

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 25, 2005

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the beginning of the academic year. Each fall, I am amazed at the rapid transition of our campus from summer to fall and the increased pace of activity as students return and move into the residence halls. As we prepare for the beginning of fall semester I want to bring you up to date on our progress this summer on ongoing projects and goals. I also want to share updated information on topics of interest.

Overarching Goals

Last fall we began a process to focus our efforts at Ferris State University around a three-part vision -

- We Need to Create A Learning University
- We Must Work Together
- We Must Become An Engaged Campus

Six University-wide task forces worked to develop ideas, proposals, and recommendations around these concepts. From these, six over-arching goals were selected. I want to share our progress to date on these.

1. Renovate and improve classrooms, technology, and furnishings with a goal of addressing all classrooms in a five-year timeframe.

Building on the work of the Teaching Facilities Task Force, academic affairs and the physical plant have focused their efforts on the following classrooms - Alumni 007, Alumni 109, Alumni 111, Starr 122, Starr 129, Starr 130, Starr 207, Starr 223, Science 132, Automotive 105, Automotive 108, and Business 224. In addition they are converting three little used areas to instructional purposes - Southwest Commons for the Police Academy, the Taggart Mezzanine for Visual Design, and the garages attached to the Power House for Automotive. Some of these areas still need a few finishing touches. When these are completed and the furnishings for these areas arrive it would be very helpful if you would provide feedback on what you like and do not like about these improvements. This will help guide future efforts to improve instructional spaces.

2. Develop and implement a hardware replacement cycle for faculty and staff computers based on a matching funds incentive program between central and division-level support and the reassignment of replaced equipment.

Although much of the work we do is dependent upon personal computers and access to the campus network, we have not had a replacement process for faculty and staff computers. The Learning-Centered Technology Task Force identified this as a major weakness in our efforts to support faculty and staff. The combined efforts of academic affairs working with information services and technology (IS&T) implemented an approach by which a minimum standard for desktop hardware is developed annually. Computers that do not meet that standard are replaced. Through these efforts 285 computers have been or will be replaced. IS&T has developed a website which provides much more information on this at http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/adminandfinance/infoserv/other/pc_replacement/index.htm

3. Design and implement a meshed wireless network that covers the campus footprint.

The Learning-Centered Technology Task Force placed a high priority on creating and implementing a wireless network for our campus. The approach chosen was to divide this project into two parts to be completed over this and next summer. IS&T has a website for this project that describes the approach, and includes a map of the wireless zones for the campus. This map is accessible at the following url ~ <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/adminandfinance/infoserv/other/wireless/zones.htm> This summer's plan was to install outdoor wireless in zones 1-4, essentially the area on the east side of State Street together with the health and pharmacy areas. In addition wireless is installed in the gathering areas of the residence halls. As you walk around campus you can see some of the components of this system. The external wireless involves small canisters attached to the upper floors of some buildings. I am excited by the possibilities this wireless network can provide for learning throughout our campus. You can track the progress of this project at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/adminandfinance/infoserv/other/wireless/OutdoorUpdates.htm>

4. Initiate a University-wide effort to create a consistent message\identity as part of a truly integrated marketing program for our institution.

The Communications Task Force identified a significant need for the University in terms of projecting a consistent identity and message. An RFP was issued for firms to work with us on develop a positioning approach for the University. From

fourteen proposals, three firms were selected for on-campus interviews. Pace and Partners was recommended from these finalists. Pace then developed five potential messages for the University. These were presented on campus last spring together with a web survey. I appreciate that many of you took time to look at these examples and provide feedback. Over 1100 responses to the survey were received! Based on this input several strategic proposals were advanced. The first is to place in the forefront Ferris State University, not the abbreviated FERRIS as we have done in the past. This emphasizes our academic growth and university status. The second was to use the torch more on our positioning pieces for the University. Third, the concept of "Imagine More" will be used as the center point for this integrated marketing campaign. While this message will be a unifying factor, it will differ from "Unleash your Potential," in that it will be used more as a footnote rather than a headline. This positioning effort will involve a variety of media including outdoor signs, national public radio, some printed publications, and web banners. As these are developed I will share the messages with you in future memos.

5. Assess the effectiveness of current student engagement efforts and compare these to national data and models.

The student engagement task force identified the need for better analysis of current efforts on our campus. Toward that end the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to students on the Big Rapids campus. Apparently a significant number of other universities had similar ideas as we still have not received the data analysis from this survey. Once we do have these results they will help us better understand the effectiveness of our student engagement efforts through the eyes and perceptions of our students.

6. Develop a funding formula which rewards colleges for enrollment growth.

The Enrollment Growth Task Force identified the need for a mechanism that provides support to academic areas with significant growth. Toward that end a enrollment growth funding formula was developed and implemented. This compares a two-year weighted average for college enrollment growth and earmarks one fourth of the tuition dollars from this growth to the college. A more in-depth explanation of this funding formula is available here -

<http://www.ferris.edu/president/AcademicIncentiveModelMethodology.doc>

The first year's spreadsheet of allocations is here -

<http://www.ferris.edu/president/AcademicIncentiveModel2005.xls>

This is vitally important to the future of our University. As a result of this support and together with the filling of open positions, we are pleased to welcome thirty-five new tenure-track faculty to our University. Given the budget constraints we have

experienced, this is an extraordinary commitment of University resources to our academic programs.

Catherine Arroe	Humanities
David Borck	Manufacturing
Sarah Christensen	Pharmacy
Christine Conley-Sowels	Education
Debra Courtright-Nash	Languages and Literature
Gordon Crandell	Automotive
Adam DeKraker	Photography, Kendall College
Patrick English	Automotive
Frederick Ennis	Education
Mark Fabbri	Health Management
Ann Gilley	Management
Bradley Isler	Biology
John Kantoraowski	Construction Technology and Management
John Kennedy	Criminal Justice
Paul Klatt	Biology
Sonya Knoll	Diagnostic Medical Sonography
Michael Korcal	HVACR
Cindy Kramer Reszke	Radiography
Stephen Lee	Pharmacy
Candace Lewis	Sculpture and Functional Art, Kendall College
Joseph Lipar	Biology
Rodney Michael	CIS
Suzanne Miller	Construction Technology and Management
Hikaru Murata	Education
James Nash	Optometry
Joseph Pacella	HVACR
Jana Pisani	Humanities
Piram Prakasam	Physical Sciences
Fran Rosen	FLITE
Marilyn Skrocki	Health Management (Program Coordinator)
Paul Thill	Pharmacy
Chrstine VonderHaar	Languages and Literature
Lisa Wall	Radiography
Rex West	Languages and Literature
Marvin Wortz	Education

As part of their acclimation to our campus, Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Harris welcomed these new faculty to campus with a week-long orientation experience. I have met our new faculty and am very impressed with

them. They bring strong credentials and wonderful experiences to our University. They will help support the continued growth and increased academic expectations for our campus. When you have the opportunity I encourage you to welcome these new members of our University community.

Enrollment

While we will not know the final numbers until next week, fall enrollment is very strong. It is reasonable to expect that enrollment in Big Rapids will be up by 300 students. FSU-Grand Rapids is looking at an enrollment increase of 25% and Kendall College of Art and Design will for the first time in its history exceed a total student enrollment of 1,000 students this fall, all remarkable achievements. This increased enrollment reflects growing appreciation for and acknowledgement of the value of a Ferris State University degree. It represents the hard work of our admissions office and academic departments in recruiting new students. Just as importantly this growth results from the contributions of every person at our University in helping retain our current students. Thank you very much for your work to recruit, retain and educate our students.

Tuition

Newspapers this summer have included a number of stories of tuition and required fee increases for state institutions. A number of universities raised tuition by double digit increases, some as much as 18 and 19%. I want to share with you the approach we have taken to tuition. In the past, Ferris State University had a tiered approach to tuition, where part-time students paid more per credit and than full-time students. Over the next three years we will move to a linear-based tuition structure. As a result this year tuition increased by 8.9% for students taking 13-15 credits. Although it has not been reported in most news media, it is important to note that tuition for students electing 12 hours or less increased only 3.5%.

Our full-time increase was the third lowest of the state institutions. As a result we moved from the 4th most expensive institution in Michigan to the 6th. To be competitive in the student recruitment market, I believe our tuition should be more toward the middle of Michigan institutions, rather than near the top. The initial recommendations presented to me last spring suggested we should raise tuition 11-12%. After talking with our students I wrestled with this issue throughout the summer. Ultimately we chosen to reduce our budget to hold the tuition increase under 9%. I am also pleased that we have maintained our approach to avoid additional student fees beyond tuition. The following table provides a comparison of tuition increases at Michigan institutions.

	2004-05	Rank	2005-06	Rank	Amount	Percent
Central Michigan	\$5,375	13	\$6,390	9	\$1,015	18.88%
Eastern Michigan	\$5,762	9	\$6,540	8	\$778	13.50%
Ferris State	\$6,190	4	\$6,740	6	\$550	8.89%
Grand Valley State	\$5,888	7	\$6,334	10	\$446	7.57%
Lake Superior	\$5,736	10	\$6,306	11	\$570	9.94%
Michigan State	\$7,395	3	\$8,208	2	\$813	10.99%
Michigan Tech	\$7,610	2	\$8,192	3	\$582	7.65%
NorthernMichigan	\$5,334	14	\$5,858	14	\$524	9.82%
Oakland	\$5,590	11	\$6,122	12	\$532	9.52%
Saginaw Valley	\$4,913	15	\$5,282	15	\$369	7.50%
UM - Ann Arbor	\$8,722	1	\$9,795	1	\$1,073	12.30%
UM - Dearborn	\$6,002	5	\$6,716	7	\$714	11.90%
UM - Flint	\$5,461	12	\$6,111	13	\$650	11.90%
Wayne State	\$5,828	8	\$6,898	4	\$1,070	18.36%
Western Michigan	\$5,934	6	\$6,784	5	\$850	14.32%

Budget

At this point there is no definitive news on the state budget. It does appear that revenues for the past year slightly exceeded expectations. While there is not confirmation at this point I am hopeful that this will cancel the executive order on last year's budget. This would be a restoration of funds between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

There are currently three different budget proposals for this year's higher education budget. The House budget follows ideas we proposed in terms of funding Universities based on enrollment growth and program costs. I believe it is a well reasoned approach that supports and helps public higher education grow in our state. The House Budget proposes an increase of \$1.3 million for Ferris State University. The Senate Higher Education Budget is based on a simple enrollment calculation. As such it ignores the importance of instructional programs that may cost more, but provide education in areas where there is both employment and needs in Michigan. As proposed the Senate budget is a \$200K budget reduction for Ferris State University.

Last February the Governor presented her budget. As originally proposed, the Executive budget cuts funding to Ferris State University by \$960,000. In

developing the University budget for 2005-2006, we used the Executive budget recommendations. Our approach was to absorb this additional budget reduction without eliminating positions. Although this was a less optimistic and more difficult approach to the budget, given the uncertain nature of state funding, I believe this was the prudent course. I am hopeful the legislature and Governor will approve a budget for Ferris State University that does not include funding reductions. If that is the case, the reductions in this year's budget will be restored.

Banner

In July we went "live" on the financial portion of our new Banner software program. This is a remarkable achievement. I want to congratulate Suzette Compton and all the members of the Banner team from across the University who have worked very hard to facilitate this transition. As a part of this initial phase of the Banner project, over 120 business process analyses were conducted. During 2005-2006 we will continue this implementation process. The Human Resources, Admissions, and Financial Aid portions of this software will be activated in January 2006. Student registration will go "live" in March 2006 and student billing in July 2006. Implementation of this software is crucial to the future of our University and protects us against the eventuality of vendor non-support for our old systems. I am very proud of the efforts of our Banner team and appreciate the extra effort you are making to assist with this implementation process. Additional information on progress of the Banner project is available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/banner/>

Instructional Resource Center Renovation

Ferris State University was fortunate to receive support from the state to renovate the Instructional Resource Center (IRC). A group headed by Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Roxanne Cullen has developed an innovative plan to make this facility an example of state-of-the-art learning spaces for our campus. As such the preliminary plans replace most of the large stepped rooms in this facility with high-tech classrooms that will be available to programs throughout the University. Additional goals for this building are to provide much needed office space for College of Business faculty and to provide a connective artery between the Business building and the IRC. I am hopeful this will become a gathering place for students in business and those taking classes in the IRC. A preliminary rendering of how this connector might look is available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/news/irc/renderings/eastview.pdf> Additional information and preliminary floor plans on this \$8.5 million project are available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/news/irc/> Once construction drawings are completed and approval is received from the state construction will begin work on this project. Our hope is to dedicate this revitalized facility in September 2007.

Extended Learning

We continue to experience significant demand for degree offerings from Ferris State University across Michigan. This fall will see the launch of twenty-four new degree cohorts across the state, including new sites at Alpena Community College, Livingston County, and Macomb Community College. Through these efforts we help Michigan citizens who are place-bound have access to Ferris State University degree programs. Thank you for your support of these degree offerings across Michigan.

Thank You

During these first few weeks of school I appreciate the extra efforts you make to help our students adjust to our University. Each of us may never know when that extra piece of kindness and assistance might make a life-changing difference for one of our students. Thank you for helping our students adjust to our University.

During the first few weeks of school I try to carve out time to walk around campus and to talk to our students and their parents. In doing so I am reminded of my first few days in college and our experiences with each of our children. I can see the uncertainty on the faces of some of our new students and the look of optimism and hopeful expectation on the faces of our parents. Each of us knows the life changing potential that a college education presents. Thank you for your efforts to help our students realize these opportunities. I look forward to working with you throughout this year and appreciate the difference you make for our students.

Best wishes,