Quarterly Report
To the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees
Friday, March 24, 2006
By Robert M. Smith, President

Let me begin by acknowledging this is the last official meeting for Council Member Angelé Waugaman. We all thank Angelé for her exceptional advocacy on behalf of the students of Slippery Rock University and her important contributions to the good work of the Council. Angelé’s dedication to the Advancement Committee promises to continue long after her official service to the campus ends. She will also be remembered as the first student trustee to serve as an elected officer of the Council. We all wish her the very best and congratulate her for an outstanding career at Slippery Rock University.

This is also the last Council of Trustee meeting for Dr. Robert Watson, Vice President for Student Life. Dr. Watson completes 34 years of exceptional service to the university at the end of this month. His leadership, commitment, and dedication to the university will be missed.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Constance L. Foley will join us July 1, 2006, as our next Vice President for Student Life. Dr. Foley is currently the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at Florida Atlantic University. At FAU, she has been responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive student development/student support program at a large diverse university. She brings considerable experience to our programs. In addition to eight years at FAU, she was at Kent State University for eight years and at the University of San Francisco for three years. Dr. Foley has a Doctor of Education degree from Arizona State University, masters from Syracuse, and a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics from the University of Michigan.

We began the second semester with our thirteenth consecutive semester of enrollment increases since the implementation of our enrollment management plan in Fall, 1999. The headcount increase for Spring, 2006 is up 3.4% to 7,609 students. The credit hour increase is up 2.7%. These numbers help our fragile budgetary circumstances.

Prospective enrollment for Fall, 2006 looks very promising. Applications are up 23% overall and the admission acceptance rate is 59% (compared to 63% last year) as we continue our commitment to admitting academically talented students. Of special interest are increases in applications among African-Americans (up 41%) and transfer students (up 33%). We are anticipating holding our enrollment increase to a one percent growth as a result of limited space and resources.

In the past three months, we have continued our work to manage the expected budget shortfall for 2006-07. At this point, we are anticipating a $2 million deficit. The most dramatic and painful steps completed since our last report to the Council were to close eight varsity sport
programs effective with the coming academic year. We announced on January 30, 2006, that we will end competition in golf, all of our water sports (swimming and water polo), field hockey, men’s tennis, and wrestling.

Our decision to eliminate these programs was driven by the necessity to effectively manage the institution’s fiscal resources in a time of significant budgetary constraints without eroding our commitment to academic quality. We have been evaluating our athletic program since 2001, listening to a variety of internal and external committees, who recommended it was time to act.

Following the announcement, our first priority was to serve as well as we could the needs of the 122 students directly involved in these sports. We will continue the scholarships for up to four years for each scholarship student for those students impacted by this decision and who wish to stay at SRU. For those seeking a transfer to another institution to continue their competition, we have taken steps to help them with that process and removed whatever barriers might stand in their way to a smooth transfer.

At this date, we still have more than a million dollars to find by July 1, 2006. We are examining some academic programs that might have to be eliminated as well as cost-savings possible from various operational processes such as travel, cost of our vehicle fleet, campus energy usage, and assignment of overtime within our facilities operations.

We are hopeful that the legislature will increase the appropriation by one-half of one percent over the Governor’s recommendation. If this happens, and tuition is increased modestly by the Board of Governors in their July meeting, our plans should produce a balanced budget to begin the fiscal year.

While the budget demands a great deal of our time and concerns, we remain focused on our key university goals. One of those is to continue to enhance the value of the SRU degree. In the last three months, we have had five accreditation or program review visitations by outside evaluators. These professionals investigate the quality of our offerings and recommend accreditation status or program review improvements.

Accreditation is particularly important as a confirmation to the public that our programs meet the highest rigorous standards of the respective national organization within the discipline. We have been officially notified that our social work program has been reaccredited. We have been told by the visiting team for the dance program that we are recommended for reaccreditation. The team was very impressed by the working relationship between the faculty, students, and administration at SRU. They made a special observation of the “ethical compassion” found here in support of our students.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education also completed their program review visit and we expect recertification of all of our programs. The team found a number of areas to compliment including the Professional Development School model for field experience in elementary education. I think we should be particularly proud that the team found our “faculty to be caring
and concerned about student progress."

The College of Education also received very good news with the award of a $1.3 million grant to Dr. Claudia Balach for a three year program entitled "Systemic Program Reform Supporting Minority Candidates at Slippery Rock University." This program will serve as a model for recruiting and retaining teachers of diverse backgrounds.

The university continues to improve its efforts to diversify the campus. As reported earlier, applications from students of color are up. Within the past several months we have finalized a number of employment searches for the coming year. As of this report, we have completed hiring for eight tenure-track faculty, six female and three persons of color. We have also completed hiring for six managers, five of whom are female.

Our goal to provide a premier residential campus will take several giant steps forward in the coming month and years. Next month we will move into the new Advanced Technology and Science Hall. This new home to the departments of chemistry, computer science, geography, geology and environmental sciences will provide our faculty and students expanded space and new laboratories for research and teaching. The Advanced Technology and Science Hall will be first used for the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees meeting in April.

Since our last meeting, our students overwhelmingly approved beginning the design and construction of a new student union building. The current student union was built in 1968 for 3,000 students. With more than 8,100 students from a very different culture, the new building will provide modern and adequate services to compliment our new housing complex. We expect the facility to include a movie theater, improved dining options, retail stores (similar to a mall), expanded meeting rooms, and space for campus clubs and organizations to meet and work.

The housing project continues to move ahead of schedule. We anticipate two of the facilities will be open in the fall with a third completed by spring. Two model suites have been opened for prospective students and parents to tour. The final three planned residential buildings have now been sited and plans begun for the launch of Phase II construction in February, 2007.

Our third goal to establish financial stability was enhanced in several ways in the past few months. The Advancement Division added funds that moved the Campaign for Slippery Rock University to the 64% completion level. Significant gifts were made in support of several scholarship funds as well as a gift of a 30-acre farm valued at $209,000. The RLA received a grant from the Heinz Endowment to support completion of documentation for LEED certification of the building. This will certify the building as an environmentally "Green" building, a goal we have now set for all of our new construction on campus. The RLA has enjoyed a very successful past three months and bookings for the coming months have been very strong. There are now fourteen educational partners housed at the RLA facility.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Legislature has established a line-item budget to support the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education. The Center creates and disseminates
environmental education and materials to the public and assists in professional development for students entering environmental education careers. The final legislative approvals were made in December to put the Center on firm financial standing with a grant of $350,000. The Center has employed a new director who is diligently working to reassert the credibility of their programs within the environmental education community. The Center has relocated its offices to 164 Main Street in downtown Slippery Rock.

On the horizon are numerous special events of interest to our public and the Trustees:

**Kaleidoscope**
The annual spring Slippery Rock University arts festival will be April 19 through 30. This comprehensive showcase of our fine and performing arts programs as well as special presentations from around the nation helps bring spring to the campus. A full calendar of events occur each day of the festival. For the first time since the program began three years ago, the festival is self-funded as a result of the generosity of corporations and individuals underwriting the events.

**Harry M. Warner Film Institute**
Harry M. Warner Film Institute as a collaborative with the Lawrence County Historical Society and the Warner Theater District in New Castle will host its second film festival April 21. The Film Institute's purpose is to examine and promote both the historical and contemporary contributions of films and film makers.

**Academic Honors Convocation**
The Academic Honors Convocation will be held on Sunday, April 2, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. in Morrow Field House. Presidential awards will be presented to distinguished individuals including the President's Award for Teaching Excellence, Outstanding Service, and the President's Award for Scholarly and Creative Achievement. Over 2,000 of our students will be recognized for exceptional academic achievements this past year.

Mr. Marvin Hamlisch, Principal Pops Conductor with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra will receive the honorary degree of L.H.D., Doctor of Humane Letters.

**Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees**
Slippery Rock University is proud to be the host for the spring, 2006 meeting of the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees. We have developed a full program for April 27-28 on campus and at the Regional Learning Alliance. The featured presenters for the conference will be Mr. William Strauss, the author of numerous books on the millennium generation of students, and Mr. Dennis Yablonsky, Secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Special thanks to Trustee Van Peterson and Ms. Tina Moser for their planning work to make this a successful conference. I am confident that the meetings will present the very best of Slippery Rock University and our guests will leave with a favorable impression about our university.
Commencement
Commencement is scheduled for May 13, 2006, at 11:00 AM at N. Kerr Thompson Stadium. We anticipate awarding almost 1000 degrees in beautiful weather. Our Commencement speaker will be Ms. Mary Del Brady, President and Chief Executive Officer of RedPath Integrated Pathology, Inc. Ms. Brady, a '72 graduate of SRU, is an entrepreneur whose 30 years of professional experience include the founding and ownership of several companies in the services and biotechnology industries.

Prior to Commencement, Trustees are invited to a breakfast beginning at 9:00 AM in Boozel Dining Hall.