

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 15, 2005

Although the mornings are still cool, after the last few days, Spring is finally here. It is amazing how much difference several bright, sunny days and the change to daylight savings time can make. As we near the end of the school year, the pace is quickening. Together with this there are the special events when we recognize outstanding achievement for our faculty and staff.

Last evening's faculty recognition dinner was the best I have ever attended. I very much appreciate the extra effort our people make to create such a special atmosphere for the evening. Congratulations go to the faculty recognized for receiving promotion, tenure, and merit awards. This recognition is based on achievement that has been recognized by their peers. Special awards were given to the following outstanding faculty -

Adnan Dakkuri	International Educator Award
Phil Watson	Academic Excellence Award
James Paramore	Academic Excellence Award
Fred Heck	Distinguished Faculty Award
Robert McCullough	Distinguished Faculty Awards

These are lifetime achievement awards and represent extraordinary accomplishments. Congratulations to these outstanding faculty on this recognition!

Planning Efforts

I want to provide you an update on continued efforts toward major goals. This past fall the communications task force identified the need for our University to have a consistent identity, one that reflects our values and uniqueness, and that can represent our University to the public. The University's Strategic Marketing Committee, a cross divisional group of faculty and staff, recently heard proposals from a number of firms who responded to our request for assistance on this. They selected Pace & Partners of Lansing to present their ideas to the University community.

Pace will be in Big Rapids this Tuesday, April 19th, with open sessions in the Rankin Center Founders' Room at 11 am and 2 pm, then in Grand Rapids on Wednesday, April 20th, with sessions at Kendall College and at FSU-GR. We very much want your feedback and opinions. I personally encourage you to attend. Much more information on this process and the proposals is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/news/identity/>. Copies of

their proposal and presentation are on the left hand side of the page. If you are unable to attend one of sessions there will be an online survey that you can complete.

This fall's technology task force recommended the University implement a wireless network across campus. The information technology area is testing equipment on the Quad, in the Pug, and in the first floor of the Prakken building. If you have a machine with a wireless connection, you are invited and encouraged to test this and provide feedback. Additional information on the wireless tests will be available shortly and communicated via campus-wide messages and Lotus Notes.

College of Technology

Academic Vice President Michael Harris and I have begun a series of meetings with faculty and staff in the College of Technology. Our intent is to listen carefully to the faculty and staff in each department. In doing so we hope to understand each area better, and to develop insight into the challenges the college faces, both at the departmental level and as a collective whole. We are soliciting input on the qualifications for the next dean of the college so a search can begin early during fall semester.

To date we have visited with the Mechanical Design Department, the EET\CNS Department, and the Manufacturing Department. I am very much enjoying this opportunity to visit with these faculty and staff and look forward to more of these meetings over the next two weeks.

Legislative Presentation

On Wednesday I had the opportunity to present before the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. John Stewart. This year the legislature has adopted a budgeting approach focused around nine results. Higher education is contained within the result, "Prepare people for jobs and the new economy." Over the past two months through my conversations in Lansing it became clear that this approach provided an opportunity when legislative leadership was willing to listen to new ideas on higher education funding.

I used my testimony time to present a new model for higher education funding in Michigan. The message was simple; the crisis in higher education is a crisis in funding. I proposed a model that increased funding to higher education for enrollment growth. It is a model based upon significant analysis of program cost data across the twelve teaching universities in the state. Using these data it shows that programs in many of the areas Michigan needs most, are in a category we have termed "High Intensity Instruction." These are also programs that are more expensive to deliver; disciplines in this category have cost averages over \$200/SCH.

This model then relates these programs to degrees and provides a percentage of the degrees awarded by a university in this high intensity category. Of the twelve teaching universities, Michigan Tech is the highest at 74%; Ferris is next at 54%. No other university is greater than 23%. The document I presented is entitled, "The Funding of Michigan Universities" and is available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/speeches/HigherEdFormula2005.pdf>. When you have time, I would very much appreciate your thoughts on this. Additional materials from my presentation are here - http://fsunw3.ferris.edu/~eislerd/house_2005.htm. These remarks received coverage within the political media, and I have been invited to appear before the committee a second time.

Coming Events

There are many events in the next few weeks as we move toward the conclusion of the academic year. I want to make special mention of the appearance by National Public Radio correspondent Juan Williams in Williams Auditorium on Tuesday at 7:30 pm. Mr. Williams is appearing as part of a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in the landmark Brown vs. Board of Education desegregation case. Additional info on this event is here - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/news/detail.cfm?ID=457>

The following evening there will be a panel discussion on this subject with Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Superintendent Bert Bleke of Grand Rapids, Emily Aleman of the West Michigan Hispanic Center and David May of the Institute for Healing Racism. This event is at 6:30 pm in the Rankin Center Dome Room. Saturday evening, April 23rd, is the kickoff banquet for the Big Rapids Sesquicentennial. This is at the Holiday Inn beginning at 5:00 pm.

At this time of year the tendency for many of us, including myself, is to push a little bit harder, trying to complete everything that needs done before the semester ends. My experience is that during this period it is useful to pause for a moment and express our thanks for the extraordinary work that is happening at the university. I want you to know how much I appreciate you and the difference you make for our students and University. I look forward to seeing you at our end of the year celebratory events.

Best wishes,

Dave