

President's Message to Campus

*Office of the President
February 16, 2018*

Executive Budget Proposal

Last week Governor Snyder released his executive budget recommendations for 2018-2019. His funding recommendation for higher education includes a \$29.8 million (2%) increase for Michigan's 15 public universities. As in past years, half of the funding increase is allocated across the board. The other half will be distributed through a slightly modified performance based funding formula. Under the new formula, weighting is increased for certificate and associate degrees awarded in critical skills areas, which is something we do well. Under this proposal, Ferris would receive a 2.6% increase, or \$1,380,400. Increases across the 15 public universities range from 1.5% to 3.1%. Other positive recommendations include a \$6 million increase to the Michigan Competitive Scholarship, which serves students at all postsecondary institutions.

In the context that no funding increase was recommended for community colleges, the proposed increase is most welcome. However, there is considerable concern for TIP funding. The Executive Budget proposes to reduce the support for students to three times the average in-district community college tuition rate, and the \$8.5 million cap per institution introduced last year remains. This limitation impacts only Ferris and is unfair to our students. They should receive the TIP support they have been promised by the state, and this should not be withheld from them because of our success in recruiting and working with TIP students. I will continue to advocate very hard in Lansing to see that this support is restored. The Executive Budget also does not recommend any capital outlay requests. Our proposal for the Center for Virtual Learning ranked 4th among those received. We will continue to seek approval for this project during this session.

Next the House and the Senate will independently review the budget proposal and pass a bill of their recommendations. Typically these bills differ and go to conference committee for the differences to be resolved in a single bill. Upon approval this is forwarded to Governor Snyder for his approval, usually in late May or early June. It is worth remembering that historically final budget amounts are lower than those proposed by the Governor.

Moving forward, my testimony before the combined House and Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee is scheduled for Thursday afternoon. Throughout the session I will continue to advocate with legislators in Lansing on an equitable approach for our TIP students, and our capital outlay request.

Budget Forums

With recent enrollment declines experienced these past two years and a steeper than anticipated decline this spring, we need to make some very difficult budget decisions. Over the past two years we have reduced the Big Rapids budget by \$9.25 million and the Kendall budget by \$3.43 million. All of these reductions result from enrollment declines.

It is customary for me to hold budget forums in the fall – but due to the impact of the spring enrollment decline and projections for next year I feel compelled to present this analysis to you now. Please join me in open forums scheduled this coming week so together we can closely examine enrollments, implications for next year's budget, efforts that can change this pattern, and what continued declines mean for immediate and future financial decisions. I very much want to share with you what lies ahead, and to seek your advice, insight and counsel as we move forward in this challenging environment.

Please attend one of the three budget forums scheduled this coming week: Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 2 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 22, at 9 a.m. or 7 p.m. All three forums will be held in the University Center, Room 203. It is important for everyone to understand the fiscal environment in which we operate and the budgetary impact of declining enrollments. If you work outside of Big Rapids, you will be able to view these forums live from your location. For login information please contact our office at (231) 591-2500. Thank you for taking time to participate.

Board of Trustees Meeting Update

At the Board of Trustees meeting on Friday, Feb. 16, the Board approved a resolution expressing its concern and sympathy for the brave women who have come forward and shared their testimony of sexual abuse by Larry Nassar. Vice Chair Lori Gwizdala spoke on behalf of the Trustees, sharing the Board's commitment to ensuring that our policies, procedures and practices regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment are fully compliant with Federal and State laws, and are in accordance with leading practices in higher education. She also shared their support of the newly created task force led by Vice President Jeanine Ward-Roof and their appreciation for the significant work that has been done on sexual assault prevention and education on campus. You can read the [Trustees' full statement](#) online.

During their meetings Trustees approved 11 sabbatical leave requests. Please join me in congratulating the following faculty:

- [Olukemi Fadayomi](#) – Biological Sciences: *Building Opportunity for Enriching Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Students' Success through Faculty Development*
- [Kathleen Harlan](#) – Dental Hygiene: *Clinical Consensus: a Clinical Educators Teaching Manual*
- [Cheolwoo Lee](#) – Accountancy, Finance & Information Systems: *Focused Finance Research – Accountancy, Finance, & Information Systems*
- [Victor Piercey](#) – Mathematics: *The Role of Faculty Learning Communities in Scaling Innovative Courses*
- [Alison Popp](#) – Marketing: *Design Process with Evolving Context*
- [Avesh Raghunandan](#) – Optometry: *Creative Endeavor to Develop an Educational Resource for Students and Educators of Vision Sciences*
- [Wendy Samuels](#) – Social Work: *Research and Write Self-Studies for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) Programs*
- [James Scott](#) – Biology: *Application for Certification as an American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (ABVP) Diplomat*
- [Thomas Stoffer](#) – English, Literature and World Languages: *Grave of a Young Mother*
- [Julie Ward](#) – Health Care Systems Administration: *Doctoral Research Project: Do First Generation Students Have the Academic, Financial, and Emotional Support to Be Successful*
- [Michelle Weemaes](#) – Diagnostic Medical Sonography: *Sabbatical to Obtain OB/GYN Clinical Experience*

We are fortunate at Ferris to have a Board of Trustees that understands the importance of the sabbatical experience and who strongly support this.

For May commencement ceremonies, the Board also approved the conferring of honorary degrees to Alex Gorsky, Teresa McKay, and Robert and Ellen Thompson. Mr. Gorsky is the chief executive officer and chairman of the board for Johnson & Johnson. A longtime advocate of diversity and inclusion, he is the executive sponsor of two Johnson & Johnson employee resource groups, the Women's Leadership Initiative and the Veteran's Leadership

Council, and was named one of the “100 Most Inspiring Leaders” by *PharmaVOICE*. Mr. Gorsky was the keynote speaker at the University’s inaugural Spathelf Lecture Series in 2013 and returned as the keynote in September 2017.

Mrs. McKay graduated from Ferris with a Bachelor of Science in Business and a concentration in Accounting. A Certified Public Accountant, a Certified Government Financial Manager and a Certified Management Accountant, she is the director of the Department of Defense Finance and Accounting Service. She leads a workforce of more than 12,000 employees who disperse nearly \$700 billion annually for our military and defense operations. She has served on the College of Business Accountancy Advisor Board for the last 13 years. During that time, she has counseled our students, supported the hiring of COB interns within her agency, and promoted the hiring of many of our graduates.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson have made a profound impact on Michigan. Mr. Thompson built his company, Thompson-McCully, into Michigan’s largest asphalt paving company. In his 40 years in the industry, he helped lead the paving business, serving as chairman of the National Asphalt Paving Foundation, president of the Michigan Road Builders Association and other leadership roles. Mrs. Thompson began her career as an elementary school teacher and has a passion for teaching, education and students. Together they created the Thompson Foundation which established the Robert and Ellen Thompson Scholarship Program for Working Families at Ferris. This began at Ferris in 2016 with 10 students receiving scholarship support. A second cohort of 30 freshmen and 15 transfer students was added in 2017. The Thompsons plan to increase these numbers each year, so that by 2019 they will support 144 Thompson Scholars with their scholarship support.

Athletics

Our nationally third-ranked men's basketball team has been chosen as this week's National Association of Basketball Coaches Division II National "Team Of The Week." Last week the men secured an 80-55 win at Tiffin and on Saturday came back from a 10-point deficit to beat Ashland 97-91 in overtime. With one-and-a-half seconds left on the clock, they tied the game with an incredible shot from midcourt to send it into overtime. You can see this amazing, memorable basket on this [YouTube video](#).

Last evening the team beat Michigan Tech in overtime 89-84, their second overtime victory in a row on the road, and will play Northern Michigan tomorrow at 1 p.m. in Marquette. Both basketball teams return home for their final regular season contests, Thursday evening vs. Purdue Northwest and Saturday afternoon vs. Grand Valley.

David L. Eisler, president