

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
May 5, 2014

---

## Provost Search Committee

This next academic year we will search for Ferris State University's new provost, the leader for academic affairs and a position of critical importance at our university. To prepare we have assembled a search committee to help guide this process. The committee will be co-chaired by Rick Griffin, Professor, Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences and Julie Coon, Associate Dean, College of Health Professions. Search Committee members include -

Scott Garrison, Dean, FLITE Library  
Tamie Grunow, Associate Vice President, Human Resources  
Kim Hancock, Professor, Pharmaceutics, College of Pharmacy  
Robin Hoisington, Executive Assistant to the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs  
Sheila MacEachron, Associate Professor, Nuclear Medicine, College of Health Professions  
Gloria Barnett, Professor, Developmental Curriculum, Retention and Student Success  
Ron Mehringer, Professor and Program Coordinator, Electrical/Electronics, College of Engineering Technology  
Bruce Morgan, Professor and Director of Residencies, College of Optometry  
David Pilgrim, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion  
Kristen Salomonson, Dean, Enrollment Services  
Carlos Sanchez, Director, Latino Business and Economic Development Center  
Dawn Schavey, Senior Academic Advisor, Extended and International Operations  
Mischelle Stone, Associate Professor, Criminal Justice, College of Education and Human Services  
Spence Tower, Associate Professor, Management, College of Business.

Please join me in thanking these members for their willingness to serve the university through their work on this committee. They will meet this spring to organize the search, with formal advertisement of the position to begin in the fall.

## Distinguished Alumni and Pacesetter Awards

This Wednesday evening is our annual Spring Reunion for Ferris alumni. During that event we recognize our university's Distinguished Alumni and Pacesetter award winners. The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes exceptional career success and noteworthy fidelity and devotion to the University. This year we will honor -

- Matthew Bissett, Surveying Engineering, 1998  
Vice President, Power and Energy Division, Atwell LLC
- Steven London, Electrical Engineering Technology, 1986  
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Bekum America Corporation
- Vivian Pickard, Human Services Administration/Social Work, 1977  
President, General Motors Foundation.

- Andrew Young, College of Pharmacy, 1979  
Director, Professional and College Recruitment, Rite Aid Corporation.

The Pacesetter Award recognizes alumni who have graduated within the past 13 years who demonstrate leadership and service to their profession, community, service organizations and alma mater. This year's honorees are -

- Mark Langwoski, Professional Golf Management, 2002  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Body by Mark Wellness, LLC.
- David Stevens, Marketing, 2008  
Manager, Technology Assessment and Capital Planning, Aramark Healthcare Technologies.

The achievements of these graduates are a source of pride and wonderful examples of career success by our alumni. During the evening we will also recognize our Golden Eagle inductees, graduates from the class of 1964. For additional information or tickets for this special event, please contact the Alumni Office.

### **Uncommon Greatness Award**

Last Thursday, Ferris State University was awarded the 2014 Uncommon Greatness Award from the Grand Rapids Center for Community Leadership, a part of the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. The award recognizes "an initiative which has helped create an area of Uncommon Greatness within our community." The criteria places particular weight on an organization working with others to facilitate positive change.

In awarding Ferris this honor, the GRCCCL noted our university's outreach to the Hispanic community. This has many different components. Our Latin@ Center engages with Grand Rapids and surrounding areas through student programs, participation in such events as the Cesar Chavez March and engagement with the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan. Included in the Center's efforts are the Promesa Summer Success and Promesa Scholars program, assisting high school and current Ferris students, respectively, to not just succeed in college, but excel. Our Latino Business and Economic Development Center contributes to the economic development of the Latino community in west Michigan. These are but a few of the many ways in which we engage with the Hispanic community and we are fortunate to have strong partners in Grand Rapids in these endeavors.

"Collaboration" is one of Ferris' core values. What the Uncommon Greatness award recognizes is that we don't just espouse certain values, we live them. My thanks to everyone who helped make this award possible, including Tony Baker, Jessica Cruz and everyone at the Center for Latin@ Studies, as well as Carlos Sanchez for his work with the Latino Business and Economic Development Center.

### **Societies of Distinction**

This past Saturday, we honored committed donors to Ferris at the Societies of Distinction dinner at Noto's Restaurant in Grand Rapids. During this evening we heard from some of those who have given generously to Ferris over the years, including Stephanie Leonardos, President and CEO of Amerikam, who spoke about her company's engagement with students; Mike Bigford, CEO of Utility Supply and Construction, who sponsors the Michael and JoAnn Bigford

Mentorship Fund and an endowed scholarship for PGM students; the Totten family, including Joan Totten, Director of Student Academic Affairs for the College of Engineering Technology, who support the Joan E. Totten Endowed Scholarship and Totten Family Hockey Scholarship Endowment; and Howard Stross, founder of the Stross Law firm and Woodbridge N. Ferris Society member, who also chairs the Ferris Foundation Board of Directors.

The evening was truly a celebration of the kind of generosity that changes the lives for many, many students, making a Ferris education possible for people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend our university. I want to thank our many donors and staff from University Advancement and Marketing who worked very hard to make the evening a wonderful success.

The Ferris Foundation Board met on Saturday and heard some very positive news on fundraising success at the University. The Foundation Endowment has now grown to over \$44 million. A decade ago this was less than \$20 million. This year's phone-a-thon using students as callers for the Annual Fund raised over \$132,000. So far this year, contributions to Ferris have exceeded the \$9 million mark, a university record. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who has made this success possible.

If you would like to start your own tradition of giving to Ferris, or increase your current level of contribution, visit <http://www.ferris.edu/giving> , or call ext. 2940 to speak to Advancement Officer about your options.

## **Commencement**

On Friday and Saturday, Ferris State University celebrates the achievements of our graduates during our annual Commencement ceremonies, the culmination of the academic year. Commencement is a truly memorable and life-changing event. If you know students who are graduating, I hope you will take a moment to congratulate them on reaching this milestone in their lives.

This year at Commencement we will confer honorary doctoral degrees upon Susan P. Wheatlake, for her efforts in establishing the Cancer and Wellness Center at Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital, and the Regional Cancer Center at Spectrum Health Reed City Hospital, which are both named in her honor; James Gartner, who directed the feature film "Glory Road," as well as commercials for many global brands; and Steven Kolb, Chief Executive Officer of the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

I want to thank everyone who works so very hard to make these ceremonies a success. There are many details to be attended to, and our graduates, as well as their friends and families, appreciate how our university strives to make this day as special as possible. The 2014 Commencement ceremony schedule -

- Fri., May 9, 3:30 p.m., College of Health Professions; 7 p.m., College of Arts and Sciences, College of Pharmacy, Doctorate in Community College Leadership.
- Sat., May 10, 9 a.m., College of Engineering Technology; 10:30, Kendall College of Art and Design. 12:30 p.m., College of Business; 4 p.m. Michigan College of Optometry and College of Education and Human Services.

All ceremonies on the Big Rapids campus are at Wink Arena in the Ewingleben Sports Complex. Kendall College of Art and Design ceremonies are at the Fountain Street Church. Doors open one hour before the ceremonies.

Please consider attending. This is a day that our graduates will remember for the rest of their lives. Please contact Elaine at [kamptnee@ferris.edu](mailto:kamptnee@ferris.edu) or x2504 if you would like a ticket for any of the events.

### **Closing Thoughts**

This has been a remarkable year at Ferris State University. One of the most visible changes this year is the ongoing renovation of our Student Center in Big Rapids. This is a major project which has required our university to have flexibility in scheduling events as the building and transformation of surrounding grounds take shape. When this facility opens in January, it will be an extraordinary resource for students, faculty, staff and visitors. Thank you for patience during the construction. This is a project that will positively re-shape our central campus.

As this academic year draws to a close, I want to thank everyone for the great work you have done this past year. This weekend we see the many graduates who have benefitted and grown through your efforts. If you will not regularly be on one of our campuses this summer, I wish you well and look forward to seeing you in the fall. My hope is that each of you will have time during the summer to engage in those pursuits that bring you a sense of meaning and fulfillment.

Thank you,

David L. Eisler, president