

# President's Message to Campus

Office of the President  
October 20, 2017

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## Family and Friends Weekend

This weekend we will welcome nearly 1,200 special guests to campus for the second annual Family and Friends weekend. Our students, their family and friends, will take part in various events and activities including the “Meet Your Dean” reception and Bulldog family movie night on Friday, the Welcome to Downtown, tailgate and football game, basketball exhibition and casino/bingo night on Saturday, and the United Way 5k color run/walk, women’s tennis and Student Affairs brunch on Sunday. Complete details are available on the [Family and Friends website](#).

Much collaboration has taken place to bring this event together. Thank you to everyone on campus and in the community for giving our students and their guests a very warm welcome to Big Rapids.

## Hurricane Relief Efforts

In response to requests on ways to assist those affected by the devastating hurricanes in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, we have compiled a list of some of the organizations that are accepting donations. This list can be found under “Resources” on our [homepage](#).

I would like to highlight a special effort on campus. Geography Professor Jennifer Johnson and her students are raising money to assist the families of Daisy Henderson and Janitza Sawyer, members of the Department of Social Sciences. Both have families in Puerto Rico and Dominica who sustained significant losses. Students are planning various fundraisers, and a [YouCaring page](#) has been established in collaboration with the Ferris Social Work Association to collect donations for the families. Thank you to the students and Professor Johnson for initiating this fundraising for those in need.

## Comprehensive Campaign Kick-Off and Foundation for Excellence Benefit

In our state as well as across the country there has been a significant change in funding for public universities. There was a time when the state provided nearly 75 percent of the funding for a student’s education at Ferris. Today that support is less than 25 percent, and this financial burden has shifted to our students. Public higher education, which was once supported as a public good, is regrettably now viewed by some as a personal benefit.

One of the ways we can help our students and provide sources of support for the education we provide is through philanthropy. At Ferris we have been fortunate to receive support from alumni and other donors, but like many state colleges and universities, there is not a strong tradition of significant and consistent fundraising support. To develop this culture of sustained giving, we needed to learn how to consistently and effectively seek, secure and follow through on fundraising efforts. While there will always be more we can learn and do in philanthropy, there is much improvement here. From modest beginnings, we now raise \$8.5 million or more annually.

Over the past few years, we have worked to build the foundation for our first-ever comprehensive fundraising campaign. A comprehensive campaign works to bring together all of the fundraising efforts of our institution, seeking to increase both the number of donors and the gifts received. Leaders of our campaign include alumni and donors willing to invest both their time and resources in supporting this fundraising effort. This campaign cabinet is led by Gary Granger, a member of our Board of Trustees and incoming chair of The Ferris Foundation, and

Jeff Rowe, Pharmacy alumnus and chair of the most successful fundraising effort in our history, Pharmacy Forward. They are joined by Paul Boyer, Bob Carter, Doug Dommert, Bob Friar, Phil Hagerman, Stephanie Leonardos, Dennis Nickels and Vivian Pickard.

Our campaign focuses on three areas – Investing in Students, Program Expansion and Innovation, and Building Partnerships. The goal for this campaign is \$80 million, a challenging, but reachable goal. During the silent phase in preparation for the campaign we have had significant success, but many millions remain to be raised.

Thursday, Nov. 9, will be the beginning of two days of activities to celebrate the public launch of this first-ever comprehensive fundraising campaign, entitled “Now & Always: The Campaign for Ferris State University.” The entire University community is invited to the University Center on Nov. 9 for an 11 a.m. program featuring remarks from our campaign co-chairs, who will share their perspective on the campaign’s theme and goals, recognize key campaign donors, and present campaign promotional materials, including a special feature video about the campaign’s impact on the University. A celebration throughout the University Center will follow the program, with food, live entertainment, games and other campaign-related activities and materials. Please come, bring your colleagues and students, learn more about the campaign, and how you can help and be involved in this important moment in Ferris’ history.

The campaign announcement will continue on Friday, Nov. 10 at the annual Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit, held in the Steelcase Ballroom at DeVos Place Conference Center in Grand Rapids. This event highlights the accomplishments of our student scholarship and faculty/staff merit grant recipients. Special guest for the evening will be Aly Raisman, team captain of the gold medal winning 2012 and 2016 U.S. Olympic gymnastics teams. WOOD/WOTV personality Maranda will interview Ms. Raisman at the event. Please consider joining us for this important evening. Special ticket pricing is available for faculty, staff and emeriti. If the price is prohibitive for you to attend, please contact me so you can be present. More information about the benefit can be found on [The Ferris Foundation’s website](#).

## **Athletics**

With wins at home last weekend against Davenport (4-1) and Purdue Northwest (4-0), women’s soccer improved its record to 9-6 overall and 5-2 in the GLIAC. Our team is currently in third place in the GLIAC with two league regular-season outings remaining. The women are on the road playing Northern Michigan today at 4 p.m. and Michigan Tech on Sunday at noon.

Our men’s and women’s basketball teams are preparing for their first exhibition games this weekend inside Jim Wink Arena. The men’s team hosts Aquinas at home on Saturday at 6 p.m., and both squads will host games with alumni teams on Sunday. The women begin at noon and the men at 3 p.m. On Thursday, Oct. 26, our men are in East Lansing for a 7 p.m. exhibition game against Michigan State, one of the top Division I programs in the country.

This Saturday our football team will host Grand Valley in the Anchor-Bone Classic at Top Taggart Field. Kick-off is at 1:05 p.m., and the game will be televised across the country by ESPN3 as part of the Division II National Showcase Game of the Week. Both teams head into Saturday’s game ranked among the top 15 teams in the nation. Ferris is #12 in the American Football Coaches Association Division II Rankings while GVSU is #7 overall. As part of Saturday’s game, a special Bulldog Football Alumni Weekend will take place with many Ferris State football alumni back to attend the game. This is an important game between two of the top teams in the nation. Join the many fans who will be in attendance and show your support for our team.

David L. Eisler, president