

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
October 24, 2011

Michigan Construction Hall of Fame

One of the special strengths of our University is the close ties between academic programs and the professional world. One outstanding example of this is the Michigan Construction Hall of Fame founded and hosted on our campus in Big Rapids. Inductees to the Hall of Fame are chosen by a committee representing industry professionals and the Ferris' Construction Technology and Management program. This year's inductees were:

- The late Edgar Boettcher Jr., founder of Boettcher Masonry
- Larry S. Brinker, founder and CEO, LS Brinker Companies
- John M. Clark, chairman of the Board and Charles J. Clark, CEO, Clark Construction
- William C. Verette, chairman, Champion Companies

This was the ninth induction into the Michigan Construction Management Hall of Fame. Each occasion is an opportunity for these pioneers and leaders in the field to reflect on their life, accomplishments and career. The extraordinary work by Clark Construction on our own new Optometry building is a very tangible reminder of the ways in which these extraordinary construction professionals impact our daily lives.

More information about the Construction Hall of Fame and its new members is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/colleges/technolo/Hall-of-Fame/homepage.htm> .

Higher Education's Economic Impact

On Friday I had the opportunity to speak on "Higher Education's Role in Michigan's Economic Future" at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey. As a member of the Ferris community, you know first-hand the importance of a college education in changing lives. At the core of my remarks was the fact that the United States is falling behind much of the world in the percentage of adults with college degrees and the Lumina Foundation's goal to raise that number to 60 percent by the year 2025. This would make our country a leader in the percentage of adults holding a college degree or credential. Currently we rank 15th in the world, with 41 percent of adults 24-35 years of age holding college degrees. In Michigan, that number is just 36 percent. This has a great impact on the employability and earning power of young adults, especially in today's global economy.

As I noted in my remarks, Ferris State University has long been committed to providing opportunity to those who want to change their lives through education. That commitment is as strong today as it has ever been and the numbers bear that out. Since 2002 we have grown 31 percent in enrollment and our improvement in graduation rates has been the 15th best in the nation. Through the Tuition Incentive Program we help hundreds of economically challenged students to earn their degrees. Regionally, we are working with Talent 2025, an initiative of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance to increase the percentage of citizens in our region with a college degree or credential. Talent 2025 has brought together presidents of the thirteen west Michigan

colleges and universities in regular meetings to reverse the declining trend of college degree completion. One of our first initiatives created a “reverse transfer” agreement between Ferris, Davenport University, Grand Valley State University and Western Michigan University, to help students earn associate degrees by combining credits from their transfer school with credits previously earned at the community college. Our first community college partner is Grand Rapids Community College. Over time we will extend this to others.

It is always a pleasure to strengthen our ties with partner institutions through such visits. I believe that the state’s institutions need to work together more closely through such agreements as reverse transfers. Sharing our experience is one way to begin this process. The full text of my remarks, along with accompanying slides is available online at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/presentations/2011-2012/> . I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on these ideas. Please send me a note, eislerd@ferris.edu .

Ferris Foundation Gala

On Friday, Nov. 4, the Ferris Foundation will host its 13th annual Gala Benefit at the JW Marriott in downtown Grand Rapids. The black-tie-preferred evening begins with cocktails at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. The Gala is one of the Ferris Foundation’s most important fundraising events and helps the Foundation to pursue its goal of providing access to a Ferris education to students through scholarships and other forms of opportunity.

If you have the ability to do so, I hope you will help support Ferris students through the Foundation’s Gala, and also enjoy an evening of elegance with other members of the Ferris community. A link to purchase tickets and other information about this extraordinary event is available on the Ferris home page.

Ferris Athletics

Over the weekend two Ferris teams extended notable winning streaks through some incredible play.

The men’s ice hockey team swept nationally 10th ranked Miami (Ohio) in a home series by scores of 4-2 on Friday and 2-0 on Saturday. The men’s team is undefeated for the season at 6-0-0. The start of the 2011-12 season is the best since the team’s inaugural CCHA season in 1979-80. Friday and Saturday’s victories were especially sweet as Miami is one of the teams that will break away from the CCHA in 2013 to form a new league. Our team next faces the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor on Thursday, Oct. 27, at 7:35. Comcast will be televising the game.

Women’s Volleyball, ranked 13th nationally, also had two victories this past weekend. On Saturday they prevailed over Michigan Tech 3-0 and on Sunday avenged an earlier loss to Northern Michigan University by beating the Wildcats 3-1. The two wins mean that team remains undefeated at home this season, and improves to 19-2 overall and 13-1 in the GLIAC. The lady Bulldogs next face Ohio Dominican in an away game on Saturday, Oct. 29, at 5 p.m.

Also, congratulations to Tina Muir who took individual honors at the women’s GLIAC cross country championships held in Ashland, Ohio, on Saturday. Tina was first by more than 20 seconds in the women’s 6K race. The team as a whole took second place in the 13-team field.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President