

# President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President  
February 8, 2016

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## University Climate Survey

As a University community we are committed to providing a safe campus environment. Sexual violence, in whatever form, goes against our core values. As part of efforts to combat sexual assault we are in the process of gathering student input regarding sexual misconduct on campus. To do this, the university has developed a questionnaire which takes about 15 minutes for students to complete. The survey is completely anonymous. Understanding the challenges some students have encountered on campus will help meet our goal to have the safest possible environment in which students can learn and socialize.

Students received the survey via e-mail. They can also complete the survey by stopping by the IRC commons area this week from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We have had a strong response to this survey already, but would like to get as broad a perspective and participation from our students as possible. There is a very good video about this in which our students encourage this participation. The video can be accessed by this YouTube Ferris State University Climate Survey [link](#). Thank you for helping to spread the word and encouraging students to complete this important survey.

## Business Leaders for Michigan

As legislators begin to work on the state's budget they will be provided with much data, especially in the area of higher education since a portion of each university's funding is dependent upon performance metrics. The group Business Leaders for Michigan, which has advocated for increased funding for education, has compiled a great deal of information about Michigan's public universities and their performance over time on these measures.

Their performance tracker compares Ferris State University against our peer institutions in the areas of State Appropriations per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Student, Productivity and Efficiency, Affordability and Access, and Economic Impact. The Ferris State University Score Card is accessible [here](#).

In most of the data the BLM presents, Ferris compares well against peer institutions from across the country. Here are some examples –

- In Total Degrees Awarded, Ferris is in the top 20 percent of peer institutions. From 2003 to 2013, Ferris' annual growth rate for degrees awarded was up 3.9 percent. We increased from 2,593 degrees awarded in 2003 to 3,680 degrees awarded in 2013. This a truly significant achievement.
- In Total Critical Skills Degrees and Certificates, Ferris is again in the top 20 percent of peer institutions. The BLM defines these critical skills areas as the STEM areas (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) along with medicine. From 2003-13, Ferris' annual growth rate was 3.1 percent in awarding critical skills degrees and certificates. In 2003 we awarded approximately 1,300 such degrees; in 2013 that figure approached 1,800.
- An area we have concentrated very hard on is the Total Cost of Attendance and Average Net Cost. The BLM looked at the cost for in-state, undergraduate students receiving grants or scholarships. While our total cost increased an annual 2.6 percent from 2007-13, the net cost declined .2 percent. We have a Net Price Calculator on the Ferris website and have tried hard to educate potential students about the actual price of attending our university. We are working very hard to continue to make a Ferris education affordable for our students.

- Ferris' Core Expenditures in 2013 compare favorably with our peer institutions. What we spend on instruction exceeds the average of our peers 42.3 percent versus 39 percent. We spent 30.2 percent on scholarships, academic support and student services compared to peer spending of 26.4 percent. Also, the rate of our administrative spending was less than our peers at 10.1 percent for Ferris versus 11.2 percent for peer institutions.
- In 2013 our Instructional Spending per Full-Time Equivalent Student was significantly above the peer average, and close to the peer top-20 percent. We have managed to remain well above the peer average despite the fact that in 2013 state higher education funding during the past 10-years was down 24.2 percent.
- From 2003-13 we decreased our rate of Administrative Spending per Full-Time Equivalent Student by 4.8 percent. In 2013 we were slightly below our peer institutions in this area.

Taken together, this paints a picture of a university that graduates students, especially in STEM areas, well above peer institutions, while at the same time controlling costs and actually reducing students' net cost to attend.

Much dedicated work from people across the university has made this achievement possible. Our commitment to be a university "where theory meets practice," and that graduates students prepared for success is certainly a part of this. Other factors that have made these improvements possible is our emphasis on being "academically nimble" and responding to changes in workforce needs. We have a very good system of faculty-driven program review that after careful study makes recommendations to close or transform degrees that no longer meet student needs, and to start new programs that prepare students for positions in a changing economy. This will be the main topic on which I will speak in testimony to a joint state House and Senate subcommittee on Feb. 25.

### **Festival of the Arts Events**

This week the Festival of the Arts continues with a full slate of events both on-campus and in the Big Rapids community. Here are just a few examples of what is taking place during the festival's second week:

- Mardi Gras Party with the New Reformation Jazz Band, Tuesday, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Cranker's Restaurant. There is no admission fee, but reservations are required. There is an optional Cajun buffet dinner at 5:30, for which there is a cost.
- Art in Big Rapids: a Panel Discussion, Friday, 7 p.m., Big Rapids Community Library. Join panelists including City Manager Steve Sobers and students from Ferris' Welding program for this review of the area's artistic output.
- The Moxie Strings, a duo consisting of fiddler Diana Ladio and electric cellist Alison Lynn, classically educated musicians known for performing a rock-influenced form of Celtic music, will perform at 7 p.m. on Saturday at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Big Rapids. That same day at 10 a.m. in the Music Center Band room they will give a workshop for string players. Additionally, the group will give short performances during both the women's and men's basketball games against Lake Superior State at Wink Arena. Tip-off at 1 and 3 p.m., respectively.
- The Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company presents "Shakespeare and the Great Michigan Read: *Station Eleven*," on Sunday, 2 pm. at Artworks in downtown Big Rapids. This performance will include selections from a number of Shakespeare's plays meant to complement discussion of the novel *Station Eleven*, which is this year's Great Michigan Read selection.

A full listing of events and other information is available at the [Festival of the Arts](#) website.

### **Athletics**

Our winter athletic teams had a very successful series of contests on the road this past weekend. Men's hockey swept the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, to run their unbeaten streak to seven games. The team won Friday's game by a score of 4-0, and prevailed on Saturday 2-1 thanks to a goal 15

seconds into overtime. Our Bulldogs, currently ranked fourth in the WCHA, face-off against Northern Michigan this coming Friday and Saturday, Feb. 12-13, at the Ewigleben. Both games begin at 7:07 p.m.

On a swing through the Upper Peninsula, men's basketball beat both Michigan Tech last Thursday 80-78 in overtime, and Northern Michigan on Saturday 70-61 in regulation play. The team is now 19-4 overall and 13-4 in the GLIAC, where they are in second place in the North Division. The team has its next three games at home, facing Northwood this Thursday at 8 p.m., then tip-off against Lake Superior State on Saturday starting at 3 p.m. The Bulldogs then host Hillsdale on Thursday, Feb. 18, in a game starting at 8 p.m.

David L. Eisler, president