

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 24, 2009

Welcome Back

It is a pleasure to welcome you back for the start of the 2009-2010 academic year – our 125th anniversary as an institution of higher education. In addition to the usual energy that accompanies the beginning of classes, we also begin a year-long slate of celebrations of our century and a quarter of providing educational opportunities. These events begin on September 1 with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Ferris mausoleum at Highland View Cemetery. There will be many activities on Founders' Day, September 3, including a welcome back employee picnic on the Quad, two history panels, and a community ice cream social. A complete listing of anniversary events is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/125>. I invite and encourage you to experience this very special year in the life of our University.

New Faculty

At Ferris State University the efforts of our academic community are directed at the continued enhancement of our students' educational experience. Despite the challenges we face in today's economic climate and in the context of continued state budget reductions, I am very pleased we have hired 22 new full-time professors to fill existing vacancies and address some of the growth we have experienced. Our commitment to the highest caliber of instruction is one of the reasons Ferris has attracted record numbers of students. Please join me in welcoming these faculty members who are beginning their first fall semester at Ferris:

Jodie Bakus, Pharmacy
Brendan Callahan, Education
Barbara Ciaramitaro, Accountancy Finance and Information Systems
Luiz Costa, Electrical/Electronics Engineering Tech, Computer Networks and Systems
Daisy Daubert, Biology
Lisa Eshbach, Management
Katherine Girard, Nursing
Shirish Grover, Management
Kierstan Hanson, Pharmacy
Joseph Joyce, Industrial Technology and Management
T.J. Lakin, Humanities
Carole McKenna, Psychology
Susan Owens, Nursing
Christopher Redker, Social Sciences
Donald Reynolds, Accountancy Finance and Information Systems
Lindsey Root, Psychology
Kristina Rowley, Pharmacy
Mischelle Stone, Criminal Justice
Jerome Trouba, Mathematics
Kristin Walters, Criminal Justice
Eric Warner, Languages and Literature
Changqi Zhu, Biology

Thank you to the Faculty Center for Teaching Learning and to everyone who helped with last week's New Faculty Orientation. This week a number of informational opportunities are scheduled for faculty. I am especially excited that we will have Dr. Arthur Chickering on campus for a presentation Wednesday at 9 a.m. in the Dome Room. I can remember when his seminal article, "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," was published in 1987. A schedule of this week's faculty events is accessible at http://www.ferris.edu/fctl/KOW/2009/Welcome_Back_Week_2009.pdf

New Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

We begin this semester with a new Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Fritz Erickson, who officially took his post on July 1. Fritz brings more than 25 years of higher education administrative experience to Ferris. His most recent position was as Dean of the College of Professional and Graduate Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

I want to thank everyone in Academic Affairs and in our colleges for helping to make Dr. Erickson's transition to his new position a smooth one. If you have not yet had the opportunity to do so I am hopeful you will take time to welcome Fritz and his wife Jan to our University and community.

As we welcome Dr. Erickson I want to express special thanks to Dr. Dan Burcham for his extraordinary work as Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs. Given his combined leadership of Academic and Student Affairs, Dan was able to create new working relationships and strengthen existing ones between these two divisions to better meet students' educational needs.

State Budget

While this historic year for Ferris promises to be an exciting and energetic one, it is also the case that we face real financial uncertainty as well. Michigan has not yet approved its budget for the coming fiscal year starting October 1, and the projected budget deficit for our state has grown to a reported \$2.8 billion. Currently there are a number of proposals to increase state revenues, but further cuts in state services seem inevitable. A downsized domestic auto industry combined with a state unemployment rate of 15 percent makes balancing the state budget a monumental problem for elected officials in Lansing.

Last fall I requested a two-stage set of budget reductions. The first of those - a two percent cut in expenditures - has been incorporated into the budget adopted by the Board of Trustees in July. The second stage of budget reduction, an additional two percent, was developed last spring, and is in preparation for additional reductions during this year. It is likely that we will need to reduce beyond even this additional amount. The simple reality is that much of our budget at the University is in people. So, even as we welcome both new faculty and staff to our campus, there are a number of open positions throughout the University that are not being filled. Not filling open positions is a real challenge for our departments - and for you our employees. I appreciate very much your help and assistance in providing quality education and services to our students.

Closing Thoughts

Over the next few days the size of our campuses and educational centers throughout Michigan will grow rapidly as we welcome our students back for this special academic year. Thank you in advance for taking time to help our students, their families, and parents make the transition to Ferris State University. Pausing to answer a question, provide some experienced advice, or to help someone feel at home may be just the action that helps a student start off on a path to educational success.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as our University begins its second 125 years. Together we can and will help prepare students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Best wishes for a great year,

David L. Eisler
President