

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 9, 2007

Today, members of the faculty are scheduled to begin voting on a resolution of no confidence in my leadership. As that process begins, I want to take this opportunity to address the allegations raised in that resolution, as well as my view of the state of the University generally.

The greatest disservice I believe this action brought about by union officials has done is to provide a distraction from the many remarkable things that are taking place at Ferris State University.

For example, yesterday four of our students from the College of Technology who won the national Rube Goldberg competition appeared on the *Today* show. Along with faculty advisors Tom Hollen and Dan Wanink, and a fifth student who is currently serving in Iraq, these students not only bested reigning champion Purdue University, they are acting as prominent representatives for the kind of education and opportunities Ferris provides. My thanks go to Rube Goldberg team members Tom Sybrandy, Matt Tomaszewski, Mike Dunakin, James Travis III and Fred Reinecke.

Reinecke's service in Iraq reminds me of the other kinds of service that Ferris students provide to our own community and communities in need. In just the last few weeks alone, our students have taken part in alternative spring breaks building houses with Habitat for Humanity in New York, and for people in New Orleans still recovering from Hurricane Katrina; Optometry students and faculty took part in a mission trip to Mexico to provide eye care services there; and players from both the men's and women's basketball teams helped raise funds for the local Special Olympics program with their second annual Head-to-Head and Hand-in Hand Game. These are only a few of the many charitable activities our students perform every year.

Recently, one of the faculty union officers called faculty members the life-blood of the University. Certainly teaching is at the very center of Ferris State University. Our founder, Woodbridge Ferris, was himself an educator who along with his wife, Helen, taught the first classes here. However, there are so many other groups at the University who work every day to make learning possible. From clerical staff to grounds people, from admissions to technology assistance, from professionals who provide health and counseling services to the many employees who feed and house our students, countless dedicated people provide a supportive environment where learning can flourish.

I believe our students are the life-blood of Ferris State University. From the freshman who enters Ferris directly from high school, to older workers acquiring new job skills to compete in a changing economy, the University exists to shape minds and transform lives. That is the reason we are here. Providing education is a noble calling. I believe all of us at our University are fortunate to be a part of this profession.

Several articles of the no confidence resolution are so vague as to make factual refutation difficult, so let me make this general point. I have worked very hard to advance the mission of Ferris State University. The outpouring of support both Patsy and I have received from the campus and Big Rapids communities has been indescribably heartening. While we feel personally grateful for this support, more important is the way the messages I have received underscore the deep feelings that students, staff, community members, alumni, and yes, faculty have for this institution. Our increased enrollment, increased alumni participation and increased fundraising all point to a Ferris community that is growing in size, in appreciation and in support.

Finally, attached to this letter is a document that goes through the no confidence resolution point by point and gives factual information that refutes the various charges. They are also posted online at - <http://fsunw3.ferris.edu/~eislerd/response.pdf> . Please take the time to review this information. I believe that when the facts regarding the allegations being leveled against me are examined, they will demonstrate that my leadership of Ferris State University has been thoughtful and well-reasoned, especially in regards to current challenges, while embracing a vision of Ferris State University that will provide new and exciting educational opportunities for generations of students to come.

Very soon we will confer degrees upon our newest graduating class. They are the professionals and innovators we need to tackle the social and economic challenges that face our state today. I am confident they will make a positive difference in the world. I am confident that Ferris State University will continue to make a positive difference for our students.

On behalf of the students we serve, I thank you.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President