

For Immediate Release
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Ferris Invites Community to Give Your Two Cents Worth

BIG RAPIDS – Community members are invited to join Ferris State University faculty, staff, students and alumni in providing input on a comprehensive initiative to build the University's identity through clear and consistent messaging.

In response to comments members of the University community provided to the President's Planning Task Force on Communication in the fall, the University is moving forward with a major task force recommendation to create a consistent message/identity as part of a truly integrated marketing program for Ferris, according to Shelly Armstrong, associate vice president for marketing and communications.

"To maintain the momentum of our planning efforts and to better align our messaging strategy among our many constituents, members of our Strategic Marketing and Enrollment Committee, among others across campus, were involved in helping us select a marketing communications firm to assist us with this messaging piece," said Armstrong.

After a thorough review of materials submitted from 14 firms responding to a request for proposal and presentations by three of the firms, Pace & Partners in Lansing was selected to complete our messaging initiative in the next several weeks.

The Pace team will conduct two open meetings from 11 a.m. to noon and 2 to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, April 19, in the Rankin Center Founders' Room on the Big Rapids campus.

Pace will unveil five messaging options (taglines) based on three broad thematic positions: "Providing Opportunity, Unleashing Potential;" "The Practical Application of Knowledge;" and "Transformation."

Anyone wishing to express their opinions about which tagline(s) they believe best reflects the distinctiveness of Ferris, resonates well with all our constituents and has a long life span is invited to the open sessions, said Armstrong.

For more information about Ferris' messaging and identity initiative, visit <http://www.ferris.edu/news/identity/>. An online survey will be posted on the site early next week for those wishing to provide feedback on messaging concepts and designs.

Pace's founder, Dennis Pace, said increased competition in higher education, declining state support and the fact that the average teen receives more than 15,000 marketing messages a week necessitates changes in Ferris' marketing and messages.

"We've found that while many audiences have a growing awareness of the University, its identity has been lost in inconsistent messages as some units across campus have developed independent messages and identities that include a number of different logos and varying graphic standards," said Armstrong.

"This exercise will help us become more engaged in marketing as a University community; better align the messages of departments and our campuses; create a messaging platform that speaks to a broader audience; enable us to tell a concise, compelling message; set Ferris apart and elevate the status of Ferris among students, parents, influencers, employers, alumni, donors, legislators and prospective employees," she said.



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Pace agrees that there is still some work to do, noting that messages are still fragmented, the brand image is indistinct, and there are a number of audiences who are not addressed through current messaging.

"It's important that we identify a good tagline that illuminates the purpose of the entire institution, distinguishes Ferris from its competition, is a platform and gateway for messaging, and is a foundation for recruitment and image," he added.

For more than 26 years, Pace & Partners has assisted a variety of corporate, government and education clients ranging from Michigan State University to the Michigan Education Savings Program, Herman Miller to General Motors and the State of Michigan to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

- 30 -