

June 7, 2007

Dear Colleagues:

I believe that the Summer University “Diversity Day” was successful. Dr. Hale’s lectures were well-received and stimulated meaningful discussions. The concurrent sessions, led primarily by members of the Ferris community, were interactive and gave us opportunities to explore issues of diversity in greater depth. At the risk of hyperbole, I believe that yesterday was a critical day in our development into a university that truly values diversity.

It is clear that many members of this University want to talk—and want to talk about diversity. This should not come as a surprise. People talk when they feel safe. They talk when they believe that their voices matter. I accept the axiom that there can be no diversity without dialogue—honest, open, searching dialogue. Dozens of people have said to me how much they appreciated yesterday’s concurrent sessions because they felt that real, meaningful dialogues occurred.

The focus on diversity at Ferris is not a fad. It is not the “flavor of the month.” We must be committed to transforming our culture into one that does not simply tolerate diversity, but actively embraces, infuses, and celebrates diversity as a core value. Yesterday demonstrated that we can talk openly, even passionately, about our differences in a civil manner. This is a necessary step.

Dialogue matters and it must be sustained. Soon, I will post a schedule of Town Hall-style meetings, each probing some aspect of diversity at this University. These will be open to everyone. Again, the objective will be to have meaningful dialogue—and to help us build a culture where constructive discussions and debates are central to how we live and work.

It is important that we continue and sustain dialogue, but it is equally important that we take concrete actions to bring change. This month I will begin meetings with divisional diversity planning committees to talk about general charges and specific actions. As always, I encourage each of you to visit the web site [www.ferris.edu/diversity](http://www.ferris.edu/diversity) to read and critique the Evolving Diversity Plan. I am not allergic to criticism; if you read something in the plan that you believe is ill-conceived or just plain silly, tell me. But also share your recommendations.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the presenters at Diversity Day. They volunteered their time and skills. Please communicate to them that you, too, appreciate their commitment. Here are their names: Abdul Ahmed, Yolonda Barnes, Christy Brewer, Mike Cairns, Tyrone Collins, Deb Cox, Micala Evans, Peter Fromm, Bev Fogarty, Karen GreenBay, Warren Hills, Chauncy Hopkins, Andy Karafa, Russell Leonard, Nicole Link, JaDeana Nolan, Danielle Perdew, Miles Postema, Bill Potter, Todd Stanislav, Luzia Tartari, Troy Tissue, Hurdylyn Woods, Leroy Wright.

David Pilgrim  
Chief Diversity Officer