

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
June 19, 2008

Summer University

Although the morning temperatures would not suggest so, there are many signs that summer is here. The first was Summer University, an excellent opportunity to focus on important priorities at Ferris, including strategic planning, emergency preparation and wellness. I want to thank everyone who took time to prepare, facilitate, or participate in these sessions. We received some excellent feedback from you on our strategic plan.

This year, it was especially timely to have a keynote presentation that focused on safety. Former FBI agents Eugene Rugala and Steve Romano were on campus to give a presentation that included a showing of their DVD, "Shots Fired," which demonstrates the assessments and decisions that must be made in an active shooter situation. The two agents pointed out such situations are rare. However, developments at Virginia Tech and elsewhere have shown that awareness of a potential situation can help to mitigate events we all hope will never take place on our campus. If you did not have an opportunity to view this presentation, please contact Elaine Kamptner at ext. 2500 to arrange for a viewing of the "Shots Fired" DVD.

Enrollment

During the summer we enroll students in terms of varying lengths – 4, 6, 8 and 12 weeks, as well as special sessions. As a result, we will not have final enrollment figures until later in the summer. Still, it is clear that summer's enrollment is again a record, up more than 5% from a year ago. More than 5,600 students are enrolled for summer classes.

If you are working on the Big Rapids campus you may have seen some of our new students and their parents here for orientation. Those sessions began last week and we are pleased to have 15% more students registered for orientation than at this time last year. Thanks are due to everyone who works so hard to make sure that potential students are welcomed and are aware of the ways in which a Ferris education can help them advance their professional and personal plans.

Legislative Update

If you have been following budget developments in Lansing, estimated revenues are now expected to be between \$350 and \$550 million less than earlier predictions. In this context it is unlikely higher education will receive the 3% increase proposed by both the house and senate appropriations committees. The most likely scenarios are that we will receive 1 or 1.5%, or no increase. At this time reductions from the state seem unlikely. While it is possible the state budget will be resolved by the beginning of July, this could very well not happen until later in July.

The university projects portion of the capital outlay bill has been referred to a conference committee. Our Optometry building proposal continues to receive strong support from both the House and Senate.

Property Purchase

The University has reached agreement to purchase the bankrupt Citgo station property across from the FLITE building. Our phase two environmental study revealed that in addition to the six tanks known to be on the property, there are an additional two tanks underneath the current building. Our agreement includes demolition of the building by the owners and environmental cleanup of the facility. The property is contiguous to the Big Rapids campus and was acquired at the appraised value, which meets our criteria for property acquisition.

At this point our plans are to make this a green space, helping to create a more inviting entrance to campus, while at the same time mitigating an eyesore and a potential environmental hazard on the front door of our University. The cost of the acquisition is \$370,000 - which includes \$350,000 for the property plus \$20,000 for building demolition. The Board of Trustees will act on this at a special meeting when they are on campus this Friday.

Finally, while on the topic of our campus footprint, we have completed the wireless network installation, which means our entire campus is now accessible by wireless connection.

Again, thank you for your help in increasing enrollment and helping to improve campus facilities. Despite challenges we face in terms of the state economy and how this affects our funding we are nonetheless, thanks to your hard work, positioned to enter the fall semester as the fastest growing university in Michigan. I am hopeful your summer includes some time for rest and relaxation and the opportunity to be outside enjoying some of the beauty of our area.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President