

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
April 11, 2007

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There is much to share about important activities and upcoming events on campus-

## **Strategic Planning**

In March David McFarland visited Big Rapids to begin an environmental scan for a strategic planning effort. This strategic plan development will continue through much of the next school year. Dr. McFarland will return to campus next Monday and Tuesday to report on his findings, solicit input from faculty and staff, and recommend next steps. Two forums are scheduled that are open to all faculty and staff. The first is on Monday, April 16th, from 2-4 pm in the Rankin Center Founders Room and the second on Tuesday, April 17th, from 9-10:30 am also in the Founders Room.

It is important this strategic planning effort be lead by a faculty member, someone with a record of significant achievements and whose involvement spans across colleges and divisions. In inquiring about possible choices for this leadership, there was one name that was mentioned frequently, Dr. Robert von der Osten. Michael Ryan, President of the FFA, also suggested Dr. von der Osten. After visiting with Robert, I too, am convinced that he is the right person for this responsibility and am delighted to announce he has accepted this invitation. As a part of these responsibilities, Dr. von der Osten will join Dr. McFarland in a meeting of nearly 40 faculty and staff, and a meeting of the combined deans and presidents council as part of the next steps in this process.

## **Wellness**

There is a phenomenon happening on our campus. Perhaps you remember last year's hit television show, The Biggest Loser. Through the efforts of the Ferris Wellness Team, a Biggest Loser effort has been organized on campus and the response has been overwhelming. There are 29 teams of 4-6 people from the campus and community involved with this very popular activity to feel better and live longer through a combination of healthy diet and exercise. More information about The Biggest Loser program is available from their newsletter at -

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/staff/webpages/biggestlosernewsletter.pdf>. Contact Wendy Dodd at ext. 5309 for more information. The Wellness Team is an outgrowth of this year's task force on Health Information and Wellness. More information about their efforts is available at their website -

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/staff/webpages/site.cfm?LinkID=294&eventID=36>.

## Summer University

Soon you will be receiving information on this year's Summer University program. Scheduled for June 6, 7, and 8, this year's program is built around two themes: Diversity and Wellness. June 6<sup>th</sup> will feature a keynote presentation by Dr. Frank Hale, Vice Provost and Professor Emeritus at Ohio State University. To complement his presentation, Chief Diversity Officer Dr. David Pilgrim and the Diversity Planning Committee have created a series of diversity sessions around topics of interest.

June 7<sup>th</sup> is dedicated to wellness, with special guest Peter Nielsen. Peter's story is an impressive one, as he overcame Crohn's Disease to become a world champion bodybuilder. More information on Peter is available at <http://www.peternielsen.com/>. Supplementing Peter's visit will be a series of presentations and activities developed by our Wellness Team.

On Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, Summer University will conclude with dramatizations by SST Communications, who bring to life diversity challenges in the workplace and in everyday life. The final event of Summer University will be the traditional picnic under the tent on our quad at noon.

## Upcoming Events

As the semester rushes toward conclusion there are more events than can be listed here. Friday begins the Sibs and Kids Weekend, sponsored by the residence hall association, which encourages students to invite their brothers and sisters to campus. On Saturday YBBW will sponsor their 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, "The Many Faces of a Woman," at the Holiday Inn. Also on Saturday is the 5K Run/Walk for Kids to benefit the Children's Miracle network. At 1 pm our ladies softball team will host Ashland University in a double header.

Saturday evening the Williams Live! Series welcomes the Chicago Brass Quintet to campus at 8 pm. On Sunday is one of the most popular events of the year, the International Festival of Cultures, which begins in the Rankin Center at 1 pm. Please come out, support our international students, and celebrate cultures from around the world.

At the end of each year many usable items are wasted as students clean out of residence halls and apartments across the community. This project collects these usable items and distributes them to charities for people throughout our community who are in need. Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup> is our first Dump and Run where students are encouraged drop off materials they would otherwise discard at the old Ford Garage, now used as the bus garage, on State Street between noon and 6:00 pm. This will be followed by Dump and Party which will place containers in residence halls across campus and at the West Campus Commons for students to place reusable items they will not take home. Volunteers are

needed to help separate and sort these items at the old Ford garage April 23-27, April 30-May 4, and May 7-11. This wonderful project helps people and reduces the amount of materials we will send to landfills at the end of the year. This is a combined effort of the Ferris State University and Big Rapids communities, Immanuel Lutheran Church, and the Michigan Campus Compact Americorps Vista project. Special thanks go to VISTA volunteer Diane Griffith who has brought this wonderful program to campus. Look for the posters promoting this event.

## Good News

Last weekend the Rube Goldberg team drove to New York to appear on Sunday's Today Show. Next they are flying to Los Angeles for an appearance on the ABC show Jimmy Kimmel Live on Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. In an earlier message I neglected to mention that Professor Dan Wanink was also a sponsor for this team and I want to correct this error. We are fortunate to have faculty such as Dan and his colleague Tom Hollen that help support extraordinary learning opportunities outside of the classroom. If you have not been following the story of the Rube Goldberg team, it is accessible online at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/wheel/rubetoday.htm> This includes some new video of the team and their amazing machine. I am told that a documentary film crew has been following our team throughout the year. Congratulations to these students and faculty on their achievement and the national recognition they are receiving. There are plans to recognize this team on campus and to demonstrate their amazing machine.

Our surveying students have won the national surveying competition at the annual conference for the National Society of Professional Surveyors in St. Louis. There is a wonderful piece of video available at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/wheel/surveying/> that describes the components of this competition which includes a paper, research, and field exercise. This includes an introduction by Professor Yaron Felus and an interview with alumnus Richard Sauve who describes the equipment, valued at over a million dollars, that Leica Geosystems donates to our surveying program annually. A few weeks ago I mentioned the video available on our webpage and did not credit the work by students and faculty in our television and digital media program who have produced a series of features on academic departments at the University. These are accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/news/week/> and provide a wonderful insight into academics at Ferris. Thank you for these efforts.

Our admissions office is using technology in some exciting ways to help spread the news about the good work and extraordinary education offered here at Ferris. If you've not seen it, I would encourage you to look at their 60 second television message available at - <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/future/fsu60sec.mov>. There are three podcasts where students talk about applying to Ferris, financial aid, and a campus visit at - <http://www.ferris.edu/admissions/podcast/>. I also enjoyed reading the blogs from four students who have described their experiences on campus this semester - <http://blogs.chatuniversity.com/ferris/>. I appreciate these innovative ways our faculty,

staff, and students are reaching out to connect new students with our University and to share the good news about Ferris.

I look forward to seeing you at our end of the semester events as the academic year draws to a close. Thank you very much for the work you do with our students.

best wishes,

dave