

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
January 10, 2011

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## **Welcome Back**

Welcome back for spring semester. With record enrollment, new construction and major renovation projects, our campuses were hubs of remarkable activity this past fall. I hope the holiday break provided you an opportunity for relaxation with family and friends. Together we can prepare for the new challenges and opportunities ahead for spring semester.

During 2010 many of my University-wide messages touched upon the difficult economic situation in the state. While Michigan still has a long way to go to regain its economic footing, 2011 begins with at least some encouraging signs. Unemployment figures for November declined, and domestic auto makers have reported increased sales. Both as members of our University community and as Michigan citizens, we can look to 2011 with some long-awaited optimism.

## **Michigan College of Optometry Building**

Today we open the doors of our new Michigan College of Optometry building. This is a true milestone for the University, and especially for MCO students, faculty and staff who have for many years studied, taught and worked in a facility that was not designed for classroom or laboratory use. The new facility is both beautiful and eminently functional, featuring cutting-edge technologies that will help prepare our graduates to be health care leaders.

In addition to the functionality of the new facility, the building further adds to the presence of the University on both sides of State Street. Since the opening of FLITE in 2001, the appearance of the Big Rapids campus has become a physical sign of our University's vitality. Combined with the strides we have made in raising academic standards and graduation rates, our campus here provides an outward sign to prospective students of our commitment to providing the best educational environment possible.

As the faculty and staff settle into the new MCO building there will be opportunities for you to tour this facility. I truly believe that this is a pivotal moment in Ferris history. As with previous physical improvements, this is a significant opportunity to take the pursuit of educational excellence to another level.

## **Martin Luther King Celebration Events**

Next Monday, Jan. 17, in celebration of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. the University will not hold classes, although administrative offices will be open for business. I hope you will attend one or more of the several University events that will take place over the course of next week in remembrance of Dr. King's achievements and sacrifice.

Jan. 17 is the 16<sup>th</sup> annual faculty and staff in-service from 10 a.m. to noon in the Rankin Student Center Founders' Room. Lunch reservations for the event are due by Jan. 13 and can be made by calling ext. 2735. Details about the reading are available on the campus calendar. Later that day you are encouraged to participate in the annual freedom march, starting at 3 p.m. from the IRC Connector.

On Tuesday, Jan. 18, from 7-9 p.m. in the Rankin Center Dome Room, Dr. Marc Lamont will deliver the MLK Celebration Keynote address. Dr. Lamont is a professor, author and cultural critic whose perspective on diversity and other issues have aired on National Public Radio and Fox News, and appeared in the pages of the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, among other publications. This keynote address is free and open to the public.

Other events include:

- Tunnel of Oppression exhibit in the Rankin Center's Whitney Young Room, Jan. 17-19, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Student tribute Jan. 17, 6-8 p.m. in the Rankin Center Dome Room
- Leaders Taking Action display Jan. 17-19, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Rankin Center Atrium
- Leadership panel discussion Jan. 18, 10:45 a.m. to noon in the Rankin Center Centennial Room
- "Food for Thought" soul food dinner at the Rock Café, Jan. 19, 6-7 p.m.

Please visit the campus calendar for details about these events.

### **Dashboard Presentation**

Over the past year, with the assistance of our Budgetary Planning and Analysis Office, I have worked to develop a graphic representation of selected indicators of our University's health and progress. This dashboard tracks 53 different pieces of data in the broad categories of Admissions, Student Body, Graduation/Retention, Diversity, General Satisfaction, General Academics, Other Indicators, Development, and Finance/Facilities. This Dashboard is a work in progress and I want to share it with you for your thoughts and input. We have scheduled a public forum for next Tuesday, January 18, at 1 p.m. in the Rankin Center Centennial Room. I am hopeful you can join me for this presentation.

I look forward to working with you this semester as we seek to advance our University and help provide opportunity for the students we all work to serve.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President