



—a Ferris State international education newsletter

What road to take?

Greetings from the Office of International Education (OIE). We are publishing these biweekly newsletters to share and provide context and rationale for the work we do to promote global engagement at Ferris.

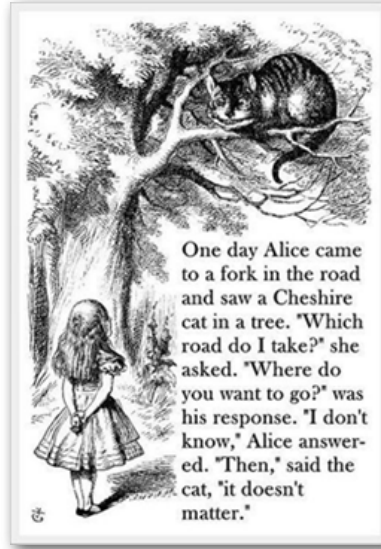
Universities like ours that are traditional, mid-size, and in non-urban areas are being challenged by technology, competition and demographics. We all are expressing the impact of the challenges in various forms and forums. We also intuitively know the road ahead is not clear nor is it yet paved. In many ways, we are not alone. Institutions like Ferris State are at a crossroads.

We take pride in being part of a hands-on, practical, teaching and training University that primarily serves undergraduate students. We are a state institution with a main campus located in Big Rapids but with reach across the state through satellite campuses. We have also been expanding our online offerings and our high school and community college partnerships.

We recognize that these offerings are also helping these partners develop their capacity to offer undergraduate courses and paving the way for our students to take classes online outside of Ferris. This will decrease our revenue per student in the time they are with us, making it more challenging to sustain a vibrant main campus. The coming shift in higher education and modes of delivery will impact us even more. We, in many ways, are asking the quintessential question travelers have asked for millennia, even before the ancient silk road:

What road to take? The road less traveled?

The economics of education showcase the challenge ahead. But, the challenges of today cloud our collective vision for the future. As we strategize our plan for the future, the question remains: What road do we take as an Institution?



In an interconnected and integrated world, opportunities are not bound by geography. As an opportunity university, we have to challenge our students to go beyond geography. The ancient Tamils understood this thousands of years ago. Ancient Tamil literature, Thirukural, says:

“யாதானும் நாடாமால் ஊராமால் என்னொருவன்
சாந்துணையுங் கல்லாத வாறு”

“The learned make each land their own, in every city find a home;
Who, till they die; learn nought, along what weary ways they roam!”

ThiruKural Verse 397

Looking back, this wisdom that I embraced growing up allowed me to take the road less travelled. Studying abroad opens doors and minds. As we challenge our students to embrace global opportunities, we need to do the same as an institution.

This is the road to take!

—Dr. Piram Prakasam, Executive Director, OIE



In Context

1. Read: Most Americans view openness to foreigners as ‘essential to who we are as a nation’ – <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/09/most-americans-view-openness-to-foreigners-as-essential-to-who-we-are-as-a-nation/>
2. Read: Forget Stanford, Tsinghua Beckons: America is losing African and Asian students to China – <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/02/forget-stanford-tsinghua-beckons/>

Our Global Ecosystem for Growth

The road ahead may appear challenging. But, Ferris prides itself on being an opportunity University. In line with the vision of our founders, we can survive and also thrive in our rapidly changing global economy and society. A forward-leaning University attracts new students, high quality faculty and staff, industry partners, alumni, and support donors. By collaborating with faculty, staff, external partners, and students, the Office of International Education has created a thriving global ecosystem for growth. In the upcoming newsletters, we will showcase how international engagement can be a key engine to take us forward. We will share details of a variety of initiatives and engagements that have been intentionally designed over the past eight years to develop and nurture this global ecosystem. Ferris can benefit from and sustain comprehensive internationalization efforts to ensure that our students and our institution succeed in the 21st century.

A flourishing global ecosystem has a foundation in resources, infrastructure, expertise, and best practices. Over the past eight years, the OIE has invested resources and time to develop a collaborative team of professionals, benchmark best practices in the field of international education, establish models and frameworks for decision making, and implement processes and procedures to sustain international efforts. In our upcoming issues, read about components of our global ecosystem in the examples below, among others.

1. **COIN Approach:** A model to assess viability of international projects using a rigorous rubric to measure capacity, opportunity, interest and needs.
2. **Summer Micro-Campus:** An innovative study abroad model that aligns program needs with partner school resources to create a multi-dimensional, high-impact learning experience at a low cost.
3. **Lighthouse Symposium:** A professional development model that builds on our strength in hands-on practical training to host colleagues and international partners to collaborate on professional development and program building.
4. **Ubuntu and Study Abroad Endowments:** Comprehensive campaign funds that have been established and aligned with partner, alumni, and donor interests.
5. **Curricular and co-curricular collaborations:** The BEYOND Initiative and the new Global Competency Certificate Program are designed to infuse global themes into the curriculum and engage students in intentional co-curricular experiences to build global knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities.



- 6. International student enrollment:** A solution to enrollment challenges that increases and diversifies the student body, generates revenue, and provides opportunities for collaboration.

These collaborative efforts create a vibrant culture of engagement across our campus and beyond. This shared culture of adventure will position our students and our institution to successfully meet the challenges of tomorrow with enthusiasm. We invite you to read our bi-weekly newsletters to see how you can help nurture and benefit from our global ecosystem.

– Lisa vonReichbauer, Assistant Director, OIE



A Moment In Time:



Colleagues from Limerick Institute of Technology in Ireland and Hogeschool Utrecht in the Netherlands joined us on October 4th and 5th to develop and strengthen exchange partnerships and curricular collaborations.



Upcoming Events:

1. October 16 and 17 - Study Abroad Fair from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm in UC 202
2. October 19 – International Faculty and Staff Potluck from 12:00-1:30 pm in IRC 104
3. Fridays at 1:00 pm in IRC 104 – Weekly Study Abroad Workshops (open to all students)
4. Fridays at 2:00 pm in IRC 107- Cultural Conversations (open to all students)

Imagine more...

