

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
February 8, 2010

Budget

Last Wednesday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm gave her final State of the State address, in which she touched upon some of the ways Michigan's economic downturn has affected higher education. On Thursday of this week, Bob Emerson, state budget director, is scheduled to release a more detailed proposal for the 2011 budget that needs to balance a projected revenue deficit of at least \$1.6 billion. Elements of the executive budget are expected to focus on the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System. The Governor has already called for incentives to encourage some 7,000 state employees and 39,000 public school employees to take early retirement, and an increase to the amount retirees would contribute toward their healthcare coverage. The specific application of these proposals to public university employees is still unclear, so we will carefully examine the information released on Thursday and share this with you when more details are available.

Healthcare and downsizing are becoming common themes among what will be competing proposals. This summer House Speaker Andy Dillon proposed consolidating healthcare coverage for all state employees into a single central system. Last month Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop proposed a budget plan that included an increase in healthcare premiums for public employees to 20 percent of the cost and a three-year, five percent cut in salary for state employees. These proposals would most likely require an amendment to the Michigan Constitution.

In her speech Governor Granholm called for re-institution of the Michigan Promise Scholarship in a redesigned form. This would be a most welcome action for our students. Combined legislative actions last year reduced student financial support from the state by 54 percent.

The Governor also called for the legislature to pass the 2011 budget by July 1. This would be a great help to universities, which regularly have to set their own budgets without knowing what the level of state support will be. However, given the lack of agreement on a plan for budget reductions and whether that plan will include increased revenue measures, achieving the July 1 target date will present a significant challenge to lawmakers.

When there is more clarity on possible details for the state budget, I will schedule an additional series of budget forums. In the interim I have encouraged vice presidents and deans to hold budget meetings, to continue sharing information and answering your questions. If you were unable to make it to one of the budget forums I held in January, the information, including a narrated version, is accessible here - <http://www.ferris.edu/president/BudgetF09.htm> .

Globalization Initiative

This week Ferris' Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Globalization Initiative are hosting the Honorable Ugur Kenan Ipek, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey at two different events. He will first address areas of opportunity and challenge in Turkish foreign policy in an address entitled, "What lies ahead for the U.S., Europe, & Turkey?" This will take place on

Tuesday, February 9, from 11:00-11:50 a.m. in BUS 111. Later that same day, from 2-4 p.m., there will be a discussion and reception for the Consul General in the International Center, FLITE 404. Both of these events are free and open to the public.

The Globalization Initiative, which seeks to advance the global goals of the University's Mission and Vision statements, has developed an engaging series of events on our campus. Physical Sciences professor Piram Prakasam began organizing faculty, staff and students to pursue global topics in the spring of 2009. He is assisted by a steering committee that includes Tracy Busch, Humanities; Enid Carlson- Nagel, Academic Affairs; Patrick English, Automotive Service Technology; Janel Lockwood, International Students; Andy Karafa, Social Sciences; Rebecca Sammel, Languages and Literature; Todd Stanislav, Faculty Center Teaching Learning; and Michael Wade, Multicultural Student Services.

In addition to the lecture series, and more informal discussions on globalization, the Initiative is also collecting research findings, analyses and reflections on globalization in the form of a white paper, and compiling a directory of resources, especially faculty experts, on globalization. More information on the efforts of the Globalization Initiative is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/globalization/> .

Ferris student and Turkish native Ahmet Kursad Demir played an instrumental role in bringing the Consul General to Ferris. Ahmet has been very involved in the Globalization Initiative, and has himself a first-hand understanding of different cultures through his play in tennis tournaments across Europe and the Middle East. Ahmet's active involvement is just one example of the benefits that come from our University striving to promote a welcoming environment for international students.

My thanks to Professor Prakasam, Ahmet Demir and everyone serving on the Globalization Initiative Committee for helping to make the Counsel General's visit possible. An introductory video "Going Global - Turkey," produced at Ferris is accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/globalization/turkey/> .

Good News

Although Michigan faces significant challenges, there are many extraordinary things taking place at Ferris. For example

- The College of Education and Human Services received \$47,000 from a King-Chavez-Parks Morris Hood grant which provides funding to ensure that education students from underrepresented populations successfully complete their teacher education program.
- Energy Works Michigan has awarded Ferris State University funds to participate in their Post-Secondary Program: Outreach & Education in Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy. The Program links 30 high schools participating in the statewide Michigan Renewable Schools Program to green jobs training.
- Tot's Place received notification that their application for re-accreditation through the National Association of the Education of Young Children was approved through Dec. 1, 2014. Tot's Place was the first center within a 60 mile radius of Big Rapids to receive accreditation in 2004, and now is the first center to have achieved re-accreditation under new, more stringent criteria.

- The Higher Learning Commission is on campus today and tomorrow as part of efforts to offer the Ed.D. in Community College Leadership.
- The Printing Industries of Michigan honored Professor Pat Klarecki with the Benjamin Franklin Award of Excellence.
- The Welding Engineering Technology program recently received ABET accreditation. They are the only accredited program of their kind in the country.
- Both the East Campus Apartments project and the Michigan College of Optometry building are major economic stimuli for our area, with 64 percent of the Apartment and 79 percent of the Optometry Building contracts awarded to firms within 60 miles of Big Rapids.
- Sara Sciba, a Kendall Art Education student, has been awarded the National Art Education Association Higher Education Outstanding Student Achievement Award. Only one award is made nationally and Sara is the first recipient from Michigan.
- Saturday our men's basketball team defeated the team from the University of Findlay. Findlay is the defending national champions for NCAA Division II. This was the first victory for our men against Findlay in the eleven-year history of Wink Arena.

A complete list of the most recent Good News items from across the University is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/GoodNews/GN020310.pdf>.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the work of Carrie Weis, director of the Rankin Center Gallery, as a member of the Executive Board for the Festival of the Arts. She was not included in my last University-wide Message in this capacity. I encourage you to participate in the Festival of Arts. For up-to-date information on the Festival, visit www.ferris.edu/festival.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President