



PRESS RELEASE: Faculty, Staff Awarded Ferris Foundation Exceptional Merit Grants

Betsy L Musolf to: Archive

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Good afternoon,

Here is a press release about Exceptional Merit Grants awarded to faculty and staff by the Ferris State University Foundation Board of Directors. The awards are made for proposals that advance the university's goals of engagement and learning. Questions can be addressed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager, (231) 591-2021 or sandygholston@ferris.edu.



Ferris Foundation Merit Grants.docx

View the release online here: <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/may/merit.htm>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 15, 2013

Faculty, Staff Awarded Ferris Foundation Exceptional Merit Grants

BIG RAPIDS – The Ferris Foundation Board of Directors has conferred \$27,725 in Exceptional Merit Grant Awards to help five faculty and staff members advance Ferris State University's goals of engagement and learning.

“The Ferris Foundation Board of Directors is pleased to support the tremendous efforts of the Ferris faculty and staff,” said Carla Miller, executive director of the Foundation and associate vice president for Special and Leadership Gifts. “Such innovation and collaboration is to be applauded.”

The following faculty and staff members will receive a portion of funding during the 2013-14 academic year for their proposals:

Michael Berghoef, of Grand Rapids, professor of Social Work, College of Arts and Sciences

Berghoef was awarded a grant for his proposal to build a virtual museum in collaboration with Ferris' Academic Service Learning partner in El Salvador. The museum will commemorate the struggle and resilience of the Santa Marta community.

“We hope to create a virtual museum and, eventually, a physical museum that will function in much the same way that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Ferris' Jim Crow Museum offer a pathway to healing historic wounds through education and a greater understanding of history,” Berghoef wrote in his grant application.

Tara Braun, of Big Rapids, International Exchange manager, Office of International Education

Braun's proposal features a Festival of Nations in collaboration with the Big Rapids community to showcase the area's diversity. The three-week event, planned this fall, will offer educational and cultural opportunities somewhat like Festival of the Arts, an annual arts celebration organized by the university and community.

"This focus will not only benefit our students, faculty and staff, but also the community in which Ferris resides," Braun wrote. "It is important that we showcase our growing diversity to educate and determine how to appreciate the differences of others."

Bradley Isler, of Big Rapids, associate professor of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences

Isler, who also coordinates the university's Biology and Biotechnology programs, was awarded funds to enrich a summer biotechnology academy offered for high school students interested in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) career. The academy, offered in July, also serves as an undergraduate recruitment tool. Grant monies will be used to purchase basic equipment for laboratory exercises in personalized medicine for the academy and for the university's BioTechnology program.

David McClendon, of Big Rapids, assistant professor of Mathematics, College of Arts and Sciences

McClendon received a grant to purchase software to develop a technology-based calculus course that will deepen students' understanding and increase their enthusiasm for mathematics.

"To reflect changes in society, there is an ongoing movement within the mathematics community to reform the teaching of calculus," McClendon wrote in his proposal. "One important element of this reform is the use of student-centered, discovery-driven activities using technology in the classroom, which take the place of standard lectures. This fall, I will be teaching a section of Math 220 (Calculus 1) at Ferris based on this approach."

Arinze Nkemdirim Okere, of Lowell, assistant professor of Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy

Okere's proposal targets funding support for a study on the role of alpha lipoic acid in the treatment of diabetic retinopathy. The grant will help fund the pilot study, a collaborative research effort between faculty from the university, College of Pharmacy and Michigan College of Optometry that will provide direction for a larger study. Upon its completion, investigators will apply for National Institute of Health funding for a randomized study with

a larger population sample.

“The execution of this study has the potential to expose Pharmacy and Optometry students to areas of research,” Okere said. “Interested students will actively be involved in research and students will be mentored by different investigators. This will provide the avenue to teach the students basic principles of research design and methodology. There is no better way to accomplish this than by mentoring students one-on-one in ongoing research.”

The Gifts and Grants Committee develops policies and procedures, and recommends additional resources for Exceptional Merit Grants and Foundation for Excellence Scholarships.

The committee also monitors scholarship awards for compliance with donor specifications, recommends and monitors grant disbursement, and recommends student scholarship recipients for the Foundation Scholarship.

For more information or to make a gift to Ferris, please contact The Ferris Foundation at (231) 591-2365 or visit www.ferris.edu/foundation. Details about establishing scholarships or endowments may be obtained from the Advancement Office at (231) 591-3825.

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