

Commencement
Presidential Address
May 6, 2006
12:30 p.m.
David L. Eisler, President

College of Technology

Graduation Recognition

It is a true honor to stand before you – the class of 2006. Today is a wonderful opportunity for you to reflect on your accomplishments here at Ferris State University. At such you need to know that your success is built upon the collective efforts of so many people who care about you and who take great pride in your growth and development.

I want to pause for a moment so we can express our thanks to them. I begin with our faculty, who have served as your teachers, advisors, guides, and mentors. We are truly fortunate to have a faculty who are dedicated to teaching and who care deeply about students. I would ask that are our faculty rise so we can express our thanks to them.

Next I want to recognize our staff, who each contribute in their way for you our students. In doing so I would note the beautiful decorations here today and their many contributions to today's ceremony.

We are fortunate today to have a beautiful commencement program which provides information on our University, its program, and today's ceremony. I extend special thanks to the students in our University Printing program for this wonderful keepsake.

Now to the special guests with us today. First I want to recognize your parents who are here with you. They have planned and sacrificed to help you reach this pinnacle of achievement. Parents please stand.

I would be willing to guess that there are also proud grandparents here today. Would you please stand.

For some graduates there are spouses or significant others who have stood by them in both good and tough times and have supported you working toward this day. Would you please stand.

Graduates, some of you also have children, who have had to share their Mom or Dad with books, studying, and homework assignments. I'd ask the children of our graduates to stand.

Finally we have many friends and other relatives of our graduates here today. Please stand so we can thank you for being here with us today.

Graduates in a few moments you'll be crossing this stage. A few helpful reminders - As you celebrate this achievement take time to thank those who have worked, helped, and supported you. Their sacrifice and love have helped create this moment for you.

Second, a practical, but useful reminder. We're going to take your picture as you receive your degree, don't forget to pause as I shake your hand and smile.

Student Stories

For every student who crosses our stage today there is a story, a story that includes parents, family and friends that supported them, teachers on all levels that have educated, challenged, and prepared them and personal commitment, effort, and sacrifice that has helped transform them. In the success, triumphs, and achievements of these graduates we see our hopes and dreams for the future, a future that is bright and promising and filled with opportunities that may yet be undiscovered.

Over the past few weeks I have taken time to visit with our graduates, learning about their experiences and hearing their stories. As I have listened, I have developed an even deeper appreciation of the students we have at Ferris State University and the power of the educational experience we provide here. These are more than outstanding students crossing our stage today. These are extraordinary people, individuals that I would be proud to have as son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother. I want you to know how impressed I am with these graduates. Perhaps the easiest way to illustrate this is to share one of their stories.

This young man developed a strong interest in welding in high school. Pursuing success in this field he learned would require a college degree and the programs recommended to him were at Ferris State University and Ohio State University. Not sure about attending college, he waited until the last minute to enroll. Beginning in fall 2003, he graduates today with his bachelor's degree completed in four years. Reflecting on his experiences at Ferris he talks about how personal the faculty are, the small class size and the friendly atmosphere. Major influences for him have been faculty members Ken Kuk and Jeff Carney.

Welding is actually a family affair as his older sister is also a student in the FSU welding program. She started out at Kettering in electrical engineering. Through her co-op at General Motors she developed a strong interest in welding engineering and was attracted to the hands on nature of our program. Beginning the winter of 2004, she has completed two years of her bachelor's degree at Ferris. Graduating today with his bachelor's degree is Keith Kovach. Classmate Troy Geno assisted him in finding his position at John Deere in E. Moline, Illinois, where he'll begin May 22nd.

The story does end there, as Keith has turned around and helped his sister Erika obtain a summer position at John Deere. I would ask that our brother and sister duo of Keith and Erika Kovach stand and be recognized. Further I would ask that their family stand and be recognized.

On behalf of our University I wish you great success, meaning and fulfillment. As each of you sets out on the next step of your life and career you will face times of challenge, heartbreak, and disappointment. In those times when you might consider giving up, I'd encourage you to remember these wonderful examples of Keith and Erika Kovach. Like each of you, their stories represent the commitment to excellence required to not just succeed, but to excel and how relationships and concern for others can help open doors throughout your career.