MEMORANDUM

To:       Paul Adams  
Anne Heineman-Batory  
Sandra Carroll  
Ed Foote  
Mike Frantz  
Maravene Loeschke  
Mary Beth Mullen  
Josephine Panganiban  
Anne Pelak  
Margaret Steele  
Deb Tindell  
Brian Whitman  
Nicole Witek  
Ann Zanzig

From:     Tim Gilmour  
President

Date:     May 16, 2005

Re:       Charge to the Task Force on Mentoring

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Mentoring Task Force. Our first meeting will Thursday, May 26, from 8:30 AM until 2:30 PM in the Miller Conference Room at the Student Center. Lunch will be provided.

Background
For the past year, the University has assessed progress toward VISION 2010. While progress toward the Vision 2010 goals has been excellent, a central conclusion from the review is that Wilkes must distinguish itself better in the academic marketplace if it is to achieve long-term strength and stability through an increase in its brand strength in Northeastern Pennsylvania and in the Mid Atlantic Region. Based on the results of a recently completed branding study, the President’s Cabinet, after consultation with all campus constituencies and the Board of Trustees, has concluded that a singular focus on the goal of “ensuring extraordinary student success through mentoring” could position Wilkes well in this larger marketplace. The Cabinet came to this conclusion based not only on the survey results, but also on the strength of mentoring activities currently in place at Wilkes.
For Wilkes to live its mentoring brand it must make available to students and staff at all educational and organizational levels the opportunity for short and long-term learning/support relationships. This single focus will clarify University priorities, and with the support of our branding strategy, create a sharply defined and stronger institutional identity. The focus on an exceptional student learning experience that is accompanied by unique and systematic mentoring opportunities will distinguish Wilkes and create a premier learning community of national reputation.

Task Force Leadership
This Task Force has been designed to be representative of the campus and its constituencies.

It will be chaired by Paul Adams and co-chaired by Mar Loeschke. An outside consultant, Ann Zanzig, has been retained to assist in guiding the work of the Task Force, particularly as it relates to the issues of the development of a feasible work plan and process improvement and systems design. Initial appointments to the Task Force will be for one year.

Committee Charge
A campus-wide implementation of mentoring will be complex and challenging. While we build on a superb foundation Wilkes, if we are to be a world class mentoring organization, in which mentoring is a core value, we must recognize that this effort will take us at least five years to complete. This is because, while we have some superb mentoring activities in place, not all students are assured that he or she will have an exceptional mentoring and learning experience. Therefore, it is important that the Committee adopt a process improvement approach to its work. In completing its work, the Committee must:

- Define an initial mentoring vision for the campus, based on best practice thinking.
- Define measures of mentoring success for Wilkes—should include measures of student learning, retention, graduation rates, job placements and satisfaction with mentoring processes.
- Identify current mentoring activities on campus; taking particular note of those activities with great promise and possible applicability in other units
- Map these activities in relation to one another and to other aspects of the student learning experience—remembering to do this mapping in manageable chunks—because all disciplines, the co-curriculum and all levels must manifest the mentoring brand.
- Identify gaps, conflicts and opportunities for collaboration for enhanced performance.
- Benchmark best practice mentoring organizations.
- Design and implement a campus-wide system for integrating mentoring practices into learning and living for all students.
- Continue improvement processes based on results as revealed by measures.

The objective will be to create a Wilkes’ mentoring system that assures that all programs are logically interconnected in a way that is comprehensible to all participants and characterized by:

- a clear purpose;
- visible support;
- a clearly defined mentor and protégé pool;
- defined mentor and protégé roles and responsibilities;
- pairing protocols;
- education and training programs;
• a mechanism for reward and recognition; and
• defined oversight, assessment and coordination.

The Committee will create a vision for mentoring at Wilkes; propose a work plan and budget for the next three years; and serve as a coordinating/steering committee to make recommendations on matters related to sustaining and further developing a climate of excellence in mentoring.

Timetable
The Committee will begin its work by May 15, 2005. A preliminary report will be made to the Board of Trustees on June 24, 2005 to include: 1) an early vision for mentoring at Wilkes; 2) a gap analysis based on the preliminary vision, an assessment of the current mentoring environment and best practices; and 3) a preliminary budget for implementation.

Periodic reports will be issued to the University community, the President’s Cabinet and the Board of Trustees.

I will be available to the Task Force as needed. I consider the work of this Task Force as absolutely essential for securing the success of Wilkes. I eagerly anticipate the results of your work, confident that your leadership will establish an outstanding national reputation for Wilkes rooted in an institutional mentoring culture. I thank you in advance for your willingness to serve in the ambitious and critical undertaking.