

## President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
September 28, 2015

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### **Excellence, Learning and Collaboration**

Our daily schedule at the university is one of continual activity. There is no denying the importance of this to meet the needs of our students and deliver education of the highest quality. However, this can sometimes obscure examples of excellence that are all around, which attest to the impact of a Ferris education on our students and their futures. Last week it was my good fortune to attend a number of events that highlighted our values of Excellence, Learning, and Collaboration in action.

On Wednesday we dedicated the Shimadzu Core Laboratory for Academic and Research Excellence. This major research and educational resource was made possible through a strong collaborative partnership with Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, Inc. Their donation of equipment, valued at more than \$500,000, was matched and enhanced through the support of academic colleges throughout the university. Rarely, if ever, have I seen an idea developed in one college, housed in a second college, and supported by all. As a result we now have an extraordinary research facility for faculty and students created thanks to that vision of interdisciplinary cooperation. The instruments installed in the lab include highly sensitive spectroscopic and spectrometric devices. Among them is a gas chromatography mass spectrometer which can be used to identify and quantify compounds in samples ranging from water contaminants to compounds bioengineered by faculty members. The lab also has liquid chromatography capabilities to help faculty carry out research in everything from pharmacokinetics to forensic analysis. It is exciting to consider what the Shimadzu Core Laboratory will help make possible for faculty and students to explore together.

Five representatives from Shimadzu stayed for the Honors program dinner Wednesday evening. We now have 1,001 students in our Honors program, which has grown from 132 students in 1997, its inaugural year. The evening celebrated over 160 students who earned perfect 4.0 averages during spring semester. The commitment and engagement of Honors students was reflected in the awards that evening. The two service award recipients are both Pre-Med students who volunteer their time with hospice patients. The leadership award recipients include a student who leads Crafters Anonymous on campus, and a student who is a reserve Marine fire battery leader.

Thursday there was an event at Cascade Hills Country Club in Grand Rapids honoring its head professional, John Celestino, for his fifty years of service there. Twenty-five years ago CHCC members established the John Celestino Endowed Scholarship in his honor, which supports students in our Professional Golf Management program. To date the endowment has awarded \$135,000 in scholarships and supported 39 students. We rarely have this opportunity

to look back and see what can result when men and women of vision set out to make a difference for students. In the true character of this remarkable person, the occasion was designed to create more support for the endowment in the future.

Friday morning was the third Victor Spathelf lecture, hosted jointly by our Colleges of Health Professions, Pharmacy and Optometry. The featured speaker was Dr. Marsha Rappley, Vice President for Health Services at Virginia Commonwealth University and CEO of Virginia Commonwealth Health System. You may know Dr. Rappley for her ten years of service as dean of the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, and her remarkable leadership that helped bring this program to Grand Rapids. Dr. Rappley's nursing career was advanced by earning a degree at Ferris, and she talked about the pivotal role this played in her decision to attend medical school.

Friday evening recognized this year's Distinguished Alumni and Pacesetters. Hearing firsthand the impact a Ferris education had on these alumni, and the difference it has made on their careers, speaks volumes about the opportunities a Ferris education makes possible. Here are some examples from this year's class of Distinguished Alumni:

- Denise Beachy is the president of Hemlock Semiconductors, a subsidiary of Dow Corning. She graduated from Ferris in applied biology and shared how this background enabled her to excel in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) field before that term became popular. She spoke about overcoming the impediments and limitations placed on her.
- Drs. David and Kenneth Friar are the first brothers honored as Distinguished Alumni. Both physicians, they are co-owners of iNDIGO Health Partners, a leading private hospital medicine group. As sons of emeriti professor Robert Friar, they related how Ferris has been a part of their lives ever since they could remember, growing up in the community and on campus.
- Carrie Germain, senior director of Pharmacy Services for HealthPlus, reflected on how she had always wanted to become a pharmacist, growing up in the steps of her pharmacist father, and how she balanced the challenges of an active career and family. Not surprisingly, her children and grandchildren were present to celebrate this occasion with her.
- Amy Proos is owner and CEO of Proos Manufacturing, a metal stamping and fabrication company. After working in this business the summer after her sophomore year, she changed her major from pre-veterinary science to a field related to manufacturing. As she related, she did not just want to simply work at the company, she wanted to own it.

Hearing the appreciation these alumni have for the education Ferris provided and fostered was inspirational. For them, the opportunity and power of the Ferris experience truly was extraordinary. These events are wonderful proof of the difference your daily efforts make for our students and their futures.

### **Campus Forum Strategic Plan Update and Assessment**

This week I am hosting two open forums to provide an update on our Strategic Plan and to share proposed assessments on this plan. They are scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 29 at 2 p.m. in the University Center Room 202C, and again on Thursday, Oct. 1 at 9:30 a.m. in UC 203. I look forward to sharing with you our achievements to date, progress on implementation of the strategic plan, and proposed assessment measures. Although this is a very busy time of the semester, I hope you will be able to attend one of these forums. Both your input and your willingness to remain knowledgeable about the challenges and opportunities that face our university are greatly appreciated.

### **MINDS Aflame**

Please remember also the MINDS Aflame presentation tomorrow, Tuesday, Sept. 29, 5:30-8:30 p.m. in Williams Auditorium. This is a major event in this year's BEYOND series, which is focused on globalization.

In addition to the faculty, staff and student members of the Ferris community who will be speaking, there are some remarkable guests who will bring their expertise to campus for this event, which is modeled upon a TED talk forum. Visiting speakers include:

- Asher Jay, a National Geographic Emerging Explorer. Jay is a "creative conservationist" who uses her skills as a designer, artist, writer and activist to advance animal rights, sustainable development and humanitarian causes. She has worked to raise awareness about poaching and the illegal ivory trade.
- David Murcko is Strategic Outreach, Advising and Program Coordinator for Abroad With Disabilities. AWD is a nonprofit organization founded with the goal of promoting the belief that persons with disabilities can and should go abroad. His presentation is entitled, "Accessibility of Experience."
- Olmecca is a Los Angeles-based hip-hop MC/producer and activist with a B.A. in philosophy who is finishing a master's degree focusing on the post-NAFTA Mexican presence in the United States.

### **United Way Campaign**

Our Big Rapids campus United Way campaign officially kicks off this Thursday, Oct. 1. I encourage you to support this effort that does so much for our community. Volunteers from across the university will be soliciting contributions that support a wide range of local service providers, including the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Project Starburst, W.I.S.E., and many other organizations people rely upon in emergency situations.

Again this year the Ferris campus campaign is being ably co-chaired by Jeanine Ward-Roof and Linda Telfer. Campus-wide volunteers along with our students are working to meet our \$60,000 goal. Please take a moment to consider how much you can give to help others when you receive your pledge card.

Mecosta and Osceola are two of the poorest counties in Michigan and the need is great. Support of the United Way provides important resources for many, many people in a coordinated effort that makes a huge difference in the lives of those facing major life challenges. We never know when the person we're helping may be a student, friend, or colleague.

Thank you so much for your support.

### Disability Awareness Month

October is Disability Awareness Month and begins with a campus kick-off event next Monday, Oct. 5, from 3-5 p.m. in the Williams Auditorium Lobby. This is a resource fair with representatives from the Personal Counseling Center, Veteran Resource Center, Michigan Rehab Services, and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing services, among others.

Additional Disability Awareness Month Events include:

- Oct. 15, 11 a.m., IRC 120, Student Speaker Series, “Does the ADA Matter?”
- Oct. 17, 5 p.m., Wink Arena, Wheelchair Basketball
- Oct. 20, 11 a.m., IRC 120, Student Speaker Series, “Facing Our Discomfort”
- Oct. 28, 6:15 p.m., Wink Arena, 5 Star Speaker Event, Veteran and NY Times best-selling author Capt. Luis Carlos Montalvan. His book, *Until Tuesday*, tells his compelling story of how an injured Iraqi veteran struggling with post-traumatic stress, and a sensitive service dog that could not trust people, save each other.

**Commented [A1]:** Are we sure this is Wink Arena? I could find nothing on the web, the calendar says TBA. Wink Arena seems like a strange place for this.

### Homecoming Weekend

We had gorgeous weather for Homecoming this past weekend. Tyler and Rex Schuberg were wonderful grand marshals for our parade through downtown Big Rapids. Parking lots near the stadium were jammed with tailgaters hours before kickoff. Nearly 6,600 people attended the traditional Homecoming football game, which our Bulldogs won 35-18 over Saginaw Valley State. This victory was the team’s 18<sup>th</sup> straight regular season win. They were led by quarterback Jason Vander Laan, who was named the Division 2 Player of the Week last week. The team’s next home game is on Saturday, Oct. 17, when they face Ohio Dominion at noon at Top Taggart Field.

Our women’s volleyball team won 2 of 3 matches this weekend, and are now 12-1 overall on the season. On Friday they beat Walsh University and on Saturday prevailed over Malone University. In their second match on Saturday the team had their first season loss to Wheeling Jesuit, a team ranked in the top-ten nationally. The team plays their next three games at home – against Grand Valley State on Tuesday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m.; on Friday, Oct. 2, against Tiffin University at 7 p.m.; and against Ohio Dominican on Saturday, Oct. 3, at 3 p.m.

Our women’s soccer team extended its record unbeaten streak to eight games with a double overtime tie against Findlay in an away game yesterday. Previously, they beat Malone University in an away game on Friday. The team plays its next home game this coming Sunday, Oct. 4, against Saginaw Valley State at noon.

Finally, our women’s cross country team finished first in a 50-team field at the Brissman/Ludeen Cross Country Invitational at Rock Island, Ill., this past Friday. Our student-athletes are having a remarkable fall season. I encourage you to show your appreciation of the positive way they represent Ferris by attending one of their competitions. We have an amazing number of student-athletes competing at a nationally recognized level. On their behalf, thank you for your support.

David L. Eisler, president