

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 4, 2007

Our Fall 2007 semester has begun with several pieces of very good news. Of all the positive developments at Ferris, the very best is that we are attracting and retaining students in record numbers.

Enrollment

Our fourth-day count of students became official last Friday and the numbers are up across the board. Most importantly, total headcount enrollment is 13,087 – 512 students more than last year, a 4% increase. Within that number are many separate successes:

- Big Rapids headcount is 9,680 – 194 students more than last year, a 2% increase
- Kendall College of Art and Design headcount is 1,180 – 98 students more than last, a 9% increase
- Off-campus headcount is 2,227 – 220 students more than last year, an 11% increase
- First Time in Any College Student (FTIAC) enrollment is 2,340 – 145 students more than last year, a 6.6% increase
- Big Rapids FTIAC Student Enrollment is 1,984 – 101 students more than last year, a 5.35% increase
- Kendall FTIAC Student Enrollment is 262 – 22 students more than last year, a 9.2% increase
- Off-campus FTIAC Student Enrollment is 94 – 22 students more than last year, a 30.6% increase

Additionally, Student Credit Hours (SCH) have increased.

- System-wide SCH total 158,793 – 4,745 more than last year, a 3% increase.
- Big Rapids SCH is 128,634 – 1,780 more than last year, a 1.49% increase
- Kendall SCH is 12,845 – 1,025 more than last year, an 8.7% increase
- Off-campus SCH is 17,314 – 1,940 more than last year, a 12.6% increase

We are attracting the most qualified students in our history. These students become campus leaders, mentors and role models. They continue to raise the bar of our University culture and are an important factor in our increased retention rates. This fall, our total first- to second-year retention rate hit 70% – a 3% increase. Within that number:

- First- to second-year retention of full-time bachelors students is 73% – a 4% increase
- First- to second-year retention full-time associates students is 68% – a 2% increase

Our commitment to creating a welcoming and supportive campus for all students also is reflected in our enrollment figures. We have more Native American, Asian, African-American and Hispanic students who declared their ethnicity at Ferris this fall. The numbers for African-American and Hispanic students are especially strong, with increases of more than 24% and 38%, respectively.

The largest headcount growth is the College of Allied Health with 204 students. The largest student credit hour growth is in the College of Business with an increase of 1,605 SCH. There is also significant credit hour growth in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Fall Enrollment summary is accessible online at – <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/memos/Fall2007Enrollment.pdf>

I want to thank everyone for their hard work in making these numbers a reality. It takes a concerted and coordinated effort on the part of committed individuals working together to bring about this kind of success. Whether you represent Ferris to students or keep campus looking its finest; whether you maintain our Web site or feed our thousands of students; whether you teach, keep the computers running, create our advertising, or help our students through academic, financial, physical or emotional issues, this great enrollment news has come about because of your contribution. Thank you again.

Founders Day

Last Thursday we gathered for Founders Day, which was a wonderful experience. The weather cooperated gloriously for our picnic lunch on the Quad, as well as for an ice cream social that brought together students, community members, faculty and staff. I want to thank Miles Postema for taking the lead in organizing the inaugural ice cream social. Thanks also to Ferris Board of Trustees members Sueann Walz, Tom Cook, and Ron Snead for attending these events.

Dr. David McFarland was on campus and conducted two stakeholder meetings on Founders Day and a third the next day to further our Strategic Planning initiative. He worked with our governing ideas and distinctiveness task forces and conducted a stakeholder meeting for the Big Rapids community that received rave reviews. Many thanks to Dr. Robert von der Osten for his strong strategic planning leadership.

In the morning I made some remarks to the campus community about our founders, Woodbridge and Helen Ferris, and also about where the University has been, where we are now and what the future may hold for us. If you were unable to make it to the Dome Room for my presentation and would like to take a look at the information, you can access a PowerPoint file presentation I used as the basis for my talk at - <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/speeches/FoundersDay2007.pps>

Higher Learning Commission

Our next university-wide accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission will be during the 2010-2011 academic year. Now is the time to begin the preparation for the self-study process. Vice President for Academic Affairs Tom Oldfield is pulling together the initial steering group to begin this process and will be sharing this with you.

Congratulations on your efforts that have resulted in such a powerful start to our academic year!

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler
President