A Path to Success:

An Implementation Plan

Ferris Forward

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PATH TO SUCCESS

Successful implementation of this Plan requires intentional actions that both build on our current successes and fundamentally change Ferris in meaningful ways. Rather than focusing on divisional approaches that may deepen traditional institutional silos, we must pursue creative, logistical, and technological approaches that will help the University function more cohesively and efficiently. During the life of this Strategic Plan, the Ferris community will work together to act on our commitment to students with the following actions.

Academic Programs and Offerings

Strategic Goal: **Balancing distinctive and comprehensive programs, Ferris will offer innovative educational experiences that blend theory and practice, allowing graduates to flourish in our dynamic, global society.**

Initiative 1: Encourage, facilitate, and support innovative degree initiatives in emerging fields.

APO 1.1: Facilitate timely exploration and examination of new program ideas, offerings, and delivery mechanisms through a university-wide think-tank that includes student perspectives.

APO 1.2: Draft and employ a strategic plan for the future of online education, informed by a review of best practices as well as the effectiveness of the current administrative structure and budget model.

Signs of our Success
- A think-tank group is holding regular meetings by Spring 2020 and is working to develop suggestions for new programs and offerings.
- A strategic plan for online education, crafted with input from across the University community, has been adopted by Spring 2020.

Initiative 2: Honor our commitment to lifelong learning.

APO 2.1: Develop new programs and offerings for professional growth and retraining of adult learners and other new audiences, and enhance recruitment, access, and campus-support for these populations.

APO 2.2: Tailor offerings to serve Ferris alumni in their commitment to life-long learning and career enhancement.

APO 2.3: Create a coordinated social media strategy to promote lifelong learning programs and offerings to audiences not currently reached.

Signs of our Success
- The number of previously underserved students enrolled has increased.
- The number of programs engaging alumni via continuing education or lifelong learning opportunities increases within three years.

Initiative 3: Spur a culture of data-driven decision making across the University.

APO 3.1: Adopt a standardized set of practices, definitions, and key indicators to be used for decision-making processes within Academic Affairs and ensure that decision-makers have free and timely access to relevant University data sets.

APO 3.2: Working with the Academic Senate, delineate responsibilities of Academic Program Review (APR) and University Curriculum Committee (UCC) chairs and members.

Signs of Our Success
- The first data-into-action award recipient is named by Spring 2020.
- Clear and transparent guidelines for APR and UCC chairs have been accepted by the Senate and are in operation by Fall 2020.
- By academic year 2020-2021, a transparent wide-ranging data repository exists for academic program review, curricular improvements, process recommendations, and follow-through.
- A 'common data set', managed and supplied by Academic Affairs or other University data center, is fully developed and automatically supplied to programs as they begin self-studies for Academic Program Review.

Initiative 4: Assess and review processes for academic programs and offerings to increase effectiveness.

APO 4.1: Create a 'program improvement center' that can support programs' efforts to improve and promote themselves.

APO 4.2: Work with UCC and other relevant curriculum committees to ensure that students entering a program with existing credits can complete the program in appropriate time and without excess credits.

Signs of Our Success

- Academic department and program personnel are trained on web and social media analytics practices and can track user engagement and guide program marketing.
- At least three programs deemed in need of help by the Academic Program Review Committee are provided with marketing in 2020-21.
- A metric for measuring unmet demand in majors and programs has been created and is in use to help guide resource allocation by 2021.

Initiative 5: Foster a rich, student-centered University educational experience.

APO 5.1: Utilize institutional structures, budget models, facilities, technologies, and events to encourage high-impact educational practices and facilitate meaningful cross-collaboration (such as team teaching, joint programming, interdisciplinary curriculum, professional development, and co-curricular learning).

APO 5.2: Conduct a review of the university course scheduling matrix and types of course offerings to ensure that we are meeting the needs of existing and target student populations.

Signs of Our Success

- A metric for measuring the use of high-impact practices across campus has been developed and is in use across campus by 2020.
- After academic year 2020-2021, awards are offered at the department, college, and university level to reward and encourage the expansion of high-impact practices.
- A metric to measure student satisfaction with course offerings (time, place, and modality) has been developed by 2020 and is used to adjust course offerings where necessary.

Student Success

Strategic Goal: With students at the center of everything we do, Ferris will continue to demonstrate our commitment to their success through recruitment in targeted markets, integrated support services, and intentional career development experiences.

Initiative 1: Expand access through targeted recruitment efforts.

SS 1.1: Coordinate University-wide recruitment strategies focused on specific performance indicators and inclusive of all recruitment areas (Big Rapids, statewide, online, KCAD, and international).

SS 1.2: Develop and commit to a targeted, measurable internationalization plan that prepares the University to thrive in a global economy and society. The plan will address study abroad, faculty development, curriculum development, on-campus global engagement, international student recruitment and retention, an inclusive environment for international stakeholders, faculty/scholar exchanges, and alumni engagement.

SS 1.3: Increase enrollment of adult, master's degree, and Pell-eligible students as well as graduates of the Michigan Career and Technical schools.

Signs of Our Success
- An annually reviewed, adaptive recruitment strategy is in use across the entire University system by October 2020.
- Enrollment of targeted populations in 2024 is 10 percent higher than it was in 2019.
- The internationalization plan is complete and implementation of key components has begun by Fall 2020.

Initiative 2: Champion degree completion and ensure a clear path to success.

SS 2.1: Write a University-wide retention plan focused on eliminating barriers to success, increasing student involvement, and cultivating a sense of belonging.

SS 2.2: Advising task force recommendations are updated and key components implemented by Fall 2021.

SS 2.3: Sustain and strengthen our identity-based centers to provide academic and retention-based support.

SS 2.4: Apply for student success grants that provide resources for further retention efforts.

Signs of Our Success
- A retention plan is complete and key components are implemented by December 2020.

- Advising Task Force recommendations are updated and implemented by August 2021.
- Ferris receives at least one multi-million dollar student success grant (such as a *Strengthening Institutions* or *Trio* Grant).
- The percentage of full-time students who complete and pass 24 credits or more in their first-year increases.
- Retention and graduation rates increase each year.

Initiative 3: Position career readiness and ExperienceShips at the center of a Ferris State education.

SS 3.1: Identify and provide the resources necessary to expand ExperienceShip opportunities for students.

SS 3.2: Provide faculty support to further embed career readiness competencies into courses.

SS 3.3: Expand the use of alumni employers to work with students one-on-one to help them shape their career paths.

SS 3.4: Focus our marketing and recruitment on our identity as an ExperienceShip university.

Signs of Our Success
- Career Education has increased engagement with first- and second-year students through classroom integration, personal appointments, events, or experiences by May 2021.
- The graduate job placement rate in degree-related careers increases.
- The percentage of graduates who complete ExperienceShips increases every year.

Institutional Effectiveness

Strategic Goal: **As demanded by our Core Values, Ferris will advance the University's mission by promoting a university-wide culture of effectiveness and connectedness, led by transparency, innovation, and accountability.**

Initiative 1: Engage in a thorough review of University structures and processes and complete an organizational realignment, to be conducted in a way that provides an ownership (or shared understanding) of important University structures while also increasing trust, efficiency, and effectiveness.

IE 1.1: Involve the University-wide community with external experts to achieve a streamlined, organizational realignment with emphasis on three areas of critical importance:

- University Structure and Processes
  - Opportunities to streamline University processes should be sought with the goal of eliminating redundancies and employing strategies that help the various University units work together synergistically rather than competitively.
  - The University administrative structure should be realigned in ways that increase effectiveness and reduce costs.
- Data Management and Access
  - Data collected by units across campus should be centrally housed and be freely accessible to decision makers and other relevant parties.
  - Data on Academic Programs and Offerings should be collected, managed, and transparently shared, particularly data that can support Academic Program Review and programmatic recruitment and retention.
  - Dedicated support should be provided to those looking to access or collect data for any relevant University decision-making process.
- University Budget Model
  - A University budget model should be adopted that provides transparency in decision making, rewards innovation and growth, and removes existing budget-based barriers to collaboration and University-wide problem solving.

Signs of Our Success
- A firm has been selected by Fall 2020.
- The firm has presented findings and recommendations by May 2021.
- The University has begun to implement the realignment plan by Fall 2021.
- A more efficient University structure has resulted in measurable savings that exceed the cost of hiring the firm.
- A new University budget model is adopted.

Initiative 2: Develop a more effective and transparent campus by standardizing and integrating the use of existing campus software and systems.

IE 2.1: Create a technology plan that facilitates and encourages the use of existing digital resources (such as the Office 365 suite of applications) to increase engagement across the University-wide community.

IE 2.2: Build an integrated student management system that tracks students throughout their relationship to Ferris, from prospective student to alumnus, in one centralized location.

Signs of Our Success

- Targeted, ongoing trainings have increased the usage of existing collaborative software systems across campus.
- A campus software solution allows anyone assisting a student, at any stage of their Ferris journey, to both access and capture necessary information required to serve the student well and efficiently.

Initiative 3: Review systems of funding, planning, and degree auditing to identify barriers for student success, thereby increasing the attainability of a Ferris degree.

IE 3.1: Automatically award associate degrees and certificates to every student who earns one, positioning the degree as a midpoint to the baccalaureate.

IE 3.2: Work with departments, colleges, and administration to plan reliable course offerings four years out.

IE 3.3: Review tenure lines by department to see where there is a heavy adjunct dependency impacting advising and upper-level course offerings.

Signs of our Success

- Degree completion rates increase, with evidence of accompanying decreased time to degree rates.
- A process for automatically auditing and awarding associate degrees is in place by Fall 2020.
- Advisors and students can reliably chart four-year degree completion plans in MyDegree and do so consistently.
- Academic Affairs and the associated colleges can use four-year degree completion plans to better predict budgets, course scheduling, and staffing needs further in advance.

Pride and Community

Strategic Goal: **Striving to share our proud story, Ferris will provide members with empowering experiences and partnerships.**

Initiative 1: Share our founders' emphasis on opportunity and excellence.

PC 1.1: Identify key initiatives that have the greatest impact on improving our overall brand and reputation.

PC 1.2: Develop and initiate an awareness campaign that informs a diverse array of students and community members on the benefits of a Ferris education.

PC 1.3: Develop a sustainable program to ignite pride and excitement among internal (students, alumni, faculty, and staff) and external (community, prospective students) communities.

Signs of Our Success
- In partnership with the national agency, a comprehensive brand campaign is launched in Fall 2019.
- A unifying and sustainable Ferris Pride Campaign has been developed by Fall 2020.

Initiative 2: Better utilize alumni as ambassadors to our constituents, partners, and the world.

PC 2.1: Dedicate physical and virtual space to highlight accomplishments of alumni.

PC 2.2: Coordinate an Alumni Speaker Series for both University-wide and program-specific initiatives.

PC 2.3: Adopt a comprehensive alumni relations strategy that facilitates the relationships between alumni and their key University homes, including programs, colleges, athletic teams, and student organizations, and empowers our alumni to serve as recruiters, leveraging their geographic reach.

Signs of Our Success

- Prominent recognition of alumni is in development, both virtually and in at least one physical campus space, by Fall 2019.
- Develop an annual alumni speaking series by Fall 2020.
- Alumni become more visible and active in campus life, participating more widely on campus and in recruitment activities.

Initiative 3: Identify, create, and pursue opportunities that strengthen student-focused partnerships with local communities.

PC 3.1: Create a team to identify opportunities to support Ferris-linked educational opportunities for students in high school and other institutions.

PC 3.2: Assign regional liaisons to help strengthen local partnerships and University growth opportunities.

PC 3.3: Build on civic and social engagement opportunities throughout Big Rapids, Grand Rapids, and West Michigan, including open dialogues with community leaders and organizations on issues that will strengthen and build relationships between students, local governments, businesses, educational affiliates, and civic organizations.

PC 3.4: Deepen internship collaborations with surrounding communities and professional organizations that create meaningful opportunities for students, including those with international status.

PC 3.5: Create a Community/Student Leader Roundtable.

Signs of Our Success

- Regional liaisons have been identified by Fall 2020.
- A list of current and potential community and educational partnerships is completed and in use for planning by Fall 2020.
- The Ferris component of Plaza Roosevelt is completed and operational by Fall 2023.
- New community internship collaborations have been developed by Spring 2020.
- A Community/Student Leader Roundtable is in operation by Fall 2020.

Enhancing Resources

Strategic Goal: **Engaging all stakeholders, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members, Ferris will implement innovative strategies to enhance University resources.**

Initiative 1: Increase funding from grants, gifts, and other non-tuition sources.

ER 1.1: Actively identify grant opportunities that would be a good fit for the University's mission, engage appropriate faculty and staff in the pursuit of those grants, and provide effective support to faculty and staff during the grant-seeking and writing process.

ER 1.2: Identify and support the development of initiatives and programs that will engage alumni and donors with the goal of increasing gifts to academic colleges.

ER 1.3: Identify potential grant opportunities with the goal of increasing the number of non-academic grants received by the University annually.

ER 1.4: Increase earnings from University assets, facilities, and intellectual property.

Signs of Our Success

- The number of academic grant applications by faculty has increased to 100 percent of Fall 2018 levels by Fall 2024.
- Academic grant funding increases by $1,000,000 annually.
- Three programs are identified in each academic college each year to work with University Advancement to invite engagement with alumni and community partners.
- Alumni gifts to academic colleges have doubled by Fall 2024.
- The number of non-academic grant applications has doubled by Fall 2024.
- Revenue from University assets, facilities, and intellectual property increases 50 percent by Fall 2024.
- Three new sources of revenue are identified and piloted using current University assets and facilities annually.

Initiative 2: Encourage revenue-generating innovation.

ER 2.1: Create a dedicated infrastructure and "innovation fund" to provide resources and strategic support for faculty and staff to explore and implement revenue-enhancing initiatives within their divisions and units.

Signs of Our Success

- An "Innovation Center", in the mode of a small business center, is established by Fall 2021 to help University stakeholders develop, evaluate, and refine potential revenue enhancing programs. The Center allows students, faculty, and community members to interact, invent, and collaborate.
- The new innovation fund supports three major initiatives and five small developmental grants for pilot projects by Fall 2021.
- A task force is convened to conduct an audit of University funding policies and practices that could affect the enhancement and use of University resources by Fall 2020. The task force recommends key changes to university budgeting, decision-rights, and revenue sharing structures to University executive leadership by Fall 2021.

CONCLUSION

Ferris Institute (now Ferris State University) was nearly destroyed on February 21, 1950. A fire devastated the campus, burning down the two chief buildings: Old Main and Old Pharmacy. The Institute's rise from the ashes is evidence of the resiliency of the campus community—and testimony to the foundation laid by Woodbridge and Helen Gillespie Ferris, his wife, the Institute's first teacher.

Today, we face different challenges. Like other public four-year colleges in Michigan, the University has experienced a significant decrease in the number of students seeking a higher education. For an institution heavily dependent on tuition dollars, the downturn in students has ripple effects throughout its daily functioning. Nevertheless, Ferris remains a resilient institution committed to educating the sons and daughters of Michigan, the nation, and the world.

The University accepts the challenge to reinvent itself.