MLK Day of Reflection Remarks
David L. Eisler, President
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Thank you for attending this virtual event. While in the midst of this pandemic it is both wise and safe to gather in this virtual fashion, I look forward to doing this together with you in person in the future. I want to begin today by expressing my admiration for you. The challenges you are facing today are tremendous, and I commend you for doing everything you can to continue your education. If you are struggling today please reach out for assistance. All of us at Ferris State University are here to support you, to help you in your time of need and to see you succeed.

As I reflect on the historic march that began at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, I am struck by the courage, and the bravery exhibited by the men and women, young and old. Watching this, and hearing Dr. King’s speech, is a stark reminder that while advances have been made in the fight for equality, we still have much work to do. We cannot, and must not, forget our history and the many men and women who have taken a stand against racial injustice.

I believe each one of us has been given a purpose. It is important we remember our purpose, and to use our talents and efforts for good. Our founder, Woodbridge N. Ferris once said, “Get all the knowledge you can but use your knowledge in the right way and it will be of untold benefit to you. Don’t use it in oppressing others…And when you see a man or woman trying to rise and doing the right thing don’t be selfish but try to help that person rise.” I want to repeat that last sentence, because I believe it is profound insight on how we can make a difference, “…when you see a man or woman trying to rise and doing the right thing don’t be selfish but try to help that person rise.” Much like Dr. King, Woodbridge Ferris sought to make the world a better place.

As you reflect on Dr. King’s life, his actions and words, I encourage you to think about the ways in which you can help Dr. King’s vision become a reality – “when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and live together as brothers and sisters, all over this great nation.” And in the vision of our founder, Woodbridge Ferris, help others rise and make the world a better place.

In doing so we make certain that these visions and dreams will never be forgotten.

Thank you.