



–a Ferris State international education newsletter

How do we live our core value of excellence?

Greetings from the Office of International Education (OIE). Last week, the OIE hosted Prof. Kai Haveman from Saxion University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. Prof. Haveman is the new Innovation Officer for their Academy of Creative Technology (ACT). He was visiting us to explore ways to deepen our collaboration to help them enhance the quality of their education.

Prof. Haveman gave a presentation on his university's strategic plan and how the ACT is executing the plan that was developed. Some members of our Strategic Planning Steering Committee participated in Prof. Haveman's presentation and the rest received a copy of it. It was interesting to see that the challenges Saxion faces mirror what Ferris is facing today. The Dutch University is also facing a future of declining domestic enrollment, decreasing revenue, and pressure to decrease the number of faculty and staff. In this context, they had developed a seven-year strategic plan in 2018.

Saxion has taken a bold approach to address the demographic challenge. They have decided to become the best university of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. They were ranked eighth a few years ago. In a short period, they have moved up to the fourth position. In the next couple of pages, you can learn about their strategy and approach to becoming the best in the Netherlands.

This made me curious to revisit Ferris State's ranking among our peers. If we look at the US News & World Report rankings, the [2015 US News & World Report](#) ranked Ferris 54th in their annual report's "Best Regional University" category for the Midwest. We also celebrated a ranking of 13 among "Top Regional Public University's" in the Midwest.

In the [2019 rankings](#) we have moved down to and tied for #94 among regional universities and moved down to 22 among public universities in the Midwest. How can the Strategic Planning process address this decrease? Are the rankings relevant to the direction we want to go? These are questions that we need to discuss as a University community.

One of our University's core value is Excellence. How do we measure it? How do we achieve it when we have decreasing enrollment and resources? Our Dutch partners have identified an approach that is working for them. They have identified innovation, inter-disciplinary and internationalization as approaches to become better and to be the best. We believe this is a road we cannot avoid. We need to be innovative, inter-disciplinary and international.

Dr. Piram Prakasam
Executive Director, Office of International Education



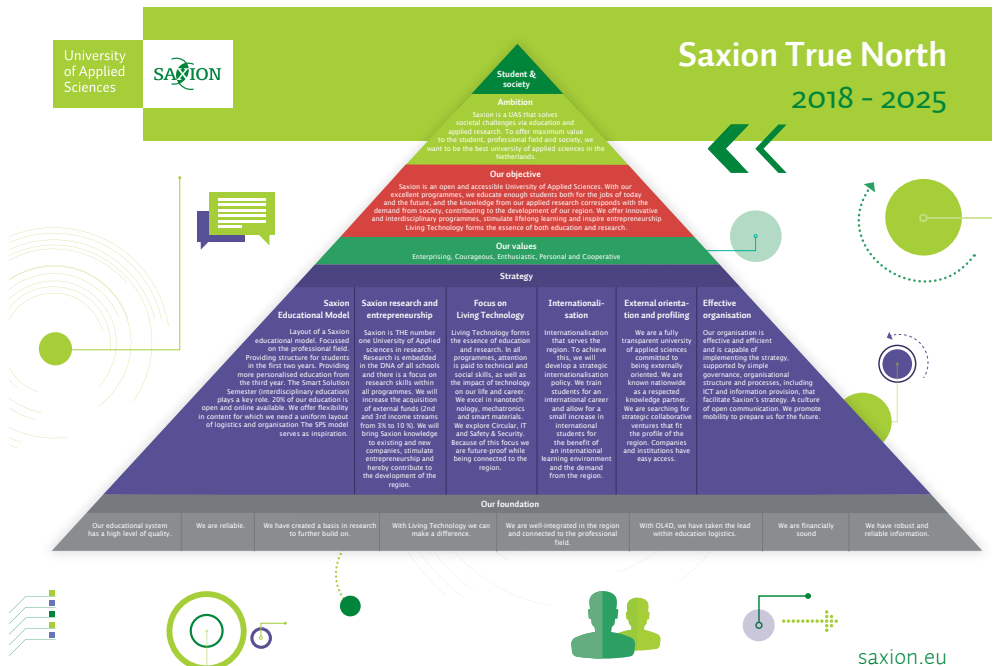
Becoming better to be the Best: Dutch approach

Last week, I visited Ferris State University from Netherlands for the sixth time. In my previous visits, I came as a visiting Lecturer from Saxion University of Applied Sciences. Our partnership with Ferris State is more than 25 years old. Our long-standing relationship has allowed Dutch students to study at Ferris State, and many have become successful alumni of our universities.

In the Netherlands, we are going through similar challenges that universities in Michigan are facing. Our graduating high school classes are expected to continue to decrease in the upcoming years. This has created significant enrollment and budget challenges. My visit to Ferris is in response to these challenges. My visit this time to Ferris State is as a new Innovation Officer for the Saxion's Academy for Creative Technology. This is a new position that has been created as Saxion recently underwent a strategic planning process similar to what Ferris is going through.


Our new Strategic Plan is a seven-year plan that started in 2018. It has three key elements:

1. Saxion will become the best University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands.
2. Living Technologies will be the essence of our education and research.
3. We will offer maximum value to stakeholders through innovative, interdisciplinary programs, lifelong learning, and entrepreneurship



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Anticipating enrollment challenges due to demographics and at the same time wanting to be the best University of Applied Sciences are opposing movements requiring innovative solutions. We will seek ways to make continuous improvement



to our existing business model by adopting Lean strategies for process improvement and implementing the True North concept to develop our university. The True North concept emerged as a guide or “compass needle” for Lean transformation to take organizations from their current condition to where they want to be. The essence of the method is that we do things right and do the right things. Lean is a method that focuses on adding value and preventing waste. We are focusing on reducing seven types of waste: mistakes, waiting, overproduction, perfectionism, talent, transport, and inventory.

As we focus on continuous improvement, we have two seemingly divergent streams: running the business and developing the business. Running the business focuses on maximizing efficiency and effectiveness in our daily responsibilities and routines. A proper metaphor may be “driving our car” as effectively and efficiently as possible. But, at the same time we are trying to become the best university of applied sciences in the Netherlands, so this will require some dramatic changes and developments. In my work, I have to deal with the implementation of change and innovation. This is often difficult but also very exciting. It is much like “changing the wheels” as we drive the car.

To make this possible, we distinguish between running the business and changing the business within Saxion. Running the business means running as smoothly as possible in our daily routine. Changing the business is organized separately from this so that there is room to experiment and make mistakes. The core concept in changing the business using True North is to dare to make mistakes so that we learn and move on. Lean strategies are used in both streams using data-driven decision-making.

One of the challenges that we often encounter is that we don’t seem to have a shortage of proposed solutions for problems. Unfortunately, we often look too little at the root causes. One method that we have implemented for doing this is another Lean strategy of Kai Zen. The agreement with my name is coincidental. I did not come up with it, unfortunately :)

Kai Zen is Japanese for change for the good or continuous improvement. It is a process that consists of eight steps. Using different techniques, the root cause of a problem is examined so that it can be tackled. So, as we work to improve our existing processes and outcomes and also work to transform what we do to meet the challenges of tomorrow, we are deliberately experimenting with new ideas. If an experiment is successful, then we will transition that idea from “changing the business” to “running the business” to help us move to our True North of becoming the best university of applied sciences in the Netherlands.

In our case, through our strategic plan, we have expressed the ambition to become the best university of applied sciences in the Netherlands. To benchmark and to become the best, we need to intentionally engage internationally. This is key to prepare our students for a changing world while also preparing them to make the world a better place.

We will continue to seek best practices and learn from others to reach our strategic goals. Prior to coming to Ferris State, I visited a university in Florida as they have one of the best Digital Media programs in the world. At Ferris, I had the opportunity to meet with several faculty and administrators during my short visit. We explored some interesting new collaborative projects, which will strengthen the cooperation between Ferris and Saxion. This also means that the Twente region of Netherlands will be connected to West Michigan. I always enjoy visiting Ferris because of its innovative strength and hospitality. If you want to know more, you can always contact me via k.g.haveman@saxion.nl

Prof. Kai Haveman
Academy of Creative Technologies
Saxion University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands



In Context

1. **Read:** [Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Excellence – Inside Higher Ed – C.K. Gunsalus, Jeremy D. Meuser, Nicholas C. Burbules, Robert A. Easter and Sebastian Wraight](#)
2. **Watch or Listen:** [Scaling up excellence: Huggy Rao at TEDx University of Nevada](#)
3. **Read:** [A Big World Out There – Inside Higher Ed – Elizabeth Redden](#)



A Moment In Time:



Kai Haveman sharing Saxion University's approach to strategic planning with a group of faculty and staff from Ferris including members of the Strategic Planning Committee.



Upcoming Events:

1. February 14 (Thursday) - International Potluck 11:00 am-1:00 pm in IRC 104 open to faculty and staff
2. February 19 at 12:00 pm in IRC 104 –World Affairs Council Great Decisions Speaker Series Telecast. “Immigration Policy beyond the Border” – Ambassador Jim Nealon, Former U.S. Ambassador to Honduras.

Imagine more...



Past OIE Newsletters

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Spring 2019 Issue 1

Fall 2018



Fall 2018 Issue 6



Fall 2018 Issue 5



Fall 2018 Issue 4



Fall 2018 Issue 3



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