

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
June 14, 2010

Higher Ed Budget

Last Tuesday, June 8, the state House of Representatives approved the Higher Education budget. This had been slated for approval the previous week, but ran into a snag over a proposal to require universities to report on any stem cell research they are conducting. In the end, the House approved the bill with the stem cell reporting requirement, and then immediately replaced it with a floor substitute that did not have the requirement. Perhaps more importantly the House version contains 3.1 percent more in funding than the Senate version, which reduced current funding by that amount. However, no source other than the general fund is identified for replacing the funds the Senate cut.

This bill has been rejected by the Senate and will next head to conference committee. In developing our 2010-11 budget, we assumed the University would be cut by three percent. As a result, we are well positioned to respond to the budget recommendation that results from the House-Senate conference committee. I will continue to keep the Ferris community apprised of these developments that can have such an impact on our University.

Dan Burcham

As you are aware, Ferris administrators are evaluated annually. This year, however, I began a more thorough and comprehensive review of vice presidents. This approach features interviews of campus stakeholders and includes the opportunity for input from individuals throughout the University. The first vice president reviewed under this method was Dr. Daniel Burcham.

In addition to the materials submitted by Dr. Burcham, and two extended sessions with him, I interviewed 69 people, including faculty, staff, students and members of the University community. I received additional comments via email, as well.

It is very encouraging for me to see how willing members of our University community were to participate in this process and to share their perceptions. I want to thank the many individuals who took part in this review of Vice President Burcham for their assistance and interest in the welfare of Ferris State University.

After careful assessment of this input and related materials, I am pleased to report this review confirmed that Dr. Burcham is perceived as a strong, effective vice president. Among his many successful efforts, increasing enrollment, improving student behavior, serving as a community advocate for Ferris and leading Student Affairs are all clearly recognized and appreciated. Dr. Burcham is encouraged to continue to build strong working relationships for enrollment efforts and to increase understanding and appreciation for the work of the division throughout the University.

In our conversations, Dr. Burcham has shared with me his appreciation for this review and for what he has learned from it. He expressed to me how much he appreciated the strong support that has been communicated for him through this process. He calls the review “self-affirming” in

that his staff and others understood clearly his goals and initiatives. He wishes to thank all his colleagues who participated.

Adjunct Faculty Status Update

Ferris State University administration and a group of non-tenured faculty seeking to organize a bargaining unit through the Michigan Federation of Teachers have agreed on a description of who would be included in the proposed Ferris Non-Tenure Track Faculty Organization.

Included in the proposed bargaining unit would be all Ferris non-tenure track faculty who provided direct classroom instruction at the Big Rapids campus for three or more credit hours per semester in any two semesters within the previous four consecutive semesters, or who are employed to provide direct classroom instruction for three or more credit hours in the fall and spring semester in the current academic year.

Approximately 80 non-tenure track faculty members who have been identified as meeting the bargaining unit inclusions and who were on the University payroll as of April 1, 2010 were mailed ballots last Thursday, June 10. The Michigan Employment Relations Commission will oversee the election and count the ballots, which have to be mailed back to MERC by July 1.

Closing Thoughts

I want to thank everyone who put in much work hard to make Summer University a success, including Warren Hills and members of the Summer University steering committee: Kathy Lake, Mike Cairns, David Pilgrim, Chris LeTourneau and Steve Stratton. Additional thanks are due to Lori Helmer, Bryan Marquardt and everyone in Dining Services for the great job they did in hosting this year's Summer University lunch at The Rock.

Another highlight of this time of year is the slate of weekly outdoor concerts by the FSU Community Summer Band, which consists of Ferris students, adult community members, and local student band musicians, and is conducted by Dr. Scott Cohen. Their concerts include a wide variety of musical styles and played in parks and other venues around the greater Big Rapids area. Please come out to enjoy the upcoming concerts at 7 p.m. on the following dates:

- June 16th at the Castle at Canadian Lakes
- June 23rd at the Big Rapids Band Shell
- June 24th at the MCMC Aux. Ice Cream Social - Centennial Park
- June 30th at the Big Rapids Band Shell
- July 7th at the Big Rapids Band Shell

On behalf of the University and Big Rapids communities, I extend a special thank you to Scott Cohen for his many efforts with the Summer Band.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President