

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 17, 2012

Flag Lowering

Yesterday, Sept. 16, our university, like public institutions across the country, lowered the flag in memory of John Christopher Stevens, U.S. Ambassador to Libya, another State Department official, and two Navy SEALs who lost their lives in a violent protest against one of our consulates there. This tragic event was especially poignant because it happened on Sept. 11, the anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Towers, the Pentagon and United Flight #93.

This is an opportunity for us to take a moment to recognize and appreciate the sacrifices required of those in service to the country – some of them civilian, but many of them members of our armed forces. It is also a reminder of the freedom we enjoy as Americans, a freedom we may at times take for granted, but which is built upon the willingness of brave men and women to place themselves in harm's way.

Here at Ferris we have a strong tradition of welcoming both veterans and active duty members of our military. Currently we have about 470 students who self-report as veterans, and 229 who receive Veterans Affairs education benefits – primarily from the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which can support up to 100 percent of a student's tuition and fees, as well as a housing stipend. More information on this and other resources for veterans is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/admissions/Transfer/WebPages/military.html> . Although geared toward transfer students, this page has many links to information of interest to all veterans and active duty personnel.

As we mourn the loss of Ambassador Stevens and the others who lost their lives in Libya, please join me in thanking our students, faculty, and staff who have served and do serve their country in often trying and dangerous ways.

Student Learning Outcomes

The General Education Task Force is asking for input on proposals for University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes before recommending them to the Academic Senate. In response to concerns that 18 was too large a number of University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes, the Task Force used spring 2012 survey results to create an alternative set of 12 UWSLOs. The full set of 18 outcomes with narratives and defining criteria, as well as the proposal for the reduced number of UWSLOs, can be found at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/senate/GenEdTaskForce/homepage.htm> under "Committee Documents."

The task force will address this question at two town hall meetings to be held on Wednesday, Sept. 19, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in CSS 201 V/W, and Thursday, Sept. 20 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in CSS 101 FF. If you can, please attend one or both of these town hall meetings to provide input. You can also send your thoughts on the adoption of 18 versus 12 outcomes to Professor Fred Heck at heckf@ferris.edu . I want to take this opportunity to thank Fred, the members of the General Education Task Force and everyone who is working on our general education requirements. This is at the core of the education we provide at Ferris State University.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is an annual celebration of the history and culture of Americans whose ancestry traces back to Spain, Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. At Ferris this celebration is especially timely with the recent launch of the Center for Latino Studies. This is intended to help provide our campus community with educational, social engagement and leadership development opportunities within the growing and vibrant Latino community.

Hispanic Heritage Month in Big Rapids kicks off with an event on Tuesday, Sept. 18, 5:30-8 p.m. on the Campus Quad. The celebration will take place in the Rankin Center in case of rain. There will be food, arts and crafts tables, and performances by the Chicago-based dance group AfriCaribe as well as spoken-word artist Michael Reyes. This event is free and open to the public.

Other Hispanic Heritage Month events include a screening of the documentary “An Unfinished Dream,” on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. in IRC 120; a screening of the film “El Cantante” on Thursday, Sept. 27 at 7 p.m., also in IRC 120; and a display to highlight National Latino Aids Awareness Day on Monday, Oct. 15, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the IRC Connector.

The Office of Multicultural Student Services, Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Planning Committee, Hispanic Student Organization, Spanish Club, the Department of Languages and Literature, and the Center for Latino Studies are sponsoring these events. I encourage you to support and attend these events celebrating Hispanic traditions.

Constitution Day

In recognition of Constitution Day, which commemorates the signing of the United States Constitution on this day in 1787, Ferris’ Political Engagement Project will hold a discussion about the workings of the Electoral College. Rick Griffin and Fran Rosen will lead the discussion, hosted by master of ceremonies Dick Hewer, about the Electoral College’s history, structure and operation. The event takes place tonight, Sept. 17, 7-8:30 pm., in BUS 111. This mechanism for electing the U.S. President and Vice President is an often misunderstood and sometimes controversial element of our constitution, which will receive much attention in this election year. I hope you can join in the discussion.

ArtPrize

This Wednesday, Sept. 19, is the opening of the ArtPrize competition, which runs through Oct. 7 in downtown Grand Rapids. Kendall College of Art and Design, especially with the newly renovated historic Federal Building, is a major venue for ArtPrize. We are also sponsoring the competition’s lecture series. If you have not yet had the opportunity to experience the transformation of the former Federal Building, this is a great opportunity to do so, while also experiencing some remarkable art.

As I mentioned in last week’s message, you can help make ArtPrize, and Kendall’s support of it, a success by volunteering. If you have previously been to ArtPrize, you know how exciting and dynamic and event it is. To sign up to volunteer go to <http://www.kcad.edu/artprize/artprizevolunteers/> . More information about ArtPrize in general is available at <http://www.artprize.org/> .

Fall Pow-wow

Saturday, Sept. 22, is the First Annual Fall Equinox Traditional Pow-wow in the North Quad. This will feature traditional song and dance performers, a hand drum contest, crafts and food. Grand entries are scheduled for 1 and 6 pm. More information is available from the Office of Multicultural Student Services at <http://www.ferris.edu/omss/> . The event is a cooperative effort of the FSU Circle of Tribal Nations and OMSS, and is another example of the success of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's Faculty/Staff Mini Grant program. I encourage you to attend.

There are many more interesting activities on campus this week. Please take a moment to look at the University Events Calendar and encourage our students and your co-workers to attend. The Calendar is accessible here - <http://calendar.ferris.edu/>

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president