



Points of Pride

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY • FALL 2007



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FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Imagine More



President's Corner

This first issue of *Points of Pride* comes at an important moment in Ferris State University's history. The University has record enrollment, is earning recognition for its diversity efforts and is in the midst of a Strategic Planning Initiative that will help guide us into the future.

Just as you can find expanded news coverage through the *FYI* newsletter's online version, you can learn much more about changes at the University and ways to get involved through www.ferris.edu by typing in "diversity" or "strategic planning" into the search engine on the home page.

I am very pleased with our accomplishments at the University and excited about our prospects for future success. Thank you for your continued efforts to assure that Ferris will become an even more dynamic and diverse institution. I look forward to reading about your work and accomplishments in *Points of Pride*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Eisler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David L. Eisler



Pictured are *Points of Pride* contributors Bill Bitzinger, Sandy Gholston, Leah Nixon, Jeff Ek, Michelle Herron and Al Williams.

Points of Pride celebrates Ferris

As Ferris continues to change and grow, so does the News Services department. With this change and growth comes the opportunity to create and develop new publications to celebrate the accomplishments of faculty, staff and students. The forum for sharing some of this good news is *Points of Pride*, a new quarterly publication replacing the weekly *FYI* newsletter.

Points of Pride's inaugural issue includes features on the 2007 Distinguished Teacher Mary Murnik, Dr. Kevin Alexander's work with the American Optometric Association, as well as Dr. Mark Swan's work with the Michigan Optometric Association, athletic trainer Tim Glover's cross-country bicycle ride to raise funds for cancer research and University College's 10th Anniversary celebration.

As its name aptly notes, we're proud of the accomplishments of faculty, staff and students at Ferris, and *Points of Pride* will celebrate their dedication and hard work. If you have news to share, contact *Points of Pride* Editor Leah Nixon at leahnixon@ferris.edu or (231) 591-5604.

Don't forget that a weekly update of campus activities and events may still be found online at www.ferris.edu/news, the Campus News home page that includes *FYI* online.

Contributors to *Points of Pride* include writers Leah Nixon, Michelle Herron and Sandy Gholston; photographers Bill Bitzinger and Matt Yeoman; and designers Jeff Ek and Al Williams.

Murnik receives Distinguished Teacher honors

Since she was a young girl, Mary Murnik knew she wanted to become a teacher – “I wanted to be like my teacher at the time,” she laughs when asked if she thought she’d someday become a professor.

Hoping someday to teach as her grade school instructor inspired her, Murnik was probably destined from the get-go to find her way to Ferris State University – after all, Ferris ties run in the family.

“Woodbridge Ferris used to walk my great-aunt home if she stayed late working on schoolwork,” Murnik said, adding she discovered two other great-aunts and a great-uncle also attended the University, then known as Ferris Institute.

In fact, it’s the pioneering spirit of Ferris that Murnik finds endearing just as her relatives before her. “Ferris made a very big difference in their lives, being the children of Finnish immigrants, and allowed them a lot of opportunity.”

It’s Ferris’ small town feel and opportunity-driven atmosphere that Murnik feels are the essence of what faculty at Ferris do for students – noting that the focus is on students’ success both inside and outside the classroom.

It’s this passion that led Murnik’s colleague, Biology department head Karen Strasser, to nominate her for the award.

“I was impressed with the teaching Mary does both in and out of the classroom,” Strasser said. “Her classes are full of writing assignments, problems and Web activities that force her students to apply the material they are learning. She mentors students involved in campus groups, as well as independent research projects. Mary remains current in her discipline, regularly attends conferences and makes sure her courses are the best they can be.”

Murnik came to Ferris in 1980. She was honored with the Martin Luther King Social Justice Award in 2004, and in 1998, was honored with the Ferris Professional Women “Woman of the Year” Award and the Michigan Association of Governing Boards’ Award for Teaching Excellence. Her research interests include mutagenesis, and she mentors undergraduate student research in that area. She chairs the Pre-Dental Advisory Committee and is a Dental Admission Test Constructor, Biology Content Area, for the American Dental Association.





Michigan College of Optometry is ahead of the curve

When asked how he divides his time between living in Big Rapids and Sylvania, Ohio, and serving as dean of the Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University, all the while balancing his responsibilities as president of the American Optometric Association, Dr. Kevin Alexander replies, "I've always operated at Mach 2 with my hair on fire."

An experienced and dedicated staff also help Alexander keep the wheel turning. In order to maintain his schedule, he points out the importance of having a well-organized system, crediting his Associate Dean Nancy Peterson-Klein and Assistant Dean Bob Buckingham.

"I'm a 30,000-foot view guy," he said. "I've been blessed with a superb associate and assistant dean who help drive the ship."

However, Alexander is not the only mover and shaker in the MCO. Dr. Mark Swan is currently serving as president of the Michigan Optometric Association, and Optometry senior Mary Phillips is vice president of the American Optometric Student Association.

Involvement with the AOA or MOA is important because of the information-sharing it provides between the MCO and industry professionals, Swan added, saying, "We're able to bring industry information to the students first-hand, sometimes before other schools, so that puts us ahead of the curve."

Alexander's leadership of the AOA puts him at the head of an organization with 35,000 members in 6,500 communities across the country whose mission is to improve the quality and availability of eye and vision care. As leader of the MOA, Swan helps the organization advance the quality and accessibility of optometric services throughout the state. He has also advanced that mission by serving on several MOA committees, including children's vision care, environmental vision, legislative, Medicaid and industry relations.

As vice president of the American Optometric Student Association, Phillips is gaining experience at the national level in an organization that helps promote optometric professions and enhances the education and welfare of optometry students, as well as advancing the vision and ocular health of the public. The AOSA represents more than 6,000 students attending the 19 schools and colleges of optometry throughout the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico.

For more information on these organizations, visit www.aoa.org, www.themoa.org and www.theaosa.org.

Ferris trainer challenges himself while raising money for cancer research

Bicycling through the high elevations and thin air of the Rocky and Sierra mountains helped Tim Glover learn a lot about himself while helping raise money for cancer research, a cause near and dear to his heart. No matter how daunting the challenges of his cross-country bike ride were, Glover knew well before he started the ride they were nowhere near the challenges cancer survivors are faced with on a daily basis.

So, when the unique opportunity to blend two of his greatest passions – bicycling and contributing to cancer research – presented itself, Glover made his mind up, quickly.

"I wanted to challenge myself both mentally and physically. I had started to feel as if my life had become 'stuck in a rut' ... so to speak," said Glover, assistant athletic trainer at Ferris State University. He decided to take part in Cross Country Challenge 2007 through America by Bicycle with a goal of raising funds for the American Cancer Society, which estimates that there were 1.3 million cancer cases in 2006. "I thought conquering a challenge of this magnitude could really help me change some aspects of my life."

Glover, through life's lessons, has come to appreciate how precious life is as he has had so many people – friends, acquaintances and loved ones alike – impacted by the disease of cancer in one way or another.

"I don't believe there's anyone who hasn't been affected by this disease," Glover said as he pondered a more recent close-to-home loss that deeply affected him. "We (Ferris State University's athletic training staff) ... lost a dear friend and colleague in Grand Valley State head athletic trainer Todd Jager to cancer. Research is vital to finding a cure and that can only happen through financial support."

From a standpoint of dollars and cents, moved by so many people in his life who have been touched by cancer, Glover established a lofty goal to raise about \$50,000. "My fundraising didn't come anywhere close. I only reached about \$6,500 of my \$50,000 goal," he said.

His self-awareness, now, is about as high as it has ever been thanks in no small part to the lessons Glover learned as he biked from the West Coast to the East Coast.

"I learned that if I put my mind to achieving a goal, even a goal that deep down I think is outside of my grasp, I can accomplish it," he said. "I also learned that I am a stronger person than I give myself credit."



University College marks 10 years of promoting student success

Woodbridge N. Ferris, founder of what now is Ferris State University, perhaps said it best: "I have come here to help you, boys and girls, if you will let me."

Nearly 80 years after his death, it's difficult to believe the man whose dream of education for working men and women became a reality and is carried on through University College. Celebrating its 10th year of existence, University College at Ferris State University serves as – among other things – a safety net, to assist students through a host of different services, for more than 10,000 students every year. The mission of University College truly represents that quote and the philosophies of Ferris.

William Potter, dean of University College for eight of its 10 years, says he and his staff take pride in the tens of thousands of lives this unique and comprehensive program has touched – in ways both large and small. On the strength of that success, University College is celebrating its anniversary with the theme, "A Decade of Difference." For those who might have been skeptical a decade ago when Linda Travis presided over this unique experiment as interim dean of University College (1997-99), results have largely silenced critics, as far as Potter is concerned.

"We are a safety net at University College," Potter said. "We think what we do is very helpful and we feel very fortunate to have college status here at Ferris State University,



Pictured are Educational and Career Counseling Center Counselor Rosemarie Van Ham, University College Dean Bill Potter, SLA Program Coordinator Julie Thatcher, SCHOLAR Program Coordinator Karen GreenBay and President David Eisler.

even though we don't offer any of the traditional degrees the other colleges offer and most of what we do is with students during their freshmen and sophomore years. Our goal is to help students by giving them structure and guiding them in the right direction. "What we try to do is help them to focus and put them on the right track."

University College offers a number of services and programs, including the Academic Support Center, Structured Learning Assistance, developmental programs and curriculum, Ferris State University Seminar and more. As part of the Academic Support Center, under the supervision of Jane Pole and Arlene Krellwitz, award-winning tutoring programs, instruction in academic skills and seminars on time and stress management, academic honesty, and study skills are offered to students.

Structured Learning Assistance

SLA, coordinated by Julie Thatcher, provides students up to 45 hours of additional help per course since it was initially introduced in 1994. SLA courses offer students additional hours of assistance in classes that are deemed high risk for failure. The courses focus on improving study habits, taking better notes, improving test-taking skills and more. University College studies show that 90 percent of students recommend SLA and enroll in it again. In 2000, the program earned national recognition when it received the Theodore M. Hersburgh Certificate of Excellence and a replication grant courtesy of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (2001-04).

Developmental Programs

The developmental programs and curriculum, under the direction of department head Joan Totten, include courses that focus on improving study skills, courses that emphasize reading and critical thinking, and Career Exploration (CARE) classes to help students who are unsure about what major fits their interests. Shelly VandePanne serves as the coordinator of FSUS. All first-year Ferris students enroll in FSUS to focus on the skills and mindset it will take to be a successful college student.

"If there is any place at this institution that emphasizes an open-door policy and focuses on opportunities it is University College," said Totten, who believes students and parents save money on college as a result of University College programs that help students focus on a program that suits them. "We feel we have a caring faculty who are here to help students, and it's the type of caring faculty that can't be matched everywhere. I believe very strongly that a lot of the success we've experienced is due to the leadership of Bill and we definitely feel we have a gem there. His leadership has been tremendous."

The mission of preparing students for successful educational experiences is paramount to Potter and his staff in University College.

"We feel that our programs are helping to better prepare students and to keep them on a good academic track and to get them into their program," said Potter, who believes University College programs help students find what interests them and keeps them enthusiastic about college, more focused and less likely to want to walk away.



University College celebrates 10 years of service to Ferris students.

Career Counseling

University College offers educational and career counseling in an area headed by Deb Cox where students can be tested and evaluated to help them learn more about their potential career interests. The counseling serves to pull out what already is inside the student. The SCHOLAR Program, which is coordinated by Karen GreenBay, works with students for peer mentoring, cultural awareness, team building and more. Janel Lockwood is the international student advisor and works on everything from on-campus employment, to academic training, to advising and more.

The Honors Program, also under the umbrella of University College, has grown from 197 students in 1997 to 585 at the start of the 2007 fall semester of classes.

"I think what we do (leads to) better student performance, better student retention and higher graduation rates," Potter said. "I think the fact we have all of these services at one college has been of great benefit to this University. If we were to put these services in the individual colleges then they could get buried as a lower priority, but in University College this is our top priority. "This is what we do and it is job one for us. We're here to help our students become successful."



Visiting professor enjoys a modern coming to America story

Nearly 20 years ago, Merja Ala-Nikkola first stepped onto American soil in the United States. In 1988, she arrived as an exchange student on a visit to the Twin Cities area and the University of Minnesota. A love affair was born, the magnitude of which mostly was unknown to her at the time and slow-cooked for two decades before she finally returned to the Western Hemisphere – this time far more mature as a visiting professor at Ferris State University.

Today, Ala-Nikkola has a Ph.D. to her credit; she also is a mother of two teen-aged boys and serves as Research and Development manager at Hamk University of Applied Sciences in Hameenlinna, Finland. The last 20 years have been good to her, and her family, but there just seemed to be something that was missing, and she could feel it in her heart. Her recent return trip to the United States – 19 years in the making – brought back fond memories and created a host of new ones as she educated Ferris students about Finland, her home country; care for the elderly, for which she is a champion; and fielded questions on those subjects and others for a lecture series on the Big Rapids campus.

At Ferris, Ala-Nikkola spoke to students in several classes, including Recreation Leadership and Management courses. Having taught classes with such themes as social policy, women’s studies, public health and information studies at the University of Tampere before she moved to Hamk, Ala-Nikkola eased into a comfort zone as she started to speak to Ferris’ students during her stay as part of an exchange program between the two institutions. Among her areas of expertise is care for the elderly – a topic near and dear to her heart and the subject of her dissertation.

“People are living longer, and they have more illnesses now because they are living longer,” she said. “We’ve found that loneliness is one of the biggest problems that people go through because their children are gone, and they are not as active as they used to be. Those people have now become passive or have become withdrawn from things that they used to do.

“One of the things we’ve found is that exercise is good for people with Alzheimer’s. Being active and doing things is very helpful,” Ala-Nikkola added. “One of the things I would like to see is a more positive attitude toward old age where people focus more on what strengths people still have and not spend so much time worrying about things that people lost.”

Ferris' diversity commitment is recognized

Ferris State University's commitment to diversity recently was recognized by Minority Access, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to improving minority opportunities in the pursuit of higher education, professional and managerial goals. The annual award is presented to institutions that demonstrate a university-wide commitment to diversity through planning and programming.

Ferris' success in working toward the creation of a more diverse campus and community was saluted on two primary levels during the Minority Access Role Models Conference (Sept. 13 through 16) in Arlington, Va. Initiatives such as GEAR UP, a program largely designed to give under-represented students a look at the value of a college education; international student festivals, which bring cultures together at Ferris; various orientation activities, and the Office of Multicultural Student Services are among the organizations or services that have helped enhance the academic, social and cultural experiences for minority students at Ferris.

"There is much work to be done, but this award suggests that we are moving in the direction of becoming a truly diverse institution," said David Pilgrim, Ferris' chief diversity officer, who accepted the award along with Leroy Wright, dean of students, and Todd Stanislav, director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning.

The University was recognized for its Martin Luther King Jr. week events and activities, the Disabilities Spring Ball and its aggressive recruitment activities such as the Office of Multicultural Student Services-sponsored Student Life Bus Tour, a recruiting trip designed to expose young people in the Saginaw, Flint and Detroit areas to glimpses of what Ferris State University has to offer. Mentoring programs such as the SCHOLAR program and the TIPS SCHOLARS office also were cited for their work as represented by the Diversity Planning Committee and through the creation of a diversity planning document.

A University faculty member since 1990, Pilgrim was appointed to head the Diversity Office in the fall of 2006 by President David Eisler to effect a change in the University's campus environment that will foster, promote and celebrate diversity.

For more information about diversity efforts at Ferris, visit www.ferris.edu/diversity.





Ferris first to offer Information Security and Intelligence degree

Ferris State University has established the first Bachelor of Science in Information Security and Intelligence degree in the nation. The multidisciplinary degree targets both corporate needs, as well as those of law enforcement, defense and intelligence organizations.

Students began enrolling this fall for the program being offered at the University's Grand Rapids campus.

Originating from the work of Dr. Greg Gogolin, a professor of Information Security and Intelligence at Ferris, the degree bridges the gap between the needs of the security, intelligence and law enforcement communities, and the higher education academic programs offered. The degree is made possible through a collaborative effort between Ferris, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Defense, National Intelligence, security and intelligence organizations, and corporations.

"This degree is an example of the forward-thinking and educational creativity of our faculty," said Tom Oldfield, interim vice president for Academic Affairs. "The industry experience they bring to the University allows us to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of business and industry in the state of Michigan and beyond."

According to Gogolin, while there is great application of the competencies for degrees offered in law enforcement or defense, the more significant long-term potential may exist in corporations. Corporations own 85 percent of the critical infrastructure in the United States and face many of the same threats from terrorism, gangs and organized crime, he said.

"It is the rise in white collar crime and the need to develop the skills of individuals using information technology to fight these criminals that reflects the need for a program such as this," said Donald Green, vice chancellor and dean of Ferris-Grand Rapids.

Added Gogolin, "A competency in a field such as Geographic Information Systems can be applied to just about any field. GIS can be visualized as layers of data on a map. One layer of data may be something like the addresses of registered sex offenders, while another layer may be information about a school bus route. It would be quickly apparent where the high-risk areas would be on the bus routes."

For more information, contact Ferris-Grand Rapids at (616) 451-4777 or visit isi.ferris.edu.

Kendall invited to Middle East Office Exhibition

Students at Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University had an extraordinary opportunity to exhibit their work at the Office Exhibition in Dubai in June, an annual international trade show now in its sixth year at the Dubai International Exhibition Centre.

Six Kendall students were accompanied by four faculty members, who are chairs of the four programs represented by the students and their products: Max Shangle, Furniture Design; Tom Edwards, Industrial Design; Phil Carrizzi, Metals/Jewelry; and Brent Skidmore, Furniture as Functional Art. Dr. Oliver H. Evans, president of Kendall, also accompanied the students to the exhibition. The students designed and built a large display booth, which was placed in the same area as some familiar names from the design world, including Haworth, Herman Miller, All-steel, Teknion and Vitra.

This is the first time a college has been invited to exhibit products at this event, and only one other institution, The University in Dubai, was represented by a display of design boards featuring projects completed by students.

“The opportunity to provide this sort of quality international business and cultural experience to our students is very rare, and we are grateful for this prestigious invitation from the exhibition director, Paula Al Chami,” Evans said. “It is a privilege to offer these students a global perspective of the business of design in a location that is undergoing the development of a dynamically high-growth economy.”

Participants experienced additional pressure because of the show’s first event: the official ribbon-cutting by Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of the Dubai Department of Civil Aviation, chairman of the Emirates Group and vice chairman of the Dubai World Trade Center. Exhibitors were encouraged to have their booths set up and staff in place to greet the sheikh as he toured the show. Because the Kendall booth was located close to the entrance of the show, students got an up-close view of this very special ceremony.

The Office Exhibition is held in conjunction with the Hotel Show and the Retail Show, and attendance figures for previous shows indicate that more than half of the nearly 12,000 registered trade visitors are from Dubai; more than one-fourth of the visitors are from Abu Dhabi, the other Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states; and the balance of the visitors are from Europe, India, Pakistan, Iran and North Africa. Exhibitors at the show also include representatives from Italy, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Portugal, Turkey and China.



Contact Information

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The renovated Interdisciplinary Resource Center features 54,700 square-feet of educational space, with an additional 6,000 square-feet of space included in a connector between the IRC and College of Business. The updated facility also features state-of-the-art teaching spaces, seminar rooms for individual or group study, along with formal and informal gathering spaces to enhance learning both inside and outside the classroom.

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