



## **PRESS RELEASE: Service-Learning Projects Provide Real-World Math Experience for Ferris Students**

**Betsy L. Musolf** to: Archive

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Good morning!

Here is a press release about an effort by Ferris State University assistant professor Victor Piercey to "erode cynicism" about math with service-learning projects that give students real-world math experience. Questions can be addressed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager, at (231) 591-2021 or [sandygholston@ferris.edu](mailto:sandygholston@ferris.edu).



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View the release online here: <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/october/math.htm>

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### **Service-Learning Projects Provide Real-World Math Experience for Ferris Students**

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University students in assistant professor Victor Piercey's Contemporary Mathematics class are participating in service-learning projects that teach math applications in real-world settings.

Seven teams of two or three students are working with one of five campus or community organizations on various projects during the fall semester. The organizations include Birkam Health Center and the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid on campus, and Big Rapids Middle School, Goodwill's Financial Opportunity Services and the Mecosta-Osceola Transportation Authority.

"These service-learning projects will help to erode cynicism about math and help students to develop a habit of mind where they will not want to avoid data," Piercey said. "I would consider this course a huge success if some of the students later in life get offered a promotion that requires working with data and that doesn't prevent them from going for it."

While students gain experience using math in an authentic setting, they also are helping the organizations. For example, students are using numerical data from Birkam Health Center to determine the most frequently used services along with their costs and benefits. The students also are comparing and contrasting fees for services and insurance reimbursement in the larger operating budget.

"The work that the students are doing for us is work that we would eventually do ourselves," said Renee Vander Myde, director of Birkam Health Center. "It's great to have the collaboration, because it helps us be more efficient while giving the students an opportunity to learn outside the classroom using their newly acquired math skills in a real-world experience."

Both Piercey and Vander Myde said they would like to see service-learning projects continue with future classes.

For more information, contact Piercey at (231) 591-2823.

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