

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 6, 2011

Enrollment

Again this fall, there is excellent news to report in terms of enrollment. This fall a record 14,560 students are attending classes at Ferris State University, 9,970 of them in Big Rapids. We are especially pleased to have registered 200 more first time in any college (FTIAC) freshman (160 at Big Rapids, 40 at Kendall). There are many positives within these overall numbers -

- Headcount enrollment is up 1.24 percent
- New freshman enrollment is up 8 percent
- On-line headcount enrollment is up 27.49 percent and student credit hours (SCH) are up 10.85 percent
- First- to second-year retention of associate degree students is up 1 percent
- The mean ACT score for entering students is 21.9, up .5 from 21.4 a year ago
- Foreign student enrollment is up 28.4 percent
- Hispanic student enrollment is up 24.4 percent
- Students of two or more races are up 39.6 percent (this was a new category in the revised federal ethnicity reporting, and students appear to be comfortable using this designation)

There are also some areas where we have declines -

- Off-campus enrollment is down 1 percent (perhaps related to the way on-line enrollment is counted)
- African American enrollment is down 5 percent.
- First- to second-year retention of bachelor degree students is down 4 percent (Overall first-year retention remains steady at 70 percent.)

In these challenging economic times, continued strong enrollment at Ferris results from the hard work of people across our University and its campuses, especially in admissions. Ferris continues to be a university that students want to attend. It is exciting that in a time of continued decline in high school graduates we have been so successful in attracting new students. This fall there are 2,556 new freshmen attending Ferris State University. We also have nearly 800 students enrolled in purely on-line programs.

We are very pleased to have 76 new foreign students, 24 enrolled in the intensive English program. The bulk of the new students come from three countries - Saudi Arabia, Canada and China. Our office of International Education is having considerable success in attracting new students.

This is the 7th consecutive year Ferris State University has enjoyed record enrollment. One of the most important reasons for this growth is the difference a Ferris education makes for our graduates. As I noted in my Founders' Day comments, Ferris continues to be the fastest growing public university in Michigan. Since 2003 enrollment has grown more than 23 percent. We are educating these students and meeting their living needs with fewer employees than eight years ago. This is a remarkable achievement.

Our record enrollment highlights our success in working together to create an environment that is welcoming to new students and in which they thrive once they arrive here. These are more than numbers to be celebrated; these are lives that can be transformed through education. As a university community we can take great pride in this. (The fall 4th Day Enrollment Summary is accessible here -

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/memos/Fall2011EnrlSummary.pdf> .

New Semester

The trouble-free start to the fall semester was another sign of cooperation on our campus. From move-in, to the start of classes, to the many activities that took place during the first week of classes, I can't think of another year during which the first week ran so smoothly. I want to thank everyone across the university community for your work. Most importantly, your efforts are appreciated by our students and their families, which is one of the important reasons we continue to grow and thrive as an institution.

I want to share two examples, among many, of your extraordinary efforts. With increased demand for residence hall rooms, it was decided to open Miller Hall to handle the overflow. Many members of our housing, custodial, and physical plant staff worked very hard to make this possible in a short amount of time. Last Tuesday the Rock Café served 6,202 patrons. This is astonishing for a facility that seats 500 diners, 550 if people use the patio. Thank you all for making a difference.

Founders' Day

Another sign of our University operating well was the success of Founders' Day. We had beautiful weather and it was heartening to see the large numbers of students on the Quad. In addition to the many fun activities, this was an opportunity for students new to our campus to learn about some of the many resources available to them.

Again, the success of Founders' Day was due to the hard work of many, many people across a range of departments and colleges. I would like to specifically thank Stan Vallier and Ferris Catering for making our picnic possible. Miles Postema and the people from our Legal Counsel and Governmental Relations Office did a wonderful job of sponsoring and coordinating the Ice Cream Social. Mary Kay MacIver and the History Task Force made a lasting difference at Highland Cemetery, dedicating a beautiful new stained glass window at the Ferris mausoleum. I am told this window had been broken since 1973. The impressive number of people who turned out for that event is a testament to our founders' enduring legacy.

There was a wonderful feeling of community evidenced throughout Founders' Day on Thursday. This has become a remarkable event engaging students, faculty, staff, emeriti and community members. This event brings our campus and local community together in an afternoon and evening of relaxed, enjoyable fun.

As part of Founders' Day I offered some thoughts about our University's past, where we stand today, and the challenges and opportunities we face during the coming year. For those of you who were unable to attend my remarks at the Rankin Center, the text is accessible here - http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/speeches/Founders_Day_2011.pdf . I have also recorded a video version, which will be posted on the homepage later today at - <http://www.ferris.edu/> . These remarks are meant as part of our ongoing discussions about Ferris and how, in these rapidly changing times, to best pursue our mission of providing opportunities

for success to our students. I hope you will take a moment to read or listen. I would appreciate hearing from you and your thoughts on these ideas. Write to me at eislerd@ferris.edu .

Athletic Success

Congratulations to the volleyball team and coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm who swept the Ferris State Invitational Tournament last weekend, defeating Drury, Wisconsin-Parkside, Southern Indiana and California University of Pennsylvania. In this process they dropped only one game in the four contests. Congratulations also to the football team and coach Jeff Pierce, who defeated Hillsdale College 20-17 in an exciting contest Friday evening. Hillsdale had been ranked 25th in the nation entering the game.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President