

**FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**2019-2024**  
STRATEGIC PLAN

**Ferris Forward**



**Ferris State University**  
**1201 South State Street**  
**Big Rapids, Michigan 49307**

**[www.ferris.edu](http://www.ferris.edu)**

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# Ferris Forward

## 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Ferris is distinguished by its strong heritage of opportunity and commitment to diversity and inclusion. A Ferris education helps prepare students for a world that is global, connected and diverse. We strive to create an environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation and understanding in which our students appreciate the cultures, backgrounds and aspirations of others.



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16.1

student to faculty ratio

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190

degree programs

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70%

internship rate

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## Message from the President

### Dear Ferris State University Community,

The values instilled by our founders, Woodbridge and Helen Ferris, remain just as strong today as they were 134 years ago. While much has changed since Woodbridge and Helen welcomed their first class of 15 students, the bedrock on which we were founded remains the same – steadfast dedication to our students, the opportunity of

***For everyone who is serving on the steering committee, subcommittees and workgroups, thank you for sharing your time and energies to map our future as a university.***

student success with our unique educational programs, and a shared understanding that we are strongest and most effective when working together on a common

mission, vision and focus.

As we develop our University's 2019-2024 strategic plan, I am reminded just how fortunate we

are to have an extraordinary faculty and staff who come together to move our University forward, and while doing so, making a great University even greater. Leading this critically important effort are Management Professor Spence Tower and Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion David Pilgrim. Working with a team of over 60 faculty and staff, students and community members, they guide the strategic planning process, and I am very grateful for their leadership. For everyone who is serving on the steering committee, subcommittees and workgroups, thank you for sharing your time and energies to map our future as a university.

I encourage every member of our University community to continue to participate in open forums, focus groups, and other opportunities for input and review of this planning process. Thank you for your engagement, initiative and contributions. Please visit this website often for updates, to share your input and view information on our 2019-2024 strategic planning progress.

Together we will create a bright future full of promise for our University and for the students whose lives we change through our education and support. Thank you for all you do for Ferris State University.




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***Together we will create a bright future full of promise for our University and for the students whose lives we change through our education and support. Thank you for all you do for Ferris State University.***

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David L. Eisler'.

David L. Eisler  
President

# Process

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee (SPSC) convened in Fall 2017 under the leadership of David Pilgrim, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, and Spence Tower, Professor in the College of Business and chair of the Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC). The team began work with the guidance of consultant Patty Cormier (AASCU-Penson), who conducted extensive listening sessions with internal groups across the university and external constituents from both Big Rapids and Grand Rapids.

Based on the feedback from the consultant and the listening sessions, the SPSC decided to review the University's Core Values, Mission, and Vision. This process was led by Lisa vonReichbauer, Assistant Director of the Office of International Education, and Suzanne Miller, Professor in the College of Engineering Technology, who scheduled open forums throughout the spring and summer of 2018 on the Ferris main campus, the Kendall campus, and in the community. In addition, stakeholders were invited to submit feedback via online surveys. With the existing mission, a new vision, and a re-examination of the descriptions that accompany the core values, the strategic planning process moved forward.

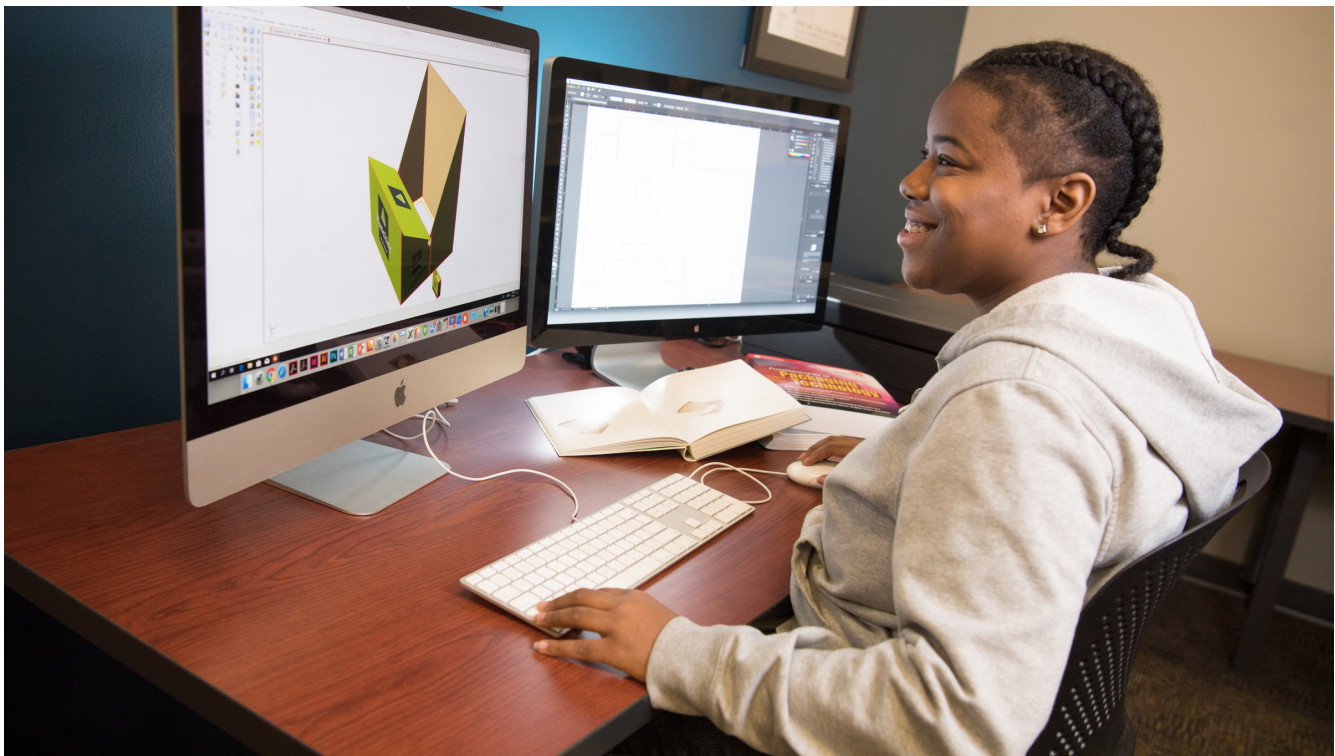
In the Spring of 2018, the SPSC identified five major strategic areas that would comprise the new Strategic Plan: Academic Programs and Offerings, Student Success, Institutional Effectiveness, Pride and Community, and Enhancing Resources. Co-chairs and team members were identified to form work groups for each of the five strategic areas. The work groups were charged with reviewing available data, conducting listening sessions, and identifying key needs. Additional input was solicited from various external groups, including David Attis, Managing Director of Strategic Research at EAB; Stamats, the consulting firm assisting with University branding; 160over90, a branding and marketing agency; and the members of the University Branding Team. Using this data-driven approach, each work group ultimately recommended a set of strategic initiatives, action steps, and key measures to be included in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. As the Strategic Plan began to take shape, valuable feedback from the Big Rapids community, the Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC), the President's Council, and the Board of Trustees helped focus and refine the goals and initiatives.

Throughout the planning process, the Strategic Plan website was accessible. It hosted up-to-date

versions of all working drafts throughout the revision process and provided a way for stakeholder feedback to be delivered directly to the Steering Committee and work groups. Website development was led by Franklin Hughes, Multi-Media Specialist for the Diversity and Inclusion Office, and Michelle Rasmussen, Communications Officer for the President. The website can be found at [https://www.ferris.edu/strategic-planning2/strategicplan19\\_24/homepage.htm](https://www.ferris.edu/strategic-planning2/strategicplan19_24/homepage.htm).

The 2019-2024 strategic planning process has truly reflected the Ferris community living by its the Core Values listed below. Collaboration and inclusivity were woven into every step of the

process, and the final plan is stronger because of the many and diverse voices that played a role in its development. The SPSC expresses its deep gratitude to every person who took the time to play a part, big or small, in this journey. Because of your dedication to Ferris and its future, we have a clear plan for growing more deeply into our vision than ever before. We welcome your continued guidance and support as we strive to honor the commitments we made to every Ferris student through the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.





# Mission, Vision, & Core Values

The Guiding Principles Subcommittee led the University in an examination of its mission, vision, and core values.

## MISSION

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

## VISION

Building on the vision of our founders, Ferris State University will be an agile and transformational university. By integrating theory and practice, we will foster opportunity, discovery, and professional preparation for a dynamic global society.

## CORE VALUES

Collaboration

Excellence

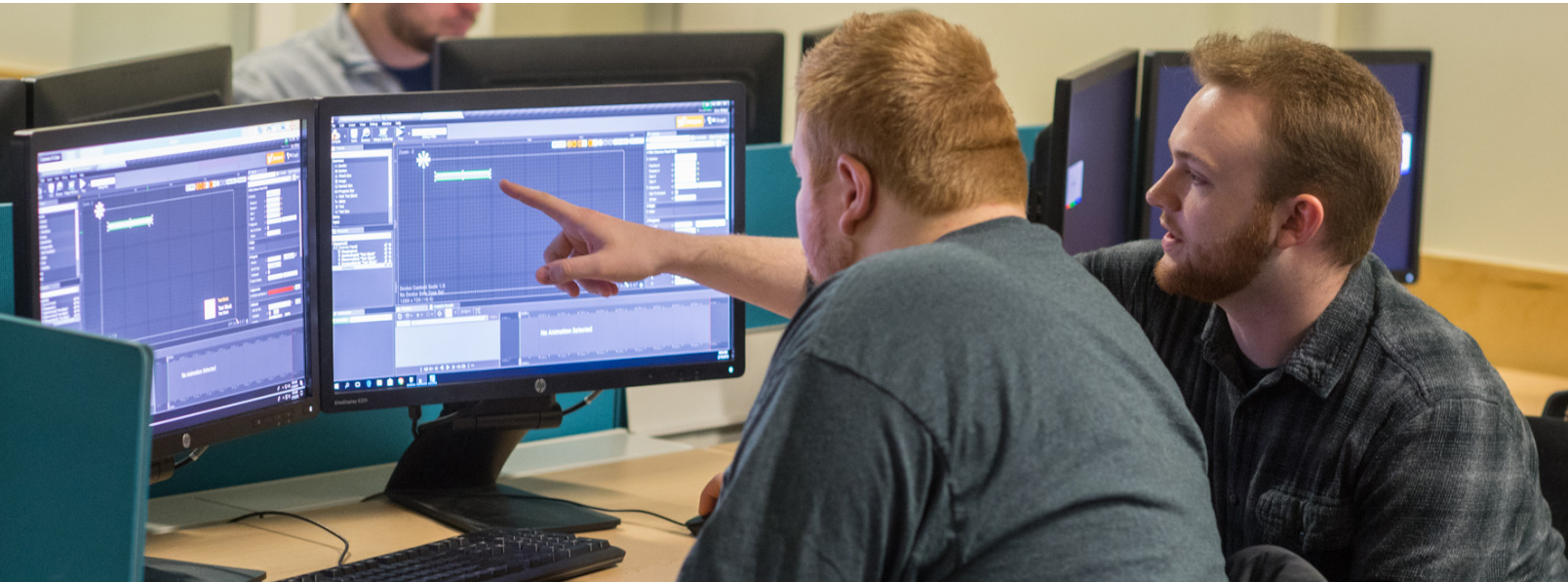
Diversity

Learning

Ethical Community

Opportunity





# The Plan

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan focuses on five key areas: Academic Programs and Offerings, Student Success, Institutional Effectiveness, Pride and Community, and Enhancing Resources.



## Academic Programs and Offerings

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.

Initiative 2: Honor our commitment to life-long learning.

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

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

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



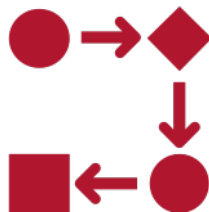
## Student Success

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.

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

Initiative 3: Position experienceships at the center of a Ferris State education.



## Institutional Effectiveness

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.

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

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



## Pride and Community

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.

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

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



## Enhancing Resources

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.

Initiative 2: Encourage revenue-generating innovation.

# Ferris Forward

## 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

# Key Strategic Targets

The Ferris Forward Strategic Plan is designed to help Ferris sustain its mission and enhance its unique career-oriented educational niche. Over the life of The Plan, Ferris State University will need to meet the enrollment declines in the state of Michigan head-on with targeted recruitment strategies and intentional growth in the areas that will best serve our students and their future careers. The Plan focuses on five strategic areas identified through extensive community listening sessions: Academic Programs and Offerings, Student Success, Institutional Effectiveness, Pride and Community, and Enhancing Resources. With mindful implementation of The Plan and its recommended action steps, Ferris State University will achieve the following key targets by 2024.

**14,000**

INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT TO 14,000 BY 2024.

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**5%**

INCREASE ON-LINE STUDENT CREDIT HOURS BY 5 PERCENT ANNUALLY.

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**3 New**

THREE NEW MARKET-DRIVEN PROGRAMS ARE ADDED TO THE CURRICULUM EACH YEAR.

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**75%**

INCREASE THE OVERALL FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATE TO 75 PERCENT.



**300**

INCREASE INTER-NATIONAL STUDENT HEADCOUNT TO 300.

**3%**

INCREASE MINORITY ENROLLMENT BY 3 PERCENT ANNUALLY.

**GPA**

INCREASE FTIAC STUDENTS WITH A GPA OF 3.5 OR ABOVE IN 2024 BY 3%.

**2%**

NET PRICE INCREASES NO MORE THAN 2 PERCENT ANNUALLY.

**50%**

INCREASE THE OVERALL FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE FOR FULL-TIME FTIAC BACHELOR DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS TO 50 PERCENT.

**75%**

INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH EXPERIENCESHIPS TO 75% BY 2024

65%

IMPROVE THE OVERALL SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE FOR FULL-TIME FTIAC BACHELOR DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS TO 65 PERCENT.



10,000

AT LEAST 10,000 ALUMNI ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED WITH THE UNIVERSITY.

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# \$1 Million

REVENUE FROM ACADEMIC GRANTS INCREASES BY \$1,000,000 ANNUALLY.

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# \$115 Million

COMPLETE THE COMPREHENSIVE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GOAL OF \$115 MILLION BY 2022.

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# Steering Committee and Work Group Members

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) was composed of a broad cross-section of the University community. The SPSC was charged with developing a new strategic plan to help guide the University's strategic priorities.

## Steering Committee

**Tony Baker**, Executive Director for Community Engagement

**Jennifer Dirmeyer**, Associate Professor, College of Business

**Lincoln Gibbs**, Interim Dean, College of Health Professions

**Kristi Haik**, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

**Sarah Hinkley**, Professor, Michigan College of Optometry

**Jennifer Johnson**, Professor, College of Arts and Sciences (Lead Writer)

**Jake Martin**, Chief Technology Officer

**Suzanne Miller**, Program Coordinator/Professor, College of Engineering and Technology

**Bob Murray**, Associate Vice President for Advancement

**David Pilgrim**, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion (Co-chair)

**Kristen Salomonson**, Dean of Enrollment Services/Director Admissions and Recruitment

**Spence Tower**, Professor, College of Business (Co-chair)

**Lisa vonReichbauer**, Assistant Director, Office of International Education

**Michael Williams**, Student

**Charles Wright**, Dean of Academic Affairs, Kendall College of Art and Design

## Administrative Support Provided by:

**Terri Cook**, Executive Assistant, Office of President

**Patty Terryn**, Administrative Assistant, Diversity and Inclusion Office

## Co-Chairs of Work Groups

### *Academic Programs and Offerings*

**Peter Bradley**, Director, Honors Program

**Sarah Hinkley**, Professor, Michigan College of Optometry

### *Student Success*

**Kathy Lake**, Associate Dean, Enrollment Services

**Joy Pufhal**, Dean of Student Life

### *Institutional Effectiveness*

**Tony Baker**, Executive Director for Community Engagement

**Angela Garrey**, Associate Director, Admissions and Recruiting

**Cindy Horn**, Director of University Recreation

### *Pride and Community*

**Megan Biller**, Assistant Director, Doctorate in Community College Leadership

**Kasey Thompson**, Assistant Professor, College of Business

### *Enhancing Resources*

**Jennifer Dirmeyer**, Associate Professor, College of Business

**Bob Murray**, Associate Vice President for Advancement



# 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 4-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.



# FERRIS STATE

## University

1884

# Ferris Forward

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