

Dear Colleagues:

The Diversity Office and the Diversity Planning Committee are working to create a document that will conceptualize, assess, nurture, and cultivate diversity as an institutional resource. We made the decision to present the document in its early stages so that members of the campus community could see the developing plan, warts and all—and have opportunities to shape the document’s direction. We have received constructive criticism and well-thought out advice. Thank you. We encourage others to read the “Evolving Diversity Plan” and send your comments. The document can be found on the Diversity Office website, www.ferris.edu/diversity.

I have spent the past six weeks reading the diversity plans of other institutions, talking to officials at other institutions, meeting with Ferris students, faculty, staff—especially persons who work directly with diversity-related issues, and helping to create the skeleton of the Ferris Diversity Plan. I have a deeper understanding of “where Ferris is,” and the steps necessary to get us to a place where we have the earned reputation of being a truly diverse institution.

One of the Diversity Planning Committee’s goals is to assess the current status of diversity at the University. We have made substantial progress in this area, but we need to probe deeper. We are asking all divisions/units/offices to provide the following information to the Diversity Office:

- Mission statements or work directives that relate to diversity;
- Strategies used to promote diversity;
- Programming or initiatives that directly relate to diversity;
- Problems that hinder the infusing of diversity in your area.

In April, I would like to begin meetings with all divisions/units/offices on campus. I envision these meetings as “working sessions,” meaning, we work on strategies and recommendations regarding the difficult questions related to the Evolving Diversity Plan. I want to continue my education of how the University works—and to learn more about the campus culture. I also welcome the invitation to meet with students in class (if it is consistent with the course outline), or out-of-class in groups of five or more.

Finally, I express my thanks to all the people who are working on this effort. I have learned that we are doing some exciting things in the area of diversity; however, there are areas where much work needs to be done—for example, the recruitment and retention of minority students, faculty, and staff. I don’t doubt that Ferris State University can be an institution with an earned reputation of being truly diverse; indeed, we have begun the work.

David Pilgrim