

## President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
March 1, 2010

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This is traditionally a very busy time with many midterms scheduled as the first half of the semester moves toward spring break. This week we are honored to welcome Ms. Naomi Tutu, daughter of Nobel Peace Prize laureate and anti-apartheid activist Desmond Tutu, to Ferris State University. Ms. Tutu will speak on the topic of "South Africa: Healing the Wounds of Racism" Tuesday, March 2, 11 a.m. at Williams Auditorium.

Ms. Tutu's visit is sponsored by the Globalization Initiative, Office of Multicultural Student Services, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and the International Student Center with funds from the Diversity and Inclusion Office. A superb video has been prepared by our Television and Digital Media Production students on Apartheid, South Africa, Naomi Tutu and her father. This features the comments of faculty members Avesh Raghundian, Optometry; Lucy Ngoh, Pharmacy; and Dan Noren, Humanities, who have firsthand experience with South Africa, together with comments by Chief Diversity Officer, David Pilgrim. It is accessible here - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/globalization/tutu/> and I recommend it to you highly. This is excellent work.

The Globalization Initiative is bringing synergy to the resources and activities we already have at Ferris State University. This work emphasizes the commitment in our mission statement to the global economy and in our values to diversity. I am pleased the Globalization Initiative has evolved into a sustainable and strong resource on our campus. We should all congratulate Piram Prakasam, Physics faculty member, and his colleagues for their continued success in building an awareness of globalization at our University. I encourage you to learn more about their efforts at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/globalization/>

### **Senate Higher Education Subcommittee**

While much of recent political activity in Michigan has focused on potential gubernatorial candidates, state budget hearings have begun. We are pleased to welcome the Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee to campus Monday, March 8, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in IRC, Room 109. I will be offering testimony on behalf of the University from 10:30-11 a.m. My remarks will focus on Ferris State University's 125 years of providing educational opportunity, the decade-long decline in state support of higher education, and last year's devastation of state student financial aid funding. The decline of state financial aid is particularly stunning and could continue this year with a proposed major reduction for Tuition Incentive Program (TIP Scholars) at public universities. In addition to Ferris State University, the agenda includes remarks from Lake Superior State University and Central Michigan University.

### **H1N1 Virus**

Thankfully, so far the incidence of the H1N1 virus has been much lower and milder than was originally anticipated. However, the World Health Organization recently advised that the H1N1 flu outbreak has yet to peak. The Web site for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>, has much good information. Among the steps the CDC calls for to keep the outbreak from spreading includes regular hand-washing with soap and water or an alcohol-based rub, and staying home except to get medical attention if one has flu-like symptoms. Students and others here will be traveling during the upcoming break, and may come

in contact with the virus. Remaining vigilant about the H1N1 flu will help assure that we do not provide opportunities for the virus to spread.

### **Campus Activity**

Our campus in Big Rapids was one of continual activity this past weekend. Friday evening included the annual Friends of Ferris Gala, the annual production of the Vagina Monologues as part of the 2010 V-Day Campaign, a Trumpet Recital and a foreign film as part of the Festival of the Arts, and the ice hockey game against Western Michigan. The Friends of Ferris benefits our political action committee. I want to extend my thanks to Vice President and General Counsel Miles Postema, AFSCME President Tom Weaver, and to all the members of our faculty, staff, and community who helped plan and promote this very successful evening. Supporting the Friends of Ferris helps our University be an active participant in shaping policy for higher education and in bringing resources to our educational efforts.

On Saturday we had one of the largest turnouts ever for the Honors Invitational, an essay competition for high school seniors applying to our Honors Program. Congratulations to faculty members Maude Bigford, John Cullen and Kent Sun for their success in attracting these academically talented students to our campus. This was also the weekend for the regional Rube Goldberg competition, which featured not only the Ferris team, but also a high school competition. This year's theme appropriately builds a complex machine to squeeze sanitizer on a person's hands. Professor Tom Hollen has been the leader for the Rube Goldberg effort, and it was good to see the remarkably ingenious efforts of these high school teams. Also on Saturday there was a Children's Dental Health Fair sponsored by our dental hygiene student association.

On Saturday, women's and men's basketball and men's ice hockey teams concluded their regular season schedules. Our women's team closed with a strong victory over Wayne State, while men's basketball continues into the postseason with a GLIAC playoff game at Saginaw Valley on Tuesday. The ice hockey team finished the season in third place of the CCHA, their best performance in the past seven years. With this they have earned a first round playoff bye and will return to action in Ewingleben Ice Arena on Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, when they host a best of three game quarterfinal series here.

Finally, the Festival of the Arts concluded its third season on Sunday with a wonderful concert and closing ceremonies at Big Rapids High School. Last week's Art in the Holocaust series was for me a very emotional series of explorations on the intersection of art and human tragedy. Much of the credit for the success of the Festival of the Arts goes to Professor Bruce Dilg, architectural technology, who has revived this Ferris tradition, and made it a vibrant effort in the depths of winter here in Big Rapids. This truly is a labor of love in which Bruce is assisted by Scott Cohen, music; Carrie Weis, Rankin Art Gallery; Bill Donahue, retired, music; and community members, Mark Gifford and Ed Mallett. The Festival of the Arts included 77 events in 32 days here in Big Rapids.

If you will be taking vacation during spring break, please accept my best wishes for rest, relaxation, and most of all, safe travels.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President