

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
November 25, 2013

For many people, the numerous stories broadcast this past week recounted a long-ago event they did not experience. However, if you were alive in 1963, you likely remember precisely where and when you heard the terrible news that President Kennedy had been shot. At that point it seemed as if time stood still while the nation recoiled from the horrible news.

The death of President Kennedy was followed five years later by the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968 and the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy just two months later on June 6, 1968. For each generation there is a tragic event that brings together our national consciousness. For some it is Dec. 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. For others it was the loss of the space shuttle Challenger on Jan, 28, 1986. All of us remember the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001.

In the rush of each day there is often little time to pause and reflect. This semester is certainly no exception. With the lateness of Thanksgiving, the fall semester is nearly over. This week classes will recess at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 27, and offices will close at 5 p.m. that day. We return for classes on Monday, Dec. 2 to begin the final week of classes before exam week Dec. 9-13. Our semester concludes with Commencement at Wink Arena on Dec. 14.

Student Engagement

There are many things to be thankful for as we enjoy this Thanksgiving period. I am especially grateful for the work you do with our students, encouraging and fostering their remarkable level of civic engagement and volunteer activity. We have come to think about this in relation to the annual "Big Event," which brings students together in a day of public service to the Big Rapids community. However, there are many, many other examples of the ways in which our students engage with local, national and global issues. Three examples from the past month illustrate the range and depth of these initiatives.

Members of FSUubuntu and Circle of Tribal Nations registered student organizations have participated in fundraising events for the "We Are One - One World Futbol Project." This is a project that endeavors to promote positive social change through youth sports participation. The students are raising money to help One World Futbol provide nearly indestructible soccer balls to under-resourced communities both here and abroad. A good video about our students' involvement in this can be accessed at <http://fsubuntu.webs.com/about-us>.

Students in faculty member Tracy Busch's "Women in Global Activism" class recently presented information in the IRC corridor on topics related to sexism. This is an example of the ways in which our university emphasizes extending learning outside the classroom. As part of their research, students examined objects that embody negative stereotype of women, similar to the kinds of objects that embody negative racial stereotypes in our Jim Crow Museum. The presentation of the students' findings was sponsored by the Political Engagement Project. The posters are scheduled to remain in the IRC corridor until Thanksgiving break. An article about

this project including a video with student interviews is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/november/women.htm> .

Ferris' Student Government Association teamed with the American Marketing Association RSO for its annual holiday food drive to benefit Project Starburst. This food drive, along with The Big Event and student participation in United Way fundraising, are some of the most visible ways students support the Big Rapids community. Our students volunteer thousands of hours every year in support of projects large and small that benefit our community.

Thank you for helping to support our students' efforts. These volunteer and service-learning projects go to the heart of our educational mission. They speak to Woodbridge Ferris' challenge to "make the world a better place." Especially at this time of year, I think it is only fitting to draw attention to these students who do so much to live their ideals.

Holiday Reception and Pancakes for our Students

As the semester rapidly draws to a close I want to remind you of two upcoming events. Due to construction on our new University Center both are hosted in new locations. On Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 3-5 p.m. in the IRC Connector, we will hold our annual Employee Holiday Reception. This is a chance to meet informally with your colleagues, and celebrate the successes of the past semester. It can be an opportunity to make contact with others in the university community we don't routinely see. You do not need to RSVP. If you have any questions about the reception, please contact Elaine Kamptner at extension 2504. I look forward to seeing you there.

One of the ways we show our appreciation for our students is our annual Pancakes with the President event. This year, Pancakes with the President will take place at The Rock on Dec. 9, 10 p.m. Preparations will begin at 9:30 p.m., and the evening will conclude at 11:30 p.m. This can be a stressful time for our students as they study for exams and finish projects. For our graduating students, this will be one of the last opportunities we have to be together as members of the Ferris community. If you would like to be a part of this tradition, please contact either Elaine Kamptner or Paige Clark at extension 2500. No special culinary skills are necessary and the evening is a great way to interact with our students. Whether or not you have participated in the past, I encourage you to join us as we show our support in a fun and tangible way.

Athletics

This past season the quarterback of our football team, sophomore Jason Vander Laan, broke the NCAA Division II single season record for most rushing yards by a quarterback. His 1,607 rushing yards shattered a record that had stood for 24 years. When one considers all the teams and quarterbacks in NCAA Division II history, this is an extraordinary achievement, one of the most incredible accomplishments I have witnessed in years of attending athletic events. In doing so Jason led the team to an 8-3 overall record and second place finish in the GLIAC North Division. This was a great individual achievement and also a fine team effort. Please join me in congratulating Jason and the entire men's football team for their successful 2013 season.

Over the weekend our cross country teams had some outstanding success at the NCAA Nationals. Samantha Jones placed fifth in the country in the women's 6K event, the highest finish in school history. Our men's team also had an exceptional meet, finishing tenth in the nation.

The men's ice hockey team season is off to an amazing start. With two victories over Alaska Fairbanks this weekend, they are undefeated in their last nine games, the longest winning streak in the country. The men are also undefeated in their new conference, the WCHA, which they lead by four points. This week the team is third in the nation on both the RPI and Pairwise ratings and is third in the country in offense, scoring an average 3.89 goals per game. The team will not compete at home again until the weekend of Jan. 10 when they play Michigan Tech.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a time when many of us will gather with friends and family to give thanks for the many blessings we receive. To provide a different view on this season, the Office of Multicultural Student Services and the Circle of Tribal Nations is presenting "The Real Thanksgiving" on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 5-7 p.m. in BUS 111 and the IRC Connector. Anishanaabe Ojibway citizen and Northern Michigan University professor Native American Studies, Martin Reinhardt, will discuss food, harvest celebrations and Native American culture. The event will also feature food from traditional celebrations. More information is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/studentlife/Minority/RealThanksgiving.jpg> .

If you are visiting friends and relatives over the Thanksgiving period, I wish you safe travels. As we give thanks, I want to thank you for the work you do every day to help our students. Together you make an importance difference in the lives and futures of our students.

Thank you,

David L. Eisler, president