

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President

December 4, 2007

This has been both an exhilarating and challenging semester at Ferris State University. While we have enjoyed having a record number of students, we continue to grapple with how to best plan for future growth given the continued uncertainty of state funding. I believe that Michigan in the long term will see strong economic growth, but the state is still struggling to diversify itself in terms of manufacturing, service and knowledge-based industries. Our graduates are playing important roles in all these areas, and students currently studying with us will be key in re-imagining the ways we innovate, educate and do business.

Diversity, Strategic Planning, and Provost Search

During this past semester I hope that each of you has had the opportunity to voice your feelings about the future course the University should take. We have concentrated on the central issues of strategic planning, diversity and our provost search for several months now to chart the best path forward. These efforts will continue during the spring semester.

Our Strategic Planning and Resource Council has held numerous campus forums at which members of the University community and other interested parties, both on and off campus, have been urged to share with us their visions for Ferris' future. Chief Diversity Officer David Pilgrim has also conducted many meetings and distributed surveys to assess the current climate in terms of diversity at Ferris and to further our commitment to being a diverse university.

If you have been unable to take part in these forums or efforts, please feel free to directly contact David Pilgrim at pilgrimd@ferris.edu, or SPARC Chairman Robert von der Osten at vonderd@ferris.edu.

Under the leadership of Ellen Haneline and Bob Loesch our Provost Search Committee has carefully reviewed the candidates and selected nine semi-finalists to interview before the holiday break. Finalists will be on campus in late January and early February.

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to each person who has participated in the development of the diversity plan, strategic plan and provost search. Special thanks go to members of the Diversity Planning Committee, Strategic Planning and Resource Council, and Provost Search Committee.

Fall Commencement

Fall commencement ceremonies will be Saturday, December 15th. Graduates from Allied Health Sciences, Education & Human Services and Technology will be awarded diplomas at 10 a.m. while Arts & Sciences, Business and FSU-Grand Rapids graduates will be recognized at 1:30 p.m. This is a special time of year when we salute our students and their accomplishments and celebrate your efforts on their behalf. I am hopeful you will join us to congratulate this fall's graduates.

At our commencement ceremonies I like to share student stories with the audience. If you know of an extraordinary graduate whose story would be of interest, I would very much like to hear about them from you. We will contact the student and only share their story if they are comfortable with me doing so. Thank you in advance for helping me to emphasize the human values and achievement commencement represents. Do you know a graduating student who deserves special recognition for obstacles they have overcome to earn their degree? If so, I hope that you would share their stories with me.

Holiday Reception

Finally, please don't forget the Employee Holiday Reception on Tuesday, Dec. 11, from 1:30-3 p.m. at the Rankin Center Dome Room. This is an excellent opportunity to meet and talk with faculty and staff from across campus. Along with good company, we will have desserts, refreshments and live music. Come join us and celebrate both the holiday season and the end of the semester.

Later that evening beginning at 11 p.m. we will be serving pancakes to the students in the Westview Dining Center. This is an enjoyable time and provides a welcome study break for our students. You are encouraged to join us. Additional information about this event is available by contacting our office.

If I don't have the opportunity to talk to you at the employee reception, please accept my wishes for a very happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President