

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 22, 2006

It is a pleasure to welcome you back to campus for the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year. There has been much activity over the past few months and I want to provide you an update on efforts on campus throughout the summer. Midway through the final week before classes, final preparations have been made for the return of students to campus, which begins in significant numbers tomorrow.

New Faculty and Staff

Last week was orientation for our newly appointed full-time faculty at the University. We are fortunate to have an excellent group of thirty teachers and scholars. On Thursday I had the opportunity to meet and talk with many of them and am very impressed with their background, experience, and enthusiasm. Please join me in welcoming these new faculty to our campuses -

Jason Alger	Kendall - Graphic Design
Paul Amenta	Kendall - Sculpture and Functional Art
Brian Brady	Technology - Manufacturing
Patrick Bishop	Business - Marketing
Mary Edgerly	Allied Health Sciences - Medical Records
Clifton Franklund	Arts & Sciences - Biological Sciences
Shawn Goffnett	Professional & Technical Studies
John Gray	Arts & Sciences - Humanities
Maureen Heaphy	Business - Management
Dane Johnson	Technology - Architectural Technology & Facilities Management
Jennifer Johnson	Arts & Sciences - Social Sciences
Josh Lotoczky	Optometry
Deborah McGowan	FLITE
David Marion	Business - Management
Jennifer Metz	Kendall - Art History
Matthew Moresi	Arts & Sciences - Humanities
Kristen Motz	FLITE
Glen Okonoski	Education & Human Services - Television & Digital Media Production

Meredith Palumbo	Kendall - Art History
Janice Prewitt	Kendall - Liberal Arts
Sarah Raguckas	Pharmacy
Steve Reifert	Education & Human Services - Criminal Justice
Alan Rosas	Kendall - Illustration
Alison Scott	FLITE
Jodi Shephard	FLITE
Jill Stachowski	Pharmacy
Matthew Thatcher	Arts & Sciences - Humanities
Stephanie Thomson	Arts & Sciences - Humanities
Spence Tower	Business - Management
Matt Wagenheim	Education & Human Services - Recreation, Leisure Services & Wellness

In Academic Affairs we welcome Grant Snyder as the new department head in Humanities. He joins Ferris from Point Park University in Pittsburgh. Todd Stanislav is the new Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, moving from Xavier University in New Orleans. Other appointments in academic affairs include -

Paul Blake	Interim Associate Dean - Education & Human Services
Michael Cooper	Department Chair - Marketing
Gayle Driggers	Secretary - Arts and Sciences Deans Office
Grace Eisen	Clinical Laboratory Coordinator - Allied Health Sciences
Reinhold Hill	Department Head - Languages & Literature
Diane Maguire	Administrative Assistant - Professional Golf Management
Dennis Smith	Department Chair - Printing Management
Karen Strasser	Interim Department Head - Biological Sciences
Julie Thatcher	Coordinator - Structured Learning Assistance

In Administration and Finance and University Advancement and Marketing appointments include -

Rachel Barrett	Residence Hall Director
Christy Brewer	Residence Hall Director
Brandi Behrenwald	Alumni Relations Assistant
Tom Clement	Plumbing Supervisor
Yasmin Cousar	Residence Hall Director
Mark Kauffman	Assistant Hockey Coach
Ron Kowalski	Boiler Operator

Nicole Merritt	Student Service Representative – Business Operations
Peter Rizzo	Residence Hall Director
Jan Talian	Head Men’s Tennis Coach

In the General Counsel office Steve Stratton joins the University as the new Director of Labor Relations. Most recently Steve served as Human Resources Director for Genesee County and Labor Relations Director for the City of Flint.

In Student Affairs Leroy Wright has been appointed interim Dean of Student Life. I appreciate very much Leroy’s willingness to assume this important position. Other appointments in Student Affairs include -

Ashley Atteberry	Interim Director of Student Judicial Services
Elise Blacklaw	Senior Recruiting Officer – Admissions and Records
Paige Clark	Secretary – Personal Counseling Center
Bruce Gilchrist	Interim Assistant Director of Admissions and Records
Christine Higley	Coordinator of Financial Aid Consortium Programs – Scholarships & Financial Aid Office
Joan Kronlein	Staff Nurse – Birkam Health Center
Jean Vallier	Student Service Representative – Scholarships & Financial Aid Office
Mark VanLent	Personal Counselor – Counseling Center
Michelle Yax	Personal Counselor – Counseling Center
Heather Youngs	Coordinator of Scholarship Program – Scholarships & Financial Aid Office

Enrollment

Last year’s new students were the best prepared in our history, with an average ACT of 20.9. This marked the seventh consecutive year of improved average ACT scores for First Time in Any College (FTIAC) students. For this fall we have increased admission standards, with the expectation that FTIAC students will have an ACT score of 17. This should result in even better prepared students for this fall.

The University’s experience is that each increase in ACT entering requirements can on the short term reduce the number of new students at Ferris. To help minimize this impact, last winter we created new transfer scholarships. These have proven effective, with to date more than 160 more new transfer students than a year ago, an increase of 14%. Transfer students tend to enroll later and we continue to see a strong number of transfer applications. The next week will determine the final numbers, but I am hopeful that enrollment will be level from a year ago. Thank you for helping to welcome these students to campus.

Facilities

The construction fences are up and work has begun on the renovation of the IRC. This project was delayed when the initial group of bids came in over budget and the process had to be repeated. The second group of responses was lower and the project is both on budget and on schedule for reopening next fall.

The Copy Center has moved into the renovated credit union building on the corner of Perry and State Street. The old building has been demolished and the area will be used for increased parking. This should help mitigate some of the parking spaces lost to the IRC project.

Over the summer a third set of classrooms has been renovated to provide spaces more conducive to learning. Finishing touches are underway on Alumni 121, Business 202, Business 211, Pharmacy 303 & 305 (converted into a single lecture area), Pharmacy 314, Science 120, Swan 104, Swan 105A, VFS (Allied Health) 324, VFS 325, and VFS 419. I hear frequently from faculty and students about the difference these improvements can make in helping to support student learning. As you use these renovated spaces please share with me your experiences regarding them.

Technology

Over the past two years the University has worked to create a wireless network that will provide Internet access throughout our campus. I am pleased to report the outdoor portions of this project will be completed by the end of this month. Wireless access has been extended to or will be completed soon to the following buildings - Allied Health, Arts/Science Commons, Business, Granger, Pharmacy, Starr, and Science. We have also completed wireless deployment for students in residence halls, cafeterias and other student commons areas on campus. During fall and spring semesters we will continue to focus on academic buildings with a target completion date of June 30, 2007.

This also marks the second year of a university-wide approach to computer replacement. The PC replacement project replaces primary office computers that are obsolete and do not meet recommended minimum standards. Through this we ensure that faculty and staff have up-to-date computers. During the summer 190 faculty and staff computers have been replaced, with another 70 to be installed in the next few weeks. Progress reports on this project are available at http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/adminandfinance/infoserv/other/pc_replacement/

Over the past two years the University has been engaged in the transition to a new enterprise software, moving from the old Plus systems (HRS, FRS, & SIS) to Banner software, a relational system based on an Oracle database platform. The final major portion of this, a transition from SIS to the student Banner program, is now operational. It is difficult for me to adequately describe the magnitude of this task. While the software is now operational, we continue to find instances where practices of the past are not easily supported by the system. There is still much for us to learn to effectively extract data from the system and to use the powerful functionality available to us. I appreciate very much the many, many people who have worked evenings and weekends to help this project succeed. Information and updates on the Banner Project are available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/banner/>

This fall we begin the conversion from the Campus Edition of Web CT to Web CT Vista. Like the Banner conversion, we must upgrade to this platform before vendor support will be eliminated for our existing system. Vista has significant functionality beyond that of our current learning software. Information on the Vista project is available here - http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/center/WebCT_Vista_Migration_News.htm This conversion will take place during the next two years and is lead by Gloria Lukusa.

Budget Issues

The state has approved the higher education budget for the 2006-2007 year. As a result of our advocacy for a higher education funding formula we received an increase of \$1,410,400, or 2.9%, significantly more than the 1.7% that had been included in the executive budget recommendations. Unfortunately we have also been billed an increase of \$1,223,936 or 38% in our contributions to the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS). This is a net increase in state funding of only \$186,464, or .38%.

This summer in discussions with the Board of Trustees significant concerns were expressed about the continued growth in tuition and the affordability of higher education for students. The proposed tuition increase for students electing 15 hours at the resident undergraduate level was reduced from 8.6% to 6.8%, a reduction of \$60 per semester or \$120 per year. It is estimated that this will decrease revenue for the University by approximately \$477,000. No faculty or staff positions will be eliminated as a result of this reduction.

Good News

Each week there are many excellent examples of the success of our students. If you are a reader of the *Wall Street Journal*, perhaps you saw the article in the August 15th edition entitled, "Where Have All the Welders Gone?" The lead

paragraph of this article features recent Ferris graduate Will Chermin and his new position with the John Deere Co. Recently I visited the website for our Honors programs, which has an excellent series of stories on recent graduates. This is accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/honors/success/index.htm>

The Ferris Alumni Association has sponsored a series of very successful events throughout the summer, with golf events in Ada and Traverse City, an alumni dinner in connection with the National Cherry Festival, and most recently a baseball outing in Chicago when the Tigers played the White Sox. Additional information on alumni events is contained in the latest edition of Bulldog Bytes, available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/alumni/BulldogBytes/>

We continue to experience extraordinary success with fund raising. Last year the University received cash contributions from 6,069 donors, a 25% increase over the previous year. This yielded a 9% increase in cash contributions. The University also signed \$2.3 million in planned gifts, an area with considerable potential for future fund raising efforts. This increased funding is critical to provide support for student scholarships and programs in these difficult financial times.

Transitions

Earlier this month Raymond Gant accepted a new position with the Leona Group, which provides management expertise for a number of public charter schools throughout the state. I have watched Raymond work with our Ferris charter schools and know firsthand how effective he can be in motivating students to remain in school and excel. At Ferris Raymond Gant has been a strong leader for diversity, supporting students, faculty, staff, and alumni. I am especially proud of his success in developing the Southeast Michigan Black Alumni Association. I will miss Raymond, both as a leader for our University and as a friend, but wish him continued success as he pursues this new opportunity.

The University will soon begin a search to fill the deanship of the College of Allied Health Sciences. Our plan is to have on-campus interviews at the beginning of spring semester and to select the next dean during spring semester 2007. In the interim I appreciate very much the willingness of Ellen Haneline to serve as dean of the college.

Closing Thoughts

Students have already begun to arrive on campus for fall semester. From time to time you will see students who may need assistance in finding a particular room or building, or who may have a question about a service or University process. Thank you for taking a moment to answer their questions, provide the

information they need, and to help them. Acts of kindness can make a significant difference for students who may be uncertain or unsure.

Negotiations throughout the summer have not yet resulted in agreement on a new contract with the faculty union in Big Rapids. These talks are dealing with very difficult issues of healthcare and compensation. I remain hopeful that responsible solutions to these issues will soon be found.

I look forward to seeing you on campus as we welcome students back and prepare for the beginning of the academic year.

Best wishes,

David L. Eisler
President