

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
October 16, 2007

There is good news to report on the state budget. After much political maneuvering, the Michigan legislature came to agreement on a package of tax increases and service reductions that will generate over a billion dollars in increased state revenues. Based on these projections the state has notified us we will receive the delayed August payment of \$4.5 million on Oct. 16. In addition, current targets suggest we will receive a 1% budget increase from the state for the current fiscal year. Details of this agreement still need to be ironed out and there remains a deficit of more than \$400 million in the budget. Both Democrats and Republicans have agreed on the amount of cuts to state departments, but have yet to identify the line items within those broader cuts.

Although the process was often frustrating and the negotiations difficult, I want to thank the Michigan legislature for working through the many difficult issues it faced to ultimately reach a state budget agreement. The transformation taking place in the auto industry has had a disproportionately large and negative impact on the state's economy. Unlike legislatures of the past few years, current lawmakers stepped away from the accounting tricks and one-time solutions of previous state budgets. That's why we should thank our representatives for doing their jobs and making some tough decisions. I am dismayed that some legislators who worked to find a resolution to the budget impasse may now face recall threats.

Higher Learning Commission Accreditation

An important University focus is planning for our next Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation visit, scheduled for the 2010-11 academic year. Under the direction of Vice President for Academic Affairs Tom Oldfield, a detailed plan for the self-study portion of this process is being developed. With the assistance of Associate Vice President Roberta Teahen, they have created a strong team to lead this process for our University, beginning with excellent leadership for the Accreditation Steering Committee. I want to personally thank Mike Cooper and Mike Cairns for accepting the responsibility to co-chair this very important effort for our University. Assisting them will be the co-chairs for each of the HLC criteria.

Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity - to assure that the organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff and students.

Co-Chairs Abdi Ferdowsi and Paul Blake

Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future - to assure that the organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Co-Chairs Caroline Stern and Mike Hughes

Criterion 3: **Student Learning and Effective Teaching** – to assure the organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Co-Chairs Chris VonderHaar and Ron McKean

Criterion 4: **Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge** – to assure the organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Co-Chairs Julia Buryk and Steve Durst

Criterion 5: **Engagement and Service** – to assure that, as called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Co-Chairs Wendy Samuels and LeRoy Wright

Data Committee: This committee will coordinate the research of the various committees and maintain the public sites, both on shared drives and the Web site, where data and reports will be available for use by all committees and for review by the campus community.

Co-Chairs, Katherine Manley and Kristen Salomonson

Other members of the Steering Committee include Rick Griffin, Academic Senate; Oliver Evans, Kendall College of Art and Design; Sharon Richards, Finance Office; Dan Grit, Physical Plant; and Sueann Walz, Trustee. The self-study coordinator is Roberta Teahen and the self-study lead author is Sandy Balkema.

As Drs. Oldfield and Teahen organize this important university-wide initiative, they are seeking volunteers to work on these criterion committees. They welcome individuals who are both new to the University and those with long histories; from all employee groups; and with different points of view. Members will be asked to engage in active inquiry in evaluating the University's achievement of the Criteria for Accreditation and to identify areas for improvement. Committee members will be "signing on" for a multi-year commitment. To volunteer please send a note to hlselfstudy@ferris.edu. Your input to this work is important, and you will be provided with many opportunities to express your views and react to draft documents. Your suggestions are always welcome, as we seek to make this a valuable learning and growth process for our University.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association is the largest regional accrediting agency, encompassing a 19-state region. The NCA's criteria have changed significantly since Ferris was last accredited. Today the standards for accreditation focus more on providing evidence of the outcomes demonstrated by the institution, especially concerning student learning achievement. There is also a much stronger focus on future planning, engagement with stakeholder communities, and diversity - all areas that Ferris is concentrating current efforts toward. I look forward to this accreditation cycle as an additional opportunity to evaluate the present, recognize our achievements, and to plan for continued progress.

Homecoming

This is a very busy week as many events are scheduled to celebrate Homecoming. On Friday, Oct. 19, I hope you will attend the first annual Homecoming Pride Day Pep Rally on the Quad from 12-1 p.m. This will be a great way to kick off our Homecoming celebrations. We will also be dedicating the Interdisciplinary Resource Center on Friday. Please join us in the connector area of the renovated IRC at 1:30 p.m. for a reception and at 2 p.m. for the dedication of these wonderful new and remodeled spaces. If you have not done so already, please take time to tour the new facility, which is an excellent step in our commitment to making Ferris a learning-centered university both inside and outside the classroom.

On Saturday, Oct. 20, the annual parade begins downtown at Noon and the Homecoming football game - this year against Ashland - kicks off at 2 p.m. at Top Taggart Field. There is also a 5k race, the annual College of Technology Chili Cook-off, the 50th Year Celebration of the Industrial Chemical Technology program, a 40th Year Pharmacy reunion, and several other alumni groups holding reunions on campus. That evening there will be the Homecoming Dance/Reception at the Holiday Inn and Conference Center starting at 8 p.m. More complete event lists are available on the Campus Calendar and the Homecoming Web page. There are links to both at the Ferris home page.

I look forward to seeing you at our Homecoming activities.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President