate student staff members around campus hosting programs, helping with presentations, and doing outreach activities to help spread the word about all of the great things we have going on at the WRC. We’re everywhere these days!

In addition to the continuation of our successful program series from last year, including Knitting Night and Selfless Saturdays, we have several new events that we hope you’ll find of interest. On October 13th, we’re partnering with RHA to host a self-defense class especially for residential women students with the founder of “Girls Fight Back!” We’re also honoring students who make the powerful choice to vote in this year’s presidential election by hosting a Voter Appreciation Day and Election Night Watch Party. We’re out pounding the pavement as well, taking our show on the road to help with CA programs in the residence halls, and hosting several of our regular events in different venues around campus to raise the WRC’s visibility.

We hope that if you haven’t been to the WRC building in recent months (or years!) you’ll make the time to stop in and say hello. We have new faces in the office, a newly renovated lounge area, and many, many other great changes. We’re not the same old Women’s Resource Center, and we hope you will be as excited about our new look and feel as we are.