

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
August 25, 2014

Welcome Class of 2019

It is impossible not to feel the energy and excitement of the new semester as students fill our campuses. There is no other time of year when the hope and potential of our students is so apparent. For our newest students, this is a time when one period of their lives comes to a close and another begins. In addition to all the skills they will learn and the knowledge they will amass, college is a time when our students start to understand who they are and the outlines of who they will become. It is a privilege to be a part of that transformation.

When I see our students and their friends and family members carrying computers, fans, pillows and boxes of clothes to residence halls and apartments, I am drawn back to thoughts of when I first attended college and then when our children did. The students arriving on campus are experiencing that same combination of anticipation and apprehension that leaving home and beginning this next stage in one's life engenders.

Beyond our students' excitement I have been proud to see how our entire university community has reached out to help students and their families. There is always a kind of controlled chaos during move-in day. Amid that, it has been gratifying to see how much thought and effort has been dedicated to make these past few days a positive experience. Often I include in these notes lists of people to thank for helping our students. To thank everyone who has helped our students get settled would mean listing nearly the entire Ferris community. I am so very impressed with the time and energy each of you invests to help our students. You can see it everywhere. Thank you for taking time to make a positive difference for our students.

Some of our students – especially those for whom college is a new, and at times daunting challenge – are likely to have many questions and need extra assistance. Thank you in advance for going that extra step to help. We never know when our act of kindness may be the defining moment that gives these students the confidence and assurance that they do indeed belong here and can not only succeed, but excel.

Founders Day and Michigan Legal Milestone

This Thursday, Aug. 28, is our annual Founders Day celebration on the Campus Quad in Big Rapids. A special addition to this year's festivities is the unveiling at 11 a.m. of a "Michigan Legal Milestones" plaque commemorating the signing of the Smith-VanderWerp Bill by Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams on May 17, 1949. The Smith-VanderWerp Bill paved the way for Ferris to become a public institution on July 1, 1950.

The plaque from the State Bar of Michigan commemorates the twists and turns that took place between the bill's signing and its implementation. On Feb. 21, 1950, fire swept through Ferris' Old Main building, destroying most of what was then our campus. At the time, some people argued that the fire rendered the Smith-VanderWerp Bill null and void. The plaque will tell the story of how Governor Williams assured that Ferris became a public institution.

This is the State Bar of Michigan's 39th such Michigan Legal Milestones plaque. It is at least the second to have a connection to Ferris State University. Another Michigan Legal

Milestone commemorated the federal court case that upheld professional baseball's reserve clause in 1914. Our Woodbridge N. Ferris building (the former Grand Rapids Federal Building), was the site of that federal trial and the plaque is located in what was the building's largest court room, now an auditorium.

I hope you can make it to the dedication. It is very fitting that we have this special event highlighting our history as we celebrate our 130th year serving students thanks to the vision established by Woodbridge and Helen Ferris.

A full schedule of Founders Day activities follow. At noon we will have our traditional luncheon in the tent erected on the Quad. The Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social with guest celebrity servers will be from 4-7 p.m. At the same time, resources and entertainment will be spread across the Quad for our students. At 8 p.m. there will be a 130th anniversary birthday celebration followed by a silent disco party. I am told that for this event you wear a set of headphones and dance to music delivered wirelessly. These events are all a part of "I am a Bulldog," (#imabulldog) the Bulldog Beginnings student return celebration. More information is available <http://www.ferris.edu/bulldogbeginnings/>. Come out for Founders Day and then join our students as they kick off the new semester. I look forward to seeing and talking with many of you there.

New Staff Center Open House

For many years it has been my desire to have a place dedicated to the education and training of our staff, a parallel model to our very successful Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. With the leadership of Vice President Jerry Scoby and Associate Vice President for Human Resources Tamie Grunow, this dream is now a reality. In conjunction with Founders Day there will be an open house for the university's new Staff Center for Training and Development from 1-4 p.m. on Aug. 28 in Alumni 121. The Center will support staff development - including life-long learning, which is an important element of the Ferris mission. Center Manager Jody Gardei encourages you to stop by and share your thoughts on the continued development of our Staff Center as it ramps up to serve the Ferris community. There will be food, prizes and the opportunity to suggest how the Center can best serve you.

Women's Volleyball Nationally Ranked

Congratulations to the women's volleyball team who enters the pre-season ranked 13th in the nation. Last year our team had a record of 25-9, won the NCAA Midwest Regional Tournament, and reached the Elite Eight round of the NCAA national tournament. Head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm has compiled an enviable record at Ferris, last year reaching the 500 career-wins plateau. Her teams have now made nine NCAA tournament appearances, and have qualified for the conference tournament a remarkable 16 straight years.

Our team opens its season this year at the Tampa Invitational in Florida, Sept. 4-6, when they will play host Tampa and Central Missouri - both top-five ranked teams. The Bulldogs start their regular, non-tournament play Sept. 12 in an away match against Saginaw Valley State and open at home on Sept. 19 against Walsh. I look forward to an outstanding year and encourage your support of our nationally-ranked women's team.

David L. Eisler, president