

President's Message to Campus

Office of the President
January 19, 2018

MLK Celebrations

This week's 32nd annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations were an opportunity for reflection, service and action. The readings presented at the faculty and staff in-service on Monday morning were especially moving and offered a unique experience of community and expression. This year, perhaps more than any in my memory, included readers presenting their own poetry or essays. Thank you to Tracy Busch, Kemi Fadayomi, Deirdre Fagan, Lincoln Gibbs, Jackie Hughes, Lisa Kemmis, Karyn Kio, Ghada Mahdi, Brooke Moore, Kaylee Moreno, David Pilgrim, Fran Rosen, Will Sartore, Mark Thomson, Michael Wade and Maggie Walcott for sharing your selected readings and beautifully written pieces.

The Diversity and Inclusion Office honored Rita Walters with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Award for her efforts in establishing a study abroad experience to Haiti for Social Work students in addition to helping develop a mentorship program for students who are at-risk academically. Thank you to Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion David Pilgrim for sponsoring and organizing this event.

Despite the cold temperatures and the snowy weather, there was a large crowd for the freedom march Monday afternoon. For this group I quoted a few excerpts from Dr. King's essay, "The Purpose of Education," that he wrote for the student newspaper at Morehouse College in 1947. His words resonate with me today, and I would like to share them with you:

It seems to me that education has a two-fold function to perform in the life of man and in society: the one is utility and the other is culture. Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of his life.

Education must also train one for quick, resolute and effective thinking. To think incisively and to think for one's self is very difficult. We are prone to let our mental life become invaded by legions of half truths, prejudices, and propaganda. At this point, I often wonder whether or not education is fulfilling its purpose. A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.

The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals.

We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character--that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living.

These are remarkable words from an 18-year old undergraduate student. Thank you to everyone who participated in the MLK celebration events this week. It is my hope that the conversations had during these events will not end after this week, but continue long into the future.

Higher Learning Commission Project Update Forums

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) last visited Ferris State University in 2011. At that time, the University earned a full 10-year accreditation without an additional visit or reporting requirements. This was a first for Ferris. As part of the reaffirmation process for the HLC, we now submit a quality improvement project, with each academic college initiating a quality improvement project in three areas: learning, retention and learning environment. In addition, there is a new approach to documenting the University's compliance with the new standards. This approach replaces the traditional self-study report. By spring 2019, we will report on our success with these quality initiatives to the HLC and be provided feedback prior to our next reaffirmation visit during the 2020-21 academic year.

All members of the University community are invited to attend the HLC Quality Initiative Project Update Forums next week. The forums for each college are as follows:

- **Monday, January 22** – Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Health Professions, Optometry and Pharmacy
- **Tuesday, January 23** – Colleges of Business, Engineering Technology, and Education and Human Services
- **Wednesday, January 24** – Extended and International Operations, Retention and Student Success, Kendall College of Art and Design, and FLITE

The forums are in the UC, Room 217. I encourage you to attend and hear updates on your college's quality initiative and the lessons learned to date. Thank you to Provost Paul Blake, Associate Provost Roberta Teahan, college deans, faculty and project teams for your efforts on these quality initiative projects. For more information visit www.ferris.edu/hlc/qualityinitiative/news.htm.

Legislative Luncheon

Our annual legislative luncheon in Lansing is Wednesday, January 31. This is an opportunity to share with our state legislators the good works happening at Ferris and to emphasize the importance of state support for our students, our University and the education we provide. If your schedule permits, I would encourage you to join us. A bus will be departing from Big Rapids at 8 a.m. for those interested in attending. To reserve a seat on the bus, please contact Jody Greco with Governmental Relations at jodygreco@ferris.edu.

Indie Incubator Exhibit

The Fine Art Gallery inside the University Center is hosting an innovative exhibit that emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration in a unique way. The "Indie Incubator: From Poem to 3D Print" features work of Ferris and KCAD students that has been transformed through four disciplines: poems, illustrations, 3D models and 3D printing. Each takes you on a journey from the artists' initial inspiration to the finished piece. A reception will take place on Friday, Jan. 26, from 5 to 7 p.m. Please come and see the talented work of our students.

Athletics

Hockey returns home this weekend to take on Bemidji State tonight and Saturday, with both games beginning at 7:07 p.m. These games are pivotal, as both teams are fighting for a potential WCHA playoff position.

Our men's and women's basketball teams were in Hammond, Ind., last night to play against newcomers to the GLIAC, Purdue Northwest. The men and women both celebrated victories and are 19-1 and 10-8 respectively. Tomorrow night they travel to Grand Valley for the women's game at 6 p.m. and the men's game at 8 p.m. This week, the men's team climbed two spots in the National Association of Basketball Coaches Division II poll to #5 in the country and moved to #4 in the nation in this week's Division II Sports Information Directors National Rankings. This year represents the first time the men have been featured among the nation's top five teams since the end of the 1988-89 season when they reached the #1 spot in the nation near the end of the regular-season. Congratulations to Coach Bronkema and the team on this achievement.

David L. Eisler, president