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**To:** [Shelly L Armstrong](#); [Archive](#)  
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Included below is a press release regarding the new Ferris State University vice president for University Advancement and Marketing, John Willey, of Des Moines, Iowa. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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### **Willey Named Vice President for University Advancement & Marketing at Ferris**

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University has announced that John Willey, of Des Moines, Iowa, has accepted President David L. Eisler’s offer to become the new vice president for University Advancement and Marketing.

The selection of Willey, who brings a career of more than 30 years in higher-education and independent secondary education to meeting Ferris’ challenges, ends an extensive national search that began last summer after the retirement of previous Vice President Rick Duffett.

Willey has held such appointments as vice president for Institutional Advancement at Lyon College in Batesville, Ark.; vice president for Development and University Relations at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio; and most recently at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, where he served as special counsel and vice president for Institutional Advancement.

Willey has been a leader in higher education fundraising, marketing, community relations, media relations and alumni relations. Willey’s background includes a 48 percent, five-year growth in unrestricted annual fund giving at Lyon and two years of record fundraising at Ohio Northern, with total gifts that were 30 percent above the previous 10-year average. Additionally, Willey cultivated and secured the then-largest capital commitments in ONU history totaling \$5.75 million toward a new building to house the College of Business Administration. He later led Drake’s giving to a record annual level of \$23.4 million, which was the largest in 12 years and a 25 percent increase from the previous decade’s average.

“John has a long history of fundraising and marketing success, and has led multiple successful capital campaigns,” Eisler said. “His interactions here on campus showed in a very concrete way his philosophy that emphasizes approachability, patience, creativity and openness. These traits and his breadth of experience will, I believe, be a very good match for our needs here at Ferris.”

Willey received his undergraduate degree in history from the University of Georgia and holds a master’s degree in history from Vanderbilt University and another with an emphasis on nonprofit management/educational policy analysis from Columbia University. A former Peace Corps volunteer in Korea, Willey was a Japan Foundation Fellow at Harvard’s Japan Institute. He grew up in southwest Georgia, but he also has strong ties to the Midwest. Willey is the fifth generation of his family to live in Wisconsin and Iowa, where his great-grandparents were pioneer farmers.

“I am delighted to accept this opportunity, and my wife, Barbara, and I are excited to soon join the Ferris and Big Rapids communities,” Willey said. “Ferris State University is blessed with a rich heritage; an innovative mission, vision and values; a motivated student body; excellent faculty and staff; and outstanding leadership. I am looking forward to joining this family and to learning more from my new campus colleagues as to how we can effectively advance the University through marketing, alumni relations and fundraising.”

Search committee co-chairs Jeremy Mishler and Susan Starkey, with the assistance of President Eisler, assembled a 17-member group that reviewed materials submitted by applicants for the vacant position, being filled on an interim basis by Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications Shelly Armstrong. The committee was composed of representatives of the UA&M staff, the Alumni Association Board of Directors, faculty and staff, The Ferris Foundation Board and local Big Rapids residents.

“We appreciate the efforts of our colleagues on our search committee and throughout campus for their collaborative efforts which have led to the selection of John Willey to become the new vice president for University Advancement and Marketing,” said search committee co-chairs Mishler and Starkey. “We also would like to extend a special thanks to members of the community for their involvement and input in this very important process.”

Willey plans to begin his new position in mid-January.

- 30 -

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