

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 15, 2008

Emergency Preparedness

With the 2008-09 academic year now fully underway, our efforts at increasing the University's readiness to respond to emergency situations continues to be a top priority. The tragedies at Virginia Tech and North Illinois University have raised our awareness of the necessity of being as prepared as possible for the unforeseeable.

Last week we distributed an emergency planning and response brochure to the University community. The brochure outlines some of the steps we have taken to heighten campus security, including

- Expanding our City Watch system of emergency voice and text messaging
- Rolling out new "blue light" emergency telephones
- Installing new entry card readers at residence halls
- Upgrading the Wheeler Pavilion sign to a programmable message board
- Improving our outdoor broadcast system

The brochure also urges the campus community to conduct regular emergency response drills; know how to make use of such existing resources as automatic external defibrillators; and schedule a viewing of *Shots Fired*, a video outlining what to do in an active shooter situation. It is important you take time to view and discuss the active shooter video. We are requesting that departments do this with the assistance of an officer from the Department of Public Safety. Also, next month we will be asking faculty and staff who wish to receive emergency text messages to sign up for this service.

If you did not receive a copy of the brochure and would like one, contact Public Safety at ext. 5000. A pdf version is also available at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/pdf/EmergencyResponseBrochure2008.pdf>

Enrollment

My last message included the good news about our record enrollment numbers - 13,532 students system-wide, up from 13,087 in fall 2007. However, I overlooked including a link to the actual enrollment figures. That report can be found at <http://www.ferris.edu/president/pdf/Fall2008Enrollment.pdf>

It is exciting to see the continued growth at the Kendall College of Art and Design. Their enrollment this fall now exceeds 1,300. With 1,352 students enrolled, the College has increased by 150% since its merger with Ferris. To meet the growing demand for space, renovations have been made to both the 6th and 7th floors of the Kendall building. Those improvements help expand space for Kendall's painting and drawing program, for student services and other needs. Space on the 1st floor is now being renovated to create additional faculty office space. Congratulations to Kendall faculty and staff, and Oliver Evans and Sandy Davison-Wilson.

Also, during a time when a number of factors – including passage of Proposition 2 – has made it ever-more challenging to nurture a diverse campus, Ferris has managed modest gains in this area while other campuses have seen significant declines in minority enrollment. My thanks to everyone who has been involved in the development and implementation of our University-wide diversity plan, which has helped us in advancing our goal of being an inclusive institution.

FerrisConnect

More than 40 faculty, staff and administrators gathered in FLITE last Wednesday evening to celebrate the accomplishments of the FerrisConnect team led by co-project managers Gloria Lukusa-Barnett and John Urbanick.

Over 450 Ferris faculty and staff have learned to use FerrisConnect since the project's inception in 2006. Special thanks to the faculty and staff trainers who helped provide this special support - Randy Vance, Amy Buse, Gloria Lukusa-Barnett, Jonathan Taylor, Rick VanSant, Mike Berghoef, Susan Hastings-Bishop, Sandy Burns, Kimn Carlton-Smith, Susan Fogarty, Steve Lyman, John Schmidt, Kim Hancock, Enid Carlson-Nagel and Eunice Merwin. Bill Knapp and Meegan Lillis even have developed an online option for this assistance.

Blackboard representatives Pat Bevilacqua and Gordon Freedman offered special recognition for Mary Holmes, E-Learning system administrator, for her collaboration within the Blackboard communities.

This fall semester 1,156 courses are utilizing FerrisConnect in blended, web-enhanced and fully online sections and 10,416 students have FerrisConnect-enhanced classes. To accommodate the more than 1,300 users often logged on at any one time, the system was upgraded in late summer with additional servers and software updates.

Wednesday's event was a very special celebration of what has been accomplished. Please join me in congratulating Gloria Lukusa-Barnett, John Urbanick and all of our FerrisConnect project implementation team for their extraordinary efforts and success.

Good News

The fall semester starts with a long list of good news items, many generated by our faculty members. Among those deserving recognition include –

- David Russell, who has been selected to serve as editor of *The Lion and the Unicorn*, one of the nation's foremost children's literature journals.
- Caroline Stern, who has been invited by UNESCO to conduct a training seminar on information literacy for librarians and other instructional faculty at the Library at Alexandria, Egypt. She has just returned from a similar trip to Turkey.
- Andrew Kantar, whose latest book, *Black November*, inspired the documentary *November Requiem*, which will air on Michigan PBS stations this fall.

You can access more items of good news at

<http://www.ferris.edu/president/GoodNews/GN082708.pdf>

This past weekend was a busy and active one. Saturday's events began with an open house at noon in the ice arena. It was wonderful to see so many people from our community on campus, skating on the new ice and registering for the many groups that use this facility. At that same time

we awarded 21 Legacy Scholarships to students who are children or grandchildren of alumni. This was an impressive group of students. This event is held in conjunction with our alumni board and it was good to have them on campus.

Saturday afternoon we held the grand opening for Starbucks in the IRC. This facility is off to a great start and I am told has served more than 4,100 customers in nine days. Our Student Government staged the initial Blues and BBQ festival with a barbecue contest and a blues band. Fortunately they had rented two large tents, which were needed because of the rain. This event raised enough money to fund three need-based scholarships. I am very proud of our students.

Despite the weather we attracted 2,800 people for the football game. The new turf and victory bell look great. Congratulations to Jeff Pierce and our team who played well and are now 3-0, winning 14-0. It was good to see so many people on campus this weekend. Your support for these events is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President