

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
November 9, 2015

Ferris Foundation Benefit

Last Friday evening the Ferris Foundation held its annual benefit with the theme, “Imagination in Action,” at the DeVos Center in Grand Rapids. With over five hundred people in attendance, this was a remarkable evening celebrating Ferris State University and the difference donor support makes for students, faculty, and staff. Pre-Pharmacy student Dawn Nguyen, an Opportunity Scholarship recipient, and College of Engineering Technology Professor Patrick English, who received a Merit Grant – both funded by the Ferris Foundation – offered remarks. Our keynote speaker was ultra-distance swimmer and media personality Diana Nyad, best known for being the only person to swim from Cuba to Florida, a distance of 110 miles, without a shark cage. She is a remarkable example of the triumph of the human spirit.

At the benefit we announced the launch of the Ferris Futures Fund. This results from actions from both our Board of Trustees and Foundation Board regarding the \$18 million refund we received from the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System. First, our Trustees voted to give these funds to the Foundation with the interest generated to be used for student scholarships. Next, the Foundation Board voted to use these funds as a dollar-for-dollar match for new gifts to scholarship endowments over the next six years. The goal is to grow these funds to a \$36 million endowment for student scholarships by 2022.

This is a transformational moment in support for our students at Ferris State University. One year from now, the Ferris Futures Fund is projected to generate \$720,000 for student scholarships. This amount will grow year after year, yielding at least \$1.44 million in scholarships after the \$36 million goal is reached. Currently our university has about \$14 million in scholarship endowments. When we have met the projected \$36 million goal for the Ferris Futures Fund, we will have increased our scholarship endowments to \$50 million, generating \$2 million in scholarships each and every year. This amount will only grow and generate scholarships for even more students in the future.

In my conversations and at forums for faculty and staff I heard numerous suggestions about how these scholarships could be used. Many of these embraced the concepts of student need, student recruitment and retention, and student academic success. Considering the number of scholarships that will be generated, it is important these scholarships be easily managed so they are awarded in a coordinated fashion. Additionally, we will need flexibility in the criteria to attract the donor support needed to double these funds. Provost Paul Blake will lead a small group of faculty and staff to help develop these criteria.

We have made degree affordability and reducing student debt important goals in our strategic planning. This is an extraordinary step forward in realizing that commitment. I am grateful that our Board of Trustees and Ferris Foundation Board have acted decisively to take this action. Each of us knows a deserving and hard-working student who would benefit from this increased support. By continuing to work with everyone capable of making a gift, we will make an important difference for our students and their students.

The 2015 Foundation Benefit will stand out as a pivotal moment for student support in our university’s history. The commitment of our Ferris Foundation Board of Directors to our university is truly impressive. Twenty-four Foundation board members from across the country

were present Friday evening. Finally, I want to thank everyone in University Advancement and Marketing for their hard work for the benefit. There are many, many details that go into making the evening such a success. This was an evening we will look back on as a landmark in our efforts for helping our students.

Leslie Bellavance Inauguration

Last Thursday we celebrated the inauguration of Leslie Bellavance as the 13th president of Kendall College of Art and Design in an investiture ceremony at Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids. Before that ceremony KCAD had the official opening of its renovated instructional space for Medical Illustration, Illustration, Architecture on the 3rd floor of its 17 Fountain building. After the investiture, there was a reception featuring Leslie's artwork at the Woodbridge N. Ferris building.

The inauguration was a reminder of how KCAD has grown since its merger with Ferris State University, and the role it plays in the cultural life of Grand Rapids. There is a wonderful interview with Leslie at the Rapid Growth Media website - <http://www.rapidgrowthmedia.com/features/LeslieBellavance.aspx> . I hope you will take a moment to learn more about Leslie and how she views Kendall's role in Grand Rapids and west Michigan.

Veterans Day and This Week in History

This is a week when we pause to honor our veterans. The celebration at Ferris began yesterday with the 13th Annual FSU West Central Concert Band Veterans Concert. Under the direction of professor Richard Scott Cohen, they performed a number of patriotic selections honoring all future, current, and retired Armed Service members.

On Wednesday morning we sponsor a free Veterans Breakfast beginning at 8 a.m. in the University Center room 202B. If you are a veteran or know a veteran in the area please encourage them to attend. Special guest speaker will be Brigadier General Phillip M. Owen, who is Assistant Adjutant General Army, Michigan National Guard.

This week there will be a range of events commemorating the history of the United States' role in World War II sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta/Club History under the theme of "This Week in History." Many of these include presentations by our faculty:

- "Keeping the Home Fires Burning: The Women's Institute in Great Britain During World War II," by Dr. Jana Pisani, Monday, 3 p.m., UC 203, 3 p.m.
- "It Was Her War Too: Comparing the Soviet and American experience in World War II," Dr. Tracy Busch, Monday, 4:30 p.m., UC 203
- "On the Homefront," Dr. Gary Huey, Tuesday, 3 p.m., UC 203
- "The African-American experience of World War II," Dr. Kimn Carlton-Smith, Wednesday, 3 p.m., UC 203
- "Art in Action: On the Use of Poster Propaganda in Wartime," Dr. Pasquale Di Raddo, Thursday, 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., UCB 205
- "Tough Choices: The Road to Pearl Harbor and the U.S. Atomic Bombing of Japan," Dr. Christian Peterson, Thursday, 3 p.m., UC 203

There are two panels featuring veterans telling their stories:

- "Celebrating Women," Female Veterans, Monday, 6 p.m., UC 203
- World War II Veterans, Tuesday, 4 p.m., UC 202B.

There are several movie showings and discussions:

- “Art in the Film, *The Monuments Men*,” Wednesday, 6 p.m., IRC 120.
- World War II Movie Showcase-Truth or Fiction? , Friday, UC202C. *The Pianist*, 10 a.m., *The Brest Fortress*, 1 p.m., *Fury*, 4 p.m. After each movie Dr. Tracy Busch and Dr. Gary Huey will facilitate discussion regarding how Hollywood often misrepresents historical fact in films.
- The Ferris Art Gallery will be displaying “*WWII Propaganda Posters from the Dr. Matt Klein & Dr. Nancy Peterson Klein*” Exhibit, with a talk by Dr. Tracy Busch and History 250 students, Thursday, 11 a.m.

Additional events, details and contact information are available on the university’s Campus Calendar.

Athletics

Our student-athletes continue to have a remarkable fall season of competition. On Tuesday our women’s soccer defeated Northwood 4-1 in a GLIAC tournament quarterfinal contest. On Friday they lost to Ashland University in the semifinals, but nonetheless had their best season ever with a record of 14-5-1. Later today the team will find out if they have a berth in this year’s NCAA tournament. Congratulations to coach Andy McCaslin and our women’s soccer student-athletes on this remarkable season.

On Saturday our nationally 5th-ranked women’s volleyball team won the GLIAC North Division regular season title with a 3-0 win over Northwood University. Coupled with a 3-0 win over Lake Superior on Friday, this improved the team’s overall season record to 26-2. It also included the 1,000th kill by senior Megan Vander Mill, a remarkable achievement. Earlier in the week seniors Danielle Dowd and Alexis Huntley were named to the Academic All-District Volleyball team. Only six students from all schools in the district are chosen for this team. The team concludes its regular season this week with away games against Wayne State on Friday and Saginaw Valley on Saturday.

Also on Saturday our undefeated and nationally third-ranked football team extended its winning streak with a 49-39 victory against Northern Michigan University. Quarterback Jason Vander Laan became the NCAA’s all-time leader in rushing touchdowns by a quarterback. Jason is a finalist for the prestigious Campbell Trophy, awarded to the top football scholar-athlete in the country. As a finalist Jason receives an \$18,000 postgraduate scholarship and will be honored at an award dinner in New York City on Dec. 8. This week Jason along with teammates Cody Dingeldey, Justin Zimmer, and Nick Huckabay were selected for the Academic All District Football team. The team returns home this Saturday for their final regular season contest against Walsh with a noon kickoff.

Our hockey team split a pair of home games against Minnesota State this weekend. A week ago coach Bob Daniels earned his 400th career victory with a win over Michigan Tech. Coach Daniels has done an exemplary job of coaching the Bulldogs. This an extraordinary milestone and a testament to his coaching and mentoring skills. Please join me in congratulating Coach Daniels.

David L. Eisler, president