

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
June 13, 2011

Higher Education Budget Passed

In a significant change from the past, the Michigan legislature passed the state budget in late May. As expected, funding for public universities was reduced by 15 percent. This represents the largest reduction in state support in our university's history. The budget included language that universities should not increase tuition by more than seven percent, and triggers further budget decreases for universities that do. Fortunately, a last-minute proposal to enact an additional five percent reduction for universities that provide partner benefits did not become law. The one positive item in the new budget is a \$6.4 million increase in support for the Tuition Incentive Program. Ferris educates many TIP eligible students, so the continued support for this among legislators is encouraging.

Included with the budget is a significant amount of intent language. Some of this will require significant effort and compliance will be costly. The final budget language also includes intent language on the development of a funding formula for public universities. At this point it is unclear how this will be created.

Optometry Building Dedication

Last Wednesday we officially dedicated the University's new Optometry building. The new facility reflects Ferris' commitment to educational excellence and providing important community resources. The dedication was the culmination of years of work by scores of people at the University. It was a great pleasure to have so many of them on campus to help celebrate this landmark moment.

Among those at the ceremony were past and present faculty and staff, students and alumni of the college. Among those offering remarks were Board of Trustees Chair Ron Snead, original faculty members Robert Carter and Michael Keating, former Dean Kevin Alexander, and Dean Michael Cron. The importance of the project to the profession was clear by the presence of American Optometric Association President Joe Ellis, and Michigan Optometric Association President Lillian Kalaczinski, a Ferris alumnus.

The building creates new opportunities for collaboration among students and faculty both in the college and beyond. This facility has long been a goal of our University. To see this dream finally become a reality is a testament to the determination of faculty and staff, University friends and supporters, and will help students for generations to come.

Summer Enrollment

There is very good news on summer enrollment. Initial enrollment reports show summer headcount up 3.65 percent, or 220 students, with a total of 6,245 students enrolled. Student credit hours are up 3.8 percent. Credit hour production is up 4.39 percent on campus, up 1.6 percent off campus, and up 5.76 percent on-line.

As you know, there are multiple terms for summer classes and these numbers will change, but the first report usually sets the pattern for the summer and is very encouraging. My thanks go to everyone for helping to make increasing enrollment a positive trend at Ferris. It takes the work of the entire community to create a university that is welcoming to students and offers the resources they need and expect.

Summer University

Please join me in thanking everyone who contributed toward making Summer University such a pleasurable and informative event. This includes the organizing committee, Warren Hills, Mike Cairns, Don Green, and David Pilgrim, all of our presenters, the staff of The Rock, and the many people who helped provide support. This year's topics covered issues related to professional development, diversity and wellness, offering a great range of materials for Summer University participants to choose from. During Wednesday's lunch I heard from many of you about the sessions you found helpful. Summer University is for you, and you help it succeed by attending. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this year's sessions and on what would be helpful for your future development.

Summer orientation sessions begin this week for our new fall students and their parents. When you see our orientation participants, please take a moment to help them feel welcome at Ferris State University. Likewise, our summer athletic and academic camps have begun. These are also prospective future students. Thank you for helping those unfamiliar with our campus in Big Rapids find their way and feel comfortable here.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President