

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
May 5, 2009

Michigan College of Optometry Building

This Friday we break ground at long last on a new Michigan College of Optometry Building. Making this project a reality has taken much work over many years. MCO faculty members have done a marvelous job of teaching in a facility that was never meant to support academics. This new building will be a resource not only for Ferris, but for Big Rapids and surrounding communities.

If you attended one of my budget presentations earlier this semester, you know that funding for capital projects, such as the new MCO building, comes from different revenue streams than does money for the general fund. As with other infrastructure projects we have planned, this is a resource that is helping to lay the groundwork for the needs of generations of students to come.

The groundbreaking ceremony is Friday at 10:30 a.m. in parking lot #41 next to the Allied Health Building. I invite you to join and celebrate this happy occasion for our students, faculty and staff.

Commencement

The speed with which the 2008-09 academic year seems to have taken place has been breathtaking. It is difficult to believe that we are about to celebrate another graduating class at our May Commencement ceremonies this coming Friday and Saturday. With so many disheartening headlines, getting to share in the joy of our graduates will be an especially rewarding experience this year. Over the past week I have been visiting with our graduates and hearing their stories of success, many times in the context of seemingly overwhelming obstacles. These students' determination to pursue their education and earn their degree is truly inspirational. I look forward to sharing some of these stories with you at commencement.

In addition to celebrating our graduates, we will bestow honorary doctorates upon three recipients, all wonderful supporters of Ferris State University: a strong advocate for higher education and philanthropy throughout Michigan, Margaret Ann (Ranny) Riecker, Chair of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation; a wonderful partner of the College of Engineering Technology and Kendall College of Art & Design, Stephanie Leonardos, President and CEO of Amerikam, Inc.; and journalist, businessman and arts advocate, Jack Batdorff, Chairman of the Pioneer Group. Their honorary degrees pay tribute to the extraordinary work on behalf of Michigan communities and higher education that all three have performed.

I hope that you feel the same sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that I do when I see our graduates receiving their diplomas. Their success is made possible by the combined efforts of the entire Ferris community. On behalf of our graduating class, I thank you for helping provide the kind of environment where their ability to excel is expected, nurtured and honored.

Closing Thoughts

On Monday I presented testimony before the Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee at the hearings in Midland. These remarks are accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/senate-2009.htm> . In many respects they reflect my remarks before the house committee in February with the addition of a section speaking out strongly against proposed legislation to allow community colleges to offer bachelor degrees.

One of the highlights for me this year has been to hear from you of your work and success. Thank you for sharing these both through our listening sessions and in writing. We have posted additional copies of the good news we have received at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/GoodNews.htm> . Congratulations on these many accomplishments.

For many of you, summer is actually your busiest time of the year as we prepare for the start of a new academic year at the end of August. Still, with May Commencement and the culmination of the major portion of our academic year upon us, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the hard work that has made this such a successful year. The continued growth of respect and appreciation for Ferris State University and our graduates reflects public acknowledgement of the education we provide students in courses of study that prepare them for success both in their careers and in life.

Even as our work continues, I hope you have time this summer to devote to family, friends and to your own relaxation and personal advancement. You truly do make a difference. Thank you again for everything you do for our students and their education at Ferris State University.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President