On Friday, Oct. 26, 2007, a person broke into the locked automobile of one of the University's admissions recruiters and stole a laptop computer. The admissions recruiter was on out-of-state travel visiting prospective students in the greater Chicago area. The computer contains personal information regarding applicants for our 2007 and 2008 student classes on the Big Rapids campus.

The information **does not** include social security numbers, driver's license numbers, credit card information, banking information, or financial data of any kind.

The data file does include name, home address, telephone number, date of birth, e-mail address, academic information, and student identification numbers. Access to the laptop computer was protected by user identification and passwords on two different levels. At present, we have had no indication that this information has been accessed or has been misused in any way. The University immediately reported the laptop theft to authorities and an investigation is ongoing.

Under Michigan statutes the nature of this information does not require we notify applicants of this incident. However, I believe it is important we inform each person whose data may have been contained on the laptop of this incident. As a result the following will happen beginning this morning –

- An e-mail will be sent to all applicants whose information was included in the data on the laptop. For current new students the e-mail will be sent to both the email address we have on file and their Ferris student IMail account. (The text for this message is available here – www.ferris.edu/laptoptheft)
- A letter will be sent to each applicant whose information was included in the data on the laptop. (This is the same text as above.)
- A press release will be distributed and university representatives will be available to the media and available at www.ferris.edu under "Campus News."

To assist with this communication effort we have done the following -

- Established a toll-free number (1-800-433-7747), where people can call for additional information
- Increased the staffing at our communications center, which is where calls to the 800 number will go.
- Developed a webpage with additional information and assistance for applicants - www.ferris.edu/laptoptheft

- Developed a list of frequently asked questions and information for callers to the university.

In response to the theft the following actions have been taken -

- Similar data has been removed from University laptops.  If similar information is on other computers at the University it is being located and either secured or removed.
- Short-term solutions are being developed for securing portions of these data for use by admissions recruiters. Long-term solutions to these data needs are also under development.
- A review of security and protocols for handling student data is underway.  Some of this was covered in the most recent audit by accounting firm Plante and Moran.  We intend to invite them to return to campus and assist in this review.
- We continue to work with the police where the machine was stolen.

I wanted you to be aware of this incident and our response before it becomes public knowledge.  It is important to emphasize that this involves applicant data for 2007 and 2008 on the Big Rapids campus.  At present there is no indication that this information has been accessed or misused.

Our University has worked very hard to address this situation responsibly and promptly.  Please contact me if you have questions or desire additional information.

Sincerely,


David L. Eisler
President