

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
January 22, 2008

Enrollment

As we begin the second week of classes, I want to share information on a number of topics. There is very good news about spring semester enrollment. Again we have a record number of students attending Ferris this semester. Our head count grew from 12,031 for Spring '07 to 12,407 for Spring '08 - an increase of 376 students. This includes increases of 83 students in Big Rapids, 113 at Kendall, and 180 students at other campus locations.

We are also up in student credit hours - 1,922 over a year ago. Included in this is some good retention news - university-wide 88% of our new students for fall returned this spring. With an enrollment of 9,038 students, we now have more than 9,000 students in Big Rapids for the first time since Spring 1995. These are very good numbers. If you would like further details, the 4th day extract report is located at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/memos/Spring2008Enrollment.pdf>. I want to thank everyone for engaging in the hard work it takes to make our University a welcoming environment that encourages students to enroll and remain in school.

Contingency Fee Refund

It was a pleasure to not only discontinue the per-credit hour contingency fee, but also to refund the monies collected from students for fall semester. This combination, the elimination for spring and the refund for fall, means that a continuing student electing 15 hours paid \$240 less this spring than he or she did in the fall.

The University took the step of implementing the fee for fall semester when the state's August appropriation for higher education was held up by budget negotiations. At that time, it was unclear if the payment would be made at all, since lawmakers were considering many different plans to balance the state budget.

The contingency fee made it possible to discontinue and refund the fee in the event of a successful resolution to the state's budget negotiations. We chose this path rather than further ratcheting up the base rate for tuition, which would have been a permanent increase. There are very few examples of instances where universities have reduced their costs to students. I am pleased we could do this for our students. Additionally, we continue to work to increase the amount of scholarship money available to students to help them pay for their education.

Volunteer Options

Every day each of us gets many e-mail messages and sometimes we can overlook helpful information that hits our electronic in-box.

I hope you take time to look at the University-Wide Notices that are delivered every weekday. In just one day last week, I read four different notes about ways members of the Ferris community could help improve our University – from volunteering to participate in a discussion on how to redesign the MyFSU portal, to attending a stakeholder conference for the University’s Vision Statement, to signing up for FerrisConnect training, to being a part of faculty learning communities and discussion groups.

Sometimes the chance to be engaged can be as simple as taking part in a survey. Your participation in the decisions that affect our University are central to making Ferris a vibrant place to study, teach and work.

Applause

With the spirit of making things better in mind, I want to thank students, faculty and staff for exceeding the University’s United Way goal. Together the Ferris community raised more than \$56,000 for the Mecosta-Osceola United Way Campaign. The strong efforts of Dan Burcham, volunteers from across campus, our student campaign leaders, and your generosity helped this succeed. During a time when the state’s economy is not as robust as we would like, it is a real testament to giving. Altogether, the Mecosta-Osceola campaign exceeded its goal of \$440,000.

We had some very good events on campus for Martin Luther King Day on Monday, including a faculty/staff in-service and the Office of Minority Student Services student tribute. More events to remember and celebrate King’s legacy will take place this week. I encourage you to join others in our campus community as we emphasize the importance of his dreams for equality. You can click on the schedule of events from the Ferris home page.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered for and contributed to the United Way Campaign, and everyone who organized and is attending the Martin Luther King week events.

Best wishes,

David L. Eisler, president