

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
May 12, 2014

Commencement

Commencement this past weekend was a wonderful celebration of our graduates. Looking into the faces of our graduates as they walked across the stage, I was greeted by smile after smile. The looks of success, accomplishment and achievement are a remarkable testimony to the strength of a Ferris education and are something that must be experienced to fully understand that moment's strength of emotion. The ceremony is very moving both for what has been achieved by our graduates and for what lies ahead for them.

Each and every one of our students has a story on their path to this moment, encompassing the highs and lows on their journey. A degree is important for our graduates' careers, but a degree is also a mark of achievement in and of itself. During commencement I highlighted stories of individual graduates. This year the stories were poignant and emotional, capturing personal challenges, connections to Ferris history, the volunteer opportunities students engage in, and much more. Taken together, these stories form a picture of the diversity of our students and the different paths students take to commencement. I hope you will take a moment to read their stories, which are available at

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/presentations/2013-2014/index.htm> .

On that same page we will post comments by our honorary doctorate recipients, James Gartner, Steven Kolb and Susan P. Wheatlake.

Thank you for making this past Friday and Saturday very special days for the more than 1,800 graduating Ferris alumni and their family and friends. At center of this celebration is the life-changing difference your educational efforts help create for them.

There is no other single moment that so clearly embodies the reality of our focus on students as commencement. It takes a large team of people to make the ceremonies a success. Whether you were involved directly in the preparations for commencement, in a ceremony itself, or whether your part involved the success of one of our graduates, on behalf of the class of 2014 I want to thank you for contribution.

Strategic Plan Approved, and Other Board of Trustees Action

Last Friday, during their regular meeting the Ferris Board of Trustees approved our new Strategic Plan. As a university community, we have worked very hard to develop a document which will help position Ferris for continued growth and success. The three-part plan is based upon the university's core values of Collaboration, Diversity, Ethical Community, Excellence, Learning and Opportunity. Part one encompasses strategic thinking and focus-areas for Ferris' future. Part two, which can now begin, involves the plan's implementation. Part three will track our successes and measure the plan's accomplishments. The plan emphasizes that *our students* are at the center of everything we do as a university.

The Board of Trustees also approved a tuition rate increase of 2.19 percent for lower-division courses for the 2014-15 academic year. This includes a 2.97 percent increase for upper-division courses for an average increase of 2.58 percent. We have worked very hard to keep a

Ferris education affordable for our students. This very modest rise in tuition was made possible by a university-wide effort to operate as efficiently as possible. Thank you for everything you have done to make Ferris a university that is responsive to the needs of our students.

Good News

Commencement brings to a close the major portion of the 2013-14 academic year, which has been a year of remarkable accomplishments for Ferris students, faculty and staff. Throughout the year it has been a pleasure to share some of these achievements with you and would like to include here an end-of-the-semester offering of some good news items. A full listing of these, along with an archive of previous lists, is available at

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/goodnews/homepage.htm> .

- The American Marketing Association chapter has been awarded GOLD chapter status for the 2013-2014 school year. This signifies the highest level achieved by our AMA chapter and places them in 3rd place for all 350 AMA collegiate chapters.
- The AMA Case competition team placed 2nd at the international competition. This year's case was to create a marketing campaign for the Hershey Take 5 candy bar. The team presented their findings to Hershey company executives during the final judging session in New Orleans.
- Hwee Joo Kam's paper entitled "Structural model of team-based learning using Web 2.0 collaborative software," has been accepted and published by the *Computers & Education Journal*.
- The School of Criminal Justice recently graduated students from their first-ever Local Corrections Officer Training Academy. They are now certified to work in Michigan Sheriff's Departments as Corrections Officers. We are the first location to offer pre-service training for future employees. The Corrections Academy provides certification as well as the bachelor's degree upon graduation.
- The Television and Digital Media Production program partnered with WZZM 13 on the broadcast of the West Michigan Whitecaps season-opening baseball game at Fifth Third Ballpark. The live, prime time broadcast utilized the program's High Definition production trailer with TDMP students filling many of the key production positions.
- The Digital Animation and Game Design Program brought 26 3-D animators together with the direction of DAGD faculty member David Baker as part of SkillsUSA for a one-day competition in the DAGD labs.
- The Omicron II chapter in Sigma Lambda Chi international honor society, has earned recognition as the 2014 International Outstanding Chapter. Assistant Professor Daniel Pratt and Dr. John Schmidt advise the chapter.
- The Corporate and Professional Development Center is currently training more than 100 employees for three West Michigan companies.
- Michigan College of Optometry Dean David Damari completed a four-day trip to Korea, where he spoke at the DIOPS Global Optometry Congress in Daegu.
- Our hockey team continues to garner postseason awards. Junior goaltender CJ Motte was chosen as the nation's Premier Player of the Year in collegiate hockey by an online fan vote. Hockey head coach Bob Daniels was runner-up for the Spencer Penrose Award as National Coach of the Year.

- Professional Golf Management students recently went to Riverview Elementary School, teaching golf to 345 students.
- Virtual Desktop Infrastructure is now available to students and allows for virtual computers to be accessed through a web browser. At this time, software titles available are 3M, Aleks Plugin, Cerner Works, Hawkes, Mathematica, Mathtype, Office 2013, Project 2013, Python 2.7, Snagit, SPSS V20, Visio 2013 and Visual Studio 2013.
- In early April, the Woodbridge N. Ferris Building was the Education Hub for this year's Grand Rapids Film Festival, hosting student films, discussion panels, lectures and an interactive Production Workshop that was open to the public.
- Painting Professor Margaret Vega recently was highlighted in a solo exhibition at the Acton Institute in downtown Grand Rapids entitled "Perpetual Order - Featuring the Work of Margaret Vega."
- Art History professor Laura J. Whatley has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to conduct research in England this summer. She will be in residence at St. John University in York, where she will be participating in a seminar entitled "Arts, Architecture, and Devotional Interaction in England, 1200-1600."
- The student fashion alliance, Bodies of Art, presented, "Sardonyx: Hybrids of the Future," a fashion display held at St. Cecelia Music Center. The students partnered with CAT footwear to help the company promote their new Earthmovers line of shoes. The organization also partnered with the Van Andel Institute's Purple Community, donating a portion of the ticket sales and all of the proceeds from a silent art auction to sarcoma cancer research.
- Klise Manufacturing, the Grand Rapids-based producer of decorative molding and metalwork, has created new custom lineal wood and wire mesh products from designs originally submitted by Chelsea McBurney, Courtney Wierzbicki, Stacy Folker and Kyle Kulchar in the second annual Klise-sponsored KCAD student design competition.
- Interior Design student Chelsea Stafford won first place in the 25th annual Ghiordes Knot competition, which requires students to create a hand-drawn space around a rug selected by the Ghiordes showroom. Interior Design student Patrick Jackson received an honorable mention.
- Brian Whitfield ('85, Illustration) designed the latest Michigan license plate featuring the Mackinac Bridge. The plate was recently chosen by the Automobile License Plate Collectors Association as the world's best new plate.
- Three Academic Service Learning Projects were successfully completed Spring Semester with Birkam Health Center, including a study determining whether or not there was an increase in service provision to female students under the Affordable Care Act. These collaborations will continue Fall semester.
- This academic year's Dawg Days program brought in 85 more students when compared to the 2012-13 academic year.
- For April's "Get Real!" Money Smart Week event Big Rapids community business owners joined forces with Ferris student and employee volunteers to provide expert guidance in an interactive financial simulation format to student participants.
- The new Student Outreach calling center has wrapped up its first year of activity. A total of \$131,232 was received from 2,108 pledges so far this year, doubling both donors and

revenue from the calling project last year. This has been a great experience for our students as well as a wonderful opportunity for alumni to connect back to the university.

- The Marketing team won three Higher Education Marketing Report Advertising Awards for 2014: Bronze for total regional brand campaign package, www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/advance/integrated ; Gold for the Spring 2013 issue of *Ferris Magazine*, www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/alumni/ferrismagazine/archive/2013-spring/ ; and Gold for a Graphic Media Management Program recruitment brochure, www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/advance/standards/img/samples/GMAN-GCOM-recruiting-book-spreads.pdf .
- The Web Content team worked with Anne Marie Gillespie of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office to build a website entitled "CAS Stories," showcasing the accomplishments, activities and research of faculty, staff, students and alumni - www.ferris.edu/colleges/artsands/CAS-stories.htm .

Thank you to everyone who has shared their successes this year. I look forward to continuing to make these successes as widely known as possible again in the fall.

With the conclusion of the academic year it is important to recognize the work you do with our students. Hearing them reflect on their academic experience and the difference that faculty and staff have made for them is wonderful evidence of the exceptional education you provide. Thank you for the difference you make for our students, our academic programs and the communities we serve. Have a wonderful summer.

Thank you,

David L. Eisler, president