

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 23, 2013

Welcome Back

It is always a pleasure to feel the excitement as students begin to fill our campuses for the start of fall semester. After a summer of often unseasonably cool temperatures, this past week we have seen temperatures climb to more normal levels as the start of classes nears. With campuses heating up both literally and figuratively, we are set to begin another year of Ferris State University preparing students for the successes ahead of them.

There are many activities planned for both returning and first-time students. A full list of the beginning-of-the-semester highlights can be found here <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/august/beginnings.htm> . I am always delighted to see students helping others with the move-in process through Bulldogs in Action. Especially for first-year students, getting a helping hand while settling in can help them get off to a great start and set the tone for that person's college studies. As the semester gets underway, please make a special effort to help students find their way in unfamiliar circumstances and assist them in any way you can. Beginning college is a big step, and some of our students will be the first in their families to embark upon this journey. They will deeply appreciate you taking the extra time to help them navigate these unfamiliar waters.

In Big Rapids, this Saturday evening's Meijer Madness is a remarkable event. While this is a fun activity for students, it is also a reminder of the close relationship between the university and the community. We are fortunate to have a strong "town and gown" bond with Big Rapids. Events such as Meijer Madness remind us of the mutually beneficial relationship between town and campus, which is now 129-years strong.

This is my 11th start of classes since becoming president of Ferris. Whether you have been at Ferris for a longer or shorter period of time, you have probably marveled at how quickly the academic year begins and then passes. This year, in particular, we are reminded of the changes that take place here in Big Rapids with the demolition of Masselink and Carlisle Halls, and the razing of the Rankin Center Dome Room as part of the university center renovation. In Grand Rapids we look forward to a second year in the marvelously restored Woodbridge N. Ferris Building. This physical evolution of our campuses is a visible reminder of how we are constantly changing to meet the needs of our students.

Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts

Fifteen years ago the merger of Kendall College of Art and Design with Ferris State University was announced. For me this is one of the best examples anywhere of how dynamic organizations can be fostered through the opportunities available in strong partnered efforts. This morning we are announcing another merger, this time between our Kendall College of Art and Design and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts.

Located at the corner of Fulton and Division in Grand Rapids, UICA is Michigan's largest contemporary arts center and a dynamic, multidisciplinary laboratory for the advancement of the

arts of our time. Throughout the year it features exhibitions of work from regional, national and international artists, and hosts a dynamic range of events. These include concerts, performance art events, artist receptions, and special events. UICA's 198-seat film theatre shows alternative cinema, foreign films, and documentaries. In 2007, UICA and its ArtWorks youth program was nationally recognized by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities as "one of the top arts- and humanities-based programs in the country serving youth beyond the school hours."

As a result of the merger, UICA will become part of the Kendall operation in Grand Rapids. Despite being an integral part of the arts scene in Grand Rapids, the UICA has been unable to achieve its targets in terms of membership and attendance since moving into its new building at 2 Fulton West in 2011. Much as Kendall's merger with Ferris helped stabilize its funding base, this merger together with significant newly pledged donor support will help UICA stabilize its finances, and so help it to reach its potential for serving the West Michigan community.

The mission of the UICA fits the educational mission of Kendall. The proximity of 2 Fulton West to Kendall means the Kendall campus is now an even more prominent fixture in downtown Grand Rapids. In addition to the mission of the two institutions meshing well, the merger creates the opportunities for operational efficiencies as well as wonderful educational opportunities for students as they become involved in an important regional art center.

IT Breach

In the past few days perhaps you, like me, have received a letter at home regarding the unauthorized access of our computer system. Although we have no confirmation that this incident resulted in any data stored on our site being misused or even viewed, we have contacted people whose personal information may have been involved. Whether or not you have received such a letter, you can learn more about this incident by clicking on the "Ferris Website Security Incident Update" on our home page, or by clicking on this link: <http://www.ferris.edu/notice/Aug-15-2013/> .

Led by John Urbanick, our Information Technology Services has worked in conjunction with an outside firm to identify the source of the problem and to take measures to further strengthen our information systems from attack. Dealing with these kinds of occurrences can be an unfortunate part of the reality of the interconnectivity of computer systems. We take very seriously our responsibility to safeguard the information with which we have been entrusted. As we continue to learn from this experience, we will also review and strengthen our security systems. In doing so, we will continue to search for the best ways to construct virtual firewalls to guard against any unauthorized attempt to access information.

I want to stress that we are working very hard to identify and address any security issues. Beyond strengthening our cyber-security, our hope is that we can find the individual, or individuals, behind this breach, which would allow for their arrest and prosecution. We will continue to inform the Ferris community about developments in this case.

Logo contest

Perhaps you followed the flurry of attention our Bulldog mascot received during the past weeks. I want to thank everyone who voted in an online reader poll, sponsored by the *Detroit Free Press*, to determine the best sports team logo in Michigan. The Ferris Bulldog bested 47 other logos to come out on top in the bracket-style competition that consisted of athletic team logos from the high school to professional level, including Detroit's Pistons basketball, Tigers baseball, Lions football and Red Wings hockey.

The Bulldog drew more fan votes than its competition in each of six rounds of voting, besting, in order, the Port Huron Patriots arena football team; Western Michigan University's Bronco; Eastern Michigan University's Eagle; the Grand Rapids Griffins hockey team; the Detroit Red Wings; and the Detroit Tigers. This shows the depth of support for our university and our athletic teams. Support for Ferris in this competition really took off online among alumni groups, as well as getting strong backing from students and the entire campus community.

The Bulldog mascot was created and designed by Terry Davenport in 1980. Terry is an FSU alumnus and the son of Dean Davenport, who led Ferris sports programs from 1979-1993 as Athletics Director.

Founders Day

Our annual Founders Day celebration is scheduled for this Thursday, Aug. 29. It begins at 11 a.m. when I will present some reflections on ten years at Ferris, areas of emphasis for the coming year, and thoughts about the challenges and opportunities ahead. If you can, I encourage you to join me in the Science Building, room 126. This will be followed by the employee picnic in the North Campus Quad. To help celebrate the success of the Ferris logo being voted the state's best, our Pride Committee has added an ice cream sundae bar to our picnic lunch. Other activities on the Quad begin at 3 p.m., including the community ice cream social, which runs from 4-6 p.m. I look forward to seeing you there.

As we begin this 2013-14 academic year, I want to thank you for the commitment you make to our students and their future. With the excitement and enthusiasm that accompanies the beginning of classes, we are each reminded again of the responsibility we have toward our students and to helping them take the fullest benefit of the opportunity of a Ferris education. Thank you for being a part of this ongoing commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president