

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
October 19, 2015

Alcohol Task Force

A reality of a residential university is that our campus becomes home to young people, many of whom are living on their own for the first time. Inevitably, students explore the boundaries of this new freedom. Much of this exploration is positive and leads to self-discovery. Sometimes, however, it can lead to poor choices.

One of those poor choices can involve misuse of alcohol. To address this challenge, I am today announcing a task force to review current trends regarding alcohol abuse by our students and the effects this can have on student success. The task force, chaired by Vice President for Student Affairs Jeanine Ward-Roof, will examine this issue and make policy recommendations for how to positively change behaviors. The charge to the task force includes

- Review data to better understand issues relating to alcohol misuse and student success
- Benchmark promising intervention and prevention practices and their outcomes with the 14 other Michigan public universities
- Inventory and review current outreach efforts and make recommendations for the future
- Identify environmental concerns regarding alcohol misuse and abuse both on campus and in the greater community
- Review the effectiveness of current policies toward alcohol abuse and make recommendations for the future.

The task force includes representatives from many different areas to gather a comprehensive range of perspectives focused on this complex topic. As work progresses, the task force will create smaller working groups to study specific topics. I want to thank the following people from across the university who have agreed to take part in this effort:

Steven Amey, Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice
Jeff Bates, Director of Student Academic Affairs, Pharmacy
Wayne Bersano, President of Student Government
Bruce Borkovich, Director of Public Safety
Kevin Bunce, Coordinator for Alumni Relations
Nick Campau, Associate Dean of Student Life
Matt Chaney, Director of Multicultural Student Services
Stephanie Emig, Manager of Campus Village Communities
Lydia Flynn, Student and Representative for Entertainment Unlimited
Jocelyn Goheen, Director of Student Services, Grand Rapids
Cindy Horn, Director of University Recreation
Matthew Jones, Coordinator of Greek Life
Melissa Klinger, President of Panhellenic

Tom Lisewski, Professor, Personal Counseling Center
Bryan Marquardt, Director of Residential Life
Alexa Macy, Panhellenic Director of Risk Management
Andrea Nerbonne, Director of Big Rapids Department of Public Safety
Josh Olszewski, Vice President of Music Industry Management Association
Tamira Owens, President of Black Greek Council
Ken Plas, Attorney, Office of General Counsel
Wendy Samuels, Professor, Social Work
Cameron Shoemaker, President of Inter Fraternity Council
Brianna Slager, Representative for Club Sports Council
Darcy Storms, College Counselor, Kendall College of Art and Design
Jim Van Treese, Professor, Social Sciences
Deb Tyson, Director of Human Resources and Curriculum, Big Rapids Public Schools
Shelly VandePanne, Director of Student Academic Affairs, Retention and Student Success
Janette Ward, Independent Living Skills Coach, Diversity and Inclusion Office
Jeanine Ward-Roof, Vice President for Student Affairs
Chauntel Wooten, Vice President of Student Government

Recently, the on-line journal *The Bridge*, presented a series of articles on alcohol abuse at four Michigan universities - <http://bridgemi.com/2015/09/game-day-michigan-struggles-with-college-drinking/>. While Ferris was not included in this report, it presented an appalling picture of alcohol abuse, something we must and will address here. Working together with this task force's efforts we can help students make better, more responsible choices.

Should you have input for this important task force, please contact Vice President Ward-Roof directly. I look forward to receiving the recommendations developed and sharing them with the entire Ferris community.

Budget Forum

Each fall after enrollment and tuition receipts are finalized, I present a forum on the university budget. This year's forum is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 22, at 11 a.m. in the University Center 202B. During this session I will touch on a number of topics, including enrollment, federal and state economic trends, and the state higher education funding formula.

Of special interest this year are changes in financial reporting requirements by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board on our liabilities from the Michigan Public Employees Retirement System. As a result of GASB 68, an additional \$65 million of debt from the MPSERS pension liability has been reported against the university's Unrestricted Net Position. In 2018 the implementation of GASB 75 is estimated to place an additional \$55 million of debt from the MPSERS health liability against the university's Unrestricted Net Position. There has been much attention given to MPSERS in these last few weeks and I look forward to answering these questions.

Much of this forum reflects efforts we have made to chart a positive course for the future through our strategic plan. Our efforts at creating enrollment success, reducing student debt and increasing external support are important components of both the budget and

strategic plan priorities. This strategic approach has helped us receive some increased funding thanks to our success on the state's performance funding metrics.

Please take time to attend this forum and stay informed about the fiscal environment in which we operate. Your understanding and support are extraordinarily helpful as we continue to provide high quality education in an environment of constrained public support.

Dawg Days

On Saturday I attended the first Dawg Days student recruitment event of the fall. Hosted in the University Center, this is an important component of our student recruitment efforts. If you are unfamiliar with this event, it brings prospective students and their parents to the Big Rapids campus to introduce them to our University. In the morning the hallways of the UC are transformed in an array of tables staffed by faculty and staff explaining what our university offers. Especially impressive is the number of faculty and staff from our colleges who attend to talk with prospective students and their parents about our academic majors. This is a truly impressive example of cooperation and support at our university. I want to thank everyone who participated in this event.

In speaking with students and their parents on Saturday I frequently heard this was the best such event they had attended. Many people contributed their time to make this so successful and their efforts are very much appreciated. The next Dawg Day is scheduled for this Saturday, Oct, 24. If you have a few moments between 9-10 a.m. that morning, I encourage you to attend and experience this for yourself.

Career Week

This is Career Week at Ferris, which runs Monday, Oct. 19 through Thursday, Oct. 22. A variety of professional events will create networking opportunities for students with more than 270 potential employers. These are excellent opportunities for students to prepare for that first position after college and to showcase their knowledge, talent and skills. There is a full schedule of events designed to help students prepare for their professional careers

- Monday, 6 p.m., UC202 – Etiquette Dinner. Students can brush up on the proper way to dine with employers or graduate school representatives through a full, five-course meal. Registration for this event is already full.
- Tuesday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., UC202 – Graduate School Expo. This provides undergraduate students a chance to explore educational opportunities at both Ferris and visiting universities.
- Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., University Center Rankin Atrium – Spotlight on Michigan Employment. This is a “drop-in” event in which speakers will present information about employment opportunities and trends throughout the state.
- Thursday, 11 a.m., Ewingleben Sports Complex – Career and Internship Fair. Beginning at 10 a.m., a career exploration opportunity will be available for underclassman and high school students who are still considering their future career options. Students can sign up for interviews with employers on both Thursday and Friday.
- Thursday, 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., employer interviews at locations throughout the university.

The listing of employers on our campus in Big Rapids is a truly impressive 22 pages long - <http://www.ferris.edu/studentaffairs/CLACS/CareerCenter/FinalBookletEmployerCF15F.pdf>. I encourage you to stop by the Career and Internship Fair on Thursday to greet employers and assist students.

Career Week events are for all Ferris students and alumni, no matter where they are in their education or career path. More information about Career Week is available at <http://www.ferris.edu/studentaffairs/CLACS/CareerCenter/CareerWeek.htm>.

Athletics

Saturday was a historic day for football quarterback Jason Vander Laan as he broke the national career rushing record for quarterbacks at any division of the NCAA. He did so in an impressive fashion, on a 53 yard touchdown run. His current total of 5,218 yards eclipses the previous record of 5,128 yards and is attracting national sports media coverage. His run was part of an impressive win Saturday over Ohio Dominican 38-17, as our football team moves to an unbeaten record of 6-0. This Saturday our team, ranked in the top four in the nation, will face Michigan Tech, a team ranked in the top twenty nationally, in a noon contest at Top Taggart Field. Congratulations to head coach Tony Annese, quarterback Jason Vander Laan, and our football team on these outstanding accomplishments.

The women's volleyball team won all three of their matches this weekend in Aurora, Ill, where they played in an event combining schools from the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and the Great Lakes Valley Conference. On Friday they defeated McKendree 3-1 and Ohio Valley 3-0. Saturday they defeated #8 Rockhurst 3-0. The team, now 20-1 and ranked third in the nation, returns home for matches Friday and Saturday against Findlay and Hillsdale. Congratulations to head coach Tia Wilhelm-Brandel and these student-athletes on this outstanding success.

Our women's tennis team defeated Grand Valley 6-3 to finish the fall regular season at 8-3. They will next compete in the GLIAC tournament on October 23-25. On Tuesday the men's golf team won their second NCAA regional of the fall at Eureka, Missouri finishing first among 24 teams. The men's ice hockey team moved into the win column Saturday evening with a 3-2 victory over 16th ranked Michigan Tech. Next Friday they host the University of Wisconsin. Our women's soccer team defeated Michigan Tech 3-1 Sunday afternoon. Their final home match is this Sunday against Ohio Dominican.

This is an extraordinarily successful fall for Ferris athletes. We extend our congratulations and best wishes for continued success to all.

David L. Eisler, president