

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 7, 2014

Just when it seemed as though spring might actually have arrived, it snowed this past weekend. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that warmer temperatures are on the way. If you take advantage of this to walk around the Big Rapids campus, I want to encourage you to look at the progress that has been made with the construction of the new University Center. With much of the steelwork and some of the blockwork in place, it is now possible to get a feeling for the footprint of this building. When completed, this will be an exciting new resource for our students, and the Ferris community generally.

Ferris Employee Leadership Development Program

Professional development is an important part of our continuing efforts at Ferris State University. I am delighted that Associate Vice President for Human Resources Tammie Grunow has organized, implemented and coordinated a revised Employee Leadership program this year. This program is designed to increase employees' depth of knowledge about the institution, especially in such areas as budget and finance, and to help them nurture their management skills and leadership style.

Please join me in congratulating the Ferris employees who have completed this year's Employee Leadership Program - Brandi Behrenwald, Rhonda Bishop, Susan Cook, David Darrow, Kasey DePew, Michael DePew, Olukemi Fadayomi, Brendan Fleishans, Carrie Franklund, Deanna Goldthwait, Sarah Hinkley, Diana Hohenberger, Sharon Hopper, Jacklyn Hughes, Tina Jensen, Lori Johnson, Amber Kneibel, Linda Lamontagne, Thomas Larabel, Mary Kay MacIver, Brian Milligan, Amanda Mitchell, Shange Montague, Angela Morris, Melanie Mulder, Angela Ososki, Jason Proefrock, Julie Rowan, Kimberly Sapkowski, Phyllis Sherman, Jeff Stewart, Joseph Strohkirch, Doug Vandecar, Mark VanLent, Matt Wagenheim, Valerie Wells, Jenice Winowiecki, Tami Wolverton and Lindsay Young.

In addition to Tammie Grunow, I want to thank everyone who supported this year's program, either in presenting one of the learning modules or in coordinating the group's events. If you have not participated in this leadership and personal growth opportunity, I encourage you to join next year's class.

General Education Task Force

After grappling with a range of complex academic issues, the work of the General Education Task Force is concluding this semester. This past January I shared a document outlining the task force's recommendations after this was approved by the Academic Senate in December, 2013. If you did not have the opportunity to review the outline at that time, it can be accessed at

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/senate/GenEdTaskForce/FSUGenEdProgSenateApproved12313.pdf>.

While this is a lengthy document, a good summary is contained on page 4, with a following section on the rationale for each of the task force's 14 recommendations.

Under the leadership of General Education Coordinator Fred Heck, who has worked tirelessly on this effort, the members of the Task Force have done an excellent job in crafting this

program. Please join me in thanking them for their time and energy in moving this process forward: Dan Adsmond, Sandy Alspach, Mike Berghoef, Paul Blake, Cathy Browsers, Tracy Busch, Terry Doyle, Fritz Erickson, Mike Feutz, Rick Griffin, Leonard Johnson, Elsie Lovsted, David Marion, Fran Rosen, Kristin Salomonson, Lisa Singleterry, Khagendra Thapa and Matt Wagenheim. This work now moves forward under the guidance of General Education Coordinator, Dr. Clifton Franklund.

SPARC

On Tuesday, April 8, the Strategic Planning and Resource Council will hold its final meeting of the academic year at 3 p.m. in the West Campus Community Center. Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion David Pilgrim will be sharing information developed from his working group's efforts on exploring the ramifications of the "achievement gap." Many public universities across Michigan and the nation have experienced these "achievement gaps" when comparing the graduation rates of different student populations. The 30-person Achievement Gaps Taskforce, co-chaired by David and Provost Fritz Erickson, began work in Fall 2013, charged with identifying strategies to close achievement gaps at Ferris and to help all students to be successful.

As always, SPARC meetings are open to all Ferris and community members. Addressing this achievement gap speaks directly to our mission of preparing students for success. When I talk with students I emphasize that the objective is not to just attend college, but to graduate from it. Success for all students is embedded throughout University values. I encourage you to attend.

Campus Events

This is a very busy week at Ferris State University. There are a number of week-long and special events by and for Ferris students celebrating the variety of our campus culture. I encourage you to join in and participate.

Today, April 7, through the 10th, the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Alliance, D-SAGA, is hosting Spring Semester Pride Week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily on North Quad and in a series of evening events. Monday is Ally Day, Tuesday is Identity Day, Wednesday focuses on Breaking the Stereotypes, and Thursday is the National Day of Silence in remembrance of bullying and suicide victims.

This is You Beautiful Black Woman Week which culminates in their 24th Annual Fashion Show, "The 7 Deadly Sins of Fashion," April 12, 7-9:30 p.m. in the Big Rapids Holiday Inn Ballroom.

This week is also Greek Week, which is themed around Mardi Gras. More information is available here - <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2014/april/greek.htm>

On Saturday, April 12, the Ferris Student Government sponsors The Big Event. During The Big Event, Ferris students fan out across Big Rapids to help home owners in need of assistance with house and yard work projects. This is the biggest student-run community service project in Michigan. Student organizers hope to help as many as 300 Big Rapids homeowners this year.

The annual International Festival of Cultures takes place next Sunday, April 13, 1-5 p.m. in the IRC Connector. In addition to exhibits, performances and cultural activities for children, there will be samples of food from different cultures available.

Lambda Alpha Epsilon is sponsoring a 5k Walk/Run fundraiser for the "Fallen Officer Memorial" on Sunday, April 13. All proceeds go to the Jessica Nagel-Wilson scholarship fund.

Ms. Nagle-Wilson was a 2000 graduate of our Criminal Justice program killed in 2002 while working as a Hazel Park police officer

I also want to remind you of the Money Smart Week Events taking place in FLITE room 240 this week. Information and links to pre-register for “Get Real” are at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/admission/financialaid> . Students pre-registering for “Get Real” will be entered into a drawing with prizes including three \$250 scholarships and Ferris apparel.

Additional information on these and other events is always available on the Campus Calendar on the Ferris home page.

Good News

This month’s collection of Good News is fourteen pages long! The successes shared here and the range of areas in which our students, faculty and staff excel is extraordinary. Reviewing these items each month reminds us of the myriad ways in which our university positively impacts the lives of people in West Michigan and beyond. This is just a sampling of Good News items from across our University.

- Chelsea Desmond, a senior in Hospitality Management, received the Rising Star Award at the Event Professional Industry Class Awards from the National Association of Catering and Events. She also was awarded the first-ever Todd Lloyd Scholarship.
- Criminal Justice has more than 480 students signed up for internships this summer, a record number.
- Students in the Law Enforcement Academy have logged more than 1,000 hours of community service this academic year. They serve dinner at the Homeless Shelter every Thursday night and provide monthly services to that agency and others.
- The Kendall Art Education Student Association is recipient of the 2014 National Art Education Association’s Outstanding Student Chapter Award.
- Cindy Todd was selected as Vice President-Elect for the Western Region of the National Art Education Association.
- The first annual Wege Prize design competition at Kendall College of Art and Design awarded \$30,000 in cash prizes. Team FusionGRow, won the \$15,000 first prize for their contained in-home hydroponics system, and Team Wicked Solutions Inc. won the \$10,000 second prize for their system to replace, collect and reprocess plastic grocery bags with a bag made from polylactic acid.
- More than 100 Kendall students, alumni, faculty, and staff will participate in Art.Downtown 2014, a citywide art exhibition on April 11.
- Jamie Brady has been elected to the board of the Opticians Association of Michigan.
- Sarah Hinkley received the “Visionary of the Year” award from the Grand Rapids Lions Club. This recognizes distinguished contributions and significant volunteer activities in medical/professional careers that enrich the lives of those living with vision loss.
- The Center for Latin@ Studies is expanding the Woodbridge *Promesa* Summer Success Program, in which rising high school seniors in Grand Rapids completed nine credits of college course work in Summer 2013. The successful curriculum, rooted in students’ cultural backgrounds, will expand to Holland in 2014. A second effort, *Promesa* Scholars: A Community Cohort, provides financial and academic support to Ferris students connected to a partnering community organization. All eight students in the program successfully completed their first semester, with five of the eight in the Honor’s program.

- The Corporate and Professional Development Center has entered into Skills Trade Training Fund agreements with Gentex, Yoplait and Reed City Tooling. Also, CPDC received Workforce Investment Act-Incumbent Worker funds to train the rapidly expanding workforce at Morbark. Altogether, these awards total nearly \$300,000.
- The Financial Aid Office has offered awards to 205 more freshmen and transfer students for 2014-15 compared to 2013-14. This is an eight percent increase and includes more offers of grant and work study funds.
- Senior guard Sarah DeShone became the first three-time All-American in Bulldog women's basketball history when she was named Women's Basketball Coaches Association Honorable Mention this season.
- The University Club Tennis Team was selected as the 2014 recipient of the USTA Tennis On-Campus National Club of the Year Award and will compete in the On-Campus National Championship in Arizona.
- On Feb. 27, the Student Alumni Gold Club, with support from the Ferris Alumni Association and Office of Annual Giving, participated in the second annual Student Engagement and Philanthropy Day.
- The Ferris Alumni Association, Commencement Office, and Barnes & Noble Bookstore hosted the annual Spring Graduation Fair. More than 800 soon-to-be graduates attended.
- The Faculty/Staff Diversity Mini-Grant Program funds new, innovative efforts that strengthen excellence in diversity and inclusion. Recent projects include Nowruz - Persian/Iranian New Year Festival, an Interpreter Program at the Birkam Health Center, Mythology of the Jewish Experience, mobile assistive technology for Counseling and Disability Services, and the Television and Digital Media Program's creation of DVDs focused on the Ferris LGBTQIA community.
- Ferris received approval of its Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater grant application and will receive \$752,143 from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to conduct an assessment of our storm and sanitary sewer system. Only two universities received this funding.
- Governmental Relations and General Counsel hosted the annual Lansing Legislative Luncheon. More than 180 people attended, including legislators and their staff, state department heads, Big Rapids community members and Ferris faculty and staff.
- News Services/Social Media collaborated with the Ferris Pride Committee to sponsor the second annual "Ferris Pride Spring Break Photo Contest." More than 30 photos were submitted and shared via social media. Three winners were awarded Ferris-branded prizes.

The full list of Good News items, along with an archive of previous lists, is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/goodnews/homepage.htm> . I want to thank everyone who took time to collect and submit this material.

Most of all, thank you for the amazing and extraordinary efforts you do. Your success is an immense source of pride to everyone at our University.

Thank you,

David L. Eisler, president