

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
January 13, 2014

Welcome back for the spring semester of our 2013-14 academic year. Despite the bitter cold of the past week, it is wonderful to see the activity on our campuses as faculty, staff and students return. My hope is the holiday period provided you an opportunity to relax, spend time with family and friends, or engage in other activities you find enjoyable and fulfilling.

We have many things to look forward to during the course of this year. Our new Student Center is rapidly taking shape, our new Strategic Plan will be further shaped and developed with your input, a number of new academic programs are in development, and we look forward to following and supporting our student-athletes.

2013 was a remarkable year, especially as we saw major changes in the Big Rapids campus, as our presence in Grand Rapids continued to grow with the hosting of major Art Prize entries at the Woodbridge Ferris building, and as Kendall College of Art and Design merged with the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art, among other developments. For a look back at some of the sights and sounds of 2013, there is an interesting video viewed from the eyes of our students on the Ferris YouTube Channel - <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/YouTube/2013/2013-in-review.htm>

We are fortunate to work at a distinctive university with a unique, special and important mission. I anticipate that 2014 will be memorable, and look forward to working with you as we continue to build a great university and make a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

Martin Luther King Celebration

This year Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have been 85 years old. The MLK Committee has organized a series of events around the theme of "Together We Will..." This celebration of Dr. King's life and work begins Monday and runs through Thursday.

On Monday, Vice President David Pilgrim will host the 20th annual faculty/staff in-service in FLITE 240. The 28th annual Freedom March begins in the IRC Connector at 3 p.m. and ends in Williams Auditorium at 4 p.m. for an exclusive screening of *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*. That evening, student volunteers will prepare, host and serve people in need during the Day of Service Project: Community Meal. This outreach effort will take place at the First United Methodist Church at 6 p.m.

On Wednesday, the annual MLK Student Tribute will be held at 7 p.m. in Williams Auditorium. Groups and individual students from Ferris and the Big Rapids community will give a variety of presentations. Featured presenters will be "The Dark Noise Collective," a multi-racial, multi-genre group featuring exciting, insightful and powerful spoken-word artists.

On Thursday, the MLK Food Stock Drive Drop-Off will be held between 5 and 8 p.m. in conjunction with the Ferris men's and women's basketball games against Northwood University in Wink Arena. The women's game begins at 6 p.m. followed by the men's game at approximately 8 p.m.

During each day of the celebration, participants are invited to visit MLK stations in the IRC Connector from 12 to 4 p.m. There “I March For/I Stand For” signs can be created to promote awareness of civil rights and social justice issues. The stations also are part of the “MLK Food Stock Drive Drop-Off.”

The celebration is sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Student Services. Co-sponsors include Entertainment Unlimited and the Office of Housing and Residence Life. An article about the University’s MLK Day events is available on the Ferris home page. For more specific information, updates and volunteer opportunities, visit <http://www.ferris.edu/mlk>. MLK events are free and open to the university community and the public.

General Education Program

At its Dec. 3, 2013 meeting, the Ferris State University Academic Senate approved a revised General Education Program. This is an important and historic action for our University. General Education is at the core of each student’s degree studies program. The current general education program was approved in 1993 and this new program was initiated after the Academic Program Review Council reviewed general education in 2008. Few curricular efforts are as time-consuming or as vitally important for learning at our University. This new program puts a premium on a Ferris education that is, among other things, holistic, learning outcomes-based and experiential. These values align with our university’s missions and core values. The general education program is organized around 18 learning outcomes, which are grouped in four main categories -

Knowledge Outcomes - Graduates of Ferris State University should know

- ...how human cultural expression is critically studied and practiced
- ...how their lives are shaped by the society and place in which they live
- ...how they are affected by the interconnectedness and diversity of global society
- ...how scientists come to an understanding of the physical and natural world and why that understanding is important
- ...how technology shapes their world

Skills Outcomes - Graduates of Ferris State University should be able to

- ...identify, access and use information effectively
- ...use critical reasoning skills to assess information
- ...interpret and use quantitative data together with other information to understand and effectively solve real-life problems
- ...think and act creatively in problem solving
- ...communicate effectively with others
- ...function effectively as a member of a team
- ...make informed decisions in the use and management of financial resources

Responsibility Outcomes - Graduates of Ferris State University should understand the value of

- ...inclusion and positive engagement in their interactions with diverse others
- ...participating in the civic life of their communities
- ...considering issues through well-established ethical and moral traditions

...continuing to learn for personal and professional growth
...making informed health and wellness choices

Integration Outcome - Graduates of Ferris State University should be able to

...integrate and apply what they have learned inside and outside of the classroom

This document is thoughtfully constructed and results from hundreds of hours of work. In addition to the learning outcomes, the document contains 16 appendices and provides remarkable insight into general education at Ferris. I very much encourage you to read this document, which is accessible at -

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

In granting approval, the Academic Senate stressed the importance of this being a fluid document as feedback continues to be gathered and other necessary elements of the revised program are developed and added. It makes good sense for our General Education Program to remain nimble and responsive to both local and national thought and research about best practices in the field of General Education.

One of the recommendations in the report is to hire a Coordinator of General Education for the program. This position is open to interested full-time tenured faculty members and is a three-year renewable position, .75 reassigned-time. The application deadline for this is Friday, Jan. 17. A link to the Position Announcement and Job Description is at

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/senate/GenEdTaskForce/CGEposition.pdf>. This position is very important to the continued development and implementation of the new general education program. If you have interest I strongly encourage you to apply.

Led by General Education Coordinator Fred Heck, the members of the General Education Task Force have done an excellent job in crafting this new program. Please join me in thanking the members for their time and energy in moving this process forward: Dan Adsmund, Sandy Alspach, Mike Berghoef, Paul Blake, Cathy Browers, 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.

Ferris Hockey

This past weekend the men's ice hockey team swept visiting Michigan Tech 1-0 on Friday and 3-2 on Saturday in front of sellout crowds in Ewigleben Ice Arena. The team is unbeaten in conference play with a record of 12-0-2, and rated #2 nationally. Their next home stand will take place on Feb. 7-8 when they face-off against Northern Michigan University. Before then they play Minnesota State and Michigan Tech in away games. Congratulations to the men's ice hockey team and Coach Bob Daniels. Also, thanks to the Ferris and Big Rapids communities for showing such great support for our student-athletes.

Closing Thoughts

With the snow, slush, ice, and salt this can be a very challenging time of year for our employees who maintain our buildings and grounds. When you see one of our employees from

our Physical Plant, please express your appreciation for their efforts and do what you can to facilitate the work they do to keep our workplace clean and well-maintained, and our streets and sidewalks open and accessible.

Thank you,

David L. Eisler, president