

# President's Message to Campus

Office of the President  
January 5, 2018

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## Welcome Back

With spring semester beginning Monday, it is wonderful to see the return of everyone to our campuses. My hope is that the holiday break gave you an opportunity to relax and engage in activities that bring you fulfillment.

Last month more than 1,000 students graduated from Ferris. The ceremonies were very special, as were the graduates who walked across the stage and became our newest alumni. At both commencements, I shared several graduate stories. There is no shortage of students who accomplish remarkable things – they overcome challenges that are difficult to imagine and triumph over this adversity. When I visit with them it is humbling, inspirational, and at times, quite emotional. Please take a few moments to [read their stories](#).

## Strategic Planning

To continue work on the University's next strategic plan, Dr. Patricia Cormier will be back in Big Rapids and Grand Rapids on Tuesday, Jan. 16 and Wednesday, Jan. 17. She will continue the listening sessions she began with faculty, staff and students in November. If you did not attend an earlier session, there will be an additional open forum scheduled on Tuesday, Jan. 16, from 3 to 4 p.m. in the UC Room 203. Your input is very valuable and will be of great help as we move forward in the strategic planning process. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Dean Kristi Haik and Professor Spence Tower, are pleased to share the names of the following faculty and staff who have agreed to serve on this committee: Tony Baker, Jennifer Dirmeyer, Lincoln Gibbs, Sarah Hinkley, Jennifer Johnson, Jake Martin, Suzanne Miller, Bob Murray, David Pilgrim, Lisa vonReichbauer, Kristen Salomonson and Charles Wright. Please join me in thanking these individuals for serving the University in this important effort.

Nearly 60 faculty and staff were willing to serve on this committee. Viewed in its entirety, this is an impressive commitment to creating the future for our University. As the planning process moves forward, there will be multiple opportunities to serve on task forces and other groups formed to support this planning effort. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to serve on this committee.

## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

The week of January 15 we will celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A man gone too soon, he was a person of hope, honor, inspiration, dignity and service. He committed his life to ensuring all people, of all colors, and all races, were given the freedom and justice they deserve. This week celebrates not only his remarkable life and accomplishments, but also promotes his leadership, teachings and unconditional love for all of humanity.

Included in this year's celebration is the [MLK Day of Service Projects](#), a special day of service on Monday, Jan. 15, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Two of the annual highlights of MLK day include –

- 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Faculty/Staff In-Service, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., UC Room 202B
- 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Freedom March, 4-5 p.m., UC Rankin Atrium

There are three special evening programs –

- *32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Student Tribute*, Monday, Jan. 15, 6-7 p.m., UC Room 202
- *I Was Here in '68 – Ron Snead, former chairman of the Ferris Board of Trustees and Ferris alumnus*, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 6-7:30 p.m., UC Room 203
- *Which Lives Matter? – Monti Washington, speaker, poet and activist*, Wednesday, Jan. 17, 7-8:30 p.m., UC Room 202

More information on these and other events is available online at [www.ferris.edu/mlk](http://www.ferris.edu/mlk).

The celebration is sponsored by the Diversity and Inclusion Office, Office of Housing & Residence Life Harmony Project, and Entertainment Unlimited. The events are free and open to the public. I encourage all members of our University community, faculty, staff and students to be a part of this celebration of Dr. King's life and achievements.

### **Athletics**

Last evening was a memorable victory inside Wink Arena as our nationally 10<sup>th</sup>-ranked men's basketball team came from behind to defeat Wayne State 86-80. This victory marked Head Coach Andy Bronkema's 100<sup>th</sup> career win.

Currently in his fourth year as head coach at Ferris, Andy Bronkema has compiled a 100-43 overall record (.699 winning percentage) to go with three consecutive NCAA Tournament Appearances and three-straight GLIAC Tournament Championships. The last three seasons are the winningest stretch in Ferris State men's basketball history.

Congratulations to Coach Bronkema, your staff and student-athletes for this incredible achievement.

### **Winter Weather**

Winter has arrived, and with it, so has the cold, snow and ice. Please allow extra time for travel, and be extra cautious, as roads and sidewalks may be snow covered and slippery. We want you to arrive to your destination safely.

Inside all of our buildings, custodians take great care to keep our facilities clean. During the winter months, we can help them by wiping off our boots and shoes upon entering a building.

If you have not signed up to receive official emergency text alerts so you are aware of time-sensitive campus safety issues, including closings due to weather or other disruptions, I would encourage you to do so. To get started, click [instructions](#) for more information.

Our students and the educational experience we provide are paramount. As we look forward, we will focus our efforts on strategic planning, enrollment, fundraising and addressing student debt. Thank you in advance for your involvement and dedicated efforts for our students. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

David L. Eisler, president