

## President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
July 20, 2007

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Over the past few weeks, public universities in Michigan have moved to increase tuition in response to state budget cuts and deferred payments. Ferris State University is no exception. At their meeting on July 6<sup>th</sup>, our Board of Trustees took action to raise undergraduate resident tuition by an average 6.7 percent.

In response to uncertainty regarding funding from the state, especially the \$4.5 million delayed August payment, our Board endeavored to keep tuition increases modest by instituting a per-credit "contingency charge," averaging \$8 per credit. If we receive the deferred payment and do not face additional budget reductions, we will eliminate the contingency charge for spring semester.

I support strongly this reasoned and judicious approach. In my four years as president we have experienced more than \$7 million in budget reductions from the State. Three of these four years our appropriations have been cut during the budget year, including this year when the cut occurred during the last month of our annual budget. Throughout this period we have not passed on budget reductions from the state to students, working instead to reduce our costs. In fact, the 6.7% tuition figure for this coming year required a base reduction of \$1.1 million to balance the budget. Tuition increases to this point have been calculated to cover mandatory increased costs at the University, primarily in compensation, benefits, and utilities.

Raising tuition is always a wrenching decision to make. This year has been especially difficult in terms of setting the University's budget. Not only have state lawmakers not set appropriations to higher education for the coming year, but they have deferred payments already allocated. This means we have been forced to make our best assumptions about what funding levels will be and what piece tuition will play in assuring a continued quality of education for our students. Should we not receive the delayed payment, the cumulative reductions in our state budget allocation will have increased to more than \$11.5 million.

We educate and nurture exactly the kind of graduates Michigan needs to help revive its economy. It is my great hope that the state will recognize the value of an educated work force and move to replace some of the funding that has been steadily eroded.

## Good News

On a more positive note, among other action the Board of Trustees approved new academic efforts recommended by the Academic Senate and a sabbatical leave for Biology Professor and Fulbright scholar James Hoerter, whose visiting professorship to the Dublin Institute of Technology can help forge important ties between our two biotechnology programs.

I want to congratulate our new Board officers: Chairman James K. Haveman; Vice Chair R. Thomas Cook; and secretary Patrick W. La Pine. We look forward to working with them in these leadership roles.

July has become an important time for meeting and gathering with University friends and supporters in a variety of places and venues. On Saturday we had an entry in the National Cherry Festival Parade and gathered with alumni for a reception and the fireworks display in Traverse City. Last evening more than 100 emeriti joined us for a picnic in Granger Center. It is always a special pleasure to visit people who dedicated their careers to our University and continue to enjoy their connection with Ferris. On Monday alumnus Chris Kunitz of the Anaheim Ducks will be bringing hockey's Stanley Cup to campus. Response to this has been remarkable with more than 250 people joining us for breakfast, and at last count 14 media outlets attending the press conference. Monday evening more than 80 Chicago alumni will be attending the White Sox - Tigers baseball game there.

We tend to think of summer on campus as a more relaxed place to be. It has not been so relaxing for everyone who has been involved in orientation. The Timme Center has been humming with groups of students preparing for their college careers. I am excited about the coming academic year when these new freshmen will begin the next phase of their lives. I want to thank all our dedicated staff and student ambassadors who have done a phenomenal job of coordinating this process while making our new students, their families and friends feel welcome at Ferris.

When those students begin classes, they will have a newly renovated Interdisciplinary Resource Center in which to study. The nearly completed renovations will help advance the University's mission of being a learning-centered institution by promoting innovation and creativity. The remodeled facility will provide many opportunities for learning - both inside and outside the classroom. The new IRC moves us closer to the ideal of the campus as place where a community of learning, and learners, thrives.

## Closing Remarks

I hope that you are having a productive and enjoyable summer. This coming academic year promises to provide us with many challenges and opportunities. Thanks to your hard work, Ferris State University continues to provide outstanding educational opportunities to our students despite a decades-long decline in public funding.

Sometimes it can be hard to step back from our day-to-day tasks to see where our efforts have taken us. Let me end by saying that our success in offering the very best programs in an extraordinarily wide range of areas has positioned us well to compete in attracting and educating smart, determined and motivated students. It is a pleasure to be part of a community that exists to provide them the resources they need to excel.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler  
President