

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
November 1, 2004
Ext. 2500

How can it be November already? Where has the time gone? After nearly twenty-five years away from Michigan, in areas where there are very few trees or the majority of trees are pine trees, I had forgotten about fall and leaves. While September and October have been the most beautiful in my memory, with the changing of seasons I was unprepared for the quantity of leaves that needed to be raked. I want to take this opportunity to update you on a number of opportunities and ongoing activities.

Campus Planning and Master Planning

The planning task forces on professional development, physical teaching space, technology, communication, student engagement, and enrollment growth are configured and currently meeting. If you have ideas or suggestions for any of these groups please send them to me and I will see that they get to the task force co-chairs. Task force reports will be presented on December 16th and 17th. Those sessions will be open to everyone who wishes to attend and the reports published on our planning web site -

<http://www.ferris.edu/president/planning2004.htm>

An important part of our University's future is master planning for campus facilities and grounds. We have been working with architect Ken Neumann from the firm Neumann Smith & Associates on future efforts for our campuses in Big Rapids and Grand Rapids. I believe it is important to share the draft of these plans with you. Toward that we end we have scheduled two sessions this Thursday, November 4th, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Dome Room in the Rankin Center. I am delighted that we will be able to have Ken Neumann join us for these sessions and would encourage you to attend. We plan to present the master plans to the Board of Trustees for approval this spring.

The condition of our facilities and the capacity of our campus to support additional expansion are extremely important as we plan our future. In our continued future planning we will also be conducting an infrastructure and facility audit this spring. I will provide additional information on these efforts when it is available.

History Task Force

Perhaps you had the opportunity to attend the rededication of the Alumni Building on its 75th anniversary. If you have not done so, I would encourage you to take a moment to see the display and pictures set up in the lobby. For me the picture of the groundbreaking is especially poignant. There are three people in the foreground and the female figure is Gerrit Masselink's widow. Masselink was Woodbridge Ferris' hand picked successor and became president upon Ferris' death in 1928. Regrettably Mr. Masselink only served 13 months before also dying. Some suggest his death was hastened by efforts in poor weather to shore up financial support for the Alumni Building's construction. One can only imagine what Mrs. Masselink's thoughts might have been at that groundbreaking.

The Alumni Building rededication was planned by the History Task Force, which is ably chaired by Harry Dempsey. This group of faculty and staff works to preserve and celebrate the history and traditions of Ferris State University. There is room for a limited number of new members on this group. If you have an interest in learning more about and preserving our history, and would like to serve with this task force, please let me know. I will be delighted to forward your name to the committee.

Athletics

This past weekend we attended both of the hockey team's games against the University of Michigan. Saturday evening's contest was at home and especially exciting. The teams fought to 0-0 tie in regulation and we won on a goal early in overtime. While there can still be improvement I was pleased with our student behavior at the hockey match. It has certainly improved.

If you have not had an opportunity to see some of our fall sports teams, this will be the last week to do so. The women's soccer team plays its last regular season match Saturday against Grand Valley, the women's volleyball team plays Lake Superior State Friday, Northern Michigan Saturday, and Michigan Tech on Sunday, football closes out its home season on Saturday against Saginaw Valley and the hockey team is in action against Michigan State Saturday evening. If your schedule permits I would encourage you to take time to support our student athletes.

Closing Thoughts

Each month I am hosting a light breakfast for new full-time employees hired the prior month. In our discussions I share some of the heritage, traditions, and values of our University. Additionally we talk about the future of Ferris. Over time I am hopeful this will become a tradition at Ferris. When you have a new

employee in your area, please encourage them to attend. If you are a new employee and have not had this opportunity, please let our office know at ext. 2500, so we can invite you to our next breakfast.

Thursday I had the opportunity to participate in Disability Awareness Day. Moving around our campus in a wheelchair was a useful reminder of some of the challenges our students face in their daily life. It is amazing the difference in perspective when one sits at waist level rather than meeting people face-to-face. I want to thank Eunice Merwin, Karen GreenBay and the members of our Liaison Committee for Students with Disabilities for their excellent work in preparing this event and for their continuing work to make our campus accessible.

This past weekend included a Dawg Day activity with over 170 prospective students in attendance. These are truly remarkable events for these students and their parents. If you know a prospective student we should be recruiting for Ferris, please let me know so we can contact them. I appreciate the many people who donate their time on Saturdays for the Dawg Day events.

Each member of our University contributes to the educational experience we provide. Thank you for your continuing efforts to help our students. It is your good work that continues to make a difference for our students, your colleagues, and for Ferris.

Thanks so very much,

Dave Eisler