

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
January 9, 2017

## Welcome Back

Welcome back for the 2017 spring semester. Despite the cold of the past week, it is wonderful to see our campuses come alive as faculty, staff and students return. My hope is the holiday period provided you an opportunity to relax, spend time with family and friends, or engage in other activities you find enjoyable and fulfilling.

Looking back on 2016, we witnessed many exciting achievements and accomplishments. Ferris was recognized as a “high value” university by *Money* magazine; we celebrated new international partnerships and degree offerings; our men’s football team advanced to the NCAA Division II national semifinals; our men’s hockey, men’s basketball and women’s volleyball teams all won their conference postseason tournaments and advanced to the NCAA Division II regional finals, along with many other great moments throughout the past year.

Last month we celebrated the graduation of more than 1,000 students at our commencement ceremonies. It has become a tradition to share stories of graduating seniors who have travelled unique or special paths to earning a degree. I highlighted four such graduates whose stories are compelling and represent the difference you make in their Ferris education and lives. The stories are accessible online [here](#).

You can catch many of the highlights from 2016 in this [video](#) produced by University Advancement and Marketing. Thank you for all your hard work this past year and for what you continue to do every day for our students.

There are many things to look forward to during the course of 2017. Our new residence hall, North Hall, continues to take shape with completion scheduled for August to house our incoming freshman. Construction is underway on the Swan Annex expansion, which will take an additional year to complete. All of the construction occurring on the Big Rapids campus since the summer has undoubtedly caused some frustrations and inconveniences, and I thank you for your patience and understanding as these projects come to completion. We will continue to see the evolution of academic and student life initiatives aimed at helping our students be prepared for lifelong learning and success.

We are fortunate to work at a distinctive university with a unique, special and important mission. I anticipate 2017 will be just as memorable and look forward to working with you as we continue to build a great university and make a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

If Martin Luther King Jr. were alive today, he would be 88 years old. It seems difficult to believe his assassination occurred nearly 50 years ago. Because of this tragedy, his image is frozen in time as a charismatic leader in his 30s, creating meaningful change in our country against considerable obstacles. One can only imagine what he might have accomplished with an additional 50 years. As an inspirational leader of the civil rights movement, Dr. King made an indelible impression on our country. He was a man of great courage and great strength; a man who forever changed the landscape of race relations in the United States. Our University will celebrate his legacy over the course of several days and host multiple special events, many of which have become traditions for us:

- **Monday, Jan. 16** - 23<sup>rd</sup> *annual Faculty/Staff In-Service* presented by the Diversity and Inclusion Office from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in University Center Room 203.  
31<sup>st</sup> *annual Freedom March and Student Tribute* presented by the Office of Multicultural Student Services from 4 to 6 p.m. in the University Center Rankin Lounge/Room 202
- **Tuesday, Jan. 17**- *Exhibit – Tunnel of Oppression* hosted by the Office of Residence Life’s Harmony Project from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. in University Center Room 116.

*Discussion – Politics Now: What Would MLK Think?* co-hosted by the Political Engagement Project and Student Government from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in University Center Room 202B

- **Wednesday, Jan. 18- Exhibit – Tunnel of Oppression** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Guest Speaker – Bakari Sellers, CNN Political Analyst, lawyer and activist.* Join this 5-Star Event from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in University Center Room 202.

All events are free and open to the entire University and Big Rapids community. I encourage you to attend and be a part of this celebration of Dr. King's life and achievements. More information on the week's activities can be found [here](#).

## **Our Strategic Plan**

The beginning of a new calendar year is a good time to review where we are, consider where we are headed and gauge our progress on the goals established in our strategic plan. Now in the third year of our strategic plan entitled "[Living Our Values](#)," we are building upon our strengths, maintaining areas of excellence and working toward a creative and sustainable future.

When you have a few moments, I encourage you to review your division and/or college strategic plans [here](#). Annual expectations and strategic plan annual reports are accessible [here](#), and finally our strategic plan metrics are [here](#) via the interactive iDashboard. Created to give us a framework upon which we can embrace our University's Core Values, our strategic plan is a living, breathing document that focuses our efforts on our students, working toward common goals that will enhance our University. I am very interested in hearing your thoughts, ideas and questions about strategic planning at Ferris. Please send me an e-mail anytime at [eislerd@ferris.edu](mailto:eislerd@ferris.edu).

## **Ferris Student-Athletes Recognized**

At its December meeting, the Ferris Board of Trustees presented two Citations of Merit in recognition of the remarkable fall season of competition by student-athletes. Our volleyball team was both the regular season and postseason tournament GLIAC champions. Finishing with a record of 30-6, they won 26 consecutive matches before losing in the NCAA regional finals. Our football team advanced to the final four of the NCAA postseason tournament before losing on the road to the repeating national champions. Finishing with a record of 12-3, the team won eight consecutive games. Congratulations and thanks go to Head Coaches Tia Brandel-Wilhelm and Tony Annese, their staff and student-athletes, for two truly remarkable and memorable seasons.

During the holiday break, our ice hockey team competed in the Three Rivers Classic in Pittsburgh, Pa. They tied the then 6<sup>th</sup> ranked team in the country, Boston College. In this game, freshman goalie Justin Kapelmaster made 58 saves. In the 65 years of our conference, the Western Collegiate Hockey Association, many thousands of games have been played against the best of college hockey. Justin's performance was the 22<sup>nd</sup> best individual performance in conference history, earning him a place on the All-Tournament team and recognition as the WCHA defensive player of the week. The ice hockey team and men's and women's basketball teams are all competing at home this weekend. Our ice hockey team takes on Alaska Fairbanks with games Friday and Saturday starting at 7:07 p.m. Our basketball teams play Saturday against Northwood with women at 1 p.m. and the men at 3 p.m. Thank you for attending and supporting our Bulldog athletic teams.

## **Closing Thoughts**

With the snow, slush, ice and salt this can be a very challenging time of year for our employees who maintain campus buildings and grounds. When you see one of our employees from the Physical Plant, please express your appreciation for their efforts. I encourage you to do what you can to help facilitate the work they do to keep our workplace clean and well

maintained, and our streets and sidewalks open and accessible.

David L. Eisler, president