

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
December 5, 2005

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The final week of the semester has arrived. It seems difficult to believe that the fall term is nearly over and that the holidays are here. But the cold, snowy weather feels very much like December. Our campus is very busy with the final events of the semester. I want to take this opportunity to share with you good news, progress on shared goals, and concerns for our University.

## Task Forces

In October we established five task forces examining areas of focus for the University. For the past two months seventy-six of your colleagues have been considering future campus efforts on the following topics -

Accreditations - Mike Cairns, Matt Klein co-chairs  
Grants and External Funding - Jim Hoerter, Karen Thompson, co-chairs  
Student Engagement - Cindy Horn, John Thorp, co-chairs  
Technical Support - Mike Cooper, Scott Thede, co-chairs  
Transfer Students - Pat Klarecki, Deb Whitman, co-chairs

The charge to these task forces included the following -

- Benchmark best practice
- Identify internal resources and unique strengths
- Consider diversity implications
- Recommend strategic initiatives
- Identify multiple small wins
- Recommendations should be challenging, but achievable
- Consider how we work together to achieve this
- Report in 60 days

The willingness of our campus community to work together to help sustain our forward momentum is truly impressive. I want to express my appreciation to each task force member for his or her willingness to help our University. At the same time I look forward to hearing their reports and want to encourage you to join me for these

sessions. These are open campus meetings and scheduled for Thursday and Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> in Rankin Center, room 155.

Thursday, Dec. 15:

9:00 - 10:00am -	Technical Support
10:30 - 11:30am -	Grants and External Funding
1:00 - 2:00pm -	Transfer Students
2:30 - 3:30pm -	Student Engagement

Friday, Dec. 16:

9:00 - 10:00am -	Accreditation
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Additional information about task force charges and membership is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/planningtf2005.htm>. We will post the task force reports at this web address and use the recommendations developed to help direct the unit action planning process in January.

## Utilities

As someone who can remember when gasoline was twenty-nine cents a gallon, it was quite a shock when energy shortages and the impact of hurricane Katrina pushed the price at the pump to nearly three dollars. While gasoline prices have come back down, similar factors have created a significant increase in the energy prices we pay, especially for natural gas.

The University uses natural gas for heating and the price increases are stunning. In November 2003 we paid \$.59 per 100 cubic feet (ccf). Last November the price was \$.84 per ccf. This year the cost is projected at \$1.30, a 55% increase from last year, and a 120% increase from the year before. During the winter season we use between 400,000 and 650,000 ccf per month. Even with a projected 3% decrease in usage, current estimates for natural gas alone suggest an increased cost of \$1.9 million.

We have already implemented many significant actions to cut costs. Our physical plant has undertaken a series of actions to improve the efficiency of our heating systems. These include a major controls modification of a power plant boiler, replacement of high pressure steam traps, and the calibration and repair of steam valve controls in residence halls. Residential Life has initiated a campaign to encourage students to cut costs, such as closing windows. To receive the lowest price possible, we purchase natural gas on a bulk, consortium agreement.

In addition to these efforts, we need your help. Please make certain doors and windows are closed. Do not use automatic door openers unless you have a disability. These defeat the airlock protection our double door entry systems provide. If you use

a facility with a fume hood or exhaust fan, please close the hood or turn the fan off when not in use. There are many other examples, please help us conserve energy and limit these cost increases.

My experience is that you may have the best ideas on how we can control heating costs. I would appreciate hearing from you on your ideas about how we can conserve energy. Please email me at [eislerd@ferris.edu](mailto:eislerd@ferris.edu). Thanks for your help. Working together we can help contain these costs.

### **Good News**

The Joint Capital Outlay subcommittee has forwarded a bill that includes funding for the IRC renovations. This has been approved by the full Senate and is waiting approval in House. When signed by the Governor, we should be able to begin construction after the first of the year. Architects for the project are Neumann-Smith & Associates. Rockford Construction is the contractor. This project is still on track for occupancy to begin Fall 2007.

For the second year in a row, the University has exceeded its United Way goal. I appreciate very much your kindness and generosity in reaching out to help those in need around us. Special thanks go to a team of over seventy volunteers who solicited funding around campus, an extraordinary group of students who assisted in this effort, and to Vice President Dan Burcham who led this effort.

As I visit with people in our community I hear wonderful stories of the contributions by our students through service learning projects, interns, or as volunteers. There are many, many examples of this, including social work students assisting with the schools, student interns with the City of Big Rapids, and students who volunteer as leaders with local scouting troops. If you are assisting students with efforts in our community, I would very much appreciate hearing from you, so I can be aware of this contribution. Please let me know about these activities, by writing me at [eislerd@ferris.edu](mailto:eislerd@ferris.edu). I appreciate the many contributions you and your students make for our community and its people. You truly do make a difference.

### **Closing Thoughts**

This past week I spent several evenings in our residence halls listening to students. Their comments about the education they receive at Ferris State University reflect the care and commitment you demonstrate for our students. They recognize and appreciate that faculty know their names and take a personal interest in student success. I heard very heartwarming stories about faculty and staff that go far beyond expectations in helping and supporting students. Thank you for caring about our students and their success.

If your schedule permits I want to encourage you to stop by the Holiday Inn next Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, from 1:30-3:00 pm for our annual holiday reception. Patsy and I look forward to seeing you and having the opportunity to celebrate this special time of year together. We always enjoy visiting with you at this event.

Best wishes,

Dave Eisler, President