

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
October 7, 2013

Power Outage

Last week was a reminder about how easy it is to take things for granted. Wednesday quickly became a day like few others when we experienced a power outage on our Big Rapids campus. This began in the early morning hours for buildings west of Northland Drive, and after 6 a.m. affected the entire campus. From dealing with snow emergencies we know that to effectively communicate the cancellation of classes, this decision needs to be made around 4 a.m., which was impossible here.

While power was restored to the east side of campus later that morning, it was Thursday evening before power could be restored to all of the west side. In addition to classes being affected, there were more than 900 students in residence halls and 300 students in apartments without power.

The power loss was traced to a failed high voltage switch. Once that was determined, a replacement switch was located, transported to campus and installed. This was accomplished by late Wednesday evening. Rerouting power allowed for the restoration of electricity to residence halls and student apartments. The incident also damaged high voltage cables on the west side of campus. Replacements were installed Thursday, allowing for the restoration of all power shortly before 9 p.m. that evening.

Thank you for dealing with this unexpected inconvenience, which impacted the work of everyone on the Big Rapids campus. I want to especially thank the men and women of the Physical Plant, Residence Life, and Dining Services, who had to scramble and work very hard to remedy problems to meet the needs of our students. An event such as this highlights why collaboration is such an important value for our university. Thank you for working together.

It is also a reminder of the importance of our colleges, departments and divisions having up-to-date emergency contingency plans. Although we tried very hard to respond well and in a timely manner to the loss of power, we never know what form the next challenge will take. If you have a contingency plan in place, this is a good time to review it and make sure that those who may need to access it know where and how to do so. If you do not have a contingency plan, I strongly urge you to work on developing one.

Art Prize Participation

Friday evening's ArtPrize awards were a triumph for the Kendall College of Art and Design. Of all the ArtPrize presentation spaces, the Kendall exhibit in the Woodbridge N. Ferris building received the juried award for the Best Venue. Additionally the work "Through the Skies for You," by Kevin Cooley and Phillip Andrew Lewis in the Ferris Building was selected for the juried prize for the best 3-dimensional work. Each juried award includes a \$20,000 cash prize. This recognition highlights the unique confluence of education, art and public service Kendall offers to the Grand Rapids community. Congratulations to everyone at Kendall who worked on

or supported this exhibit and to President David Rosen for his leadership that helped further raise the profile of KCAD in Grand Rapids and throughout West Michigan.

While the final attendance figures have not been tabulated, it is estimated that during ArtPrize more than 30,000 visitors viewed the exhibits housed at the Woodbridge N. Ferris Building and more than 70,000 visitors toured exhibits in our new spaces at the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts. Additionally, collaborative design faculty and students created much interest with their demonstration of possible uses for the section of Pearl Street between our two Kendall buildings there. I especially want to thank the 360-plus people from our university communities who volunteered to help visitors at these ArtPrize exhibits.

Wheelchair Basketball

October is Disability Awareness Month and a number of activities are scheduled. Sunday I had the opportunity to watch the opening presentation in our Arts and Lectures series, Dancing Wheels, an innovative group that combines modern dance with dancers in their wheelchairs. This Friday, the Liaison Committee for Students with Disabilities is hosting a wheelchair basketball game in Wink Arena at 7 p.m. The Grand Rapids Pacers, a wheelchair basketball team, will be playing against members of our men's and women's basketball teams. This is a family-friendly event, and is free of charge to the entire community. I encourage you to join me Friday evening and throughout October in celebrating the resilience of people with an array of different abilities.

Enrollment Task Force

Tuesday evening was the first meeting of our Enrollment Task Force. It is a character strength of our people that they are willing to respond and help address the challenges we face. At this first evening meeting all nineteen members of the task force along with Co-Chairs Paul Blake and Don Flickinger were present. It is impressive and heartening to see this kind of commitment on the part of our university community toward this very important issue.

The Strategic Planning and Resource Council will discuss enrollment at its meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 3 p.m. in West Campus Community Center. As always, SPARC meetings are open to all and I encourage you to attend, participate and share your ideas during this session. This challenge is an opportunity for us to consider how we attract students to our educational offerings both now and in the future. Thank you in advance for attending and sharing your insights.

United Way Campaign

The University United Way campaign is currently underway. There is much need in our communities, and the United Way is the foremost agency that coordinates efforts to address that need. The money raised through this annual drive provides support for 23 agencies and 25 programs providing shelter, health-care services and emergency needs.

Our students play an important role in our United Way efforts. This is an opportunity for them to develop an understanding of philanthropy, and they respond in a magnificent way. They organize many fundraising events and work with United Way throughout the year. Of the many ways in which our students benefit the Big Rapids community, this is one of the most significant. We are very proud of our students and the lengths they go to in order to help others.

Ultimately this is your effort. A wonderful cross section of people from the university come together to make this annual campaign a success. I want to thank our volunteers who give of their time and talents to help the United Way campaign succeed: Andrea Blue, Linda Bomar, Sue Cherry, Terri Cook, Laurie Daniels, Nina Davis, Shari Edstrom, Annette Eler, Theresa Foust, Shelli Garland, Will Gasper, Jill Gregory, Robert Griffith, Fred Heck, Cindy Horn, Kathy Hotz, Geri Johnson, Lori Johnson, Elaine Kamptner, Sandy Kerridge, Susan Lewis, Andresa Maciewjewski, Diane Maguire, Marsha McDaniels, Angie Mishler, Jeremy Mishler, Julie Modene, Denise Moulter, Mary Murnick, Amy Nestle, Karen Ottobre, Angie Palmer, Jane Pedelty, Bill Potter, Wendy Samuels, Melissa Saunders, Ella Shaw, June Swanson, Karen Thompson, Ben Upham, Chris Vodry, Shari Wessels, Debi Whitman, Melissa Wilkinson, Lurena Williams, Josie VanAvery, Mark Van Lent, Jim Woolen, Deb Yost and Ian Zista. This year's Big Rapids campaign is chaired by Don Flickinger and Linda Telfer.

Ferris State University has traditionally been very supportive of the United Way. This year the goal of the "Take a Stand/Lend a Hand" Ferris United Way campaign is \$60,000. A donation of just \$1 a week can provide a hot meal for 35 people. When a United Way volunteer contacts you please, help.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president