

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 13, 2004
Ext. 2500

It is a pleasure learning again about spring in Michigan and the sudden changes in temperature that can occur. Today is certainly one of those truly beautiful Michigan days that helps one forget about the occasional cold morning that remains. As we move into the final weeks of the semester, I want to take this opportunity to share the efforts of our University Planning Committee with you.

University Planning Committee

In early April I shared with you the results of this year's Unit Action Planning process. You may recall that in preparing action plans each unit was asked to look at their work in terms of efforts on the Seven Strategic Directions of the University (<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/directions.htm>). These have been in place at Ferris for the past few years. During this semester I asked the University Planning Council to review the Seven Strategic Directions of our University using data developed from the Unit Action Plans. The charge was two-fold, to first assess the effectiveness of unit, division, and university efforts on the directions, and then to propose possible revisions of them.

This year the University Planning Council was ably chaired by Professor Susan Jones and Vice President Dan Burcham. In my opinion they did an extraordinary job of examining each Strategic Direction through an evaluation of all Unit Action Plans. Their process included a unique matrix approach which gathered together for each Strategic Direction the unit initiative or activity and looked at the assessment for this effort. In doing so they asked and attempted to answer the following questions -

- Were activities designed to achieve the Strategic Directions?
- Did the activity seem appropriate to the task of achieving a Strategic Direction?
- What assessment was done to show progress toward each Strategic Direction?

We have created a web page which contains the materials developed by the University Planning Committee, their final report, the reports of each standard subcommittee, and the matrices developed in this process. The url is <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/UPCreports2004.htm>

Recently I met with the University Planning Committee and received their final report. They suggested a series of recommendations in the Strategic Directions including the following.

- Continue using the seven Strategic Directions as a base for strategic planning.
- Consider the combination of Strategic Direction #1 and #3.
- Consider the combination of Strategic Direction #2, #6, and #7.

I asked the Committee to consider how the Strategic Directions might be rewritten based on the above recommendations. The following proposed revisions to the Strategic Directions reduce the number from seven to four. While the original seven were each important, it is my experience that it is difficult for an institution to focus on that many objectives. For me four feels like a more manageable number. The following is a working draft of how the revised strategic directions might look and reflects the committee's suggestions.

- Increase University enrollment by fostering highly responsive academic opportunities, enhancing existing academic offerings, and prudently expanding academic majors and programs.
- Employ advanced technology to strategically extend the university's position as a national leader in providing a career-oriented academic curriculum.
- Attract, retain, and develop an exceptional faculty and staff in an extremely competitive higher education market.
- Through expanded external focus and contacts, expand university resources and empower all university employees to be more efficient and effective.

From my perspective I find these to be effective revisions. However I would very much appreciate receiving your thoughts on those four directions.

I believe the University Planning Committee has worked both effectively and efficiently and I am very grateful for their efforts. The members of this Committee include the following people.

Shelly Armstrong	Rick Griffin	Kristen Salomonson
Matt Chaney	Mike Hughes	Eve Sidney
Rick Christner	Tom Kirinovic	Donna Smith
Richard Cochran	Karl Linebaugh	Allen Sutherby
Adnan Dakkuri	Lionel MacKenzie	Sid Sytsma
Sally DePew	George Nagel	Amanda Umlandt
Rick Duffett	David Nicol	Tom Weaver
Don Flickinger	Tom Oldfield	Craig Westman
Jason Granger	Karen Paine	Anja Wing
Don Green	Mike Ryan	

I want to publicly express my thanks to each of them for their strong efforts and encourage you to do the same.

In my charge to the committee I asked them to evaluate existing university strategic directions, not to create new ones. As I have read and reflected on the Strategic Directions, there are ideas and values I consider important for our strategic future as a university that are missing. These include a commitment to diversity, an understanding of the global environment, the need to help prepare citizens for our democracy, and a strong statement about the importance of learning in our strategic future. Again I would invite your comments about these thoughts.

A Vision for Ferris and Its Future

This has been an extraordinary year for me as I have listened and learned about Ferris State University from you, its people. To date I've conducted 70 small group discussions, hearing from over 1200 faculty, staff, and students. This Thursday I want to share with you some of what I have learned and present my vision for our future. I invite you to join me at 2:00 pm in the Dome Room for these remarks. If you cannot be present, I will also share the text in a campus message to faculty and staff.

In the hustle and bustle of the end of our academic year I want you to know how much I appreciate your efforts for our students and our campus. Thank you for your strong efforts for our University.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President