



MISSION, VISION,
CORE VALUES-
Campus Forums
and Survey Input
Report
Is there a need for change?

ABSTRACT

Review the current Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the University that were adopted in 2008 in preparation for the next University Strategic Plan and make recommendations to the University Steering Committee

Guiding Principles Subcommittee

Sub-Committee Membership List

College/Department	Committee Member
CET	Suzanne Miller Co-chair
OIE	Lisa vonReichbauer Co-chair
MCO	Sarah Hinkley
CHP	Lincoln Gibbs
SCTD/A&F	Jody Gardei
COEHS	Brady Flachs

Overall Study Approach

9 forums were held throughout campus, including Kendall. Overall, they were attended by 98 faculty, staff, and students with the majority being staff members.

A survey was emailed to all members of the university via University Wide Notices. Additionally, it was emailed to all students. 117 completed the survey. 47 were students, 37 were staff members, 31 were faculty, and 2 were alumni.

Total Participation was 215.

Input was requested on the current Mission, Vision, and Core Values.

To provide consistency and guidance to the Steering Committee, the following definitions of Mission and Vision were included in a document handed out to attendees at the forum and were used by this subcommittee.

“Mission is a statement that specifies an organization’s purpose or “reason for being.” The mission should capture the essence of who we are, what we do, and for whom. The mission should guide each day’s activities and decisions. It is the primary standard against which the organization’s plans and programs should be evaluated. The mission statements use simple and concise terminology, speak loudly and clearly, and generate enthusiasm for the organization. The mission is the core, the purpose of the organization.”

“The **Vision** of an organization is the dream, the type of statement that answers the questions “where are we going” and what can we achieve?” It is a concise word picture of what the organization strives to be and should always be the roadmap that drives, inspires, and motivates those affiliated with the organization. This is the real purpose for going to work every day....how will the world be different because of the organization?”

“Core Values are the principles and ideals that bind the organization together including all stakeholders. They are developed to frame an ethical context for the organization and to many they are the “ethical standards” of the organization – the foundation for decision making within the organization. As employees are faced with daily decision-making, the core values will serve as the guidelines”

Ms. Patty Cormier, the University’s Strategic Planning Consultant indicated that we needed to shorten and tighten up our mission and vision. She further stated the FSU needs to address change in order to effectively compete in a tightening post-secondary education economy.

Mission Statement

Our present Mission Statement:

"Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. Through its many partnerships and its career-oriented, broad-based education, Ferris serves our rapidly changing global economy and society."

Reviewing the survey data for the Mission statement, we found:

- 24.8% Strongly agree and 48.7% Agree that the current Mission statement reflects what FSU stands for today. This is a very strong indicator that 74% believe there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the Mission.
- 76% believe it reflects what FSU should stand for in the next decade.

However, when we broke the Mission into its individual idea components, we began to see areas that need to be addressed.

"Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers"

- 53% believe FSU effectively meets this aspect of the Mission
- 84% believe it should remain in our Mission
- Forum results back this up
- **Conclusion:** this theme should remain

"Ferris State University prepares students for responsible citizenship"

- 32.5% believe FSU effectively meets this aspect
- 65.8% believe it should remain in our mission
- 24.7% believe it should be modified or deleted.
- Looking to the commentary for clues, we found that many questioned what "citizenship" means
- Forum results indicate "Responsible citizenship" was liked by 37, but 15 disliked "responsible" and 12 disliked "citizenship."
- **Conclusion:** definition is unclear; must be reviewed

"Ferris State University prepares students for lifelong learning"

- 35% believe FSU effectively meets this aspect
- 68.4% believe it should remain in the mission
- 25.6% believe it should be modified or deleted.
- A large concern is how do you measure lifelong learning?
- Forum results also indicate over 1/3 wanted it modified or deleted
- **Conclusion:** must be reviewed

“Ferris State University serves our rapidly changing global economy and society through its many partnerships and career-oriented, broad-based education”

- 48.3% believe FSU meets this
- 60.3% believe it should remain in our Mission
- 21.5% believe it should be modified or deleted with it being split pretty evenly between those options.
- Forum results indicated 38 attendees liked “broad-based education”, but 27 felt it needed to be changed. Many had an issue with the word “serves” with some questioning do we actually “serve” or “adapt to?” and the idea of local, rather than global.
- **Conclusion:** needs work

Other Forum commentary highlights include:

- Desire to shorten the Mission – keep it lean and focused
- Is this mission distinctive or unique to us? This feels full of buzz words.
- One statement indicated that “the mission does not reflect Woodbridge Ferris’s original vision of the university to help all students who want a college education.”

Vision Statement

Our present Vision Statement:

“Ferris State University will be: The recognized leader in integrative education, where theory meets practice throughout the curriculum, and where multi-disciplinary skills important in a global economy are developed with the result that Ferris State University will also be:

- *The preferred choice for students who seek specialized, innovative, career- and life-enhancing education.*
- *The premier educational partner for government, communities, agencies, businesses, and industries through applied research and joint ventures*
- *A stimulating, student-centered academic environment that fosters life-long engagement, leadership, citizenship, and continuing intellectual development*
- *A university that aligns its practices and resources in support of its core values of collaboration, diversity, ethical community, excellence, learning, and opportunity*
 - 67.6% find the Vision statement to be inspiring and motivating
 - 10.3% either disagree or strongly disagree
 - 22.2% are neutral meaning it adds no value at all
 - Thus overall 32.5% do not support the current Vision
 - Forum results indicate that more like the first statement (line) than the rest of the Vision. Many had concerns with the grammar. Others indicated concern regarding resources with the current state of the University. Many feel a disconnect between the Vision and University as it is today – in other words, we are not close to meeting what we aspired to be
 - **Conclusion:** Vision statement must be revised

Breaking the Vision into its individual ideal components, we again see specific areas of concern.

“Ferris State University will be the recognized leader in integrative education, where theory meets practice throughout the curriculum, and where multi-disciplinary skills important in a global economy are developed”

- 76.1% want this to remain in the Vision
- 24% want to significantly modify (16.2%) or delete it (7.7%).
- When you review the commentary, there are many comments indicating it is “too wordy, clunky, no focus, no relationship to the educational process, buzz words, etc.” Further some stated that theory meets practice only applies to some programs, but not the majority.
- Forum results indicate a large number like “integrative education,” but an equal number want it modified or deleted. Many liked “theory meets practice”

- **Conclusion:** Theory meets practice is felt strongly by those that follow it; integrative education may not be the best word choice to describe our holistic approach to our students' education – it may be more of a buzz word and buzz words change often
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“Ferris State University will be the preferred choice for students who seek specialized, innovative, career- and life-enhancing education”

- 81.2% want this statement to remain in the vision
- 19.7% want it significantly modified (10.3%) or deleted (9.4%)
- Forum results indicated “innovative,” “career,” and “specialized” should remain
- **Conclusion:** With fewer desiring to delete or modify this statement, it implies overall satisfaction with it, although the term “life-enhancing” was mentioned several times as an area of concern. “Specialized” was specifically called out as being liked.

“Ferris State University will be the premier educational partner for government, communities, agencies, businesses, and industries through applied research and joint ventures”

- 69.2% want this to remain in the Vision
- 32.5% want it significantly modified (17.1%) or deleted (15.4%)
- Commentary indicates the following: “premier” is meaningless and judged not supportable; focus on education, not terms associated with research; too wordy. .
- Forum results indicated “applied research” is not applicable and again “how do you measure “premiere?””
- **Conclusion:** Overall, it does not appear to add value and is believed to be misleading

“Ferris State University will be a stimulating, student-centered academic environment that fosters life-long engagement, leadership, citizenship, and continuing intellectual development”

- 78% want this to remain in the Vision
- 22% want it significantly modified (15%) or deleted (7%)
- Commentary indicates that no one has an issue with “student-centered”, but major issues with “fostering lifelong engagement” and “intellectual development.” The issue appears to be that there is no perceived link with either in the education process at FSU.
- One comment did inquire as to whether this could be the Vision statement
- Forum input liked “student-centered” but was split on “lifelong engagement”
- **Conclusion:** Requires revision – has similar theme as the current Mission.

“Ferris State University will be a university that aligns its practices and resources in support of its core values of collaboration, diversity, ethical community, excellence, learning, and opportunity”

- 80% want it to remain in the Vision
- 21.8% want it significantly modified (9.6%) or deleted (12.2%)
- Commentary indicates that other than being a bit lengthy, there is no disagreement with the intent. However, the real issue is that respondent do not believe FSU lives up to the Vision, especially “ethical community” noting internal walls blocking collaboration.
- The final comment indicated we need to be more concise, focused, and much more student centered as a key focus of the vision – after all, that is why we are all here.
- **Conclusion:** The Core Values do not need to be restated in the Vision or the Mission. They can and should stand on their own and be part of everything that we do.

“Inspire” Statements from the Forum

The following are statements from the forums that garnered the most interest in being included in the Vision:

- The preferred choice for students who seek specialized innovative careers and life-enhancing (transformative) education
- A stimulating, student-centered academic environment that fosters lifelong engagement, leadership, citizenship, and continuing intellectual development
- Student-centered
- A place where people are held accountable for doing their job and have real consequences if they don’t
- Globalization of the curriculum
- Ferris should be a wholly integrated institution that builds on its strengths like Pharmacy, KCAD, etc But can expand successfully in new directions and using newer modes of education – like expanded distance learning offerings
- Diverse learning environment
- Recognized globally as a leader in international/global education and collaboration
- More chance to meet culture diversity
- Ferris should aspire to be a leader of career programs that innovate in technology and solving world/community issues
- Interprofessional education/curriculum. Interprofessional collaboration among campus units/colleges

Core Values

Our present Core Values:

- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Ethical Community
- Excellence
- Learning
- Opportunity

In the survey, respondents were asked whether the Core Values that FSU has adopted essentially capture the essence of our identity. 28.2% were either neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

Respondents were then asked to check the boxes of the Core Value that most strongly influenced their viewpoint if they selected neutral, disagree or strongly disagree.

- Diversity was selected by 53.7% of the respondents
- Both Collaboration and Ethical Community were selected by 46.3% of the respondents
- Excellence was selected by 34.1%
- Opportunity selected by 29.3%
- Learning selected by 24.4%

Overall comments include:

- These values have not been core to our identity
- Ferris does not invest in these core values – we need to operationalize them
- Being off-campus, I do not know if Ferris meets these goals
- Too many – they are not separate values, they are interlaced
- Opportunity is the foundation on which all other values are built
- These are common sense
- Who is the target market for these core values?
- Add Leadership as a Core Value

Below are the comments from both the survey and the forums specific to the individual Core Values

Collaboration

“Ferris contributes to the advancement of society by building partnerships with students, alumni, business and industry, government bodies, accrediting agencies, and the communities the University serves”

- We are a “siloeed” institution

- We do not collaborate internally, only externally
- Our funding model does not allow collaboration
- Simplify and emphasize teamwork
- Need collaboration across campuses; employee groups; with community colleges
- Build ethical partnerships
- Good concept – integration?

Diversity

“By providing a campus which is supportive, safe, and welcoming, Ferris embraces a diversity of ideas, beliefs, and cultures.”

- We do not do this effectively
- The indication that FSU is ethical and treats all fairly with honesty and integrity is misleading
- Diversity is not what makes FSU unique
- What about inclusion? Inclusion was mentioned many times
- Enhance study abroad
- Diversity of thought
- Replace “fairness” with “equality”
- Why use “diversity” when defining Diversity?

Ethical Community

“Ferris recognizes the inherent dignity of each member of the University community and treats everyone with respect. Our actions are guided by fairness, honesty, and integrity”

- Linked to Diversity
- Fairness does not equal equity
- Prefer inclusion instead of Diversity to combine Diversity and Ethical Community
- Need to be able to measure this value
- Employees are not treated equally and ethically here
- Add “accountability”

Excellence

“Committed to innovation and creativity, Ferris strives to produce the highest quality outcomes in all its endeavors”

- Have some work to do. Not easy to measure in a majority of the areas of our institution.
Change from top-down or direction

- Top down support, financial support needed, emphasis needed on professional development, more innovation and creativity from family
- Needs to add meets or exceeds highest standards
- Replace “committed” to “practice”
- Low standards allow excellence to go out the window
- This is a very general statement – how are we showing our excellence? Turn this into action
- How do you measure excellence?
- Vague
- Add “service”

Learning

“Ferris State University values education that is career-oriented, balances theory and practice, develops critical thinking, emphasizes active learning, and fosters responsibility and the desire for the lifelong pursuit of knowledge”

- This is too long and unclear
- Add “hands on”
- Why is the word “value” in here?
- Innovative/experience learning
- Key to who we are
- Perfect

Opportunity

“Ferris, with a focus on developing career skills and knowledge, provides opportunities for civic engagement, leadership development, advancement, and success”

- Seems non-committal
- Add more trade opportunities in other programs
- What is “advancement?”
- Does not talk about giving students opportunity they may get anywhere else. Is talking about opportunities students have while here and what they trained for
- Focuses on opportunities while they are here, not when they graduate and afterward
- Follows Woodbridge Ferris
- Opportunity is Ferris – it’s on the seal
- Add community to civic engagement

Conclusions

It appears that respondents and attendees do not see a direct link between the education process and “global economy,” “society,” and “citizenship.” It is not necessarily that they believe they are unimportant, simply there is no link. Comments indicate they believe the phrases dilute what they view as the prime goal of the University – to educate for a career.

While being student-centered seems inherent in an educational environment, there were enough comments regarding the fact that we are not (especially from some students) that it seems this must be stated clearly.

Kendall was raised in a few instances and should be a consideration in the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan. As should our satellite campuses that, according to some of the comments, do not feel very connected to Ferris or that they are receiving the same experience touted in the Mission and Vision.

After reviewing multiple university and college mission and vision statements, it was determined that our current mission and vision are somewhat reversed. Following the concept of K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Stupid), we have two possible proposals for a Vision statement and two for a Mission statement. The Vision is what we want Ferris to be. The Mission is what we do to pursue the Vision.

The Core Values are solid, however, they should be re-worded to better define how they apply to the entire University.

Vision:

Ferris State University will be the first choice in education for those seeking student-centered , experiential, collaborative opportunities in an interconnected world

OR

Ferris State University is focused on leading the evolution of practical, experiential education opportunities in our interconnected world.

Mission:

Ferris State University provides experiential and collaborative learning through the effective use of resources, partnerships, and continuous improvement. Our focus on industry and community-responsive relationships assures our graduates are in demand.

OR

Ferris State University is a student-centered community that equips learners with relevant skills for careers driven by an interconnected world. We enhance the student experience through collaborative, experiential learning opportunities.