

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
January 16, 2012

United Way

Congratulations to our students, faculty and staff for reaching the University's United Way goal. Together the Ferris community surpassed its \$67,000 goal for the Mecosta-Osceola United Way Campaign, with almost \$4,000 of this coming from students. Special thanks go to Dan Burcham, Linda Telfer, our many campus volunteers and student campaign leaders. It was your generosity and desire to help others that created this campaign success. The United Way is a strong force for good in our community, one which has become increasingly important for area families during these difficult economic times.

Bomb Threat

Last Thursday our University responded to a telephone message in which the caller claimed that one or more explosive devices had been left on campus. We took this situation seriously and decided upon the appropriate action to insure the safety of our faculty, staff and students. Currently we cannot discuss the specifics of the threat, because we are pursuing the person who made this claim. There were some very clear signs that this was not a legitimate threat. However, under the provisions of the Clery Act we are required to report any threat credible or not within 90 minutes of when it is received. Do understand that had the threat been more specific, or had there been some particular information left by the caller that made us believe the caller had taken genuine action, we would have reacted far differently. We have plans developed to use all of our resources to move people away from danger if or when it should occur.

We take safety very seriously at Ferris, so this was not a decision arrived at lightly. After the incidents at Virginia Tech in 2007 I began campus efforts to review emergency preparedness, and significant resources were invested in planning, preparation, education and equipment. We have instituted a range of procedures for reacting to threats, and we have multiple communication systems in the event of an emergency. On Thursday we used a number of those systems to make people on campus aware of the threat. A building-to-building search was conducted and we asked all members of the campus community to assist in being watchful for suspicious activity.

Thursday was a reminder that we must always be vigilant, up-to-date and prepared for emergencies should they develop. I want to thank everyone who worked very hard on Thursday to make certain that you were informed and safe. As with all emergency situations we will review the decisions made, actions taken, and consider ways we can continue to improve our preparation and response. Please know that we will continue to make every effort to assure that all members of the Ferris community can pursue their work and education in a safe environment.

Spring Enrollment

The fourth day enrollment counts are in and they show another semester of record enrollment for Ferris State University. Headcount enrollment is up 162 students, approximately 1 percent, to a total of 13,705. Student credit hours show a similar increase with growth on the Big Rapids campus and on-line. It is wonderful to see 80 more international students on campus than a year ago. The 4th Day Enrollment Report may be accessed here - <http://www.ferris.edu/president/newsletters/memos/docs/Spring2012EnrlSummary.pdf>.

Thank you for your continued efforts to help new students connect with the university community, and continuing students persist and succeed.

“College Tax” Articles

The Bridge, a website sponsored by the Center for Michigan, has been running a series of articles about higher education in Michigan and the cost to students of earning a degree. Their use of the term “College Tax” to describe the state’s disinvestment in higher education and the impact that disinvestment has on students has generated a fresh round of debate on this topic. A good overview article they published lays out the case for greater funding of higher education in Michigan - <http://bridgemi.com/2012/01/college-tax-burdens-students-state/> . The Bridge has an entire series of provocative articles about educational policy in the state, which can be accessed at <http://bridgemi.com/category/talent-education/> . While there are many news stories about higher education funding and legislative activity, these articles provide a good framework for considering this complex issue.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

I take this opportunity to remind you again about this week’s Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration that begins today and runs through Wednesday. You can access a list of campus activities and other resources through a link on the Ferris homepage. Please help commemorate the life and sacrifices of Dr. King by attending one or more of these events.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president