

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 2, 2008

As much as we look forward to the start of classes each fall, the amount and pace of activity when the campus comes fully to life again somehow can take us just a little by surprise. The past few months have been a busy time at Ferris with summer classes, student admissions, orientation sessions, course preparation, renovation projects and more, but nonetheless we get used to a somewhat more leisurely rhythm to the campus. The arrival of students starts a new academic year, and an exciting time, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm generated by students and faculty returning to our campuses.

Founders' Day

While a new generation of students helps make us look forward, we should also take time to look back. Founders Day this Thursday will do both. It is a time to honor our founders, Woodbridge N. and Helen Gillespie Ferris. As the only public university in Michigan named after its founders, we have a unique vantage point from which to consider where we've been – and where we're going. This year there is much to celebrate with newly adopted values, vision, and mission statements.

At 11 a.m. on Thursday, I'll be joined by Professor Robert von der Osten in the Rankin Center Dome Room to present the current draft of the University's Strategic Plan. This plan results from the active engagement of our University stakeholders over the past year. After this presentation you are invited to join us under the large tent in the Quad for our traditional picnic lunch. At 1 p.m., Robert and I will host a question and answer session on the strategic plan in the Rankin Centennial Room. This is one final opportunity to solicit your opinions on this plan. I hope you will take the time to review the Strategic Planning documents that are on the Web at www.ferris.edu/president/strategic/Goals-Initiatives.htm.

Later that afternoon, between 4 and 7 p.m., we'll be sponsoring our second annual community ice cream social on the Quad. I encourage you to stop by, visit with our neighbors both on campus and the community, and enjoy a free ice cream cone. More information on Founders' Day activities is available at www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/news/homepage1.cfm and on the Campus Calendar available on the Ferris home page.

Class of 2012

Every year there are stories about the cultural landmarks that define the incoming class. For example, first-year students coming to us straight out of high school have always known High Definition Television, but never a Berlin Wall. For them, there have always been Web pages and cell phones small enough to fit in a shirt pocket, Nelson Mandela has always been a free man, and there has always been litigation involving the Exxon Valdez.

Incoming first-year students have also always had Starbucks franchise coffee shops – and that will be no exception at Ferris. Today we opened the first Starbucks in Big Rapids in the connector area of the Interdisciplinary Resource Center. A grand opening celebration is

scheduled to take place on Saturday, Sept. 13, in conjunction with our home football contest against Findlay. We're proud that the Senior Vice President for Marketing is a Ferris alumnus, Terry Davenport, son of Joyce and Dean Davenport, for many years Director of Athletics at Ferris.

Year of the Dawg

This past weekend, Leadership Mecosta unveiled their community art project, "Year of the Dawg" during Riverdays celebrations in Big Rapids. Thirty-six 3'x4' fiberglass bulldogs inventively painted by local artists (including Ferris Artist in Residence Robert Barnum and Rankin Art Gallery Coordinator Carrie Weis) will spend time at area businesses – and on campus – in a project that will not only benefit Leadership Mecosta, but also Artworks Gallery and the Youth Attention Center. The use of bulldogs for this project is a tangible symbol of the close relationship that exists between the University, Big Rapids and surrounding communities. I want to thank everyone at Ferris who has helped make Year of the Dawg possible, including Erin Diehm, Diane Griffin, Geri Johnson and Matt Yeoman, who were part of the Leadership Mecosta Year of the Dawg Team. Also, thanks to those who sponsored artwork, including the Ferris Foundation and Alumni Association; Dan Burcham, Rick Duffett, Don Green, Elaine Kamptner, Tom Oldfield and Miles Postema. Patsy and I are also sponsors. If you have not yet seen them, the bulldogs look fantastic! The pictures of the completed dogs are not yet available online, but you can watch a short video of work on the FSU alumni\foundation dog at <http://www.yearofthedawg.com/peakvideo.html> .

My best wishes for the coming year, and I look forward to working with you, implementing our strategic plan and facing the challenges each year brings. Official enrollment figures will be available on Thursday and I look forward to sharing them with you during our 11 a.m. presentation. Thank you in advance for your efforts in helping make Ferris the best possible learning environment for our students.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President