

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
February 12, 2009

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## Provost Appointment

It is a pleasure to announce that Fritz Erickson has accepted my invitation to become Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Ferris State University. Fritz brings an exceptional background of experience and accomplishment to our University. For the past six years he has served as the dean of the College of Professional and Graduate Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

Dr. Erickson earned his bachelor's degree at Western Michigan University and master's and doctorate from the University of Northern Colorado. He began his career as a public school teacher, taught 11 years at Millersville University of Pennsylvania earning the rank of tenured full professor, served as a department chair at Michigan Tech University, and then dean at Eastern Washington University before assuming his current position in Green Bay.

In addition to his leadership work at the university level, Dr. Erickson has been very successful in securing grant support for cooperative international projects, diversity efforts, and in encouraging student educational success. He is the author of 56 texts on educational subjects and technology. A full copy of Dr. Erickson's curriculum vitae is posted on-line at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/memos/EricksonVita2009.pdf>

Throughout the interview process Dr. Erickson received very strong evaluations and support from all constituencies. Our University community owes a debt of gratitude to search committee chairs Bob Loesch and Ellen Haneline, and the members of this search committee who organized and conducted an extraordinary search. Fritz will be joining our University on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Please join me in welcoming him to Ferris State University and his family to Big Rapids.

## Trustee Appointments

It is a pleasure to welcome Ms. Alisha M. Baker to the Ferris Board of Trustees. Ms. Baker was recently appointed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to serve a term that runs through Dec. 31, 2016. At the same time, Gov. Granholm reappointed board member Art Tebo for a second 8-year term.

Alisha Baker is a customer service manager at DuPont Automotive Finishes. She serves as chair of the Macomb County Chamber of Commerce Board. Alisha brings significant manufacturing and automotive experience to Ferris as well as a perspective from the Southeastern part of the state, which is home to many of our students. Having earned certification as a Six Sigma Black Belt, she is a superb addition to our board during this challenging time in the state economy. Ms. Baker is on campus today and tomorrow learning more about the University and touring our facilities. I am very impressed with her initiative and desire to become an active part of Ferris State University.

Art Tebo has served on the Ferris board since 2001, and is one of the University's greatest advocates. His reappointment provides important continuity to the board, which complements the fresh viewpoint that Trustee Baker brings. Art is the retired chief operating officer of Boyne USA Resorts, and is completing his second three-year term on the Michigan Travel Commission.

Board Chair Jim Haveman and I both want to express our gratitude to Gary Granger, whose term expired in December. Gary's expertise in architecture and construction was invaluable to Ferris at a time of major building and remodeling projects at the University.

Our board will be in town February 20<sup>th</sup> for committee meetings and the next full meeting of the board of trustees is scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Festival of the Arts**

I am hopeful you have already attended some of the Festival of the Arts events. They continue throughout the month with many varied opportunities. This weekend alone there's the play "Deathtrap"; the French film "The Valet"; a program to honor suffragist Anna Howard Shaw, who grew up in Big Rapids; and a performance by the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble. There truly is something that should appeal to everyone at the Festival of the Arts. I encourage you to attend and look forward to seeing you at many of these events.

Special thanks go to Bruce Dilg for his extraordinary leadership for the Festival of the Arts. His leadership team for this remarkable series of events include faculty member Scott Cohen, emeriti faculty Bill Donahue, and community members Mark Gifford and Ed Mallett. A complete list of events and other information is available at [www.ferris.edu/festival](http://www.ferris.edu/festival)

### **State Budget and "Food For Thought" Forums**

Today the State Budget Office presented the Governor's reductions for Michigan's 2009-2010 budget. As expected, there is a \$1.4 billion revenue hole in the combined general fund and state aid (public school) budgets for next year. There are many, many difficult recommendations in this budget proposal as our state struggles to deal with the economy.

For higher education a \$100 million reduction is proposed including a 3 percent reduction in operating support. At Ferris State University this is a \$1.5 million budget reduction on top of the Governor's proposal to freeze University tuition for next year, an action that would create an additional \$5 - 6 million revenue shortfall for our budget. An executive summary of the budget reductions is posted here - <http://www.ferris.edu/president/memos/BudgetOverview2009.pdf>

To provide you additional information and to answer your questions I have scheduled a series of lunchtime conversations about the budget and related topics. The first pair of "Food for Thought" forums are planned for next week. I hope you will attend on Wednesday, Feb. 18, at noon or on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 11:30 a.m. in the Rankin Center's Centennial Dining Room.

After Gov. Granholm's recent address on the state economy and today's budget announcement, these forums should be very timely. Please join me for food, light refreshments, and some important discussion about Ferris and how we will respond to these current economic challenges.

These are only the first steps in the budget process and there will be much dialogue, discussion and compromise in Lansing before the budget becomes final. As a result it is too early to reach conclusions on what the budget will be, but these proposals do truly give us cause for concern.

At Ferris State University we have been conservative in our fiscal management and are well prepared to address these significant economic issues. Together we will work through the challenges of the present while we continue to create the University of the future.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler  
President