

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
January 12, 2015

Welcome Back

It is a great pleasure to have faculty and students back on campus and to feel the vitality of the start of a new semester, despite the return of some real Michigan winter-like weather. If you have not visited our stunning new University Center yet, I encourage you to do so. It is easy to see the great impact our new University Center will have on the Big Rapids campus. With the start of food service, meetings, events, performances and spaces for study and collaboration, the Center not only visually upgrades the Campus Quad area, but offers new and exciting academic and social options. If you are not regularly on the Big Rapids campus, there is an article and video tour at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2015/january/uc.htm>

An excellent opportunity to experience this new facility will be at the grand opening for students this Friday, Jan. 16, from 9 p.m. until 2 a.m. The events for this evening include iExperia – a combination of DJ, concert and cirque-style stage acts – roving magician, DJ/karaoke event, an appearance by Brutus and much more. All of the dining (Starbucks, all-you-can-eat and ala carte dining) will be open offering free food to participants. Prizes will be awarded to those who complete a scavenger hunt by exploring the building's many new spaces, including the new art gallery and bookstore. Safe Rides will also be available that night until the end of the event. Thank you to everyone who is working very hard to make this a memorable evening. I also invite you to join us for the formal dedication of the University Center which is scheduled for Feb. 19 at 11 a.m.

I hope you had a good holiday break and feel energized, as I do, to help our students by tackling such issues as enrollment, student loan debt and strategic planning. All of these are areas where we are making solid progress, but more remains to be done. Thank you in advance for your good work over the course of the semester ahead.

Provost Search

Last Friday morning the provost search committee released its list of finalists in a university-wide notice, along with a schedule of open candidate sessions, which will take place in the University Center. I have had the opportunity to talk with each of the finalists and am very impressed by them. I want to extend special thanks to all search committee members, and especially Julie Coon and Rick Griffin, who are so ably co-chairing this process. I encourage you to take time to meet and interact with these five final candidates. Your engagement with and assessment of these candidates are important as we work to fill this leadership position.

Kendall College of Art and Design Presidential Search

As with the provost search, our search for the next Kendall College of Art and Design president is also progressing on schedule. A search committee co-chaired by Ron Riksen and Cindy Todd, and consisting of Kendall faculty, students, staff, alumni, a former trustee and other friends of the college has done an admirable job with this process. The committee was pleased to

review a rich pool of qualified candidates who applied for the position. On-campus visits for the Kendall president candidate finalists are planned to begin the second week of February.

Campus Facilities Master Plan

Over the past month we have been working with the architectural firm of Neumann/Smith to ensure that input we received about university priorities and the needs of students, faculty and staff are reflected in our next five-year Master Plan. A discussion draft of the new Master Plan that meets those goals should be received and shared with the Ferris community in early to mid-February. This will serve as a guide for our future as we continue to develop and improve the Big Rapids campus.

With the opening of our new University Center, among other developments, we are seeing the fruits of our previous Master Plan. I am appreciative of the work so many people have put into this process and believe the result will be a blueprint for our future that will continue our success.

Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Next week, Jan. 19-22, our university will host a number of events to remember and celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. There is an article about the celebration on the Ferris home page, which includes a full description of events, plus a link to a very powerful video narrated by Breia Harris, senior in psychology and MLK planning committee student member.

MLK Celebration events are free and open to the public. Some of those events include:

- 21st Annual MLK Faculty and Staff In-Service with Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, David Pilgrim, Jan. 19, 10 a.m. to noon, University Center 203. The theme "Living in The World House" will guide the readers.
- Ferguson, What Would MLK Do?, Monday, Jan. 19 at 2 p.m., University Center, Room 203. An open discussion based on current social justice issues.
- 29th Annual Freedom March in honor of Dr. King, Monday, Jan. 19 at 4 p.m., starting in the University Center in front of the bookstore.
- "Culture Shock" - 5 Star Event and 2015 MLK Celebration Featured Presentation, Monday, Jan. 19 from 7-8:30 p.m. in Williams Auditorium.
- Documentary Series, Tuesday, Jan. 20 through Thursday, Jan. 22, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in FLITE 438. Tuesday, the 2013 PBS series "Many Rivers to Cross"; Wednesday, the History Channel's 2008 special "King"; Thursday, Newsreel's 2002 film series "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow."
- Charity Basketball Event, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 5-7 p.m., University Recreation Center
Donations in the form of nonperishable food items and essentials will be collected at the event to benefit Big Rapids community organizations.
- 29th Annual MLK Student Tribute, Wednesday, Jan. 21, 6-8 p.m., University Center, Room 202 BC

- MLK Unity Ball, Wednesday, Jan. 21, 8-11 p.m., University Center Room, 202 A, includes live music, light refreshments and a variety of displays that showcase “Unity” from Ferris students. Semi-formal dress is encouraged.

Athletics

Ferris State University’s quarterback, Jason Vander Laan, was officially presented with the Harlon Hill Trophy as the outstanding football player in Division II at a luncheon Friday at the University of North Alabama. Jason is the first player in Ferris football history to receive this prestigious award, which is analogous to the Heisman Trophy, and was selected from over 12,000 student athletes competing in Division II football. This past season Jason helped lead our team to an 11-1 record with a combination of both passing and running skills.

In doing so, he compiled a team-best 1,466 rushing yards, completed passes for a career-high 2,381 yards and had a combined 50 touchdowns - 30 passing and 20 rushing. He ranked as the nation's top rushing quarterback at all levels. Jason has been an exceptional representative for Ferris both on and off the field, and this well-deserved honor justly recognizes his personal achievements - and the play of his teammates and work by our coaching staff, which made those individual achievements possible.

Both of our basketball teams are doing very well. Our women are 7-4 overall, 5-3 in the GLIAC conference. The men’s team is red hot, 12-2 overall, leads the GLIAC with an undefeated 8-0 record, and has now won 12 games in a row after defeating Walsh on Saturday. Before the holiday they defeated Bowling Green State University on their home court in Ohio, 82-68. This is the first time our team has defeated a Division I school in basketball since 2000. Last week we were ranked 22nd and 25th in the nation in the media and coaches’ polls. The Massey On-line Poll ranks us 6th.

Our men’s ice hockey team won both contests against the University of Alaska - Anchorage last weekend, moving into 4th place in the WCHA. They return home this Friday and Saturday for two important contests against Minnesota State Mankato, which currently leads the conference and is ranked #1 in the nation. The puck drops for these contests at 7:07 Friday and 8:07 Saturday.

Finally, you may recall that senior ice hockey goalie C.J. Motte was a finalist last year for the Hobie Baker Award, the highest individual honor in Division I hockey. He is again nominated for this award. This recognition process begins with fan voting at www.hobeybakeraward.com.

David L. Eisler, president