

Michigan Senate Education Committee
Testimony - February 15, 2007
Ferris State University
David L. Eisler, president

1. How many applications do you get each year? - between 12,000 and 13,000
2. What percentage of applicants becomes part of the Freshmen Class? - 19%
3. What percentage of students who enter as freshman eventually graduate? - 40%

We can confirm that 55% of the students who do not continue at Ferris enroll at another institution and continue their education. This would suggest that 27% of the students who enroll as freshmen do not continue to pursue a degree in higher education. The most common reason given to not continue at Ferris, but to attend another institution is financial hardship that requires them to live at home. It is worth remembering that Ferris graduates 400 associate degree students annually - many of whom seek employment rather than continuing toward a bachelor's degree.

4. What is the average number of years it takes a student to graduate?

5.33 years for a bachelor's degree.

5. What is the ACT cut score for admissions?

- For general admission the ACT score required is a 17 composite OR a 2.5 high school grade point average.
- For admission into selected University College programs the ACT score required is a 15 composite and a high school grade point average range of 2.25 to 2.49.

6. What weight is given to the ACT/SAT when making admissions decisions?

The ACT is a major determinant to entering the University. Of equal weight is the high school grade point average.

7. What role does the ACT play in determining Financial Aid?

The ACT is not used in determining Financial Aid. The ACT combined with the high school grade point average does determine eligibility for some institutional merit scholarships.

8. What changes are you making, if any, to align with the new high school graduation requirement?

It is our current opinion that the new high school graduation requirements have been designed to reflect expectations for college preparation and admission. We intend to monitor the performance of our students who graduate under these new standards to see if this is indeed the case.

9. What amount of Financial Aid is received by students who don't graduate?

The figure fluctuates, but in general 80% of our students receive financial aid. About 32% of our students receive financial aid and do not graduate from Ferris State University. However, it is incorrect to assume that students who do not continue their degree work at Ferris State University do not graduate from college. During the 2005-06 academic year, 55% of the students who left Ferris State before earning a degree were enrolled at another post-secondary institution. Based on these data approximately 16.2% of students receive financial aid and do not continue to pursue an undergraduate degree.

10. What percent of students who drop out received financial aid? 78%

11. Please provide a breakdown of your drop outs by race, sex, SES, etc.

Retention and graduation rate data track students at Ferris by several factors including sex, race, and ACT/high school grade point average information. There are no real differences in terms of retention and graduation rates and these demographic factors except in two instances: ACT/high school grade point average and ethnicity.

For ACT/high school grade point average there is a strong positive correlation between these scores and an increased likelihood of remaining at the institution and graduating from it. For example in Fall 2002 students with an *ACT composite of below 15 and a high school grade point average between 2.5 and 2.9, 59% of them were retained* from year one to year two. But for students with an *ACT composite of 25 and above and a high school grade point average between 3.5 and 4.0, 88% of them were retained* from year one to year two.

In terms of ethnic background we retain first year African American students at a rate 10% less than all students. This rate for African American students has improved 10% over the past five years. We retain first-year Hispanic students at a rate 15% less than all students.

12. What is the average class size of freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior status?

If this question refers to the numbers of students at each level at Ferris, these data are from Fall 2006.

Freshman	3301 (28%)
Sophomore	2508 (22%)
Junior	2280 (21%)
Senior	3320 (29%)

If this question refers to the average class size at Ferris, 80% of classes at the University have 25 or fewer students.

13. What is the rate of remedial education at your institution?

Remedial instruction is 1/5 of one percent at Ferris, or .2% of the undergraduate budget. In the last five years expenditures for developmental education have decreased from \$259,247 to \$64,438. These data reflect increased admission standards implemented at Ferris over the past six years. (See attached report on the level of participation in remedial education.)

14. Do you have programs to help retain students? Do you have someone who is assigned to each student who helps address academic, financial, and any other problems the student has in adapting to a higher education environment?

Ferris has many programs and services that help to retain students. A sampling includes:

- **Comprehensive Orientation Program** - We offer experiences for first-year students, honors students, international students, transfer students, off-campus students, and graduate students.
- **First Impressions Program** - During the first week of classes in the fall and spring semester, information kiosks are set up campus-wide to direct students to classes, to answer questions, to provide moving-in assistance, and to offer refreshments. It is an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to interact during this period of adjustment to the beginning of the semester. There are also extra campus activities offered to encourage new friendships and interactions.
- **Welcome Calls to New Freshmen and Transfer Students** - For new students in the fall and spring semesters, the Ferris communication center contacts each new student to inquire about how the student has adjusted to the University. We offer to answer any questions students may have, in addition to providing them with information about campus events and services.
- **Required First-Year Student Seminar** - The mission of these classes is to provide students with personal connections, knowledge, and resources that

will enhance their potential for learning, safety, satisfaction, and graduation.

- **Structured Learning Assistance Workshops** – This is an academic support system that features weekly study and practice workshops where students master course content to develop and apply specific learning strategies to improve academic success and foster retention.
- **Peer Mentor Program** – This program assists first-year students to become more prepared academically and socially for the challenges faced during the first year of college. The goal of the program is to increase the likelihood of persistence and successful graduation of participants.
- **Midterm Grade Notification** – This is encouraged in all classes, but especially in 100- and 200-level courses to enable students to take corrective action earlier in the semester to foster academic success.
- **Academic Support Center Services/Tutoring and Writing Center** - The transition to college-level work can sometimes be challenging and Ferris has a number of services to assist students in the academic area. The tutoring center offers one-on-one tutoring by appointment and on a walk-in basis, in addition to providing assistance with study skills and a study resource section. In addition, those students needing assistance with writing and editing papers may utilize the writing center. These services are free to all Ferris students.

Each Ferris student is assigned a faculty advisor upon entrance at the University who serves their academic, social and any other needs.

15. Do you have relationships with high school officials in the state that send their students to you? If so, what kind of relationship is it? If not, why not?

Ferris State University has strong relationships with high school officials. Over the past year, we have increased significantly the number of contacts and visits made to Michigan high schools.

- The University visited 200 high schools in Michigan in 2005-06 and increased the number to 575 high schools for the 2006-07 year. We have nearly tripled our visits to Michigan High Schools over the past year.
- We acknowledge our appreciation to our Top 100 Feeder High Schools.
- We attend *Promoting the Publics Event*. It is an annual open house for High School Counselors.
- We attend 10+ *College Day/Night Events* sanctioned by the Michigan Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers. High School representatives and students attend these events to learn about post-secondary educational opportunities in Michigan.

Enclosure