

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 27, 2007

In January Dr. David Pilgrim accepted my invitation to serve as the first Chief Diversity Officer at Ferris State University. In doing so, Dr. Pilgrim was asked to provide strategic organizational leadership and focus for our institution's diversity efforts. Specifically this has included the following -

- Increase our efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse student body
- Develop and build upon current efforts to recruit and retain a diverse workforce
- Work collaboratively with all university constituents to develop an institution-wide diversity plan.

David has approached these significant challenges with an energy and passion that has helped bring direction, focus, and cohesiveness to these efforts. He immediately created a Diversity Planning Committee of more than twenty members and worked to meet with each organization on campus actively involved with diversity efforts. After only four months time the results show true forward movement. If you have not done so already I would encourage you to visit the diversity office website (<http://www.ferris.edu/diversity/>) and to read David's memos to campus, consider and reflect on the emerging plan for diversity, watch some of the videos contained there, and most importantly consider how you can become actively involved.

Today I am delighted to announce that Dr. Pilgrim has accepted a three-year appointment to serve as Chief Diversity Officer at Ferris State University. While there is much work to be done, we have the right person to help us become the diverse university community we should be. I encourage each of you to support David and his leadership for these efforts. Working together we truly can make a difference for all people.

Higher Learning Commission Re-affirms Accreditation

On April 12, 16, and 17 a visitor from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visited University educational efforts located at Ferris State University - Grand Rapids, at Kendall College of Art and Design, in Lansing, and in Flint. These interim visits were a part of HLC efforts to visit universities with multi-site campuses that are more than five years since their last accreditation visit. I am pleased to report that Ferris State University received the highest rating possible from this review. Operations at these sites meet expectations and no review or follow-up by the Higher Learning Commission is suggested, recommended, or necessary. For each criterion reviewed there were two possible choices,

adequate or attention needed. All criteria for all sites received the higher rating. The complete final reports from these visits are posted on-line at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/planning2005.htm> and click on “Higher Learning Commission” under “Accreditation.”

During the past few months concerns have been expressed regarding the organization of educational programs offered in non-Big Rapids locations. This visit affirms that each site visited and our University more than meets the criteria of the Higher Learning Commission. As we celebrate this external affirmation of our educational efforts, it is important to remember that accreditation standards are minimums. Our University should not just meet, but rather exceed these expectations.

It is important to express our thanks to Ferris State University employees in Grand Rapids, Lansing, Flint, Big Rapids, and throughout Michigan. Every day they work very hard to ensure that students receive a quality Ferris education wherever our courses and programs are offered. Thank you.

Good News

There is some very nice news about students from our Computer Information Systems (CIS) program in the College of Business. At the recent National Collegiate Conference of the Association for Information Technology Professionals (AITP), 15 of our CIS students competed against 750 other students from universities across the country as they took the Certified Computer Professional (CCP) test. Of the 750+ students, our students took 3 of the top 4 places (1st, 2nd, and 4th). This is very impressive and reflects the efforts of CIS faculty, including the faculty advisors of the student AITP chapter, Dr. Amy Buse and Prof. Clyde Hardman.

Congratulations to the women’s golf team, which captured its second consecutive Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championship. Sophomore Alison Meyer won top medalist honors and sophomore Meghan Hunter placed second. Additional information on this is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/sports/golf/wgolf/0607news/07gliaacchampionships.htm> Our women’s golf team hosts the NCAA Division II East Regional Competition at Katke Golf Course April 30- May 2.

University Advancement and Marketing does an excellent job of using electronic newsletters to share information and accomplishments of alumni and the Ferris Foundation. If you have seen the latest versions of these newsletters, they may be accessed here –

Bulldog Bytes (Alumni) - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/alumni/BulldogBytes/>
Ferris Foundation - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/foundation/Newsletter/>

Yesterday new trustees Patrick LaPine and Sueann Walz were confirmed by the Senate Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee. It was gratifying to hear the many positive comments from Senators for both nominees and Ferris State University. We are delighted to have both Mr. LaPine and Mrs. Walz as members of our Board of Trustees. Friday morning I am presenting testimony to the same Senate committee during their appropriation hearings in Grand Rapids. Copies of these materials are accessible on-line at - http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/Senate_2007.htm

Monday evening we will be hosting Pancakes with the President in the Westview Dining Center beginning at 11 pm. I am always impressed by how our students stay and visit with each other, taking time for human interaction in between the pressures of study and exams. Please encourage your students to attend. If you have time and energy Monday evening, please feel free to come out and join us. This is an enjoyable and meaningful experience.

Closing Thoughts

Last week's terrible tragedy at Virginia Tech intruded upon our sense of well being and safety. The physical safety of our faculty, staff, and students is our highest concern. Based on these most recent events we are going back and reviewing how our campus can prevent, notify, and respond to an event of this nature. As we do so I want to express my thanks to each person who took time to express their concern and support for our colleagues in Virginia. Special thanks go to our students and staff for their planning and participation in last Thursday's ceremony on the quad.

You may recall that following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington of September 11th, there were sharp increases in the harassment of Muslims, Sikhs, and persons of Arab descent, as well as persons perceived to be members of these groups. This was misguided and wrong. In the aftermath of the Virginia Tech tragedy, there are national reports of harassment against Asians, especially Koreans and Korean Americans.

It is important that we as members of this campus community set the example that all people are treated fairly, with respect, and without prejudice. Thank you for making certain all people feel welcome and safe on our campus.

Best wishes,

David L. Eisler
President