

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 14, 2009

Continuing 125th Anniversary Events

This past week we continued our 125th anniversary celebration with the groundbreaking for Helen's Garden – in memory of Helen Gillespie Ferris – in the area between the Prakken and Alumni buildings and the “Ferris Through the Years” photo exhibition at the Rankin Center Gallery.

The Rankin Center exhibition continues through the end of the month, and I encourage you to take the time to see these aerial images of the development of our University's campus. Remembering and celebrating our past reminds us that we learn, live and work on a campus that continues to evolve. The work we do today to prepare for the campus of tomorrow builds on the efforts of previous decades to anticipate the needs that we are living today. The “Ferris Through the Years” exhibition helps make the context of our plans for the future relevant in a very immediate way.

Campus Construction

Signs of the continual evolution of our campus truly are all around us. At the start of the fall semester we opened the completely renovated Rock Café, with a marketplace-style orientation. The new Rock Café is a major component of our efforts to ensure that the University is meeting the health and lifestyle needs of our students. I want to thank Dining Services Director Lori Helmer and all of our dining service and physical plant people who have helped make this state-of-the-art facility a reality.

Another important part of making our campus more attractive to students will be our new East Campus Suites, which are currently under construction and are scheduled for completion in August of 2010. These new suites will offer our students the first new on-campus housing option in the past fifteen years. They will provide over 300 students the type of living arrangements they want here on campus. Upgrades such as the Rock Café and East Campus Suites help Ferris attract students to our campus in Big Rapids. Without question the education we provide students is of the highest importance, but it is also a reality that some students will not attend unless we provide a living environment that supports those academic offerings.

Most happily, at long last construction should begin in October on a new Michigan College of Optometry building. This long-overdue project will greatly enhance not only the ways in which faculty can deliver material to students, but also increase the MCO's capacity to serve the community. This facility will be a major and important step forward for Ferris' ability to provide Michigan with the healthcare professionals it needs. My thanks to the MCO faculty and all who have worked so hard to make this project a reality. For more information on the new facility, follow this link - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/alumni/develop/Realize/MCO-New-building.pdf>

In addition to these high profile projects, we also are working to assure that the general infrastructure of campus continues to meet the needs of the Ferris community. Over the summer much progress was made in replacing antiquated electrical systems and roofs, sidewalks and streets in need of repair.

Housing and dining projects are funded out of separate revenue streams than our General Fund. Even as we face ongoing funding challenges, we are assuring that we are positively positioned for the kind of continued growth our “Ferris Through the Years” exhibition has so well documented.

Education Program Success and Good News

We have received some extraordinary news about our Teacher Education program. The Michigan State Department of Education reviews teacher preparation programs through a process called Teacher Preparation Institution Performance. This process identified the program at Ferris as exemplary and scored it the 2nd highest of any program in the state with a score of 68, just two points behind Andrews University’s top score of 70. Also receiving a score of 68 were Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Hope College, Northern Michigan University, Oakland University, Saginaw Valley State University and Wayne State University.

Our program was ranked higher than programs at Michigan State University, Michigan Tech, Alma College, Calvin College, Eastern Michigan University, the University of Michigan and UM-Dearborn. These programs, however, were also considered exemplary. We also were rated higher than programs deemed satisfactory at Albion College, Olivet College, UM-Flint, Hillsdale College, Adrian College, and Western Michigan University. Our program received the maximum number of points in the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification, Teacher Exit Surveys, Supervisor Surveys, Program Review Status, and Diversity.

Beyond this success in teacher education, there is much good work to share at Ferris State University. With the size and complexity of our University, it is sometimes difficult to know about the many achievements, activities, and contributions of our people. To assist we post a listing of “Good News” items on our web pages. The latest version is accessible at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/GoodNews.htm>. Among the items on the most recent list is a notice that UA&M is partnering with Television and Digital Media Production to produce “Ferris Today,” a new public affairs broadcast that will air at 10:30 p.m. Thursdays on Fox 32 and streamed on the Ferris Web site, beginning September 17. The show will be produced by Sandy Gholston in collaboration with TDMP students and faculty. It will highlight University programs and initiatives; a video feature about students and faculty/staff; news about upcoming events and activities; and sports.

Events and an Invitation

The Office of Multicultural Student Services has moved to new space in the FLITE library. They are hosting an open house from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. today, with a ceremony at 1 p.m. The location is FLITE 159, just off the 24-hour study area on the first floor. I encourage you to take a few moments to welcome OMSS to these new offices.

Before this Saturday’s football game with Grand Valley State University, the Student Government Association is sponsoring its second annual Blues and Barbeque event beginning at 4:30 p.m. The proceeds go to a special scholarship program they have established. This event was

great fun last year and it is wonderful to see our student government working to help students attend Ferris.

Finally, if you have not had the opportunity to experience the new Rock Café, I want to invite you to join me for lunch or dinner. In addition to enjoying this new dining facility, it will also provide the opportunity for me to hear your thoughts about our University and its future. Please let me know your best day of the week and preferred time during fall semester by calling ext. 2500. I hope you can join me and look forward to hearing from you.

We are off to a remarkable start of the semester with a record enrollment and exciting new building projects that will continue to help attract future generations of Ferris students. Thank you for helping to make this an especially exciting time as we celebrate 125 years of providing educational opportunity in Michigan.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President