

**From:** [Leah D. Nixon](#)  
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Included below is a press release regarding Ferris State University's announcement today (Monday, Nov. 9) that the university will fund the shortfall in student aid for Fall Semester 2009 created by the non-renewal of the Michigan Promise Grant and Michigan Competitive Scholarship. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

For Immediate Release  
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### **Ferris Helps Fill Gap in Public Aid**

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University announced today (Monday, Nov. 9) the university will fund the shortfall in student aid for Fall Semester 2009 created by the non-renewal of the Michigan Promise Grant and Michigan Competitive Scholarship.

President David Eisler announced that Ferris will provide financial assistance to 1,312 Ferris students who had expected to receive the Michigan Promise Grant to help offset tuition costs. Affecting 10.4 percent of Ferris' undergraduate student population, the university will provide \$1.15 million of financial assistance to students for Fall Semester 2009. This decision was unanimously endorsed by Ferris' Board of Trustees.

Additionally, the Michigan Competitive Scholarship funding was reduced by 50 percent. This impacts 616 students from Ferris who were identified to receive this scholarship. Affecting 4.9 percent of the undergraduate student population, Ferris also will fund this shortfall.

Ferris is scheduled to receive one-time Federal Stimulus funds in the amount of \$1.3 million, Eisler said. The Federal Stimulus funds will provide enough dollars to aid students who were initially awarded the Michigan Promise Grant and Michigan Competitive Scholarship for Fall Semester 2009 only. Kendall College of Art and Design will use \$102,000 in operational funds to aid its students initially awarded these scholarships from the state of Michigan for Fall 2009 Semester.

“Our students are relying on this support and have made their budgets based on the promise of these funds,” Eisler said. “The board of trustees and I believe billing students this late in the semester would constitute an unreasonable financial burden for them.

“From my perspective this is clearly the right thing to do for our students,” he said. “This is an important move on the part of the university to help keep a Ferris education affordable. With this action, the university has made it clear that our first priority is the education, well-being and support of our students.”

Board of Trustees Chair R. Thomas Cook said, “For students and families already struggling

to cover tuition costs, it seemed appropriate for Ferris to step up and provide financial assistance to students left vulnerable by the non-renewal of the Promise Grant and Competitive Scholarship funding.”

Ferris Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Fritz Erickson added, “Now, more than ever, students need our help and support to ensure they can pursue their education at Ferris State University.”

The elimination of Promise Grant and Michigan Competitive Scholarship dollars puts further constraints on students’ resources to attend college and affects students statewide, Erickson said, noting scholarship recipients come from nearly every county in Michigan.

One look at the numbers tells the story of students’ tough financial circumstances, he added.

Ferris saw a 13.4 percent increase in the number of financial aid applications, up 2,408 from 17,907 during the 2008-09 academic year to 20,315, said Financial Aid Director Rob Wirt. Applications for special consideration have increased 103 percent from 338 during 2008-09 to 687.

Of the special consideration applications Ferris has received, the university has helped 489 of those students applying for further financial assistance with more than \$850,000 in institutional financial aid. Ferris also has developed an initiative to raise need-based scholarship dollars. *Opportunity@125* marks the university’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration with the objective of raising at least \$250,000 in scholarship funding to be distributed during the 2009-10 academic year.

Should the state of Michigan pursue and be successful in securing other funding to support the Michigan Promise Grant and Michigan Competitive Scholarship, the university will use the Federal Stimulus funds to support all students at Ferris, Eisler added.

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