

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
March 4, 2013

Good News

As we approach the mid-term break our students, faculty and staff have many good news items to share with the Ferris community. A full list of these items is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/goodnews/homepage.htm> . I would urge you to read the full list. Here is a small sampling of some of the many positive things taking place at our university.

- Dr. Michael P. Keating, optics professor in the Michigan College of Optometry received the Michigan Optometric Association's Jack W. Bennett Optometric Educator of the Year award, while 4th year Optometry student Alana Herron received the MOA Student of the Year award.
- The American Optometric Foundation awarded a Fredric Rosemore Low Vision Educational Grant to Dr. Sarah Hinkley and the Vision Rehabilitation program for its interprofessional collaborative efforts with the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired in student education and patient care.
- In conjunction with the Festival of the Arts celebration, Dave Murray from the Welding Technology Department once again instructed a three-week introductory welding workshop for artists.
- Seven faculty members have been selected to receive Faculty Research Grants -
 - Tracy Busch, Stalin's Roads: Building Socialism in the Soviet Interwar Period.
 - Jim Hoerter, Planarians as a Model System for Studying the Role of Adult Stem Cells in Cancer.
 - Josh T. Lotoczky, The Use of Soft Multifocal Contact Lenses to Slow Myopic Progression in Children.
 - Arinze Okere, The Use of Alpha Lipoic Acid for the Treatment and Prevention of Diabetic Retinopathy.
 - Anne M. Spain, Prevalence and Characterization of Tetrathionate-Reducing Bacteria Isolated from Anaerobic Sediments.
 - Craig Straley and Michael Klepser, Assessment of General Public Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Prevalence, Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention of Hepatitis A, B, and C.
 - M. Beth Zimmer, The Effect of Spinal Cord Injury on Learning and Memory: Enhancement with Exercise.
- On Friday, Feb. 15, Maranda of WOOD TV Channel 8 featured the gaming industry, including a 10-minute segment on the Digital Animation and Game Design program and the Northern Bend project, which is currently active at the Grand Rapids Public Museum as part of its Shipwreck exhibit.
- Television and Digital Media Production students produced two Harlem Shake videos that went viral on the internet. As of Thursday, Feb. 21, the two videos together had more than 40,000 views. Also, TDMP students are producing a segment this semester titled *Ferris Trolls*. Views of the first two editions have topped 5,000.

- The Web Content team of Ted Halm, Dale Hobart and student assistant Melissa Divietri collaborated with Admissions staff to publish a new Admissions website.
- Nearly 85 sixth through eighth grade “mathletes” participated in the Woodbridge Ferris MATHCOUNTS Competition on Thursday, Feb. 21.
- On Thursday, Feb. 28, the Student Alumni Gold Club participated in the national Student Engagement and Philanthropy Day event. The students wrote thank-you letters to accompany gift bags and made deliveries to 43 businesses and individual supporters of Ferris.
- The News Services team published the Winter 2013 edition of the Points of Pride newsletter, which focused on Registered Student Organizations. To view the online version of the newsletter, visit <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/pride/winter13.pdf> . Also, the News Services/Social Media Team reports that the University's Facebook page has more than 24,000 likes. The Ferris Facebook page can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/FerrisState> .
- The Ferris Foundation placed in the top 25 percent of returns for the past 10 years of all colleges and universities reporting their 10-year results in the 2012 NACUBO-Commonfund Study of Endowments. The average 10-year return for the endowment pool was 7.2 percent, which beat the average S&P 500 index return of 5.3 percent.
- Information Technology Services has completed the MAP Works project. MAP Works enables faculty and staff improve student retention by identifying at-risk students early in the term.
- Kendall College of Art and Design Art Education Professor Cindy Todd won a Prestigious Art Education Award from the National Association of Art Education.
- Kendall instructor Kristen Morrison will create student assessment specifications and prototypes for the Michigan Department of Education.
- Career Week, Feb. 4-8th, brought a record of number employers to campus. 175 employers attended at least one of three career fairs. In addition, faculty member Dan Wanick led an enhanced partnership with the College of Engineering Technology. Employers were able to ride the Ferris bus to a variety of CET locations. Each employer received a tour of the facility and had the opportunity to connect with faculty.
- Junior Anna Rudd led the indoor track and field teams as she claimed two individual event titles at the 2013 GLIAC Indoor Championships in Allendale. She has been named as both the women’s track athlete of the meet and regional track athlete of the year. Rudd set two national provisional qualifying marks and broke the meet records in both races.
- The men’s tennis team is off to a 6-1 start under first-year head coach Chad Berryhill after winning four matches in a five-day span at home.

Legislative Testimony

Tomorrow, March 5, I will be presenting testimony to the Michigan House of Representatives Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee in Lansing. Entitled, “Higher Education in Michigan: Creating Opportunity, Funding Excellence and Restraining Costs,” the overall message is for the legislature to preserve stability in their funding approach. Last year, the state introduced a performance-based funding formula to incent universities to focus their efforts in a number of areas, including graduation rates and producing graduates with in-demand degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Health Care fields.

Legislators are under pressure to change the metrics of the funding formula. The Executive Budget moves last year's funds to base and continues the same metrics. This is, in my opinion, the correct course. In an era of declining support for public universities, we can use funding far more effectively if it is granted as permanent, rather than one-time monies. Base funding allows us to make the long-term decisions required to grow our career-oriented degree programs that produce the kind of graduates our state needs. We can and are making progress on the identified priorities, but can only do this if the priorities do not change from year to year.

I will also present our success in keeping a Ferris education affordable. If you have attended one of my budget forums, you know that the cost of a college degree reflects tuition plus state support. Since 2001 the cost of a Ferris education has increased by an annual average of 2 percent, significantly less than the Consumer Price Index increase of 2.7 percent and the Higher Education Price Index of 3.3 percent. This is a significant achievement during a time of declining state support. Today our costs to educate a student at Ferris State University are less than they were in 2011.

Of concern are proposed changes to the Tuition Incentive Program, which is very important to Ferris. We will also ask for relief from the unfunded burden of the Michigan Public School Employment Retirement System, or MPSERS. Our increased costs from MPSERS will be over a \$1.1 million more this year than last. Total MPSERS costs for our University are estimated to be over \$10.5 million next year.

The full text of my comments, as well as related exhibits, is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/presentations/2012-13.htm> . As always, I welcome your thoughts and reactions. Please write me at eislerd@ferris.edu .

Closing Thoughts

Friday evening was another wonderful Hospitality Management Gala. Themed after the Pure Michigan campaign, and entitled Real Michigan, the Hospitality Management students outdid themselves with an excellent dinner enjoyed by all. Congratulations to faculty members Julie Doyle, Lianne Briggs, Amy Dorey and all faculty members, staff and students who contributed to a truly spectacular evening that raised money for their endowed scholarship and to support student travel.

Last week saw the completion of another successful Festival of the Arts. Scheduling the many events that comprise the FOTA takes a lot of work and dedication. Festival Board members Jerena Keys, Robert Krueger, Barbara Ross, Steve Sobers, and co-chairs Ed Mallett and Carrie Weis did a remarkable job of coordinating and promoting this celebration of creativity. I want to thank all of the Ferris faculty members and staff who presented at this year's Festival. My hope is that you enjoyed this month-long series of activities. Please join me in thanking the board members who put in many hours to make the Festival such a success.

Next week our campus will be quieter as we have our Spring Break. If you are travelling during this time, I hope that you do so safely. When students return there will be just seven weeks of classes remaining in the Spring term. While this will be a very busy period, I look forward to the remainder of our academic of our academic year, culminating with our Spring Commencement ceremonies May 10 and 11.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president