

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 27, 2012

Welcome back

We are delighted to have a full complement of students, faculty and staff back on campus with classes in session and our University activities in full swing to start fall semester. If you have had the opportunity to talk with our students and their parents during this move-in period, you have certainly sensed their excitement and optimism. That kind of energy is infectious. I want to thank our residence life and admissions staff, our physical plant employees, our dining employees, our faculty, and everyone who has assisted in making this week a welcoming one for our students, their families and friends.

Many people reach out to help students and their families feel welcome on our campus. One of the great traditions in Big Rapids is First Impressions, where volunteers staff tents in the Rankin Center, South Quad, FLITE and Bond Circle on the Friday and Saturday before the start of classes to greet students, provide information, and answer questions they and their parents might have as they move in to campus. This year those volunteers included Teresa Allen, Ashley Barrigar, Cindy Bauman, Shauna Beisiegel, Marilyn Bejma, Richelle Boerma, Dan Burcham, Mike Cairns, Nick Campau, Jeff Carney, Samantha Colwell, Laurie Daniels, Vickie Deur, David Eisler, Kim Erickson, Debbie Fisher, Teresa Fogel, Patti Fraser, Will Gasper, Leah Goode, Destiny Gorby, Jody Greco, Robin Hoisington, Sharon Hopper, Elaine Kamptner, Cheryl Kondziolka, Sandy Larie, Beth Logan, Andresa Maciejewski, Pat Maguire, Angela McCane, John Monahan, Katy Moore, Kristy Motz, Kara Olson, Shanee Ramsey, Linda Randle, Scott Randle, Andrea Ruggles, Rebecca Sammel, Missy Saunders, Jerry Scoby, Karen Thompson, Deb Tice, Dan Tuuri, Kim Wilber, Brittany Vierck, Leroy Wright and Heather Youngs. This is a wonderful example of our University community in action helping our students.

As a part of the campus move-in, the Office of Housing and Residence Life and the Residence Hall Association this year again sponsored Bulldogs in Action to welcome new students to campus. This year's Bulldogs in Action included more than 20 student organizations helping move new students in to campus residence halls. Please join me in thanking the Residence Hall Association, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, NAACP, Ferris State Football, Basketball and Soccer teams, and additional Registered Student Organizations. If you have ever had to move a son or daughter to begin college, you understand how helpful this assistance is.

2011-12 was an amazing year for our University. Some of the highlights included the opening of our new Pharmacy facility at 25 Michigan Avenue in Grand Rapids, the success of our men's ice hockey team, our successful reaccreditation, the launching of new programs, completion of the renovation of the historic Federal Building for the Kendall College of Art and Design, the opening of an expanded Jim Crow Museum, among others. I expect that this year will be equally eventful.

We should never lose sight of the fact that our efforts at Ferris State University have as their singular purpose the education of our students. We will continue our conversation on how as an institution we can better serve our students and how we can continue to innovate to keep a

Ferris education affordable. We have already talked a great deal about these issues, and this semester we will be moving to put the best of the suggestions that have already been made into practice.

As we welcome students back, our challenge is to build upon the work we have already done to create the best opportunities possible for the class of 2016 and beyond. Our students' arrival on campus is the most tangible reminder possible of why these issues are so very important.

Faculty Welcome Back Week

Last week's Faculty Welcome Back Week activities were especially well organized and attended. I want to extend my thanks to everyone who helped plan, presented at, or participated in them. On Monday, as part of this year's "Making Connections" focus, Provost Fritz Erickson spoke about current academic initiatives. The kick-off event, faculty presentations and Tuesday evening's celebration, combined with Wednesday's college-level meetings, were a great way to bring people together as we begin the academic year. Special thanks go to the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Academic Affairs and the Academic Senate for their hard work in making this week a great success.

Founders Day

Founders' Day is this Thursday, Aug. 30. At 11 a.m. I will be sharing thoughts about our University and its heritage, successes, areas of emphasis for this coming year and future challenges. All employees are invited to join us for our annual picnic on the Quad beginning at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday and lasting throughout the noon hour. There are many activities for our students on the Quad starting at 3 p.m. From 4 until 7 p.m. that afternoon, the Office of Government Relations/General Counsel will host the annual Ice Cream Social with free ice cream for all. A full listing of Thursday's events is available on the Campus Calendar on the Ferris home page.

When Woodbridge and Helen began their school on September 1st, 1884, no one could have imagined that this would become the vibrant Ferris State University of today with nearly 15,000 students and seventeen campuses throughout Michigan. As we enjoy lunch, ice cream and the many events that take place on the Campus Quad a part of Founders' Day, I hope that whether you are new to campus or have been with the University for many years, you consider why we start each year with a day dedicated to the legacy of Woodbridge and Helen Gillespie Ferris.

Athletics

Last year included some of the University's most successful athletic seasons ever. This week our athletic teams begin competition, starting with our men's football team away game against St. Francis in Joliet, Ill., on Thursday, Aug. 30, at 7 p.m. On Friday, Aug. 31, our women's soccer team begins its season with an away game in the Grand Valley State Kickoff Tournament in Allendale, where they will face Indianapolis at 4:30 p.m.

Women's volleyball begins its season at home by hosting the Ferris State Invitational Tournament. On Friday, Aug. 31, they face Alderson-Broadus at 4 p.m., and Mercyhurst at 7 p.m. Then on Saturday, Sept. 1, they play West Virginia State at 1 p.m., and Clarion at 5 p.m. Finishing out athletics contests this weekend, women's soccer has its home-opener against Armstrong Atlantic State on Sunday, Sept. 2 at 11 a.m.

Our student-athletes represent our University both on the field, and with volunteer activities in the community. Let's help our athletic teams begin another successful season by showing them our support.

Congratulations

We are proud of Katke Golf Course Head Manager and Head Golf Professional, Ian Ziska, who finished second in the Michigan PGA Championship. The tournament was won by another Ferris alum, Scott Hebert.

Dr. Bruce Morgan was named Interim Dean of the Michigan College of Optometry last Friday by Provost Fritz Erickson. Thank you, Dr. Morgan, for accepting this important position and for leading your college through the search for a new dean.

Class of 2016 Mindset

This year we welcome the class of 2016 to campus. Perhaps like me you notice that our students seem younger and younger each year, and have far different experiences than we did when we attended college. Beloit College annually publishes a "Mindset List" to give a perspective on how first-year college students view the world as the result of their life experiences. The compilers of this list note that most students entering college this year were born in 1994, for them,

- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Richard Nixon, Arthur Ash, and the Commodore 64 have always been dead.
- They are more familiar with Amazon than independent bookstores.
- Music has always been available as downloads.
- Clinton Eastwood is known as a film director rather than as "Dirty Harry"
- The Twilight Zone involves vampires, not Rod Serling.
- The Communist Party has never been the official political party of Russia.
- They have likely never used a telephone dial.

This list could continue for pages, but the point is easily made. One of the joys of working at Ferris is that each semester we are renewed by the presence of students who bring fresh experiences and perspectives with them. Just as they will be challenged by new ideas and concepts, they, too, challenge us with a perspective which will, collectively at least, outlast our own. Thank you for your work in helping them to further deepen and broaden their appreciation and understanding of the world around them.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president