

President's Message to Campus

Office of the President
October 13, 2017

Budget & Enrollment Forum

On Tuesday I hosted the annual budget and enrollment forum. This provided an opportunity to look back at last year's budget results, this year's budget, revenue, the state higher education formula funding, enrollment trends, budget reductions and to look toward the future. I want to emphasize a few points from this presentation:

- As a result of enrollment declines, we have significant reductions in revenue and the University general fund budget. Last year this budget was reduced by \$5 million. This year the budget was reduced by an additional \$3 million. After the 4th day enrollment count, the budget was reduced by an additional \$442,000.
- Taken together, over a two-year span, nearly \$8.5 million has been reduced from the general fund budget. Many at the University will remember the significant reductions we made in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 because of state funding cuts during the great recession. That amount was \$10 million.
- While the 18-year-old population will significantly increase nationally, the number of students graduating from Michigan high schools will continue to decline through 2021. This decrease is estimated at more than 7,000 graduates, a decline of 6.8%. The total number of Michigan high school graduates is estimated to drop below 100,000 in 2020.
- Despite these numbers, there are positives in this year's enrollment including a slight increase in FTIAC students in Big Rapids, a 3% increase in the enrolled yield rate of admitted students in Big Rapids, significant increases in first-year retention and an increase in graduation rates.

The reality is many public universities in Michigan experienced larger headcount decreases than Ferris, and much good work is underway at our University in student recruitment and retention. However, to avoid continued significant budget cuts we will need to work effectively to reverse enrollment declines. I am very optimistic and strongly believe that we not only can, but will do so. In my remarks I stressed seven targeted ways to do so:

- Improve student retention
- Push back state cap on TIP
- Remove impediments for transfer students
- Increase summer school offerings to take full advantage of year-round Pell
- Address decline in Internet SCH
- Build on renewed interest in programs at community colleges
- Leverage concurrent and dual enrollment into full-time students.

Seventy-three percent of our general fund budget comes from student tuition. Because enrollment and student credit hours this fall are the lowest we have seen since 2008 and 2006 respectively, it is critical each of us continues to focus our efforts on enrollment, both attracting new students and retaining current students. At the same time, we need to actively promote what makes Ferris State University distinctive in Michigan higher education.

The presentation contains much more information, is available online and is annotated with the Adobe “sticky notes” feature. To view, [download the presentation](#) and open with an Adobe product. I would strongly encourage you review this information.

Thank you to everyone who attended the budget presentation. I look forward to working with you to improve recruitment and retention for 2018. If you have questions about the material presented, please contact me.

Graduate Student Survey

When students fill out their application for graduation, they also complete a Graduate Exit Survey to share their perspective on their experience with us at Ferris. This survey is open to all graduating students from all locations. The results of the most recent survey were analyzed in September and include responses from just over 2,500 graduates.

This survey asks students their opinions on a variety of topics. As part of our strategic plan we track the responses to four questions on our dashboard:

- Ferris was a good value for my money – 91% of respondents agree
- I’m proud I attended Ferris – 95% agree
- Rate your overall Ferris experience – 95% are satisfied
- Would you recommend Ferris to a family member? – 72% answered yes, 26% possibly.

These are remarkable results and all are increases from last year’s results. Thank you for the extraordinary work you do for our students, and the care and support you provide them. It makes an important difference, and as these results confirm, is much appreciated.

You can view these survey responses, along with other strategic plan measures on the newly redesigned WebFOCUS dashboard located on the [Strategic Planning webpage](#). Thank you to Tammy Babcock and Rob Wagner for designing and implementing this new dashboard template.

Diversity and Inclusion Events

To promote the importance of intercultural exchange and connections with members of our campus community, the Office of Multicultural Student Services is organizing a campaign against stereotypes called #NoType. This campaign provides an opportunity for the University community to share their experiences of being stereotyped and the importance of challenging stereotypes. Visit the UC Rankin Atrium from 12 to 3 p.m. on October 17-19 to participate in this campaign.

The Liaison Committee for Students with Disabilities is showing the documentary "Best and Most Beautiful Things" at 6 p.m. on Oct. 17 in IRC 115 as part of Disability Awareness Month. After the screening, organizers will Skype with the film’s director and Michelle, the subject of the documentary. You can learn more about this uplifting story and other Disability Awareness Month activities at ferris.edu/disabilityawareness.

The Center for Latin@ Studies welcomes Andrés Chavez, grandson of civil rights activist Cesar E. Chavez, on Wednesday, Oct. 18, from 3 to 5 p.m. in IRC 131. Mr. Chavez will speak on equity and liberation from a new generational vantage point. A Q&A session with him will follow. This is an opportunity to learn about his family’s legacy and his advice to millennials across the country.

Good News

Next week is the eighth week of the fall semester. As evidenced by this partial listing of the Good News submitted, there is a multitude of great work happening across campus. Please take a few minutes to review the entire [Good News list](#) and congratulate your students and colleagues on their accomplishments.

- Jana Pisani joined the state board of the Michigan Council for History Education and will participate in a historical literacy panel discussion at the Great Lakes History Conference.
- Sandy Alspach presented an overview of a research project, co-led by Paul Zube, on the effect of social media on athlete performance at the International Congress on Sport, Economy and Media in Hamburg, Germany.
- Congressman John Moolenaar recognized Aesthetic Engineers for their work on the 'Freedom is Not Free' monument unveiled at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7979 in Ewart, a project between Fine Arts and Architecture programs.
- Law Enforcement Academy students raised and donated \$1,000 for the Michigan Special Olympics by participating in the Law Enforcement Torch Run.
- "The Muskegon," a short documentary produced by TDMP students Josh Monroe and Ray Heinlen, has been selected for screening at the Fresh Coast Film Festival.
- Michelle Weemaes and Tracy Glentz presented on Inter Professional Education and Academic Service Learning at the MIPERC conference at GVSU in September.
- Anuli Njoku received a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation travel grant to attend the RWJF New Connections Eleventh Bi-annual Symposium in Boston.
- Fathima Wakeel received a grant from the American Cancer Society to fund a tobacco-free campus initiative.
- Michael Reger published "Association between Urinary Phytoestrogens and C-reactive Protein in the Continuous National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey" in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition.
- Natalie Wetzel participated on an ArtPrize Nine discussion panel organized by Creative Many focusing on the challenges facing creative practitioners in Grand Rapids.
- Students Taylor Axdorff and Skylar Sparks worked with WZZM 13 to design and construct a custom news desk used to broadcast from the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum during ArtPrize Nine.
- UICA's OddBall: *Cultivate*, raised \$35,000 to help underwrite UICA's exhibitions and programs throughout the year.
- Thomas Dowling published a paper in PLoS ONE with collaborators from the University of Maryland's Institute of Human Virology and School of Medicine titled "Targeting of CDK9 with Indirubin 3'-monoxime safely and durably reduces HIV viremia in chronically infected humanized mice."
- Jennifer Lamberts published a paper in *Neurobiology of Disease* with Dr. Patrik Brundin from the Van Andel Research Institute titled "Axonal transport dysfunction in neurodegenerative diseases: the "holy grail" for developing disease modifying therapies?"
- Dejah Rubel's report on the presentation "Partnering with Vendors to Limit Compromised User Accounts" at the NASIG annual conference in Indianapolis was published in the NASIG Newsletter.
- Emily Aslakson published "Reduction of Magnitude and Frequency of Vertical Strabismus through Vision Therapy" in the journal, *Optometry & Visual Performance*.
- David Damari was the keynote speaker at the 8th Annual Korean Optometric Association meeting in Seoul.

- The Beer, Booze & Books presentation was attended by 1,532 first-year students (86% of the first-year class).
- Seventy TIP Scholars participated in the program's first early move-in week to learn more about resources and the campus.
- Senior center Jake Daugherty is one of 22 college football players from across the country and one of only 11 non-NCAA Division I student-athletes chosen to the Allstate AFCA Good Works Team for his efforts both on and off the field.
- Ferris Sports Update, produced by TDMP students, airs each week during the athletics season with broadcast coverage throughout most of Michigan.
- Residential housing occupancy is at 97%.
- Twenty-one employees are participating in the Ferris Employee Leadership Development Program.
- Fourteen employees participated in a new train-the-trainer workshop hosted by The Staff Center for Training & Development.
- Enterprise and Application Services partnered with Enrollment Services and Human Resources to provide staff training on Banner Workflow to further process automation.
- Information Technology Services, Enrollment Services, Human Resources and Academic Affairs collaborated in the upgrade to the institution's enterprise reporting tool, WebFOCUS, upgrading the design and security of the software.
- Governmental Relations and General Counsel hosted the 11th Annual Founders' Day Community Ice Cream Social, with celebrity servers scooping Jones' Homemade Ice cream to over 2,000 people.
- More than 1,000 students attended the Bulldog Beginnings event Rec Fest. The event also welcomed more than 200 new followers to the UREC social media sites.
- The Center for Leadership Activities and Career Service's "Clothespins of Kindness Campaign" at the start of the school year provided 1,000 clothespins with kind and encouraging phrases to share with fellow students.
- Tyrone Collins was elected as a delegate for the Michigan Association for College Admission Counseling.
- There are 23 intramural soccer teams this fall, a 50% increase from in the past.
- The Ferris Futures Scholarship Challenge has seen 178 gifts and pledges to new and existing endowments, with more than \$3.4 million of new gift commitments.
- After two weeks, the Telephone Outreach Program has already raised \$3,985 for student support on campus.

Athletics

This weekend our men's hockey team plays its first pair of Western Collegiate Hockey Association games at home tonight and Saturday against Northern Michigan. Both games begin at 7:07 p.m. The men had an exciting 3-2 home-opening victory over Western Michigan before a large crowd this past Saturday evening.

The University's Disc Golf club team is defending national champions and received additional national recognition last week winning the Dean's Cup at the Winthrop Gold course in South Carolina. The club competed against some of the top collegiate teams in the country. Congratulations to coach Leonard Johnson and the team for their success.

David L. Eisler, president