

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President

March 31, 2008

Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Review

Work is well underway in preparation for our next accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission. Mike Cairns and Mike Cooper are leading this university-wide effort for our University. They are joined in this work by a Steering Committee that includes Sandy Balkema, Paul Blake, Julia Buryk, Steve Durst, Oliver Evans, Abdi Ferdowsi, Rick Griffin, Mike Hughes, Kitty Manley, Ron McKean, Tom Oldfield, Sharon Richards, Kristen Salomonson, Wendy Samuels, Caroline Stern, Robbie Teahen, Chris VonderHaar, Sueann Walz, and Leroy Wright. The steering committee has been meeting this spring semester to begin planning for data collection and development of the institutional self-study.

This April 11-15, several members of the University's steering committee for the reaccreditation self-study will attend the annual meeting of the HLC in Chicago where they will learn more about the commission's expectations. After that, the committee will develop a more detailed timeline for completion of responsibilities before the HLC's anticipated site visit to the University in early 2011. There will be many opportunities for the campus community to provide input to and comment on the evolving documents by the team's expected self-study completion date in October 2010.

Six additional committees have been convened, designed to support the self-study efforts. Many of the criterion committees have already met; others will meet following the annual meeting. Each will have a detailed plan for their activities by mid-May 2008. These groups include the following:

Criterion One Committee (Mission and Integrity) co-chaired by Paul Blake and Abdi Ferdowsi. Members include Shelly Armstrong, Dan Burcham, Linda Golden, Maryanne Heidemann, Elaine Kamptner, Mary Kay MacIver, Karen Nash, David Pilgrim, Susan Starkey, Deb Thalner, Karen Thompson and Megan Truskoski.

Criterion Two Committee (Preparing for the Future) co-chaired by Mike Hughes and Caroline Stern. Members include Maude Bigford, Linda Golden, Beth Krueger, Melinda Isler, Jeremy Mishler, Carol Quigley, Fran Rosen, Ed Shepard, John Urbanick, Nathan Veenemon and Tom Weaver.

Criterion Three Committee (Student Learning and Effective Teaching) co-chaired by Ron McKean and Chris VonderHaar. Members include Tony Baker, Kim Beistle, Kati Busch, Amy Buse, Enid Carlson-Nagel, Cheryl Cluchey, Deb Cox, Tom Crandell, Fred Heck, Liza Ing, Eric Jarvi, Pat Klarecki, Matt McNulty, Ron Mehringer, Marcia Parry, Jana Pisani, Andy Purvis, Fran Rosen, Todd Stanislaw, Scott Thede, Trinity Williams and Jim Woolen.

Criterion Four Committee (Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge) co-chaired by Julia Buryk and Steve Durst. Members include Tony Baker, Mike Berghoef, Robert Buckingham, Jeff Carney, Julie Coon, Keith Cripe, Greg Gogolin, Kim Hancock, Jennifer Hegenauer, Nancy Hogan, Michelle Johnston, Denise Mitten, Tracy Powers and Mike Terry.

Criterion Five Committee (Engagement and Service) co-chaired by Wendy Samuels and Leroy Wright. Members include Tony Baker, Matt Eickhoff, Will Gasper, Diane Griffin, Rick Griffin, Susan Hastings-Bishop, Jennifer Hegenauer, Cindy Horn, Nancy Mettlach, Glen Okonoski, Ron Rizzo, Jon Shaffer, Ed Shepard, Mike Terry, Shelly VandePanne and Michael Wade.

Data Committee, co-chaired by Katherine Manley and Kristen Salomonson. Members include Vicky Deur, Ted Halm, Melinda Isler, Sharon Richards, Robbie Teahen, Deb Thalner, Scott Thede and Robert von der Osten.

Mike Cairns and Mike Cooper, who chair the Steering Committee, are very pleased by the many people willing to contribute their time to the HLC self-study and accreditation process. If you have not yet volunteered and are interested to become a part of this very important process, e-mail either of the co-chairs or Robbie Teahen to offer your assistance. There is also a separate mailbox for the HLC work: hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu.

At Ferris we are fortunate to have a number of people who serve as reviewers for the HLC and who can provide internal peer review throughout this process. These include Oliver Evans, Doug Haneline, Michelle Johnston and Tom Oldfield.

This self-study process provides a wonderful opportunity for the University community to reflect upon its accomplishments of the past few years. In doing so we can celebrate strengths, clarify challenges and continue efforts to provide the best possible education for our students – an education relevant for their success in our rapidly changing world. It is a time for reflection, critical self-analysis and additional future planning.

Thank you to everyone who has agreed to serve, and those who will yet be volunteering.

Presidential Assessment

This year marks my fifth as President of Ferris State University. It is an honor for me to serve as your president. I consider it a privilege to work with all segments of the campus community – in Big Rapids, Grand Rapids and locations around the state – to advance the mission of the University. Also, in all those locations and many others, it has been a pleasure to meet and work with alumni and friends of the University.

Beginning when the Trustees hired me in May of 2003, they have annually reviewed my efforts in leading the University. As I complete this fifth year it seemed the appropriate time to request a comprehensive review. Further, I believe it is important that each of you have the opportunity to provide input on my performance and so requested the process to solicit this.

As Board Chair James Haveman has written you, the assessment is scheduled for next week, beginning Monday, April 7. Stakeholders both inside and outside of the University will be interviewed by the review facilitator, Dr. John W. Moore. Dr. Moore is the former president of Indiana State University and California State University, Stanislaus, and is an expert on presidential reviews.

In addition to those stakeholders who will be selected to be interviewed – some randomly – as a member of the University community you can give your views in writing to Dr. Moore. To give input for this assessment, send your sealed letter to Dr. Moore in care of his office at 1634 Monarch Drive, Venice, FL 34293. All letters will be evaluated and no attribution or identification will be made in the review regarding any respondent. However, to have your views considered, it is necessary that you sign your letter.

As important initiatives move to fruition – most recently development of Ferris’ new mission and vision statements, as well as our University-wide diversity plan – your expertise and involvement as a member of the Ferris community has proven invaluable. I have learned a great deal since becoming president in 2003 and look forward to using this five-year assessment as another tool to further expand my understanding of how I can best serve the University. Thank you for providing input into this review.

Student Achievements

Saturday evening’s Hospitality Management Gala was truly an extraordinary experience. Working together these remarkable students transformed the Holiday Inn ballroom into a re-creation of the “Big Band” era. This was a delightful evening of good food, entertainment and service. Congratulations to all the students in this program whose efforts contributed to this success and to the faculty who guide their efforts – Lianne Briggs, Amy Dorey, Julie Doyle, and Kaky Wolfer.

Finally, it is a pleasure to recognize Robert Rankey II and Nicole Wheelock for service awards they have recently been selected to receive from Michigan Campus Compact. Robert was selected to receive MCC’s Heart and Soul Award and the Michigan Humanitarian Award, while Nicole learned that she has received an Outstanding Community Impact Award. This is Nicole’s third year of recognition by the Michigan Campus Compact. Robert is one of just three students to be selected to receive the Michigan Humanitarian Award and is being nominated for the national Campus Compact’s Howard R. Swearer Student Humanitarian Award.

Robert and Nicole have been involved in numerous activities that benefit others both on and off campus. We have many students at Ferris who give of their time and energy. Among that group, Robert and Nicole are certainly two of the most deserving of this recognition. They will receive their awards at the Outstanding Student Service Awards celebration to be held in Lansing on Saturday, April 5. Please join me in extending your congratulations to Robert and Nicole!

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President