

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 19, 2006

Even though there is still a nip in the early morning air, spring is here. We can see the rapid greening of the campus as the dust and dirt accumulated over winter is swept away. Last weekend was one of the most beautiful in memory with two truly remarkable Michigan spring days. I want to take a few moments and update you on some of the activities on our campus.

Accreditation Task Force

Last fall we established a university-wide task force to study the two options available for our next Higher Learning Commission review, the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). In their review this task force hosted presentations by Doug Haneline, Michael Harris, Tom Oldfield, and Robbie Teahen, and Michelle Johnston, who are all expert examiners for the Higher Learning Commission. Their combined efforts provide an introduction, description and explanation of these approaches. I appreciate very much that they would share their special expertise with our campus.

The task force's final report provides an excellent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. This report, together with the presentations and other materials from the task force's work, is accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/planningtf2005.htm>. When you have the opportunity, I would encourage you to review this task force report. I would very much appreciate hearing your thoughts on which accreditation we should choose for our next review. Please write me at eislerd@ferris.edu.

Both Mike Cairns and Matt Klein did an excellent job of chairing and leading this task force. I want to express my thanks to them and their team members, John Backstrom, James Bandstra, Richard Cochran, Daniel DeRegnier, Yaron Felus, Raymond Gant, Kevin Jackson, Rebecca Kowalkoski, Beth Krueger, Mary Murnik, Karen Norman, Christi Roe, and Greg Wellman. Together they have helped educate our campus on accreditation options and related both

processes to our campus. Through their efforts we can reach an informed decision on the best approach for Ferris State University.

Campus Engagement

As part of student engagement efforts we have expanded our participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement. In thinking about opportunities for student engagement, I am continually amazed by the breadth and variety of events scheduled on our campus. If you have not done so recently, I would encourage you to click on this link for the campus calendar, <http://www.ferris.edu/news/calendar/calendars/calendar.cfm>. I believe you will be surprised by the number of events created for or organized by our students. The next week and a half includes final concerts by music organizations, spring sports banquets, a variety of charity events including the a benefit for the Card Wildlife Center, recognition events for faculty and staff, and all sorts of organizational meetings. Thank you for your efforts in supporting, advising, and attending these activities.

Earlier this month I had the opportunity to attend a presentation by Professor George Kuh, who directs the National Survey of Student Engagement at Indiana University. His session, entitled, "Creating Conditions That Matter for Student Success: Lessons Learned," was one of the best I have ever attended. Particularly compelling are the data he presents on the improvement of student gpa by participation in engagement activities. It is not surprising that the most substantial improvement is by students with lower entering ACT scores. I'd encourage you to look at Dr. Kuh's presentation, which is accessible at <http://www.agb.org/nct/discover/Kuh.ppt>. Ferris State University is one of 559 colleges and universities participating in this survey.

Faculty and Staff Recognition

Tuesday is the annual Employee Service Award Celebration. I hope you will join us at the Holiday Inn at 3 pm when we recognize employees achieving service milestones at Ferris State University. As a part of these ceremonies we will honor this year's recipients of the Distinguished Staff Awards -

Judy Elsey	Enrollment Services Supervisor, FSU-Grand Rapids
Brian Pacholka	Technician, Plastics and Rubber Department
Kenneth Schussler	Custodian, Residential Life
Barb Spedowski	Secretary, Level II, Residential Life
Glenn Zobel	Moving Coordinator, Physical Plant

The Distinguished Team Award recipient is the committee that organized this year's Martin Luther King activities. Chaired by Karyn Benner and Karen

GreenBay, team members include Andrea Beck-Jones, Tyrone Collins, Kaiya Hamilton, Katherine Palazzolo-Miller, Maurice Webb, Leroy Wright, Sandy Alspach, Tangynica Anderson, Anthony Baker, Jasmyne Brookins, Cheytaya Brown, Wendy Dodd, Matt Eickhoff, Todd Heft, Cindy Horn, Vanita Sanders, Charlie Wade, Hurdlynn Woods, Nina Woods, Rev. Jon Fleming, and Pastor Robert Garrels.

Please join me in extending our congratulations to these honorees. Selections for the Distinguished Staff and Team Awards are made by a committee co-chaired by Michelle Balliet and Jim Cook and including Karen Ottobre, Deborah Yost, and Jim Brown.

Thursday evening is the annual Faculty recognition dinner. My next campus memo will include a complete listing of awardees from those ceremonies.

Worth Seeing

This continues to be the most successful fund raising year in our University's history. The volunteers on the Ferris State University Foundation are active partners in this effort. If you have not done so, I would encourage you to take a look at their most recent electronic newsletter at <http://www.ferris.edu/foundation/FFnews/spring06/>. This issue highlights the establishment of endowments for non-traditional female students, students in Plastics Technology and Plastics Engineering Technology, students enrolled in the College of Education & Human Services, a planned gift for the Michigan College of Optometry, the first annuity for the University, and the Foundation mini-campaign for the Jim Crow Museum. Recently Ferris State University developed a unique email solicitation for alumni scholarship support. If you have not seen this I would encourage you to take a look at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/alumni/AlumniEcard/Alumnicard.html>.

Currently showing in the Art Gallery at the Rankin Center is one of the most powerful exhibitions I have witnessed. If you have not already experienced "Hateful Things," I want to encourage you in the strongest possible way to make time to do so. It is difficult to view this exhibit and not be impacted in an emotional way. I want to express my thanks to David Pilgrim, John Thorp, and the Jim Crow Museum for developing this powerful show. Please see this exhibit before it closes on April 28th. After its premiere on our campus this exhibit will travel throughout the country. In writing this I am reminded that one of the most visited places on our website is the Jim Crow Museum, if you have not seen this, it is at <http://www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/>.

Closing Thoughts

Many of you have responded to my request for student accomplishments to share at commencement. If you are aware of a student graduating this spring who has overcome significant challenges, who has a special story, or who has extraordinary achievements, I would appreciate you sending me his or her name so that I may contact them. While we will not be able to recognize each person, your assistance can help personalize and emphasize the personal success of our graduates. Please send these names to me either via email at eislerd@ferris.edu or at ext. 2500. Thanks in advance for your help and assistance.

There is no busier time than these next two weeks. Thank you for the extra effort you make to bring the semester to a close, to recognize outstanding effort, to celebrate the contributions of retiring colleagues, and to congratulate our graduating students. I look forward to seeing you at many of these events as we rapidly move toward Commencement.

Best wishes,

Dave