

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
December 9, 2003
Ext. 2500

Commencement is for me one of the happiest times of the academic year. At commencement we draw attention to our graduates and can see the difference college makes for our students. During the rapid pace of the semester it is possible to become focused on day-to-day issues, but commencement provides that opportunity for us to see and reflect on the life-changing aspects of a college education and the futures it creates for our students and graduates.

I find that commencement never fails to remind me of what higher education can do for people. For me there is something very special when I watch our students confidently stride across the stage, proud and self-aware. It is a very, very special moment for our students and their families as they celebrate this life-changing achievement.

As we approach fall commencement I want you to know the difference that each of you makes for our students. Truly it is our collective effort as a university community that help students grow, mature, and discover a path to their future. As our students cross the stage this Saturday I am hopeful you will be reminded that it is your cooperation, support, and collective work that helps create this positive learning environment for our students. It is our purpose as a university and I want you to know how much I appreciate your dedicated efforts for our students.

I am hopeful you will be able to join us on Saturday as we congratulate the newest group of graduates from Ferris State University. While there are some students we may know better than others, each of us is a part of creating a university that makes a difference. If you know of a unique or special story about one of our graduates I would appreciate you sending it to me.

For me it seems difficult to believe that the fall semester is already nearly over. In many ways I have felt like a new student as I have sought to learn about and understand our university. I appreciate very much your help and assistance in the process. Thank you for taking time to visit with me and to share your thoughts on our University, its history, challenges, and future.

During the fall semester I have spent significant time visiting with our faculty, conducting twenty-four small group meetings. In these I have sought your input and inquired about the challenges you face in your teaching at Ferris. Without exception I have found in each group a strong commitment to our students, to dedicated teaching, and to our university. It is truly an honor to be on a campus with these values. For spring semester I will be working on a similar series of meetings with our staff and students, seeking their thoughts and ideas on our University.

As someone new to Big Rapids and to Ferris State University I want to thank you for the kind, thoughtful way Patsy and I have been welcomed here. We consider ourselves truly fortunate to be a part of this wonderful University and look forward to a bright, exciting future with you. Thank you for helping us feel at home here.

I am hopeful that the time between semesters will provide an opportunity for relaxing and refreshing after a very busy semester. For us this is always a special time for family and friends. Please accept our best wishes for a happy and meaningful holiday season and happy New Year.

It is truly an honor to work with you for Ferris. I look forward to January with both excitement and hopeful expectation.

Best wishes,

Dave