

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
December 12, 2011

---

## **SPARC**

The next meeting of the Strategic Planning and Resources Council takes place tomorrow, Tuesday, Dec. 13, from 3-5 p.m. in the West Campus Community Center. Plans for renovating the Rankin Center into a proposed University Center will be the main topic of discussion. Last January I appointed a University Center Visioning Committee headed by Professor Wendy Samuels and Vice President Dan Burcham. This past summer they began working with a team from Brailsford & Dunlavey on strategic analysis, and conducted a number of focus groups and an on-line survey.

On Tuesday SPARC will be reviewing the executive summary from Brailsford & Dunlavey. You may access that document here -

<http://ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/strategic/minutes/> . As always SPARC meetings are open to everyone in the University community. By attending this meeting and offering your input on this important topic you will help us shape a campus that will be the best possible resource for students and for our community for many decades to come.

## **Review of Vice President David Pilgrim**

This semester I have continued an approach to the review of vice presidents that includes interviews with campus stakeholders and the opportunity for individuals throughout the University to contribute input. I recently reviewed Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. David Pilgrim. In addition to the materials submitted by Dr. Pilgrim and two extended sessions with him, I interviewed 65 people, including faculty, staff and students.

It is very encouraging for me to see how willing members of our University community were to engage in this process and share their perceptions. I want to thank the many individuals who participated in this review of Vice President Pilgrim for their assistance and interest in the welfare of Ferris State University.

After careful assessment of this input and related materials, I am pleased to report this review confirmed that Dr. Pilgrim is perceived as a strong, effective vice president. Among his many successful efforts, frequently noted were his work to increase the awareness of diversity on our campus, to create dialogue about diversity, to make certain diversity is a central and integral part of university planning, and to expand the diversity of our student body, faculty and staff. Additionally, Dr. Pilgrim is recognized for his continued efforts with the Jim Crow Museum and to represent this resource on a national scale.

As he leads diversity efforts at Ferris State University, Dr. Pilgrim is encouraged to continue to build strong working relationships for Diversity and Inclusion and to increase understanding and appreciation for these efforts throughout the University.

In our conversations, Dr. Pilgrim has shared with me his appreciation for this review and for what he has learned from it. He expressed to me how much he appreciated the strong support that has been communicated for him through this review. My thanks to everyone who took part in the process.

## **Commencement**

This Saturday we will recognize the latest group of graduates from Ferris State University. For me commencement is one of the most meaningful times in our academic year, when we see the difference a Ferris education makes. Each of us at Ferris State University, faculty, staff and administration, see in our students' personal and intellectual growth the fruit of our collective efforts.

At each commencement I encourage our graduates to reflect on their accomplishments here at Ferris State University. I also remind them their success is built upon the dedication of many people who care about them and who take great pride in their growth and development.

Within the daily experience of our work we don't often have the opportunity to step back and to see what our students have become. Commencement provides that opportunity when we can pause, reflect and celebrate the truly life-changing difference education can make. Our graduates and their accomplishments represent the greatest fulfillment of our mission.

As members of the Ferris community, we never know when our efforts will shape a life, inspire a person, or help them find the path to a better future. I both thank and salute you for the difference you make for our students and their futures.

## **Leadership Changes**

On Friday Vice President for University Advancement and Marketing John Willey announced his intention to retire effective January 12, 2012. I want to express thanks to John for his work at the University and know that you join me in wishing him well as he enters retirement. His many contributions to Ferris State University are much appreciated.

Associate Vice President Shelly Armstrong has accepted my offer to serve as Vice President for University Advancement and Marketing and will continue in this position until it is filled on a permanent basis. I very much appreciate Shelly's willingness to serve in this leadership capacity and look forward to working with her.

During this period please join me in strongly supporting the men and women in University Advancement and Marketing and Vice President Armstrong. Our combined efforts are needed to raise much needed financial support for our students and University, and to effectively promote Ferris State University throughout Michigan.

## **Happy Holidays**

The period between Thanksgiving and the Holiday break is one of the most intense in the academic calendar. As our students complete their exams and return home for the holidays it is also a time to rest, recharge and prepare for the New Year.

Throughout campus I see many examples of how our people are helping those in need. These efforts are the true spirit of this holiday season.

My hope for you is that during this vacation period you will have time to visit with family and friends as you enjoy this special season. The holidays are a time of year when people of many different backgrounds, both religious and secular, give thanks. I want to add my own thanks to everyone in the Ferris community for your dedication and hard work during the past year. If you are traveling for the holidays, please be safe and drive carefully.

I look forward to our continued good work together in 2012, helping students and together building a great university.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, president