

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
April 25, 2011

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## Higher Learning Commission

Last week a visiting team from the Higher Learning Commission spent three days at our University as one of the final steps in our reaccreditation process. At a public presentation the team recommended Ferris State University receive continuing accreditation for 10 years without conditions or required follow-up visits. This is very good news and reflects well on the hard work that so many people have put into this effort.

During its presentation, the team offered a number of points it identified as leading to its positive recommendation. These included clear articulation of the Ferris Mission and its emphasis on successful careers; the uniqueness of our professional and technical programs, which are responsive and adaptive to the students we serve; student engagement, both in professional organizations, on campus and in the community; and the inclusiveness and collaboration the University fosters, which includes how we have organized discussions regarding general education requirements, academic organization and strategic planning. The team chair also talked about the solid financial position of our University and the dedication of our faculty and staff. There were also ideas the team urged the University to consider in building upon our clear strengths. These included closing the loop on assessment and demonstrating how student learning informs teaching; planning for the demands of increasing graduate-level offerings; and the continued development of the relationship and processes with the Kendall College of Art and Design.

The visiting team will now work with the HLC to complete its draft report. When completed, it will be submitted to the University for review before a final report is submitted to the HLC. I want to thank the members of the steering committee who spent many hours on the details of the project - Paul Blake, Jeff Boochard, Rick Christner, Cheryl Cluchey, Steve Durst, Oliver Evans, Abdollah Ferdowsi, Rick Griffin, Doug Haneline, Jennifer Hegenauer, Melinda Isler, Michelle Johnston, Katherine Manley, Ron McKean, Carol Quigley, Kristen Salmonson, Wendy Samuels, Max Shangle, Robbie Teahen and Sueann Walz. The steering committee has been co-chaired by Chris Vonder Haar and Mike Cairns. Maureen Milzarski spent many hours in support of the project. The writer/editor for the self study was Sandy Balkema. Associate Provost Teahen provided insights from her experience with the HLC.

This has been a three-and-a-half year long process, which involved the time and commitment of many faculty and staff. The visiting team was especially impressed by the number of faculty and staff who were engaged in the HLC process and who visited with them last week. I want to thank each of you for everything you did to contribute to this outstanding success for our University. It is clear acknowledgment of the excellence of Ferris State University and your commitment to our students.

## **Distinguished Staff and Team Awards**

It is a pleasure to announce the annual Distinguished Staff and Team Awards. Please join me in congratulating these staff members, who help make Ferris a great place to learn and work. The 2010-11 recipients recognized for their outstanding contributions to our University are-

- Bill Bitzinger, Photographic Services, University Advancement and Marketing
- Debra Cox, Educational Counseling and Disabilities Services, University College
- Cheryl Kondziolka, Dean's Office, College of Arts and Sciences
- Pam Muccio, Department of Physical Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences
- Debra Warwick, Grand Rapids office, College of Professional and Technological Studies

The 48-member Dawg Day Team of Enrollment Services, chaired by Jason Daday and Troy Tissue has been selected to receive the Distinguished Team Award for their extraordinary work on behalf of prospective students. This year a Special Recognition award goes to the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Committee for helping the University celebrate an important milestone in its history. Many people were involved in this effort co-chaired by Mary Kay MacIver and Miles Postema.

The selections for these awards were made by a committee of staff consisting of Debra Bloom (co-chair), Mitzi Day, Geri Johnson, Julie Modene and Ruth Ridderman (co-chair). I encourage you to join me in thanking the committee and all our winners for their commitment to the University and the excellence of their efforts.

## **Annual Employee Service Award Celebration**

Please be sure to join us for the Annual Employee Service Award Celebration, which will be held this Wednesday, April 27, 3-5 p.m. in the Rankin Center Dome Room. We will be celebrating the service of University employees who have completed five-year increments of full-time, continuous service. Also, we will be recognizing important employee achievements and awards, including Distinguished Staff, Distinguished Team, and many others. Highlights will include our traditional strawberry pie, and a slide-show of employees who have reached the various five-year plateaus of service. For a complete list of employees receiving recognition for their years of service and to register, go to <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/forms> .

## **SkillsUSA**

Congratulations to the Ferris students who took part in the Skills USA 2001 State Leadership and Skills Conference held in Lansing this past April 15-17. The twelve competitors did an outstanding job against other Michigan post-secondary schools. Together, they took home 11 medals, including five gold medals, allowing those students the opportunity to compete at the national finals in Kansas City this June. Students winning gold medals are Kyle Thede, Technical Drafting; Jacob Stratz, HVACR; Ron Olkowski, CNC Turning; Josh O'Neil, Diesel Equipment Technology; and John Bohnett, Graphic Communications.

SkillsUSA serves more than 300,000 high school and college students and professional members. Its programs include local, state and national competitions, which allow students to demonstrate occupational and leadership skills. During the national championships, more than 5,000 students compete in 92 occupational and leadership skill areas.

Congratulations to our winners as well as to the faculty members who helped their students achieve this success: Joe Compton, Pat Klarecki, Gary Maike, Ramon Robinson, and Advisor/Coordinator Dan Wanink.

### **Commencement Stories**

It is difficult to believe that it is nearly time for commencement ceremonies – this very busy academic year has passed quickly. Please contact me if you know of a graduating student with a compelling story. This might include significant achievements or accomplishments, overcoming challenges, or making important contributions to the University or community. Each year at this time I look forward to the opportunity to visit with exceptional students and highlighting some of their stories during commencement exercises. These examples of student success help illustrate the very human nature of the work we do here at Ferris. If you know of a noteworthy graduate, please e-mail me at [eislerd@ferris.edu](mailto:eislerd@ferris.edu) or call our office at extension 2500. Thank you!

### **Share Your Success**

During the next few days we will be visiting with a number of divisions as we conclude the “Share Your Success” sessions.

Wednesday, April 27, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. – Kendall faculty and staff, KCAD 209

Thursday, April 28, 9-10 a.m. – Administration and Finance, MCO 210

11 a.m.–12 p.m. – Government Relations & General Counsel,  
McKessy Conference Room

2:15–3:30 p.m. – Student Affairs, RAN 125-127

10:30–11:30 p.m. – Administration and Finance 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift,  
BUS 111

Monday, May 2, 1:30–3:45 p.m. – University Advancement, PRK 104

If you missed an earlier session in your area, please feel comfortable with joining any of these meetings. I very much look forward to seeing you and hearing your stories of success.

### **Pancakes with the President**

As exam week begins, we will be hosting “Pancakes with the President” on Monday, May 2, starting at 11 p.m. in the Westview Dining Center. This is an opportunity for Ferris students to take a break from studying to relax and meet informally with members of the University community. If you have participated in the past, you know this is a great opportunity to interact with students as the academic year draws to a close. All members of the campus community are invited to assist. Please contact Elaine Kamptner at ext. 2500 if you would like to join us.

On a personal note, the past weeks have been a challenging period for Patsy and me as our mothers passed away within two days of each other. We are both so very appreciative of the many notes, cards and expressions of support. From both of us, thank you very much.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President