



From the President's Desk
November 26, 2008

Good morning. There has been an overwhelmingly negative response to my recent communiqué to the valued employees of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). It is now clear to me that we have erred in our attempt to find a balance between how best to observe the season in ways that honor all traditions – while also allowing employees to express their individual beliefs during the upcoming holiday season. As stated in my earlier message, there was no attempt to suppress expression of the holiday spirit. However, the message was received differently, and for this, I am sorry.

Today I am reversing my earlier direction regarding holiday decorations on the campus, and announcing a return to FGCU's past practice in which common areas of the campus may be decorated. Employees may decorate the common space areas in their departments and units, and of course also continue to decorate their desks and individual workspaces in observance of the holiday season.

Our decision this year could have been better informed by seeking broader input from our employees. I still intend to convene the representative group of faculty, staff and students during 2009 to discuss these issues and to develop opportunities for the University community to learn more about each other's traditions – not only in December, but throughout the year.

Please know that trying to adhere to tenets of political correctness was not the basis for the earlier decision, but rather attempting to achieve a difficult balance. I deeply regret any disappointment and hurt feelings this has caused, and hope that a return to FGCU's previous holiday decorations will ensure that all employees feel they may celebrate and express their respective holiday traditions.

Thank you.

Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D.
President