

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 29, 2011

Welcoming Students Back

With students back on campus, fall semester is off to a truly energetic start. Although this happens each year, one can forget the way our campus is transformed when students return. It is easy to feel the excitement that accompanies the start of classes in the fall. While I enjoy talking to all of our students, I am always particularly interested in getting to know those just starting their college careers. They bring with them a special sense of potential and anticipation that goes to the very heart of our mission to provide opportunity. I also enjoy talking with their parents, hearing their hopes and expectations for their children, and their growing realization that college is a significant change in both their and their students' lives.

Even as we welcome students settling into our residence halls, we have large numbers of older students new to their studies or returning from a hiatus from the classroom. Increasingly we are welcoming students who are several years out of high school looking to learn new skills, or sharpen the skills they have learned on the job.

I want to thank everyone in Big Rapids who took the time to help new students by volunteering at our First Impressions booths and tables. When you are new to campus, it makes such a difference to have someone who can answer your questions and help you.

Many, many people volunteer for First Impressions. If you have volunteered this year or in the past, you know what an opportunity it provides to meet our new students and their families. This year's volunteers included Teresa Allen, Ashley Barrigar, Cindy Bauman, Marilyn Bejma, Richelle Boerma, Jacob Bouvrette, Dan Burcham, Mike Cairns, Nick Campau, Paige Clark, Laurie Daniels, Jon Dean, Vicky Deur, Kim Erickson, Teresa Fogel, Patti Fraser, Will Gasper, Destiny Gorby, Jody Greco, Denise Grinnell, Sherry Hayes, Lori Henderson, Kelly Hicks, Angie Hollister, Sharon Hopper, Elaine Kamptner, Steve Karnes, Dean Kludy, Sandy Larie, Beth Logan, Rick Manuszak, Angela McCane, Sharon Metcalf, Nancy Mettlach, Jeremy Mishler, John Monahan, Laura Monahan, Kay Moore, Kristy Motz, Paula Olson, Leeann O'Neal, Shanee Ramsey, Lori Rendel, Barb Renne, Carol Rewers, Angie Roman, Nancy Spedowski, Melissa Sprague, Steve Stellard, Frank Sturm, Deb Sweet, Karen Thompson, Deb Tice, Brittany Vierck, Judy Watson, Laura Wnette, Kim Wilber, Krista Wilcox, Leroy Wright, Deborah Yost and Heather Youngs. Experience has shown that with a list of this size that some names could have been omitted. If I did, please accept both my apologies for doing so, and my thanks for assisting.

Special thanks go to the First Impressions Committee which consisted of Mike Cairns, Will Gasper, Elaine Kamptner, Laura Monahan, Mark Schuelke and Debra Sweet.

A part of move-in day is assistance by Bulldogs in Action. These combined groups help students and families carry students' belongings into the residence halls. Student organizations taking part included - Alpha Phi Alpha, Alpha Xi Delta, B.L.A.C.K., Black Greek Council, Black Student Union, Delta Sigma Theta, Delta Zeta, Kappa Psi, Lambda Chi Alpha, Panhellenic Council, Phi Beta Sigma, Residence Hall Association, Students and Faculty from Graphic Design, Women's Rugby, YBBW, Zeta Phi Beta, and Zeta Tau Alpha.

In addition to this official helping hand, students new to campus will be asking many questions throughout the first few days of the semester. Please take a few moments to make sure they get the assistance needed to make their transition to our University as trouble-free as possible. This extra help can make an impression on them that will last years. I can think of no other time when working together is as important as this. Hopefully, our new students will become lifetime members of the Ferris community. Thank you for helping to make their welcome an extraordinarily positive experience for them.

College Visits

Last Wednesday Provost Fritz Erickson and I visited with faculty and staff of our academic colleges plus our Center for Academic and Support Services. Faculty and staff from our Kendall College of Art and Design heard from Oliver Evans at their annual beginning of the semester meeting. As the year continues, we look forward to further opportunities to meet with faculty and staff to learn about both the successes that have been achieved and the challenges that still face us. I also look forward to sharing good news from our various colleges.

Over the past several years Ferris has achieved the difficult feat of growing enrollment while also increasing admission standards and raising graduation rates. My thanks to you for making this most difficult combination of goals possible. Monday's Retention Summit had an attendance of more than 200 people and demonstrated both the interest and commitment to help our students persist, graduate and succeed. I look forward to continued engagement in this important effort to advance the mission of the University.

Hockey

Last week the uncertainty that has hung over the Central Collegiate Hockey Association caused by the establishment of a Big Ten hockey league and the National Collegiate Hockey Conference was successfully resolved. Ferris and four other CCHA member institutions - the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bowling Green State, Lake Superior State University and Western Michigan University - were extended invitations to join the Western Collegiate Hockey Association beginning in the 2013-14 season. The University and our Board of Trustees have accepted this invitation to join the WCHA.

At this point in addition to Ferris, Lake State and UA Fairbanks have also accepted the WCHA invitation. In expanding the WCHA, we join the University of Alaska Anchorage, Bemidji State University, Michigan Technological University, Minnesota State University-Mankato, St. Cloud State University and Northern Michigan University, which accepted an earlier offer to join the league.

I want to thank Athletics Director Perk Weisenburger, Coach Bob Daniels and Vice President Jerry Scoby for the time and energy they invested to help resolve this challenging set of circumstances. This is a very positive outcome to what has been a historic restructuring of NCAA Division-I hockey. An expanded WCHA will be an extremely competitive group of teams and we look forward to continuing the proud tradition of Ferris hockey.

Athletic Contests

Our athletic teams begin their regular season competitive schedules with several home contests on Friday, Sept. 2. Women's volleyball hosts its two-day Ferris State Invitational at Ewigleben Ice Arena starting with a match against Drury (Mo.) at 3 p.m. and against Wisconsin-

Parkside at 6 p.m. The next day, Sept. 3, they compete against Southern Indiana at noon, and against California (Penn.) at 5 p.m.

The first men's football game is Friday evening with the team's "Community Day" game against Hillsdale at Top Taggart Field at 7:30 p.m. Help support our men's and women's athletic teams by showing your support and attending one or more of these events.

Founders Day

Finally, I want to remind you take part in Founders Day activities on Thursday, Sept. 1. I will be offering some thoughts about the traditions and future of our University at 11 a.m. in the Rankin Center Dome Room. Following that we will have our traditional picnic on the Quad. At 2 p.m. the new stained glass windows in the Ferris Mausoleum will be dedicated in Highland Cemetery. Then from 4-7 p.m. an old-fashioned ice cream social will take place in the Quad. There are also many student activities in the Quad from 3-7 p.m.

Thank you again for helping our academic year begin so successfully. I look forward to seeing you at Founders Day and at events around campus.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President