

**Academic Affairs**  
**2013-2014**  
**Major Initiatives**  
**May 22, 2013**

**Strategic Planning**

Developing a broadly engaged and accepted university wide strategic plan is a critical priority for 2013 - 2014. Based on the mission and core values, the strategic plan will seek to provide a focused direction for all members of the university community. Summer 2013 will be spent reviewing the results from the listening sessions, analyzing selected data sources and exploring institutional challenges. Fall 2013 will be spent drafting the strategic plan then broadly sharing and redrafting the draft with the preliminary goal of completing the strategic plan by the beginning of Spring 2014.

**Online and Virtual Learning**

Few opportunities are as important to the future of Ferris as the long-term structure of online offerings in all its forms. This includes developing the right balance of courses and programs, using online to support a strong residential campus, developing the right financial model and implementing a consistent set of standards and procedures. EMAT has provided a strong framework to move forward. The goal for 2013 - 2014 is to finalize these operational components and lay the groundwork for sustained online growth.

**Academic Leadership**

Creating a culture of effective academic leadership continues to be a high priority for academic affairs. For 2013 - 2014 new models of selecting, supporting and developing academic leadership will be implemented. However, it is not enough to develop a new model for empowering departments in selecting departmental leadership unless there is the support and professional development that promotes a climate of effective leadership.

**Implementation of Diversity Initiative: The Achievement Gap**

Bringing greater levels of diversity to our campus community continues to be a critical priority. For 2013-2014, academic affairs will focus on reducing the achievement gap using two broad approaches. First, the achievement gap is an academic issue requiring the use of sustained and broadly implemented models of engagement across academic affairs and other divisions. This means examining how existing programs can be used to better support academic achievement. For example, the Center for College Readiness, the honors program along with individual academic programs have an opportunity to develop approaches that can lead to a reduction in the achievement gap. Second, new models will be explored, such as those at Eastern Connecticut State University, and new partnerships, such as those with area school districts, will be developed to create greater opportunities for academic success for all students.

**Continued Focus on Retention, Graduation and Student Debt**

Building on the successes of colleges, departments and programs, it is important that academic affairs continues the long term goals of increasing retention and graduation rates while reducing student debt. For 2013-2014, the central efforts of academic affairs are to help students

successfully move from one semester to the next, one academic year to the next and on to graduation. Each college within academic affairs will focus on their roles in promoting high academic standards, providing students with engaged experiences, and keeping students on track toward graduation and beyond while also developing models for reducing time to degree. The overall goals of these efforts are to create a unified approach toward and investment in increasing student retention and graduation while reducing overall student debt.