Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you today. Your past, present and future support of higher education is something we depend upon and appreciate very much.

These are challenging times in Michigan. Like other universities across our state, Ferris State University has shared the pain of budget reduction. In doing so we have worked to sustain quality, maintain access, and preserve the core of our University. At Ferris we focus on educating Michigan citizens for careers. This is precisely what Michigan needs now.

Budget Reductions - We have reduced budgets intelligently, to preserve our focus on careers, to emphasize high quality instruction, and to position our campus help the state and its citizens.

- The impact of 15% reduction in state funding has been substantial. By next fall we will have eliminated 90 positions at Ferris State University, 8.4% of our workforce.
- Our enrollment is among the fastest growing in the state. From Fall 2000 to 2003, the number of students at FSU grew 16.71%, the fastest of any Michigan public university.

Tuition Restraint - Ferris State University has accepted Gov. Granholm's proposal.

- To do so we will impose a 5% reduction for next year's budget
- Each of us must work to keep a college education accessible and affordable for our students. For 2003 our tuition and fee increase was 4th lowest among Michigan public universities.

Other Areas of Concern - Help us keep Ferris strong so we can follow our mission of preparing individuals for careers and providing access for a wide range of students.

- Student Support - Students at Ferris average $5,601 in total financial support, an amount second only to University of Michigan. Even in times of reduced finances, we are redirecting funds to increase student support. Your continued support of MERIT, TIP, and other programs for student support is vital.
- MPSERS - We have no control of costs with the unfunded mandate of MPSERS. Your assistance is needed in stopping the continued trend of increasing benefits and the extension of benefits to noncontributors.

For additional information on the readings and data used in the development of this presentation - http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/presentations.htm
**First Impressions** - During this first year at Ferris, my approach has been to listen and learn. I have met with our faculty and staff in groups of 20-30 people, listening. I’ve conducted 56 meetings, visiting with over a thousand of our people. **The Pride of our People** in what they do is extraordinary. This is my 29th year in higher education and I have never worked with people who care more about students and their institution. Here is some of what I have learned.

- **Ferris Is Unique and Different** - Ferris has a degree mix of technical and professional programs found nowhere else. Many are delivered in a 2+2 laddered format. Last year FSU awarded 808 associate degrees, seven times greater than any other state university. Outreach efforts extend these offerings throughout the state.

- **Career Focus** - At Ferris we believe students should earn more than a degree. We prepare the highly skilled workforce Michigan needs. FSU grads get good jobs. Our latest survey showed 97% of our graduates finding employment.

- **Support for Students** - Our University draws from the vision of our founder, Woodbridge N. Ferris, who viewed Ferris as an opportunity school, committed to helping students succeed. In the past two years first year student retention has improved 4%.

- **An Educational Model that Works** - We believe in small classes with full-time faculty. Our average class size is 19 and the student to faculty ratio is 15:1. Fewer than 15% of our classes are taught by adjunct faculty and we use no graduate assistants.

**Vision for the Future** - Education is about creating hope and opportunities for our citizens. Now is the time for higher education to provide leadership in helping to create Michigan's future. Over the coming months we will work to implement the Michigan Technology Initiative.

- Recruitment of highly qualified students to manufacturing technology fields through a coordinated network of career counselors and opportunities.
- Development of seamless articulation among vocational technical centers, community colleges and the university.
- Creation of specialized certificate and degree offerings designed to provide lifelong opportunities for career growth and development.

**Reality of Our Present** - Our University is committed to help the citizens in Greenville. We will work with Montcalm Community College, Michigan Works!, and other partners to address the challenges faced by citizens in Greenville.

- The technical and professional training Ferris provides will help displaced workers prepare for new careers and employment.
- **Our commitment is do whatever is possible, not to advance our University, but rather to make a difference for these people.**

Through a model of high quality education, a commitment to student access, and a strong focus on careers, Ferris State University is working to make a difference for our state and its people.