

January 11, 2008

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to ask that you review the latest draft of the University's Diversity Plan (<http://www.ferris.edu/diversity/plan/Diversity%20plan%202%20page%20.pdf>) and offer your suggestions. On November 13, 2007, I sent the plan to the University community and received feedback. The current document reflects some of those ideas. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the plan, in whole or part, with any individual or group. On March 21, 2008, I will take a final version of the plan before the Board of Trustees and ask them to approve the document.

As I have noted before, this document is a general plan. The University Diversity Plan defines diversity, establishes the strategic diversity goals, and offers some important action steps; however, the bulk of the specific action steps will be developed and implemented at the divisional levels—see item #1G. Those divisional action plans will include tasks, assignments, timelines, and methods of accountability and assessment. In other words, the *real* work will be done at the divisional and departmental levels. Please consider joining your divisional diversity work group.

During the last year I worked with the divisions to establish diversity work groups. To date, all of the divisions have teams in place. Some of the divisions have made substantial progress. The Deans Council recently approved an Academic Affairs Diversity Plan (<http://www.ferris.edu/diversity/Plan/Academic%20Affairs%20plan%20draft%20doc.pdf>); now each of the colleges and Ferris-Grand Rapids will be asked to develop individual action plans. Student Affairs has a diversity plan in place and a progress report (<http://www.ferris.edu/diversity/Plan/Student%20Affairs%20Progress%20Report%20&%20Recommendations.pdf>).

Administration and Finance has drafted a diversity recommendations report (<http://www.ferris.edu/diversity/Plan/2007%20A&F%20Retreat%20Diversity%20Project%20Recommendations%2011192007.pdf>).

Ferris State University can become a truly diverse institution, but it will take the energies and talents of many people. One of the first actions I took in this job was to create a Diversity Planning Committee, twenty-seven members of the Ferris community. They are a determined, hard-working group that believes that a university is strengthened by a diversity of colors, cultures, worldviews, beliefs, lifestyles, and abilities. They have done good work and their efforts helped guide the work of the divisional diversity work groups. I ask you this day to become a part of the changes that are occurring at Ferris. Become an advocate for change. Ask to be included in the thinking that goes into the diversity action plans. Go to the meetings. Speak plainly. Raise concerns. Offer recommendations. Ask to be involved in the implementation of those plans. I am telling you that change is possible if you help.

David Pilgrim
Chief Diversity Officer