

Expectations for 2018-2019.

These expectations are adopted jointly by the President, his leadership team and the Board of Trustees for the 2018-2019 academic year. It is essential all have a shared understanding that the core focus of Ferris State University is to provide education of the highest quality. In this time of significant budget reduction, the efforts of all in the Ferris community are needed to sustain and enhance the educational experience of our students.

These expectations for the coming year address the current environment in Michigan, the Five Critical Success Factors developed with the Trustees, and the culture at the university. Built upon core values and based on the university's strategic plan, they represent the efforts of a university united in a common mission and shared purpose.

Strategic Planning - Work is well underway in the preparation of the next university strategic plan. When completed in spring 2019, the plan will be focused, measurable and address the external market environment we serve. This plan will enhance the Ferris of the present and guide the Ferris of the future. Integral to this future is fostering a strong sense of innovation and entrepreneurship, exploring new markets, together with developing, implementing, and delivering new degrees and curriculum.

Branding and Marketing – The importance of leveraging the distinctiveness of Ferris to best position the university for the future was identified and emphasized at last August's board retreat. Building on considerable input from internal and external stakeholders, and working with the assistance of the Stamats firm, a comprehensive brand identity for the university will be finalized and adopted in 2019. This will form the core of a new marketing campaign emphasizing the institution's strengths, educational products and offerings, competitive advantages, and value.

Student Recruitment Strategy – The continued decline of high school graduates in Michigan is the greatest single challenge facing the university. This decline has created intense competition for new first-year and transfer students. Major strategic and tactical efforts throughout the university community focus on recruitment. Our recruitment strategy will focus on opportunities resulting from the distinctiveness of the university, targeted recruitment for high-demand programs with capacity for additional student enrollments, and market growth areas.

Student Retention and Success – Significant preparations are being made for the 2020-21 visit of the university's regional accreditors, the Higher Learning Commission. Using the Open Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, the university's quality improvement project focuses on a holistic approach to enhance the academic capabilities and success of our students. This is a major effort to positively affect learning, retention and the learning environment for all students, and will help inform the work of the Center for Academic Literacies, opening in fall 2018. Additional work will be done to identify students who are at risk earlier and to proactively provide support for their success. New programs for second-year and probationary students, together with the use of data analytics to provide "in-time" assistance, and the application of research-based practices to improve student outcomes will be implemented.

External Support - “Now and Always,” the university’s \$80 million comprehensive fundraising campaign, is increasingly engaging more new and repeat donors, creating additional philanthropic support. With over \$68 million raised, areas of special focus during this year include the Ferris Futures Scholarship Challenge, the Center for Athletics Performance, and Pharmacy. Increased engagement from alumni and donors will not only result in financial gifts, but should also assist with recruitment and retention. Efforts to increase state funding for operations, our students and capital projects will continue.

Every year there are any number of unexpected challenges, but by acting strategically we will focus on our core academic mission through these five areas of emphasis, continuing to build the forward momentum of our university.

May 7, 2018