

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 1, 2013

Fulbright Scholars

Ferris has a long and distinguished record of success in the Fulbright Scholar Program, the prestigious, merit-based international exchange program that operates in cooperation with more than 150 countries. Currently College of Business Professor Bill Smith is in Sierra Leone as a Fulbright Scholar. This year we are very proud to have two Ferris faculty members and a student earn Fulbright awards. Starting this fall Languages and Literature Professor Daniel Ding will be in Hungary and College of Business Professor Greg Gogolin will be in Chile under the auspices of the Fulbright program.

Graduating senior Danielle Voorhies has been selected for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. Danielle will be in South Korea for a year beginning this July. This highly competitive award stems from extraordinary achievement and efforts designed to encourage and support students in this process. Danielle is the president of a new campus organization, FSUbuntu, which is dedicated to promoting international understanding and helping Ferris students to apply for Fulbright grants.

Earlier this year FSUbuntu received a \$2,000 grant from the United States Institute of Peace to bring three Fulbright scholars to campus to speak. This Wednesday, April 3, the third and final speaker, Jimmy Gurulé, professor of law at the University of Notre Dame, will discuss Chile under the military rule of Augusto Pinochet. His talk will take place from 3-3:50 p.m. in IRC 120.

These Fulbright awards reflect the ability, commitment and passion of our faculty and students, as well as the emphasis Ferris has placed upon being a university that values a global perspective. Please join me in congratulating Profs. Ding and Gogolin, along with Ms. Voorhies on being chosen for these very selective and competitive honors.

Strategic Planning

Efforts to help create the next strategic plan for our University are well underway. There are a variety of opportunities for you to participate in “listening sessions” hosted by faculty and staff leading this process. The schedule of listening sessions includes -

Tuesday, April 9

Pharmacy faculty/staff, 11:20-11:50 a.m., PHR 201

Led by Sue Cherry and Paul Kwant

Optometry faculty/staff, 11:30-noon, MCO 210

Led by Sarah Hinkley and Tamie Grunow

Wednesday, April 10

EIO Directors, 2-2:30 p.m., TBD

Led by Sandy Balkema and Leonard Johnson

Thursday, April 11

Education and Human Services faculty/staff, 11-11:30 a.m., BIS 209

Led by Leonard Johnson and Jessica Cruz

Please join me in thanking the members of the Ferris community who are leading this effort of aligning the strategic planning process with our core values. At the same time I want to encourage you, if you are one of the target audiences, to attend and participate in these listening sessions. Your input will help form the basis of establishing university priorities for the future.

Provost Fritz Erickson and Languages and Literature Professor Sandy Balkema are leading this process for the University. To help encourage participation and to share information, their team has created a new Strategic Planning website – www.ferris.edu/strategic-planning . The site includes much good information about the process, its timing and events. Additionally, you can express your opinion by giving input through the site by clicking on the “Join the Conversation” link available on the site’s home page. So please join the conversation – in person, online or both – and be a part of shaping the future of Ferris State University.

State Funding

Governor Rick Snyder and the Michigan House of Representatives Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee have both released their proposals for funding the state’s universities this year. Both proposals allocate as base funds the dollars we received as one-time funds last year. For Ferris this represents nearly \$3 million. The approach adopted by the House differs in some ways from the approach used last year, and which was recommended by the Governor in the Executive Budget. Under both plans, the state increases support for public universities by 2 percent and distributes these funds contingent upon performance metrics in five areas: producing graduates with critical skills degrees, research, six-year graduation rate, total degrees conferred and institutional support.

The Governor’s proposal includes incentive funds for universities that restrain tuition increases to less than 4 percent. The House’s proposal combines the tuition restraint dollars with the performance funds, spreading it across the performance metrics. Under the House approach institutions must limit tuition increases to 3 percent to receive performance funding. Additionally, the House’s proposal changes the metrics established last year by taking into consideration the number of Full-Year Equivalent students a university has.

Under the Governor’s budget, our increase over last year thanks to the performance-funding formula is \$2,083,439, or 4.7 percent, plus tuition restraint funding that would be calculated under a formula determined by the tuition set by all universities. Under the House’s budget, Ferris would receive an increase of \$2,013,873, or 4.6 percent.

On the whole, these are both favorable budgets for Ferris. When I testified to the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, I stressed the importance of staying with the same performance metrics established last year. If these change from year to year, lawmakers will not be able to measure how universities are meeting the criteria. The Governor’s budget keeps the existing metrics intact. While the House’s proposal also largely keeps the metrics in place, it changes the results by taking into account FYEs.

The Michigan Senate releases its own higher education funding proposal on April 10. I will continue to spend considerable time in Lansing working on the prospects of increased funding for Ferris.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president