

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
January 8, 2004
Ext. 2500

Welcome back! I'm hopeful that the holiday break period provided time for relaxation and visiting with family and friends. The last few days have brought back memories of what real Michigan weather can be. As we begin what I'm hopeful we can in time call Spring, rather than Winter semester, I want to take this opportunity to provide updated information on efforts begun during the Fall.

Vice President of Academic Affairs Search

Monday's Campus-Wide Notices included a message and update from Dr. Nancy Peterson-Klein, chair of the Vice President of Academic Affairs Search Committee. Her message is also available at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/vpaa/> . In late December the search committee recommended five finalists for this position. Each is now scheduled for campus interviews during January.

- Michael A. Gealt, Dean, School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Purdue University - Calumet (January 12 & 13)
- Michael Harris, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Eastern Michigan University (January 14 & 15)
- Finnie A. Murray, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Texas A&M University - Commerce (January 20 & 21)
- Thomas E. Oldfield, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ferris State University (January 22 & 23)
- Vilas A. Prabhu, Associate Provost for Academic & Student Affairs and Research Administration, Southwestern Oklahoma State University (January 26 & 27)

The candidate interview schedule includes two opportunities for faculty to visit with each candidate, an open forum for staff and other members of the university community, and a time for students to meet the candidate. Each candidate's schedule is available at

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/vpaa/schedule.htm>.

Our search committee has done an extraordinary job in screening and selecting these candidates. In my opinion each is qualified to be a vice president of academic affairs. The challenge now begins to choose the person who is best for Ferris State University. To assist in this process the search committee has developed a form for you to submit your evaluation of each candidate. I am hopeful that you will make time to visit with each candidate and to provide your input for this very important decision.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank the members of our search committee -

Dan Burcham, Vice President, Student Affairs
Laurie Chesley, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs
Tom Cook, Board of Trustees
Tom Crandell, Director, Director, Corporate Development
Abdollah Ferdowsi, Professor, Business
Don Green, Vice Chancellor, FSU-GR
Karen Greenbay, Coordinator, SCHOLAR Program
Jacque Hooper, Dean, Allied Health Sciences
Anne Kelly, Assistant Professor, Library
Helen Kchodl, Student
Cindy Konrad, Associate Professor, Medical Records
Elsie Lovsted, Professor, Pharmacy
Bill Papo, Professor, Printing and Imaging Management
Nancy Peterson-Klein, Professor, Optometry
David Pilgrim, Professor, Social Sciences
David Steeno, Professor, Criminal Justice

As you see members of the committee on our campus I am hopeful you will thank them for the time and effort they invested in this process. They are truly an extraordinary search committee. I am especially appreciative of Nancy Peterson-Klein for the strong, thoughtful leadership she has provided to this group. It is my expectation that we will select and be able to announce our next Vice President for Academic Affairs by mid-February.

You may recall that I have visited with you about my intentions to use each administrative leadership vacancy at Ferris as an opportunity to have an external review of the division or college. On December 8 - 10, Dr. George Mehaffy, Vice President for Academic Leadership and Change at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and Dr. Marlene Strathe, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Oklahoma State University, visited our campus to review academic affairs as a division. Both George and Marlene have many years of successful service as chief academic officers and during their time on campus had the opportunity to meet with many members of the academic and university community.

As consultants Drs. Mehaffy and Strathe have done their job in precisely the manner that I had hoped they would, stating their findings in a clear and straight-forward style. In reading this, I believe it is helpful to remember that the report states opinions, not facts, and that these opinions were formed over a short period of time. There very well may be sections or statements of this report with which you disagree and perhaps strongly so. While it is an input to possible future directions in academic affairs, it is not a road map for what we should or will do. Most certainly it does not prescribe what the agenda for the next Vice President for Academic Affairs should be. However I believe it will be helpful to both our next vice president and our academic community as we seek to move forward in the future. The report has been placed online and may be accessed at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/aareport.htm>. I believe this report will create discussion on campus and would very much appreciate receiving your thoughts and reactions to it. Please feel free to email these to me at eislerd@ferris.edu or visit with me as I am walking around campus.

Meetings with Faculty and Staff

One of the most rewarding activities for me during fall semester was the meetings we conducted with the faculty. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to meet and visit with our faculty and learned much from this. More than at anyplace I have worked, there is here at Ferris a wonderful commitment of our faculty to helping students and to quality teaching\learning. This is truly one of the great strengths of our university.

We have received some requests from faculty who were unable to attend meetings during the fall semester and have scheduled two additional sessions to accommodate them-

- Wednesday, January 21st , 1:30 - 2:30 pm
- Friday, January 23rd, 3:00 - 4:00 pm

If we did not have the opportunity to meet and you would like to do so, please **contact our office at ext. 2500**, so we can include you in this process.

During spring semester we are going to arrange similar meetings for me to visit with our staff. We will be contacting you soon to invite you to a session. I am very hopeful that you will be able to attend and look forward to visiting with you. There is much for me to learn about Ferris State University and I am excited at the opportunity of hearing from you.

Planning Discussions

I thought it was very important to schedule the Vice President of Academic Affairs interviews in January and as close together as possible. Undoubtedly some of the people identified as finalists by our search committee will be favored in other searches and if they should be our choice, I don't want to lose them because of the schedule. Additionally I believe it is easier to compare and contrast candidates when the process does not drag on for a significant period of time. To accommodate the interview schedule it has been necessary to rearrange the original schedule for planning discussions. These are now scheduled as follows -

Tuesday, Feb. 3:	1:00-2:50pm 3:00-4:50pm	University Advancement and Marketing Student Affairs
Wednesday, Feb. 4:	1:00-4:50pm	Academic Affairs
Thursday, Feb. 5:	8:00-11:50am 1:00-2:50pm 3:00-4:50pm	Academic Affairs Administration and Finance Governmental Relations and General Counsel
Friday, Feb. 6:	10:00-11:50am	FSU-Grand Rapids

More information on this schedule will be available as the dates approach.

Closing Thoughts

Both registration and payment information suggest that spring enrollment will reflect the growth patterns we experienced for fall. In a time of reduced resources this means each of us will work harder to accommodate the increased workload. I appreciate very much your willingness and strong efforts to help our students and university in this way.

It is an honor to work with you. Thank you for everything you do for our students and programs. Please accept my best wishes for a rewarding and successful semester.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President