

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
January 15, 2007

After a period of mild weather, winter has returned. We have been fortunate so far this year; lower energy costs together with warmer temperatures and limited snowfall have helped the University conserve on utilities and snow removal costs. This is in sharp contrast with this time last year, when utility costs had tripled because of high prices for natural gas. With snowy weather and colder temperatures please be careful of slippery sidewalks and snow removal vehicles. You can help us conserve energy by closing windows and doors and reporting temperature problems.

December Commencement was a very special event as we recognized and celebrated our graduates. A memorable part of these ceremonies were remarks by faculty members Dr. Andrew Kantar, recipient of the 2006 Academic Excellence Award, and Dr. Pasquale Di Raddo, the 2006 Distinguished Teacher. Their comments were thoughtful, humorous, and insightful. We have placed their remarks on our website and I would encourage you to read them - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/>

Yesterday's Martin Luther King March was the best attended in memory. It kicked off a week-long series of events in celebration of the life, ideals, and legacy of Martin Luther King. Some of this week's highlights include today's Faculty-Staff In-Service, Tuesday evening's presentation by T. Gardner of "A Dream Deferred," and Saturday evening's Martin Luther King Legacy Dinner and Awards. A complete schedule and description of events is available on the web at - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/studentlife/minority/mlk/>

As we begin the second week of the semester I want to report to you regarding spring semester enrollment and provide an update on our task forces and their reports.

Spring Enrollment

There is very good news to report on spring semester enrollment, which is by far the largest in Ferris' history. 12,031 students are enrolled at Ferris this semester, the first time spring enrollment has exceeded 12,000 students. It was just two years ago that spring enrollment exceeded 11,000 students.

Here are some highlights from the 4th day enrollment report -

Headcount

- Enrollment is 12,031 students, a 295 student increase over this semester a year ago.
- This is an increase of 110 on-campus students and 185 off-campus students.

- Transfer student admissions are up significantly. This spring we have enrolled 569 transfer students compared to 375 transfer students a year ago. It appears that transfer scholarships introduced last year are helping us recruit more of these students.
- Student retention appears to be improved. We have 126 more continuing students than a year ago, 105 of those are on-campus students.
- Enrollment at Kendall College of Art and Design is at an all-time high, an increase of nearly 50 students from this time last year.

Credit Hours

- Credit hours are also up. Total credits are 145,765 as compared to last spring's 143,817 credits, an increase of 1,949 credits. After fall semester's decline of 2,140 credit hours, this is significant growth.
- For spring the credit hour growth is off-campus, an increase of 2,140 credits.
- On-campus credits are down slightly, by 192 credits. This however, is a remarkable turnaround after the fall semester on-campus decline of 3,809 credits. A continuation of this fall's pattern would have suggested a decline between 3,000 and 3,500 credits for spring.

Enrollment growth results from the good work of everyone – our faculty and staff – across all of our campuses. Evidence of this can be seen in many places, faculty who take extra time to help students succeed, Saturday morning Dawg Days student recruitment events where faculty and staff volunteer their time to meet and greet prospective new students, in the wonderful look of our campus and facilities, and in the efforts many people make to promote their departments and academic programs. Thank you for the extra effort you are making to encourage new students to attend our University and to help us retain our current students. I am especially pleased with the hard work of our people in student recruitment, admissions, records, financial aid, and the business office who have made certain that applications and student records are processed promptly. Increased school visits and the approach of doubling back with students who did not enroll this fall have proven very effective.

We are now working hard on admissions for fall. Success here will reinforce the analysis that this fall's decline in student credit hours was a blip, and not a trend. We continue to implement recommendations from the Enrollment Task Force and to look for new strategies for fall.

Task Force Reports

Shortly before the holidays we heard reports from our four campus task forces. It is always impressive to see the innovative work of our faculty and staff through this process. Complete materials from the task forces are available on our website at - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/planningtf2006.htm>

The Scholarship Task Force was chaired Kathy Lake and Mary Kay MacIver. They examined and considered the following questions -

- What are current processes for donor recognition, announcement of scholarship opportunities, the awarding of scholarships, and monitoring scholarship awardees?
- How can scholarship information be more effectively shared with prospective awardees?
- How do we better communicate with faculty and staff to make certain that all scholarship funding is awarded?
- How can we effectively connect scholarship recipients with the donors who have provided this support?

I would encourage you to look at their powerpoint presentation. It is an excellent analysis of our current scholarship efforts, displays best practice websites in this field and makes strong recommendations for future efforts. The powerpoint is here - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/PlanningTF2006/scholarship.pps>

Based on the task force recommendation we will move forward with developing a Scholarship Office at Ferris State University and I would appreciate your thoughts on this. Other recommendations will be embedded into this year's Unit Action Planning process. I want to thank the members of the Scholarship Task Force for their excellent work -

- Kathy Lake, co-chair, Director, Enrollment Services
- Mary Kay MacIver, co-chair, Associate Director-Alumni Relations, UAM
- Maude Bigford, Coordinator-Honors Program, University College
- Kevin Dendel, student representative
- Matt Eickhoff, Assistant Director, Student Leadership and Activities
- Brian Kegler, Assistant Athletic Director, Athletics
- Becky Kowalkoski, Educational Counselor, Business
- Rod Larsen, Assistant Dean, Pharmacy
- Ron McKean, Associate Dean, Technology
- Angie Mishler, Admissions Counselor, Admissions and Records
- Tracy Powers, Assistant Dean, FSU-GR
- Christa Walker, Advancement Services Assistant, UAM
- Heather Youngs, Scholarship Programs Coordinator, Financial Aid

The Health Information and Wellness Task Force was chaired by Wendy Dodd and Warren Hills. This group was asked to consider the following questions -

- How do we help employees be aware of the benefits available to them?
- How may we best use services available to the University community both on-campus and in the community?
- What would be considered University standards for health and wellness?
- How do we create a campus culture of wellness?
- How do we raise campus awareness of health issues?

This group's comprehensive report pulls together the wellness resources available on our campus, presents best practice websites across the country and makes strong recommendations for future efforts. When time permits I would appreciate your thoughts on the ideas presented. The report is accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/PlanningTF2006/wellness.pdf>

Wellness is a very interesting topic in that it cuts across all divisions and involves everyone on our campus, faculty, staff and students alike. To continue to move forward on this topic we will create a Wellness Team to focus on this at the Big Rapids campus. I would appreciate your thoughts on this. Many of their recommendations will be implemented through the Unit Action Planning Process. I want to thank the members of the Health Information and Wellness Task Force for their excellent work -

- Wendy Dodd, co-chair, Assistant Director, UREC
- Warren Hills, co-chair, Associate Vice President, Human Resources
- Britta Dahlberg, student representative
- Susan Davis, Physician, Birkam Health Center
- Kim Hancock, Professor College of Pharmacy
- Tom Liszewski, Personal Counselor, Birkam Health Center
- Denise Mitten, Associate Professor, Recreation Leisure Services and Wellness
- Bill Papo, Professor, Printing and Imaging Technology Management
- Marcy Parry, Associate Professor, Health Care Systems Administration
- Zack Potter, student representative
- Mike Slocum, Hall Director, Residential Life
- Dave Stevens, student representative
- Steve Stratton, Labor Relations, General Counsel Office
- Paul Sullivan, Director, Birkam Health Center
- Allen Sutherby, Cable Television Technician, IS and T
- Shelly VandePanne, FSUS Coordinator, University College
- Joe Viviano, student representative
- Kevin Walsh, student representative
- Brenda Walton, Dietician, Dining Services
- Tom Weaver, Carpenter, Physical Plant
- Tim Zobel, Physical Plant

The Advising Task Force is chaired by Paul Blake and Deb Cox, who presented an interim report of their efforts to understand the advising process on campus, the support we provide academic advisors, and the advising support our students receive. Their presentation provides significant insight into advising processes in Big Rapids and the diagrams contained in their powerpoint provide cogent analysis of current approaches. They also do an impressive comparison of data contained in the 2006 National Survey of Student Engagement and data from a student advising project presented to the Academic Senate in 2003. Their presentation is accessible here -

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/PlanningTF2006/advising.pps>

This committee anticipates presenting their final report in February.

The Enrollment Task Force is chaired by Dan Burcham and Pat Klarecki. They presented an interim report of their data analysis, committee focus, strategies implemented for Spring 2007, thoughts for Fall 2007, and long-term efforts. This presentation is available here -

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/PlanningTF2006/enrollment.pps>

The success of this task force's efforts is embodied by our excellent enrollment for spring. Throughout this semester the Enrollment Task Force will be sharing and recommending strategies for enrollment at Ferris.

Closing Thoughts

Over sixty people contributed their time and talents to the efforts of our four task forces. I want to express my personal thanks to each of them for committing their time to these topics of importance for the future of our University and its people. The results of their efforts working together for Ferris are truly impressive.

Construction continues on renovations to the IRC. I received a note from Fred Wyman, Department Chair and Professor in Television and Digital Media Production, that there is now a webcam for watching progress on this project. The camera shoots from the Business Building to the south side of the IRC and is accessible here -

<http://www.ferris.edu/news/irc/>. You may need to install an ActiveX file for this to function from your computer and the webcam is limited to 15 viewers. On a snowy day like today it presents a very interesting sight.

Martin Luther King week provides each of us the opportunity to interact with members of the University community we might not normally see. Through this we can make our campus a better place for all people. These events result from the combined efforts and concerned individuals on our campus and community. I want to thank everyone who has worked throughout the year to create this special week for our campus.

Best wishes,

dave