

To: Ferris State University – Grand Rapids and the University Community
From: Donald Green, Ed.D.
Vice Chancellor and Dean
Subject: University-Wide Diversity Planning Committee
Date: March 12, 2007

At Ferris State University, we embrace diversity and its multiplicity of meanings. This includes race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and faith but it also means diversity of thought and values.

When I discuss diversity at Ferris State University – Grand Rapids, I have a more specific meaning and subsequent applications; diversity is the opportunity for full participation and freedom from discrimination for all groups of people, especially those who have experienced burden, barriers and exclusion. For too long, the creativity and ambition of a large portion of the world's population has been disregarded due to misguided perceptions. This participation is vital in order for the campus and the community to both survive and thrive.

Diverse perspectives and practices are central to academic quality. They expand creativity and force us to test our models, paradigms and assumptions. As we seek knowledge of others, we learn more about ourselves. We become both ready to embrace change and generate it. To this end, I support the goals and efforts of the University's Office of Diversity and its planning committee as we seek to expand diversity throughout the institution.

Higher education is a starting point for opportunity and prosperity. To embrace diversity is to seek new answers. As a university campus, we will elevate all people, empowering through knowledge and encouraging the creativity that spawns economic growth in our region and state.

To make our intentions concerning diversity more concrete, the Grand Rapids campus of Ferris State University will strive to reflect in our faculty, staff and students the rich mix of ideas, faith and ethnicity contained in our West Michigan region while advancing scientific, technological and social advancements found throughout the world. I look forward to pursuing these objectives in partnership with the University-Wide Diversity Planning Committee.