Ferris State University is a leader in economic development and in the preparation of Michigan’s citizens for successful careers. We provide the unique kind of education essential to enable the state’s workforce to meet the demands of future employment. From programs that train the builders of buildings, operators of heavy equipment, computer information systems, electronics engineering, manufacturing, nurses, healthcare professionals, pharmacists, optometrists, and so on, Ferris provides programs that are hands-on, experiential and that may be four years or less. These unique, equipment and practical experience intensive programs are key to the jobs of tomorrow.

**Ferris impacts economic development through education and training.**

- Ferris provides programs that are unique in the state, some that are even unique in the nation.
- Last year Ferris awarded over 830 associate degrees, eight times more than any university in the state. This strength at both the associate and baccalaureate levels allows the University to create innovative 2+2 degrees, where students first earn the associate and then the bachelor degree.
- To help support the Workforce Investment Act, Ferris State University has created 56 training programs, four times more than any other university in the state. These range from 12 credit hours credentials to 2-year and 4-year programs.
- Ferris is working with Montcalm Community College to help workers in Greenville and has offered its services to assist with displaced workers at Steelcase facilities in Grand Rapids.

**Ferris provides jobs for Michigan citizens.**

- Ferris State University is the largest employer in Mecosta County with 1,333 full-time employees, 573 part-time employees and 2,731 student employees; a total workforce of 4,585. The University is the largest employer for a five-county area.
- Our impact as the largest employer in the West Central area, where small cities and towns are the norm, is significant. The benefits to the local economy, education and other partners cannot be overstated.

**Ferris spurs economic development through partnerships with business, industry, and government.**

- The College of Allied Health has created 3 certificates to support Michigan Works!
- Ferris is working with the Dow Foundation on a major redesign of workforce education.
- It is estimated that the economic impact of Ferris optometrists is over 1/3 of a billion a year.
- Through Freedom to Learn, Ferris State University is actively working to integrate technology in instruction in Michigan schools.
- To help address the nursing shortage in Michigan, Ferris has created clinic faculty workshops to train staff nurses as instructors for pre-licensure nursing programs.
Funding Reductions and Cost Savings

Budget reductions from the state have significantly reduced the capacity of the University. The impact of these reductions has been increased by continued strong unfunded enrollment growth. Additional funding reductions result from the continued unfunded mandate of MPSERS.

- The combined impact of funding reductions and strong enrollment growth is that the University now receives 23.3% less per student than 3 years ago.
- To date the University has cut 86 full-time positions. Focusing on our core educational efforts, 36 of these cuts have been in administration. Included in this is a significant reduction in custodial services.
- Funding for travel, supplies and equipment has been reduced or eliminated. When equipment is needed, used items are frequently selected.
- The University has closed programs, reduced the number of majors and emphases, eliminated class sections, and capped admissions in some areas.

Ferris State University has an ongoing effort for cost reduction and process improvement. The necessity of the current funding environment has quickened these efforts. Examples of cost-effective savings include the following -

- Reorganization of the University, including the elimination of upper administration and reducing the number of departments.
- Elimination of many printed materials and replacing them with electronic documents, examples include the university catalog, viewbook, course schedule, and electronic rather than paper reports.
- Many services are now primarily available via the web, examples include student recruitment, admissions, financial aid, registration, billing and payment.
- Ferris works through consortia to purchase fuel, power, insurance, supplies, and in the near future, health insurance. Through these the University receives the advantage of large volume discounts. The University is the state’s largest user of the cooperative advantages available through the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.
- To meet the increased student enrollments at our University, administrators, including the president, are encouraged to teach at least one class.
- The University actively partners with business, industry, and government agencies for support, supplies, and equipment. Recent examples include partnerships with CISCO, Allstate Insurance, Adtran and Xpiron.

Affordability

The unfortunate result of state funding reductions is that the responsibility for funding higher education has been passed from the state to students. To help keep our education affordable, Ferris State University is involved in the following efforts -
Ferris has increased financial support to students by over 6.5% for this year and expects to increase that support by nearly 9% for next year.

Partnerships with community colleges and career technical centers allow students to begin their education closer to home and then transfer to the University. Ferris is the statewide leader in laddered 2+2 programs where students first earn an associate and then a bachelor degree.

In addition, the University is actively partnering with community colleges so that many students can complete their bachelors degree through Ferris coursework at a community college near their home.

Ferris discounts tuition for high school students who dual enroll for college classes.

To use facilities and people more efficiently, last year Ferris State University implemented a summer incentive. Students who take two summer classes and purchase a meal contract receive a free private room in the residence hall. Summer study allows students to graduate more quickly and helps the University handle growth with existing facilities.

**Investments for the Future**

Over the past eighteen months Ferris State University has worked to create a vision for Ferris and its future. This vision has three parts -

- We need to create a Learning Centered University.
- We must work together.
- We must become an engaged campus.

This renewed focus on learning has become a core value for our University. It is the basis for decisions both for the present and future. Even in a time of reduced funding, Ferris State University is actively working to create a bright future. Recent investments for the future include the following -

- The University has created a Master of Science in Nursing to help prepare instructors for nursing programs throughout Michigan.
- To address growth and facilitate access, the University budget has been redesigned with incentives for academic growth.
- The University has completed a comprehensive master plan for its campuses in Big Rapids and Grand Rapids. It has now begun a complete facilities and infrastructure audit.
- Ferris State University has a vision for technology. It is midway through an administrative software conversion, and has plans for a campus-wide wireless network, and for the planned replacement of faculty and staff computers.
- The University has developed a plan to improve its classrooms over the next five years and create productive learning environments for our students.

Additional information from this presentation is available at -