Thus far, we have established Strategic Thinking as Part One of the Ferris State University Strategic Plan. Our strategic thinking is based on our six Core Values and represents our collective picture of what future Ferris will look like and how we will operate. Establishing our Strategic Focus Areas was a result of a collective, feedback-driven process in which countless Ferris campus and community members participated.

We are now excited to begin Part Two and Part Three of the planning process – Implementation and Evaluation. Both processes are extremely important as we move forward. To create the future Ferris that we collectively envision, we must take appropriate action and measure our progress.

**Implementation** becomes, therefore, a process of setting goals and allocating resources to accomplish those goals. Traditionally, we have set goals in a hierarchical fashion, beginning with University-level goals and aligning goals at the division, college, unit, department and program levels. Establishing goals this way is a well-established process that produces many good results, and there is room for such goal-setting to occur this way in this plan. However, there are also other ways to go about setting goals that we hope will become more routine as we aim to achieve our collective vision of future Ferris.

- **We hope that goal-setting will become more collaborative and transparent.** If one group has a similar goal to another group, we hope that discussions will ensue regarding resource sharing and optimizing our use of people, space, and money to accomplish the common goal. A collaborative, rather than competitive, approach should be our aim.

- **We hope that goal-setting will rely on existing University data.** We have numerous existing data sets available to inform our decision-making. Using these data sets effectively will help us to ensure that our goals are realistic and worthwhile. We often think we know why problems exist, but until we are able to prove the actual cause of the problem or identify the specific area that need our attention, our thinking is merely an exercise in speculation.

- **We hope that goal-setting will occur at the individual level.** As stated above, we understand that value of a hierarchical goal-setting process. We also believe in the tremendous value of small and steady individual contributions toward a larger goal. As we envision future Ferris, we also envision everyone identifying an area or areas to which each of us can contribute to our future.

Allocating resources to achieve our goals can be a nebulous, or even contentious, process. It is our hope that goals set in the spirit of collaboration and with sound data to support the goal will cause the allocation of resources to become more clear – and exciting and empowering. Furthermore, we hope that we can establish processes to allocate resources to support the individual-level contributions to our strategic plan, realizing the importance of many individuals working together for our future.

**Evaluation** is necessary to round out our progress on our strategic plan. Traditionally, we think of measuring our progress as an exercise in numbers production. Can we count our increases? Can we see the jump in numbers from this year to that year? Certainly, statistical representation of our progress is important. Numerous state and federal compliance and performance indicators require that we measure our progress in such ways.

However, evaluation can also extend to a more qualitative measurement of our success. Harder to track, but just as important, are the stories that our students, employees, partners, community members and others share about Ferris State University. These stories can indeed be a valuable indicator of our success.

We will do well to remember both quantitative and qualitative measurements as we assess our progress on our goals and evaluate whether our strategic thinking is coming to fruition.