

STRATEGIC PLAN
2014-2019 FINAL REPORT
June 2019

Living Our Values

Collaboration | Diversity | Ethical Community | Excellence | Learning | Opportunity



**FERRIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Dear Ferris State University faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends,

This year represents the conclusion of the 2014-2019 strategic plan “Living Our Values.” The plan has helped guide University efforts over the past five years. The significant achievements over this period result from the hard work and dedication of many people in our campus communities.



Faculty and staff who conceived this plan organized it around our six core values: Collaboration, Diversity, Ethical Community, Excellence, Learning and Opportunity. The accomplishments outlined here and on the Strategic Plan website represent progress made in all six core values and in respective strategic focus areas. The breadth and depth of these accomplishments are truly extraordinary. They help to advance the mission of our University, to exhibit excellence in the work we do, and in doing so, make a significant difference in the lives of our students. On behalf of the University, please accept my thanks for your work throughout this strategic plan.

The success of your efforts for the University is reflected in the achievements of our graduates. As we celebrate the culmination of this strategic plan, we also look to creating the Ferris State University of the future, embracing both the opportunities and challenges ahead. Building on our strengths, I am confident that together we can help make a great University even greater. In doing so we continue the vision of our Founders, fostering an education that is “for all of the people, all of the time.”

Sincerely,

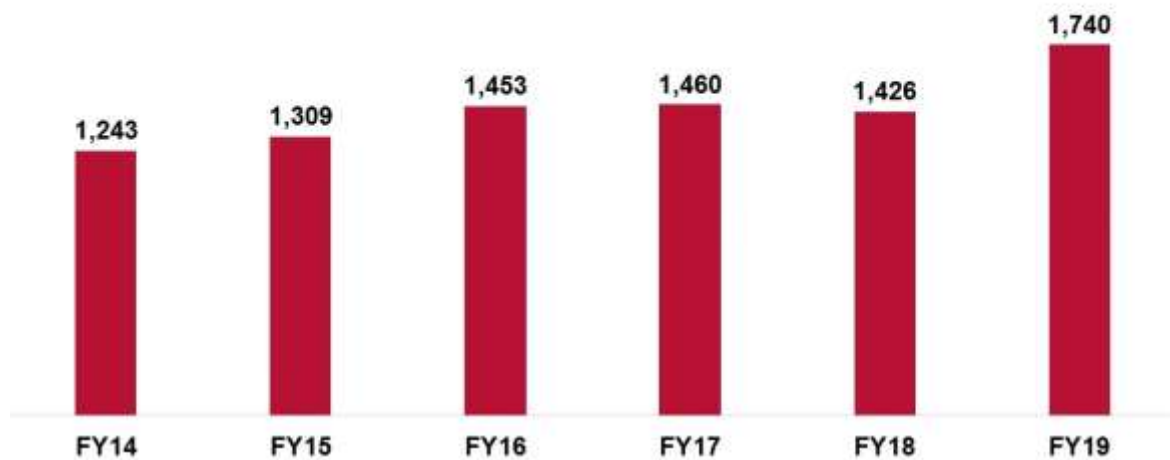
David L. Eisler, president

Opportunity

In 1884 when Woodbridge and Helen Ferris established the Big Rapids Industrial School, they did so to provide education to those who did not have this opportunity. That founding principle remains at the core of Ferris today. Whether it be in Big Rapids, in Grand Rapids at Kendall College of Art and Design or Grand Rapids Community College, at any of our 20 other community college partners, at any of our 21 high school partners or online, Ferris State University provides the opportunity of education today throughout Michigan and beyond.

Opportunity at Ferris is more than a geographic commitment. Just as Woodbridge and Helen Ferris did, we provide education to those who do not have this opportunity. Ferris enrolls more Tuition Incentive Program students than all other public universities in Michigan combined.

FSU Tuition Incentive Program Enrollment



Our Ferris Youth Initiative program provides an educational future for students who age out of foster care. Statewide only 20% of foster youth attend college.



Meet Heaven, a 2019 College of Arts and Sciences graduate and Ferris Youth Initiative participant. This picture was taken in Lansing this June, as she was participating in the National Foster Youth Initiative Legislative Shadow Day.

Ferris also provides opportunity for the men and women who work here. Embracing the education we provide, full-time employees may take up to nine credits per semester without charge. Building on the example of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, this strategic plan envisioned a similar center for staff. The Staff Center for Training and Development was created in 2014.

Over these past five years, Opportunity has been represented in signature accomplishments throughout the University. The new University Center opened January 2015. This is a place that extends opportunities for students to collaborate and learn together outside the classroom, with spaces for lectures, performances, meetings, food, art and much more. The University Center fosters a sense of community by providing students places to work and socialize together.

The Ferris Futures Scholarship Challenge was created in November 2015. Beginning with an \$18 million refund from the Michigan Public Schools Employee Retirement System, this matches gifts to new and existing scholarship endowments dollar for dollar. With a transformational goal of a \$36 million scholarship endowment, to date the Challenge has received gifts from 1,836 faculty, staff, alumni and donors toward 277 new and existing scholarship endowments, with nearly \$7 million raised. The Ferris Futures Scholarship Challenge is a powerful commitment to keeping the opportunity of a Ferris education available to all.

The University received a \$1.2 million National Science Foundation grant to establish Project S³OAR, a four-year program that seeks to recruit, retain and graduate low-income, academically talented students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Starting in Fall 2019, 36 students each year from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering Technology will receive up to \$10,000 in scholarship funding for four years toward their degree.



Pictured are members of the Hagerman family at the unveiling of their \$5 million gift to the Pharmacy Forward campaign.

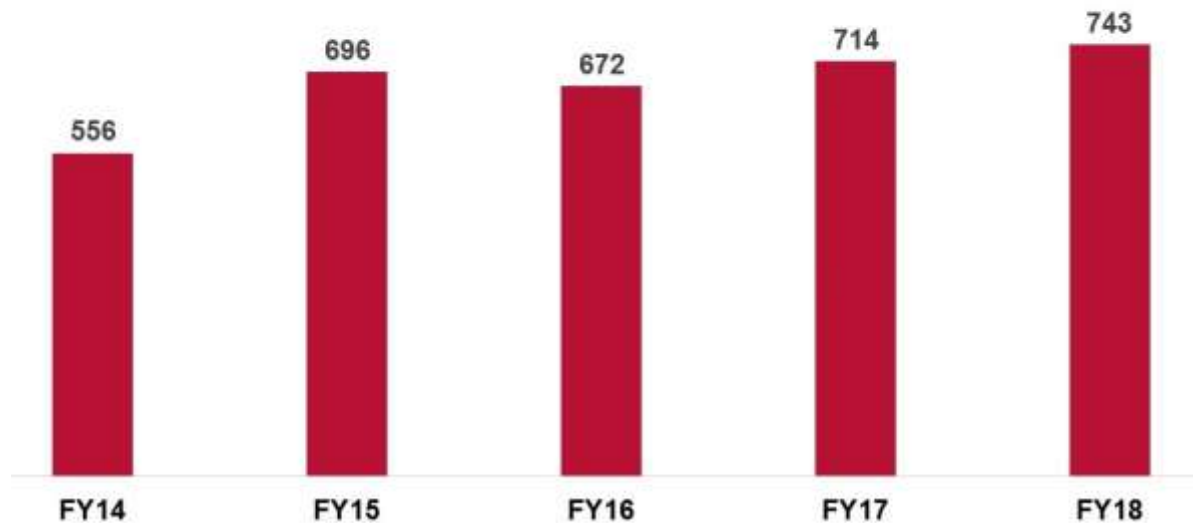
In November 2017 “Now and Always: the Campaign for Ferris State University” was announced. The first comprehensive campaign in the University’s history established an \$80 million fundraising goal to advance three major priorities – Investing in Students, Program Expansion and Innovation, and Building Partnerships. Just one year later this campaign surpassed the original goal with \$86 million raised and set an even more ambitious goal of \$115 million.

Diversity

In conceiving the University's Strategic Plan the authors wrote, "*Ferris is a university for all students all the time. Our future Ferris is one where our similarities and differences are seen, heard, experienced, celebrated and woven into the fabric of our University in a real and authentic way.*"

Over the past decade, the diversity of the Ferris student body has more than doubled. Today, over 21% of students who identify their ethnicity are from diverse backgrounds. During the five-year period of this strategic plan, the number of Hispanic students at Ferris State University have increased by over 33%.

Hispanic Student Enrollment - Fall



Factors in this growth have been the establishment of the Promesa program, developed to help connect Ferris to Hispanic communities in West Michigan and prepare students for entry into college. This was followed by the creation of the Center for Latin@ Studies and Promesa Scholars program led by Kaylee Moreno. The Promesa Advancemos program helps middle and high school students discover their potential for college and become college ready. This work extends into the Grand Rapids community with the work of the Latino Business and Economic Development Center and its Director Carlos Sanchez in encouraging leadership and community entrepreneurship development.

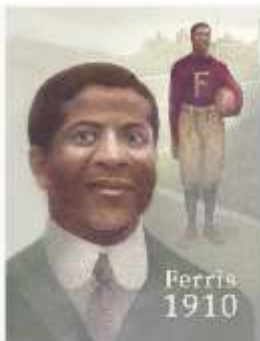
During this period, Ferris has continued to embrace the proactive and dynamic concept of inclusiveness. This approach is reflected in the goals of the 2016-21 Diversity and Inclusion Plan developed by faculty and staff from throughout the University. It is evidenced in the continued evolution of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia and the recognition of Vice President David Pilgrim as a national authority on race and race relations.

In 2017 and 2018, this commitment to diversity and inclusion led to the creation of the Meditation, Prayer and Reflection Room in the FLITE Library and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center in the University Center.

This strategic plan also has a strong commitment to cultural and global engagement. International student enrollment at Ferris peaked at 536 students and has since declined significantly. Global engagement however continues to grow through the internationalization of the curriculum, the growth of study abroad programs and international partnerships. The International Institute of Education recognized the international commitment of Ferris State University and the Office of International Education's Beyond Initiative with the 2019 Heiskell Award Honorable Mention.



Diversity is very much in the heritage of Ferris, dating back to the Ferris Institute. Recent research by Franklin Hughes and David Pilgrim has documented a relationship established by Woodbridge Ferris where African American males from the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute attended the Ferris Institute to take special college preparatory courses before transferring to other schools. Many of these men played vital roles in the history of the United States.



Gideon Smith



Russell Dixon



Belford Lawson



William Gibson



Percy Fitzgerald



Percival Prattis

Ethical Community

Through this plan, Ferris State University is committed to an ethical community with a culture of trust, professionalism and sustainability. During 2016-17 the University conducted its first-ever University-wide employee engagement survey. More than 1,050 employees responded to this survey, a response rate of over 50%. Combining strongly agree/agree yielded these survey results from Ferris faculty and staff –

- 83% are proud to work at Ferris.
- 68% are treated fairly at work.
- 80% are treated with respect by their supervisor.
- 48% believe there is an atmosphere of trust here.
- 67% would recommend Ferris to their family and friends as a good place to work.



VOSH student with patient during an international mission trip

For Mr. Ferris the purpose of his school was "...to make the world a better place." Today faculty, staff and students exemplify this in many ways. As examples, annually Dental Hygiene students travel to Guyana, South America to clean and restore the teeth for hundreds of people there. Professor Dan Wrubel leads Optometry students on international missions for VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity). In 2015 on the island of Dominica this group saw over 1,700 patients and dispensed close to 5,000 pair of eyeglasses.

Closer to home Health Professions and Pharmacy students provide free health screenings to new and established immigrants in Grand Rapids at Asian Community Health Fairs. Pharmacy and Optometry interns are integral to the work of the Cherry Street Health Center, and Pharmacy interns support the Clinica Santa Maria in Grand Rapids.



In Big Rapids, Student Government leads the largest one-day student-run community service project in Michigan. On a Saturday morning in April, students help Big Rapids residents by doing yard work, painting and home maintenance. 2017 marked the 10th anniversary of this event with over 1,500 students participating to help more than 250 homeowners.

This strategic plan fostered the creation of a University-wide Sustainability Task Force. During 2015-16 more than 1,200 faculty, staff and students participated in a survey on the issues of sustainable practices for energy and energy conservation. This work has led to renewed recycling efforts at Ferris.



Best practice examples of this commitment to sustainability are at Kendall College of Art and Design, where with support from the Wege Foundation, Kendall annually sponsors the Wege Prize. This challenges international teams of students to create solutions based on the circular economy concept, a model that is restorative and regenerative by design.

Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of Ferris with many partnerships that advance society and the communities faculty, staff, students and the University serve. In September 2015 the Grand Rapids Public Museum School began teaching 6th grade students. Among the School's partners, faculty from Kendall College of Art and Design were the catalyst behind creating its curriculum using a design-thinking approach. One year later the Museum School was selected from 696 applicants as one of 10 XQ Super Schools and received a \$10 million grant.

Ferris State University reaches out to local communities in many efforts. In 2018 the Teacher Cadet Program initiated with the Grand Rapids Public Schools helps encourage high school students from diverse backgrounds to aspire and prepare for futures as K-12 teachers.

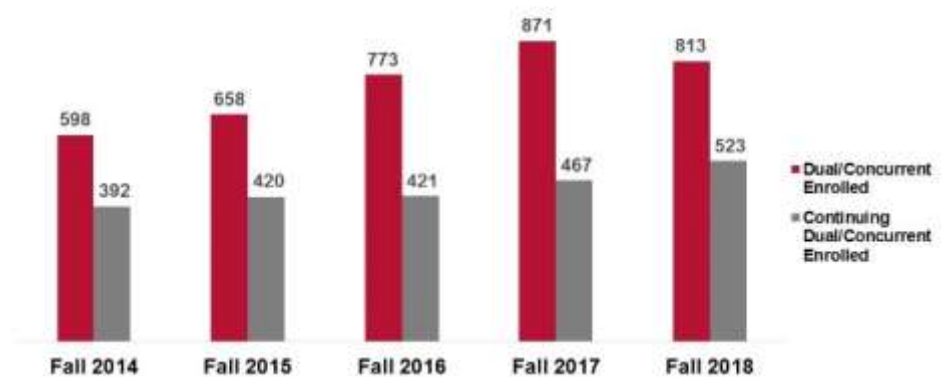


Also initiated in 2018, the Growing Opportunity: A Partner Celebration stuffs and donates backpacks for GRPS students.

Through FerrisNow and the Woodbridge Promise programs, Ferris State University partners with high schools to offer college courses to their students in their facilities during the school day. During the five years of this strategic plan, the number of dual enrolled students taking Ferris credits has increased by 36%.

In March 2017 the Ferris Next Scholarship was created, providing a \$1,000 annual scholarship to dual and concurrent high school students who continue their college education at Ferris. The number of these students enrolled at the University has increased by 33% during the past five years.

High School Dual/Concurrent Enrolled Students



Throughout Michigan, Ferris collaborates with 21 community colleges, providing bachelor completion degrees for adult learners, most of whom are unable to relocate to Big Rapids to continue their education. Currently 28 undergraduate degrees, 22 certificates and five master's degrees are available at statewide locations.

The Doctorate in Community College Leadership creates new partnerships with community colleges, expanding to areas outside of Michigan. This began with a cohort at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, who graduated in Fall 2017 and continues with a cohort from Lone Star College in Houston, Texas.



Ferris also collaborates internally to create more educational opportunities for students. These include curricular efforts like linked courses designed to foster student success and dual degree programs such as the combined Doctor of Pharmacy and Master of Business Administration.

This is also evidenced in facility projects designed to enhance the student educational experience. North Hall, the first new Ferris residence hall in 50 years, opened in August 2017. One year later, renovations to the Student Recreation Center and a \$30 million expansion and renovation to the Swan Annex were completed. The new Ken Janke Sr. Golf Learning Center opened at the Katke Golf Course in March 2019.



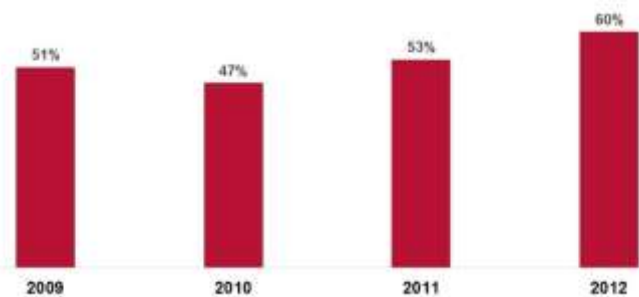
North Hall opened in August 2017

Learning

A Ferris education is designed to prepare students for a career, for professional success and for continued learning throughout life. Founded on concepts of active learning, it is best described as where theory meets practice. Supporting this are a strong faculty and staff commitment to student success. The Academic Literacies Center, which opened in Fall 2018, is an example of this all-encompassing culture of student success. The Center provides students the opportunity to discover and overcome the visible and not-so-visible barriers to success.

This commitment to student retention and success has resulted in the highest graduation rates in the history of Ferris State University. Using IPEDS data, 60% of the most recent cohort of entering freshmen graduated within six years.

Six-Year Graduation Rate – Entering Cohort for Full-time FTIAC Bachelor's Degree Seeking Students



There is national recognition for this emphasis on student success. A recent study by David Leonhardt and Sahil Chinoy of the *New York Times* analyzed 368 public and private colleges and universities, creating expected six-year graduation rates based on the characteristics of the college's students. This then compared the institution's actual graduation rates with the expected graduation rate. At Ferris, students graduate 5% above the expected graduation rate. In the listing of the 15 top-performing schools in the nation with entering student classes of 2,000 students or more, Ferris State University is ranked 14th, the only college or university from Michigan in this listing.

As a new measure of this strategic plan, a Graduate Exit Survey was developed and administered to students completing their application for graduation. Ferris graduates clearly value the education they receive, answering that they agree or strongly agree with the following statements –

- 91% believe Ferris was a good value for their money
- 96% are proud they attended Ferris State University
- 95% are satisfied with their overall Ferris experience

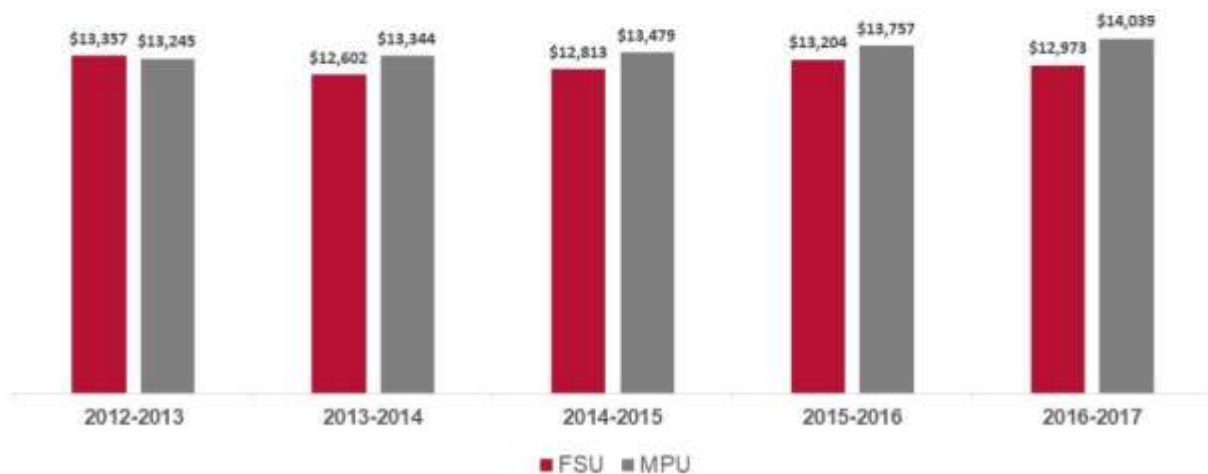
A critical component of a high quality education is degree programs that reflect and embrace current and future practice in the field. This is accomplished through continuous curricular innovation and the creation of new academic degree programs. New degree programs created include associate degrees in Digital Media, Information Security and Intelligence, Natural Science, Psychology, Professional Brew Management, Social Work; bachelor's degrees in Actuarial Science, Biochemistry, Criminal Justice, Hospitality Management, Industrial Chemistry, Integrative Studies, Respiratory Therapy, Spanish for the Professions; master's degrees in Healthcare Administration, Public Health, Visual and Critical Studies; and the Doctorate in Nursing Practice.

Excellence

Excellence is both a value and descriptor. Examples of Excellence are embedded throughout this final report. They are contained in the educational experience Ferris State University provides and described throughout. A special emphasis of this Plan is on the cost of a Ferris education. Simply put, a student cannot access the opportunity of Ferris if he or she cannot afford it.

The net price, or the full price of a student's education (tuition, room and board, books, transportation and incidentals) minus the financial aid and scholarships (but not loans) has declined for Ferris students in all income brackets. Over the past five years, the net price of a Ferris education has declined by \$384 or 2.87%. During this same period the net price for Michigan public universities has increased by \$794 or 5.99%. This is a difference of \$1,178.

Net Price of Attendance

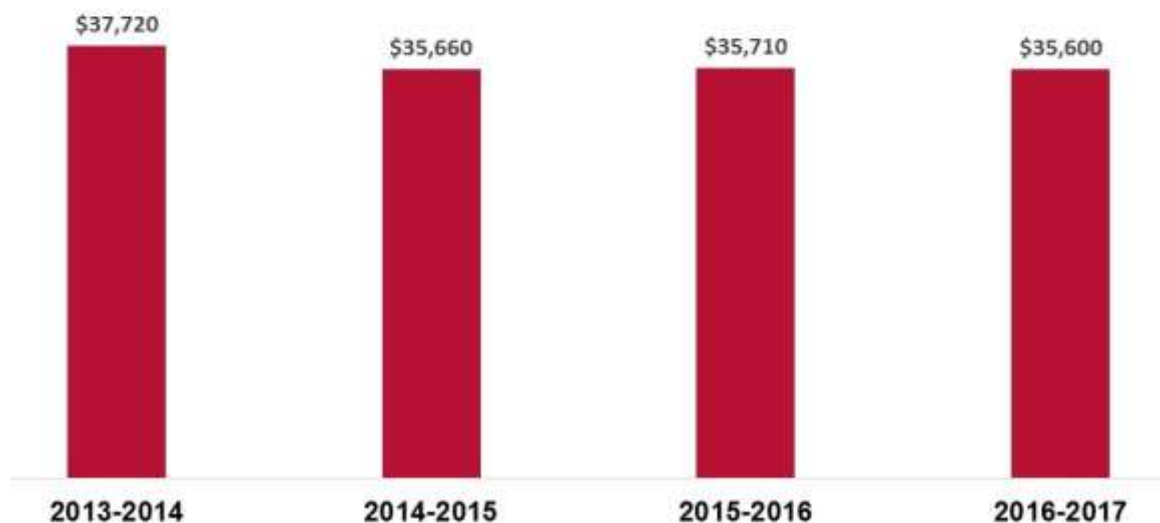


Together with cost containment, these net price statistics result from increased financial support for students. During the past five years, university financial aid support for students has increased by 21%. This also results from increased scholarship support from The Ferris Foundation, whose endowment has grown from \$46 million to in excess of \$85 million, an 85% increase.

This emphasis on financial support for students and cost containment is part of a long-term strategy to reduce debt for Ferris students, many of whom come from backgrounds with limited financial resources. On a five-year comparison of Ferris students who begin as freshmen and who graduate with debt, the average debt has declined by \$1,725 or 4.62%.

This is not the case with other Michigan universities. Over the past three years, while the average student debt at Ferris has declined by \$60, at Michigan Public Universities student debt has increased by \$1,145 or 3.82%.

Average Debt of FSU Bachelor's Degree Graduates



Excellence at Ferris State University is recognized by a variety of national sources. This includes high national rankings for academic programs in Digital Animation and Game Design, Optometry, Information Security and Intelligence, which is also a National Center of Digital Forensic Excellence, and for online programs in Dental Hygiene, Health Informatics, MBA, Nursing Informatics and the Doctorate in Nursing Practice. Selected examples of University-wide excellence include –

- *Money* magazine identified Ferris State University as “one of fourteen, most improving, high value public universities in the nation.”
- The *Wall Street Journal* included Ferris in its inaugural ranking of U.S. colleges, which included results from student surveys. Ferris was the only public university included in the report from West Michigan and scored well in student engagement and the right choice for students (8.92 out of 10).
- *Washington Monthly's* Annual Guide included Ferris in its “Best Bang for the Buck-Midwest.”
- Study.com ranked Ferris 37th among its top 50 “Most Affordable Colleges.”
- The National Council for Home Safety and Security ranked Ferris 23rd on its list of the nation's safest campuses.

The past five years have also been a period of extraordinary athletic excellence with conference championships captured by football, ice hockey, men's basketball, men's golf and men's tennis. Notable achievements include –

- Volleyball has won five consecutive regular season and postseason conference championships with a conference winning record of 91% and an undefeated conference season in 2018.
- Men's tennis advanced to the NCAA Division II Final Four in 2016, to the Elite Eight in 2017.
- Men's golf advanced to the NCAA Division II Quarterfinals in 2017.
- Men's football completed undefeated regular seasons in 2014, 2015 and 2018, advanced to the NCAA Division II Playoffs for the past five years, to the National Semifinals in 2016, and to the National Finals in 2018.
- Men's basketball captured the Division II National Championship in 2018.



Closing Thoughts

Strategic plans are documents that capture dreams and aspirations, while addressing both challenges and opportunities that develop both internally and externally. Ten years ago the University's Strategic Plan established agreed upon core values for the University, together with new mission and vision statements. For the past five years, "Living Our Values" built upon these efforts.

As this plan draws to a close, now is the time to thank all who have contributed to its development and execution, and to again look to the future. "Living Our Values" has established the foundation for the next strategic plan. This new plan has been developed over the past year and a half through the concerted efforts of many at the University.

Through each person's efforts we seek to make a great University even greater and to provide an educational experience that truly touches and changes lives. In doing so we look forward to the future with excitement for the opportunities ahead.