

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
May 5, 2008

This past week I hosted a lunch for members of the Governing Ideas Task Force. Earlier in the year that group concluded its efforts, which have focused on reviewing and re-shaping our core values and mission statement.

This has been arduous and painstaking, but an essential and rewarding task. The members of the task force are prime examples of the type of dedicated people at Ferris who put their heart and soul into their work. It has been a real challenge to come up with values that succinctly define the character of this University, then to evaluate and hone those ideas after being critiqued by the entire campus community. The ultimate result of this is a concise and elegant distillation of our values:

- **Collaboration:** Ferris contributes to the advancement of society by building partnerships with students, alumni, business and industry, government bodies, accrediting agencies, and the communities the University serves.
- **Diversity:** By providing a campus which is supportive, safe, and welcoming, Ferris embraces a diversity of ideas, beliefs, and cultures.
- **Ethical Community:** Ferris recognizes the inherent dignity of each member of the University community and treats everyone with respect. Our actions are guided by fairness, honesty, and integrity.
- **Excellence:** Committed to innovation and creativity, Ferris strives to produce the highest quality outcomes in all its endeavors.
- **Learning:** Ferris State University values education that is career-oriented, balances theory and practice, develops critical thinking, emphasizes active learning, and fosters responsibility and the desire for the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.
- **Opportunity:** Ferris, with a focus on developing career skills and knowledge, provides opportunities for civic engagement, leadership development, advancement, and success.

Thanks to Chair David Pilgrim, Doug Haneline, Leonard Johnson Ron McKean, Arlene Morton, William Papo and Roberta Teahen for their conscientious work in developing these core values, as well as our new mission and vision statements that define in a more inclusive way who we are as an institution.

Academic Affairs

Late last week Dr. Tom Oldfield was advised that he should reduce his workload. As a result he has decided to step down as Vice President for Academic Affairs and to concentrate on his work as Dean for the College of Technology. Tom has done an exceptional job as VPAA and I will miss the strong leadership and solid support he has provided over this past year. It is clear that

he has great passion for his work as Technology Dean and I look forward to continued success for him in this leadership role.

In seeking someone to replace Tom in Academic Affairs, there was one person repeatedly recommended, Dr. Daniel Burcham. Over the past few days I have spoken with Dr. Burcham and am pleased he has accepted my invitation to serve as acting Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dan has nearly forty years of experience at Ferris and knows our University, its people and programs very well. You know Dan from his exceptional work as Vice President for Student Affairs, where his leadership has been a driving force in the continued growth in enrollment at Ferris. You may not know that he also has a distinguished academic career at our University, and is a tenured member of the Languages and Literature Department, where he first started teaching in 1969. At Ferris Dan has been responsible for the development of courses in study skills, reading skills and vocational exploration. He helped create many of our student support programs during the twenty years he served as Director of Student Development.

Dan also has significant administrative experience in Academic Affairs, including appointments as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Dean of Enrollment Services, which was at that time in the Academic Affairs division. Dr. Burcham was appointed Vice President for Student Affairs in 1996. In 1997 he also served as Acting Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. During this interim period Dr. Burcham will continue as Vice President for Student Affairs, providing a unique opportunity to better coordinate the efforts of these two divisions. We are fortunate to have a very capable and experienced Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Mike Cairns, who will assume additional responsibilities to assist him with this division. Dr. Burcham will transition into this new position over the next few weeks and will assume full responsibilities on June 1st. I am very pleased Dan is willing to accept additional responsibilities so our University can continue to move forward.

Commencement

More than 1,700 Ferris students are preparing for the next stage of their lives as we approach Spring Commencement. The University will honor these graduates in five ceremonies over two days, during which more than 1,500 of our degree candidates are expected to participate. Commencement exercises will begin at 3:30 p.m. on May 9th for the College of Allied Health Sciences followed by a 7 p.m. ceremony for the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Pharmacy, and Professional and Technological Studies. The College of Technology will kick off Saturday's ceremonies at 9 a.m. followed by the College of Business at 12:30 p.m., and the College of Education and Human Services and Michigan College of Optometry at 4 p.m.

Please join me in congratulating our graduating seniors, many of whom have not only been our students but our co-workers. Student workers and interns are an invaluable part of our daily operations. Having seen the high level at which our students operate here on campus, I look forward to hearing about their accomplishments as they begin their careers away from Ferris.

Pancakes With the Students

The end of the semester means that it's time for our "Pancakes With the President" event, which will take place this evening from 11 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. in Westview Dining Hall. In the past we have had more than 800 students take a break from studying for final exams to join us. This is a very enjoyable opportunity to interact with our students. In addition to our faculty who attend I also invite interested staff members to join us. There's always room for one more person in cooking, serving, or just talking with our students. If you don't mind staying up late at the end of the semester, please come and participate.

As we conclude this academic year I want to thank you for your help, support and assistance as we have moved forward in defining values, vision, mission, and creating both a university-wide diversity plan and a strategic future for Ferris. It is an honor to serve as your President.

Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President