

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
May 3, 2010

Service Awards

Last Wednesday's Service Awards filled the Dome Room to capacity. Thank you to everyone who attended. This is always a great event that highlights the achievements of faculty and staff. I want to acknowledge all of our employees who reached service milestones for their contributions to Ferris. Taken together, these faculty and staff represent 4,130 years of serving Ferris. Congratulations to all!

Five Year: Robert Aamoth, Theresa Beeckman, David Borck, Sandra Carey, Christine Conley-Sowels, Cook, Suzanne, Debra Courtright-Nash, Patrick English, Frederick Ennis, Tracy Franck, Wendy Franklin, Jeffery Gabalis, Bruce Gilchrist, Ann Gilley, Maureen Heaphy, Jeffery Higley, Susan Impellizzeri, Bradley Isler, Tamara Jackson, Lisa Johns, Claudia Johnson, Paul Klatt, Robert Kleeves, Sonya Knoll, Cheryl Kondziolka, Michael Korcal, Linda Lamontagne, Ramona Larson, Ho Lee, Joseph Lipar, Lisa McCarthy, Suzanne Miller, Hikaru Murata, Gregory Nicholson, Leah Nixon, Kelly Normand, Joseph Pacella, Debora Parrish, Alison Popp, Piram Prakasam, Rebecca Prunty, Theresa Raglin, Sarah Raguckas, Frances Rosen, Paula Rushford, Laura Seay, Marilyn Skrocki, Tina Smith, Helen Sobers, Melissa Sprague, Matthew Stanke, Paul Thill, Mark VanLent, Dean VanOstenberg, Christine Vonder Haar, Tassi Witbeck, Bonnie Wright, Michelle Yax.

Ten Year: Cory Anderson, Melody Armstrong, Mark Arnold, Catherine Arroe, Nancy Baar, Andrea Beck-Jones, Robert Bentley, Lisa Besemer, Brian Bowling, Deborah Buck, James Cook, Susan Cross, Blane Danley, Rhonda DeLong, Beverly Demarr, Gayle Driggers, Patricia Hackett, Raymond Hall, Katherine Harris, Lucinda Jackson, Timothy Jacobs, Kirsten Johnston, Michelle Johnston, Joseph Karafa, Richard King, William Knapp, William Koepf, Pamela Laprise, Thomas Liszewski, Karen Lobdell, Elzbeth MacLain, Theodore Mackellar, Jason Mason, Matthew McCarthy, Carla Miller, Marlene Mohnke, Frank Mondrella, Amber Morgan, Arlene Morton, Leeann O'Neal, Stephen Poland, Miles Postema, Carol Quigley, Connie Randle-Morcom, Deborah Roberts, John Robison, Karen Rohdy, Andrea Ruggles, Melissa Saunders, Janet Schmidt, James Scott, Dan Sims, William Smith, Gretchen Spedowske, Kent Sun, Vicky Taylor, Jean Tollenaar, Michael Troupe, Benjamin Upham, Stanley Vallier, Dean Vanloo, Susan Wancour, Carrie Weis, Gregory Wellman, Nancy Wencl, Helen Woodman, Shannon Yost, Daryl Young

Fifteen Year: Amy Buse, Shari Chamberlain, Ronald Greenfield, Bruce Hammond, Barbara Hampel, Kim Hancock, Sherry Hayes, Angela Hollister, Maureen Milzarski, Carl Shangraw, Curtis Smith.

Twenty Year: G.T. Behler, Charlotte Bongard, Gidget Cady, Kimn Carlton-Smith, Susan Cherry Scott Claerhout,, John Conati, James Cook, Ana Davila-Howard, Susan Davis, Charles Drake, Brian Estes, Gary Gerber, Joanne Gerst, Suellen Gifford, Richard Griffin, Sheryl Hickman, Kathy Hotz, Susan Jones, Roy Lane, Kathleen LeClaire, Randall Los, Bo Lou, Diane Maguire Marsha McDaniels,, Ronald McKean, Judith Mitchell, Richard Modene, John Pasquantonio, David Pilgrim, Ramon Robinson, James Rumpf, Dennis Smith, Donna Smith, Shirley Sundell, Debra Sweet, Kriss Tessin, Karen Thompson, Christina Ward, Susan Weaver, Duane Wilson, Thomas Worth, Faye Young.

Twenty Five Year: Thomas Adams, Gerald Battle, Joan Birkam, James Brown, Michael Cline, Joseph Compton, William Conrad, Dennis Finney, David Frank, Barbara Gilmore, Edward Green, Lon Green, Diana Hepler, Kenneth Kuk, Barbara Landreth, Robert Loesch, James Maat, Katherine Manley, Laura Monahan, John Noller, Deborah Obert, Colleen Olson, William Papo, Patricia Patterson, Jane Pedelty, Pamela Saunders, Tracy Schoner, Kenneth Starner, Caroline Stern, Jeffrey Stirn, Yvonne Thebo, John Vermeer, Christina Weber, Daryl Young, Charles Zimmerman.

Thirty Year: Ashraf Afifi, Edward Brayton, David Burns, Robert Burtch, William Carpenter, Cheryl Cluchey, Willard Duran, Mark Fribley, Robert Groh, Theodore Halm, Mary Herring, Marilyn Keigley, Annette Keyt, Beth Logan, Gloria Lukusa, Robert Lumsden, Bradley McCormick, Mary Murnik, Donna Myers, Nancy Robinson, Brenda Rouhan, David Russell, Colleen Sauntman, Allen Tetsworth, Michael Toles, Christina Vodry, Shari Wessels.

Thirty Five Year: Robert Carter, Sally DePew, Mary Gallagher-Eustice, Roberta Grow, Michael Keating, Robert Krueger, Paula Olson.

Forty Year: R.K. Agrawal, Roy Gifford, Matthew Klein, John Linnen

Legislative Testimony

Last Tuesday I presented testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education at the state capitol in Lansing. The session also included testimony from Grand Valley State University and Oakland University.

Speaking on behalf of Ferris, I talked about our University's 125 years of serving Michigan; our collaboration with community colleges to expand access and opportunity; the economic benefits Ferris generates; the decades-long reduction in state funding for higher education; and this past budget year's unprecedented decline in financial aid. My plea to legislators was to stop the erosion of financial support for university students throughout Michigan. A copy of these remarks is available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/house-2010.htm>

As with Ferris' presentation to the Senate subcommittee in March here on campus, and our earlier scholarship presentation in Lansing, lawmakers heard from first-year Printing Technology student Melissa DiVietri about the importance of the Tuition Incentive Program, which is facing large proposed reductions from the state. Melissa explained to the panel that the TIP program is helping her to become the first person in her family to earn a bachelor's degree, noting her roles as "a leader, a woman in the Engineering Technology field, and a survivor of a disability." She told lawmakers that, "My education is...another step toward success." For Melissa and thousands of mid-Michigan residents, the TIP program helps bring bachelor's degree access within reach.

I want to thank Melissa for testifying three times to impress upon our elected officials the real-world impact of the decisions they make in Lansing. She has become a very effective spokesperson for the TIP Program.

The Rock

The improvements to the Rock Café and have made a wonderful difference for our University in Big Rapids. Ferris' Dining Services has been notified that they will receive a Bronze Award in the National Association of College and University Food Services Loyal E. Horton Dining Awards Contest for Residence Hall Dining-Single Stand Alone Concept for The Rock Cafe. This is a national award and Dining Services will be recognized at the NACUFS National Conference in San Jose in

July. My congratulations to Lori Helmer and everyone in Dining Services for the remarkable work they have done with The Rock's renovation.

Faculty Contract Negotiations

Negotiators for the Ferris Faculty Association and University administration have been meeting since July of last year. Despite meeting more than a dozen times, the last four with a state appointed mediator, we did not meet our goal of reaching contract agreement by April 15th. I am disappointed that we have not yet reached an agreement and recognize that there is still much work to be done on a new accord before the current contract expires on June 30th. The teams have not met since April 14th, but another negotiating session is scheduled for May 6th.

We have invested significant effort in a series of relationship building meetings, beginning more than two years ago. From this effort we both know and understand each other better. I am hopeful that using this shared understanding we can discuss the difficult issues remaining and reach agreement. In these very challenging economic times we are committed to completing negotiations on a new contract as soon as possible. For those who would like to review our contract proposal and response to the FFA, these materials and other information are accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/fsuintranet/negotiations> .

Commencement

On Friday, May 7, and Saturday, May 8, our 2009-2010 academic year culminates with Spring Commencement. This event truly is the highlight of the year as we celebrate the achievements of our students as they begin the next phase of their life journey. Of the many times when I am proud of Ferris, commencement is the most satisfying – even as we say farewell to students we are sad to see go. Perhaps the only thing more satisfying is hearing news of their successes that their time at Ferris has helped make possible.

At commencement we will also be conferring an honorary doctorate upon Jennifer Ramsey Wallace “The TIP Lady.” Jennifer is Outreach Manager for Financial Aid Programs for the Michigan Education Trust. In that capacity she has helped thousands of students afford a college education, and has played a big role in helping Ferris expand the Tuition Incentive Program.

I hope that you can attend the ceremonies. And as we prepare to launch the careers of this newest class of Ferris alumni, I also hope you will take the time to thank our graduates for the hard work they have done to earn their degrees, as well as to improve our school and community. On behalf of all of us at Ferris, I wish all the best to the class of 2010 as they prepare to make their mark on the world outside our University.

Summer Wishes

The past several months have been an extraordinary time for the University. We celebrated our 125th anniversary, witnessed new building on campus and launched innovative new degrees. Beyond that, I have been extremely proud of our ability to work together in the face of the continuing decline of state support for higher education, as well as the nearly unprecedented economic challenges Michigan faces.

The coming months promise to be no less eventful. In the fall we look forward to dedicating our new Michigan College of Optometry building and welcoming students in to our East Campus Suites apartments. There will also be both new challenges and opportunities as we bid farewell to some of our senior staff members who elected to take the early retirement option. Most importantly, there will be a new class of freshmen and transfer students who will be looking for help and guidance as they begin their Ferris studies.

As we begin final exam week and anticipate commencement, I want to wish you a good summer. I understand that many of you may be just as busy during this time as the rest of the year, but I hope that you do find time to relax and spend time with family and friends – and thank you for your work during this past year.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President