

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 29, 2005

These past two days have included two of those truly amazing Michigan mornings, when the sun breaks out from behind the clouds, the sky is a brilliant blue, and everything looks fresh and beautiful. It seems impossible to believe that today is the last day of classes - where has the academic year gone?

Tuesday's Service Awards were a wonderful occasion for our campus to come together. In what was the largest crowd I have witnessed for this event, we recognized over 2800 years of experience and commitment to Ferris State University. At the Service Awards we presented the Distinguished Staff and Team Awards. I want to offer special congratulations to these outstanding staff, selected by their peers for this honor -

Karen Lobdell - University College
Gary Lutz - Technical Assistance Center
Mandy Seiferlein - College of Pharmacy - Kalamazoo
Paul Sullivan - Birkham Health Center
LeRoy Wright - Residential Life

The members of the Janus Custodian Training Team were selected for the outstanding team award. They are Barb Gilmore, Stephanie Patton, and Sandra Werner.

I want to thank the members of the Distinguished Staff and Team Committee who selected these individuals. This group includes Michelle Bailliet, Jim Cook, Robin Hoisington, and was ably chaired by Glenn Zobel.

Planning Update

Let me take this opportunity to update you on our continued efforts on major campus goals. Beginning with the university-wide task force on teaching facilities this past fall, we have begun a major effort to improve our classrooms. If we are to be a learning-centered university, each of our classrooms must be a place that welcomes, facilitates, and encourages learning.

In what is the first phase of a five-year project to improve classrooms, there are three categories of facilities designated for improvement. The first group includes areas that are heavily used, but need moderate improvement - Automotive 105,108, Business 224, Science 132, and Starr 130/122. The second group includes classrooms that require more extensive repair - Alumni 121, Johnson 104, Pharmacy 314, Science 120, VFS (Allied Health) 324, 325, 420, Starr 207, and Swan 223. Each area upgraded will include

the technical capabilities of a computer, projector, DVD, VCR, and podium cabinet. Feedback from these renovations will be used to guide future efforts.

There are three additional spaces that will be converted to instructional purposes. These are: the Southwest Commons (connected to Puterbaugh Hall), where the upper floor will be adapted to meet new requirements in the Law Enforcement Program and the lower level for general purpose classrooms; the Taggart Hall Terrace Floor, which will be adapted as a living\learning setting for Visual Design and Web Media students; and the service garage attached to the Power Plant, which will be adapted for overflow from the Automotive Department.

It is unclear how much of this we will be able to accomplish this summer, but together with the renovation of the IRC, this represents a significant contribution to improving instructional spaces on our campus. I want to express my thanks to the university-wide task force on teaching facilities chaired by Susan Jones and Terry Doyle, and the implementation group from academic and administrative affairs, Roxanne Cullen, Mark Eichenberg, Mike Hughes, Joe Samson, Randy Vance, and Craig Westman who have worked very hard to prepare this action plane. Their complete report is accessible at - <http://www.ferris.edu/president/planning/LearningFacilitiesApril2005.pdf>

Simultaneously another group has been looking at computer resources for faculty and staff on campus. Building on the recommendations of the technology task force, they have been working to create a campus standard for hardware and software and to create an approach for the replacement of equipment and software across campus. They have accomplished both tasks in what I believe is an admirable fashion.

The recommendations for hardware and software are available on the web -
Desktops - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/tatfsu/technicalstandards/stdcomrec.htm>
Laptops\Notebooks - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/tatfsu/technicalstandards/PortableHardwareStandardsRecommendations.htm>
Software - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/tatfsu/technicalstandards/stdsoftware.htm>

In developing an approach for replacing faculty and staff computers, the committee considered first a four-year strategy, but instead recommended an approach based on the hardware standards. Approximately 300 faculty and staff primary computers do not meet the campus minimum standard and will be replaced. The expectation is that 75% of this cost will be funded centrally and 25% funded from the division. This funding will provide for a replacement desktop machine, additional costs beyond this will be funded by the division or department.

Expectations are that hardware standards will increase annually. Projections suggest that each year between 250 and 300 computers will not meet the minimum

standard and be eligible for replacement under this approach. There are areas with needs for greater computing power that will need to replace machines more frequently.

This establishes an approach for the systematic replacement for faculty and staff computers on our campus. I want to express my thanks to the university-wide task force on technology this past fall, chaired by Bill Boras and John Urbanick, and to the Strategy Committee, Kevin Alexander, Michael Cairns, Susan Cherry, Richard Cochran, Roxanne Cullen, David Nicol, Jeff Spedowske, Scott Thede, and John Urbanick, that has guided these recommendations into implementation. Their report is available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/president/planning/PCReplacementApril2005.pdf>

If you have not yet done so, there is still time to submit your opinions on the proposed messaging ideas for our University. To date over 800 people have participated in this process and provided their feedback. Thank you so very much for taking time to consider and comment on these ideas. If you have not done so yet, I would encourage you to first read their campus presentation at - http://www.ferris.edu/news/identity/fsu_pace.pdf (caution large file), and then take the survey at <http://www.secondwindnetwork.com/surveys/fsu.htm> These materials will remain open for comment through May 6th.

The wireless Internet connectivity trial is continuing on campus until May 6th. The external portion of this is can be tested in the Quad and the internal portion is available in the first floor of the Prakken Building. I appreciate the extra effort our people in IS&T have made to allow this test. Initial response from campus users has been very positive. Please share your experiences with these trial setups with the people at IS&T. Based on this success of this trial and your feedback we will have wireless capability throughout the campus by the beginning of the fall semester.

Honors

At this time of year we recognize our students for their wonderful work and accomplishments. These events are a wonderful blend of academic achievement and service. I have been especially impressed by the students who work in our residence halls as hall advisors and desk managers. They have a tremendous impact on the development of our students who live on campus.

We continue to receive information about the significant honors and recognition our students are receiving. We are especially pleased for student Bret Muter, who has received a prestigious Udall Scholarship, one of 80 in the nation. This is a \$5,000 award for his final year at Ferris. Information on Bret is available from the Udall site at <http://www.udall.gov/Scholar.asp?WebID=A58D2244D39841618E2DCA1AEE8794FB>

For the fifth year in a row FSU HVACR students placed first in the national ASHREA competition. These students are advised by faculty member Doug Zentz. At a

recent state competition, College of Technology students also qualified for the SkillsUSA VICA competition. Their advisors are faculty members Gary Maike and Dan Wanink.

Transitions

This is a time when we bid goodbye to good friends and colleagues. Recently College of Technology Dean, Chuck Matrosic, announced his retirement. We wish him well as he enjoys his cabin in the upper peninsula and pursues his love of sailing and thank him for his college leadership. During the past three weeks Academic Vice President Michael Harris and I have visited with each department in the College of Technology, gathering input for this dean search, which will begin during the fall. I very much enjoyed this opportunity to visit with the COT faculty and staff and to learn more about the uniqueness of our technology programs.

Yesterday Governor Granholm announced the appointment of Scott Hill-Kennedy as the Chief Judge for the 49th Circuit, which encompasses Mecosta and Osceola Counties. While many might not have been aware of this, it has been one of Scott's life-long dreams to become a judge. While we will truly miss him at Ferris State University, our area is fortunate to have a person of his character and integrity to serve in this important legal role. Scott has provided wonderful service as University Counsel, Executive Director for the Ferris Foundation, Vice President for Governmental Relations, and as Interim President. We wish Scott well in this new role.

Closing Thoughts

Planning is moving forward for renovations to the IRC building. Open sessions have been scheduled for next week with Neumann/Smith and Associates, the architects who will be assisting our campus with this project. We both want and need your input on this project. I would encourage you to attend one of these sessions, scheduled on Monday, May 2nd at 3:00 pm, and on Tuesday, May 5th at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. All meetings will be in IRC 004. If you are unable to attend and would like to provide input, you may do so by emailing Roxanne Cullen, cullenr@ferris.edu.

The rhythms of the academic year create incredible activity as the semester ends. I appreciate the contributions each of you makes to the education and development of our students. As I visit with them I am impressed with their maturity, their confidence in the education they have received, their enthusiasm for the future, and their desire to help others. Thank you so very much for the difference you make for them.

Best wishes,

Dave