DISCUSSION SUMMARY

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Self-study report to the HLC
Spring 2011

(Draft for Focus Group and campus review sessions)

Revision date: August 23, 2010

Please send comments, suggestions, and revisions to the Ferris HLC Self-Study Steering Committee: hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu
About this Discussion Summary

For the past three years, Ferris State University has been involved in a rigorous and thorough self-study process. This self-study is being completed for two key reasons:

• First, to maintain our status as an accredited institution of higher education, we must provide evidence to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that we are meeting all of their established accreditation criteria. The results of the self-study, as reported in the Self-Study Report, will be presented to HLC approximately 8 weeks ahead of their site visit in April 2011 as evidence that we are meeting — and, in many cases, exceeding — these criteria.

• Second, the self-study process provides the University with the opportunity to reflect on what we’re doing, how well we’re doing it, and what we can do to continue to improve.

This document is a summary of the self-study report, intended to guide discussions and additional reflections on the self-study process itself and the results we’ve collected.

We invite you to read this summary — and the entire report — carefully and provide your comments. At the conclusion of this document, we’ve included some questions and space for your comments. Please take a few moments to include your voice in this important campus dialogue.

Thank you for your commitment to improving Ferris.

The Self-Study Steering Committee
Organizational note:

The final report consists of three sections:

- **Section One** discusses our institutional history, the progress we’ve made since the last self-study and HLC reaccreditation in 2000-01, and significant changes at the University.
- **Section Two** reports the results of the current self-study activities, responding to the five criteria for accreditation.
- **Section Three** will contain federally required reports detailing characteristics of our student population, graduation statistics, faculty and staff populations, and financial reporting, referred to as an Institutional Snapshot and Federal Compliance information. This section documents the ways the University meets federal requirements in key areas, such as transfer and verification of student identity.

This discussion summary covers sections one and two (Section Three will be drafted in September 2010 when the Fall 2010 data is available). The final report will continue to be updated and revised during fall 2010, with the final report submitted to HLC and the campus community in early 2011.

Section One: About the University

Chapter One: Introduction

In the more than 125 years that Ferris State University has existed as an institution of higher education, the University has been committed to effectively teaching its students and preparing them for their futures.

When Woodbridge N. Ferris (1853-1928) founded Big Rapids Industrial School in 1884, he had a vision of educating students “to make the world better.” When Ferris Institute was first accredited by the North Central Association (NCA) in 1959, its educational philosophy stressed that “Ferris Institute has long been known for the manner in which it has opened the doors of educational opportunity for serious-minded students regardless of their previous educational background and attainments.”

Since its first regional accreditation in 1959, Ferris has completed the reaccreditation self-study process under three organizational names: first as Ferris Institute, then, beginning 1963, as Ferris State College, and since 1987 as Ferris State University. The most recent reaccreditation self-study process was completed in 2001, when the NCA team granted the University a positive ten-year continuation of its accreditation, identifying three areas to address in the coming years. Subsequent visits in 2004, 2006, and 2010 in response to university-initiated change requests also resulted in a positive assessments by NCA/HLC.

The University’s required progress report on the merger of Kendall College of Art and Design was accepted in 2004. The University has also requested changes that resulted in additional visits since the 2000-01 comprehensive visit:

- In 2003, a new degree site was added in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
In 2006, the University was granted permission to offer any of its existing programs online. In 2007, as a federal requirement, three of the university’s other locations were visited to confirm the quality of extended offerings. In 2010 the University was approved to offer its first non-clinical doctorate, an EdD in Community College Leadership.

In 2008, in response to a change request submission for new online programs (Nuclear Medicine and Dental Hygiene), Commission staff changed the University’s status to include any Ferris programs under the online umbrella, negating the need for the University to seek permission for any future online programs.

Each of these change visits has resulted in very positive endorsements of the University’s systems and capabilities with no required follow-up required. In 2007, Ferris also had a commission-mandated site visit as a part of the Commission’s regular process to evaluate the other locations of universities that have a substantial off-campus presence. At that time, Flint, Grand Rapids, and Lansing were all visited and received favorable reviews.

Chapter Two: Previous self-study results

In March 2001, the NCA/HLC team visited Ferris as the culmination of the University’s reaccreditation self-study process. The team identified many strengths in the University’s organization, processes, and procedures. Among the strengths were these:

- An inclusive planning process that is well conceived and executed
- Enrollment management initiatives, including a strategic marketing plan
- A comprehensive, integrated array of support services
- Dynamic opportunities available through the University Center for Extended Learning (Note: now College of Professional and Technological Studies)
- An organization “positioned to become a regional, national, and international leader in the delivery of career-oriented, technical, and professional education”

The site-visit team also identified three challenges facing the University, for which they recommended concentrated effort and attention. The three challenges were these (summarized here):

- Some inconsistency in General Education requirements across departments
- General Education requirements in programs offered through Kendall College of Art and Design differ from Ferris’ general education requirements
- Need for a maintenance, replacement, and improvement cycle for the University’s technology infrastructure

Since the 2001 visit, the University has addressed these three areas of concern and reported its progress to the NCA/HLC at regular intervals as a part of its university-initiated change requests.

*Note: Ferris State University is one of only 212 institutions that has approval from the HLC.*
Chapter Three: The self-study process

The campus community began the current self-study process about three years ago, beginning in fall 2007 when the president commissioned the associate vice president of Academic Affairs (now associate provost) to lead the self-study effort. Since this time, the Self-Study Steering Committee (comprised of Steering Committee co-chairs; co-chairs for each Criterion Committee; co-chairs of the Data Committee; individuals representing key campus constituencies, such as AFSCME and the Senate; ex-officio members, such as HLC peer reviewers; and the writer/editor) have coordinated extensive research efforts into the policies, plans, practices, and structures of the University.

Throughout the self-study process, the University community has been encouraged to participate, share their individual perceptions, and respond to the self-study report through committee activities, open meetings and “listening sessions,” online surveys, self-study events, and report “reflection sessions.” Participation, involvement, and collaboration have been central to the process,

- From initial discussions of the HLC criteria: defining how they apply to University practices and crafting the self-study research approach
- Through the research process: identifying, collecting, and defining evidence
- To the conversations about the results: writing and editing to report the data accurately

The research efforts, led by the co-chairs of the Criterion Committees, involved members from across all areas of the University, providing direct access to essential data and information while ensuring a breadth of perceptions and expertise.

While the entire University community had many opportunities to contribute and be involved in the research process, the Steering Committee established and enlisted the help of a Communication Committee later in the process. This committee’s task was to focus efforts on ramping up the campus awareness for the final year of activities, including reviewing and responding to the report drafts and, finally, preparing for the site team’s visit in April of 2011.
Organizational note:

Section Two reports the results of the University’s extensive self-study process that began in the fall of 2007. These results respond to HLC’s five Criteria for Accreditation:

- Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
- Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
- Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
- Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
- Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

Each of these five criteria has four or five core components that formed the basis of the self-study’s research process. A summary of the evidence and the self-study results are presented in the following pages.

Section Two: The self-study results

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

The mission of Ferris State University

At the University level, four documents constitute the set of University mission documents: the Mission Statement, the Vision Statement, the Core Values, along with each year’s Goals and Initiatives. For the past 125 years, Ferris State University has maintained both strong clarity and public articulation of its mission. The specific wording of its mission statement has been revised and updated over the years, and these revisions have reflected the often-subtle shifts in the University’s development and growth as an institution. From W.N. Ferris’ early vision of re-educating out-of-work lumbermen, to the needs of an expanding global community, at the center of Ferris’ mission are the central aims of being a “career-oriented,” “teaching institution.”

Core Component 1A

Are the organization’s mission documents clear and do they articulate publicly the organizations’ commitments?

Ferris’ mission and core values are central to the University’s public image and its internal practices. Revision of the mission documents in the past five years has led to increasing visibility of the mission and the values across University messaging. This revision process also led to efforts to revise division, college, department, and program mission statements to align more clearly to the University’s documents.
The University’s mission statements at all levels reflect these four principles:

- Career preparation
- A General Education component focused on lifelong learning and responsible citizenship
- Multiple partnerships
- Preparation for a rapidly changing global society

Self-study comments:
Self-study research efforts indicated that the University communities share an awareness and acceptance of the mission and values and are strongly committed to practicing them within their individual sphere. The self-study process concludes that Ferris’ mission, vision, and core values are well defined and accepted, communicated broadly and consistently, and supported by activities that are consistent with the mission. The University’s diverse range of program levels and distinctive programming also reflect the institution’s commitment to its mission. Ferris’ mission has served the University well in the current economic downturn, as citizens acknowledge the value of preparation for careers, resulting in increased enrollments at the university.

Core Component 1B

*In its mission documents, does the organization recognize the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves?*

The University continues to make significant gains in becoming an institution that recognizes the importance of diversity. At the governing levels, the institution adopted language and provided a baseline to develop an organizational culture that embraces diversity. University activities show that the institution in theory and practice is embedding an appreciation of diversity into the core of its operations.

Ferris’ history is grounded in an appreciation of diversity and conscious efforts to develop and enhance the diversity reflected in its student body, faculty, and staff, as well as providing opportunities for the University community to enhance its experiences and awareness of diverse ideas, cultural artifacts, and viewpoints. Woodbridge N. Ferris’ belief that education should be “for all people, all of the time” remains central to the University’s educational efforts today (*Autobiography, p.193*).

The University, while being proud of its historical basis for these efforts, is also cognizant of the limits of our successes. This awareness led to the expansion of the University’s efforts in several key areas:

- Centralized campus diversity efforts into one office: The Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO).
- Named a new Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) to coordinate and lead diversity efforts. This position was later changed to vice president of Diversity and Inclusion.
- Developed and adopted a Diversity Plan with four clear goals.
- Renamed, and geographically relocated, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, which is now the Office of Multicultural Student Services.
- Expanded the outreach efforts and student support services of the International Center.
• Reinforced the centrality of global awareness in the General Education requirements.
• Enhanced awareness of globalization through several campus activities, including the Globalization Initiative.

Self-study comments:
Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris State University continues toward its vision of serving more diverse populations and a culture of inclusion. Overall, the self-study research indicates a positive and strong awareness of Ferris’ commitment to enhancing the diversity within the University. The self-study process concludes that Ferris State University desires to be a truly diverse institution by providing an institution that is supportive, safe, and welcoming, and by embracing a diversity of ideas, beliefs, and cultures. Nevertheless, the University has also identified improvement opportunities, including retention of minority students and recruitment of a diverse staff, and is addressing these challenges.

Core Component 1C

Does an understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization?

The process of revising and adopting the revised Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values by the University community in 2007-08 provides clear evidence of the strong support and acceptance of these documents. At the conclusion of the process, the following groups publicly adopted these documents:

• Academic Senate
• Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC)
• President’s Council
• Ferris State University Board of Trustees

Since then, SPARC led the work to apply these mission concepts into actionable University goals and initiatives. Through many constituent-based meetings, these goals and initiatives drove efforts to develop a more effective, valuable, process-driven, and accessible planning process. The president formed an Annualized Planning Task Force to coordinate these efforts, including a charge to create revised planning templates and a timeline for Strategic Alignment Planning and Unit Level Planning. This strategic alignment requires all units to develop their plans to support the University’s goals and initiatives. Applying the mission and values to all University practices and policies, then, is central to all of these planning activities.

Further evidence of support for the University’s mission is demonstrated in the work of the Academic Senate’s Academic Program Review (APR) process that has been in place since 1988. Identifying a clear program mission and defining a clear relationship to the University’s mission are among the seven APR goals and key categories of data analysis.

Self-study comments:
The self-study research process indicated that the widespread understanding and acceptance of the University’s mission and core values are evident across campus policies and procedures. From program review, faculty evaluation, and support for professional development and faculty research, to university-wide
diversity, planning, and budgeting initiatives, the University mission provides underlying guidance for all decisions. The self-study process concludes that the revision process led to increased visibility and increased transparency of the mission and values. With the University’s mission and core values positioned in central locations and in every day practices and procedures, all members are encouraged to reflect on their significance. While the revision process may have been completed in 2008, the process of applying the mission across campus and communicating it across constituencies continues.

Core Component 1D

*Do the organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission?*

Ferris State University has appropriate organizational structures and policies in place to provide guidance for effective institutional governance, and these governance policies and procedures are clearly supported by the mission. Ferris is governed by an eight-member, governor-appointed Board of Trustees that has general supervision of the institution and controls and directs institutional expenditures. Ferris operates under a traditional university structure, with five major divisions, each led by a vice president who reports directly to the University president:

- Academic affairs
- Administration and finance
- Government relations and general counsel
- Student affairs
- University advancement and marketing

Also reporting directly to the University president is the vice chancellor/president of Kendall College of Art and Design, the vice president of Diversity and Inclusion, and the vice president of external and international operations. In addition to these divisions, several groups serve specific purposes in the operations of the University:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President’s Council</th>
<th>Responsible for making strategic decisions and providing oversight of operations for the University</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deans’ Council</td>
<td>Provides advice and feedback to the provost/vpaa on curricular and academic matters, including recruitment, grade processes, assessment, budgeting, and especially academic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs’ Council</td>
<td>Advises the provost/vpaa and the Deans’ Council on operational considerations within the academic enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Council</td>
<td>Shares important information and provides regular updates concerning their areas and members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC)</td>
<td>Provides advice and counsel to the president related to progress on the University’s planning goals and strategic initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Senate</td>
<td>Serves as the legislative body of the faculty and as the official representative of the Ferris faculty to the provost on matters relating to academic policies and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendall’s College Senate</td>
<td>Serves as the legislative body of the Kendall faculty and as the official representative of the Kendall faculty to the college president</td>
</tr>
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College and divisional governance includes department heads (administrative
position) or department chairs (faculty position) or directors (non-academic). Across the divisions, a strong participative management process is supported by an active committee structure and well-defined roles and responsibilities. Academic programs also rely on external advisory boards for guidance on curricular, development, and programmatic issues.

Self-study comments:
Self-study research efforts indicated that the many governance entities are both a strength and a limitation, with several often overlapping groups involved in University decision making, and with an occasional lack of clarity about which of these groups has responsibility. The self-study process concludes that Ferris State University’s institutional structure provides great opportunity for all interested stakeholders to participate in the governance of the University and that Ferris’ long history and practice of participative management and governance continues to reinforce this structure. At the same time, the self-study process revealed opportunities for the University to streamline its structure and processes that may lead to greater transparency and efficiency.

Core Component 1E

Does the organization uphold and protect its integrity?

Since its founding in 1884, Ferris has prepared students for successful careers. The strength and consistency of Ferris’ mission has provided the foundation of the University’s integrity as an academic institution, guiding the community’s adherence to high principles and professional standards.

The University operates under many well-defined policies and procedures, which — as part of campus-wide efforts to increase transparency about operations and policies — are available on a central University website. These centralized policies include Board of Trustees Policies, Business Policies, Human Resources Policies and Procedures, Academic Affairs Policy Letters, Student Affairs Policies, and miscellaneous policies that cover everything from graphic standards to parking rules and regulations.

University actions and procedures are also included in, or directed by these policy documents:

- Code of Student Community Standards (student handbook)
- Kendall Student Handbook
- Employee dignity policy
- Administrative “at will” policy / Board of Trustees Policy: Part 6 (Section 6-110)
- Collective bargaining agreements with the representative bargaining units
- Student complaint policies and procedures (academic and non-academic)

Self-study comments:
Self-study research efforts indicate that the University has developed policies, procedures, and practices that reflect its high standards and professional principles. From the Board policies that direct overall operations to the student and Human Resources policies that focus on individual rights and responsibilities, Ferris continues to complete its tasks and meet its mission of...
preparing students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. The self-study process concludes that Ferris State University’s commitment to increasing visibility and transparency in all of its actions will help to ensure that Ferris should continue to be well respected. Simultaneously, the self-study process has also revealed some inconsistencies in our policies. Whenever these are discovered, as we found with the transfer policies, improvements are initiated.

Did you know?
Ferris’ mission has always emphasized providing an inclusive education for all. From its inception, Ferris State University was envisioned as an institution for all people. W. N. Ferris believed that education should be “for all people, all of the time” (Autobiography, p.193). W.N. Ferris described the institution in its school catalog as “a school for the many” which gave “a practical education” for “the ambitious person, youth or maid, man or woman” (1898 course catalog, p.8).

Criterion Two: Preparing for the future

The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

The Future of Ferris State University

Maintaining high standards in every aspect of the University’s academic programs, governance structures and policies, and interactions with employees, students, and constituents is a part of Ferris’ long history. To face the future challenges with confidence, the University must be able to rely on solid planning and forecasting processes.

Core Component 2A

Does the organization realistically prepare for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends?

The challenges that Ferris State University is currently facing are not new. Social, political, and economic challenges have faced the nation, the state, and the University over the years. Facing the state’s current high unemployment rate, decreases in funding for higher education, and increased “brain drain,” Ferris has relied on its strategic planning process to address these challenges in a proactive manner. Over the years, as the financial base has shifted, moving the University from being a state-supported institution to its recent levels of diminishing state assistance, Ferris has developed a model of financial stability that relies less and less on these unstable state funds. The University has also responded with across-the-board general fund budget reductions, increased scholarship and financial aid opportunities for students, and new fund-raising initiatives.
Self-study comments:

Self-study research efforts indicated that the University has developed more accurate forecasting methods to prepare for the needs of the future, in both academic and non-academic areas. From measuring enrollment trends, student service needs, and staffing requirements, Ferris is responding by considering the effects of these social, political, and economic events on the University’s changing student body. The self-study process concludes that, over its history, Ferris has always responded to the needs of the state and region by offering courses, degree programs, training, and certification in a wide range of professional fields. In the past few years, these curricular enhancements reflect the challenges facing the state, and they also reflect changes in course delivery and student demographics.

Core Component 2B

*Does the organization’s resource base support its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future?*

Ferris uses a combination of methods to develop academic priorities including the new planning initiative process that ties divisional plans to the overall University strategic planning priorities. In this process, funds are allocated to initiatives that directly relate to the University’s strategic goals. Because of Ferris’ tradition of being an institution focused on teaching and learning, the University supports this mission keystone with significant allocation of financial resources to support its classrooms, laboratories, and clinics; its faculty and staff development opportunities; and its ongoing assessment of these to ensure excellence.

Support for educational programming consists of more than financial resources and strategic planning. Also key to the support of Ferris’ academic programs are ongoing professional development of its faculty and ongoing improvements to its technological infrastructure. Some of Ferris’ development and support activities include the active and extensive programming provided by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL), the established research and development opportunities supported by the Academic Senate, the encouragement and financial support of faculty professional activities, the training provided for University staff, and the performance appraisal process that operates at all levels of the University.

Self-study comments:

The self-study research process indicated that the University’s resource base that supports its education programs is both dynamic and responsive to the needs of the entire campus community. Ferris’ tradition as a teaching/learning institution ensures a focus on effective teaching methods, environments, and faculty support. The self-study process concludes that Ferris supports and enhances its academic priorities not only with financial resources and support to develop its faculty, administration, and staff, but also by inculcating a culture that values professionalism and continuing development. At the same time, resource constraints exist and many areas have been asked to “do more with less,” and budgets have been declining in many important areas.
Core Component 2C

Does the organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement?

Ferris has several ongoing evaluation and assessment processes to collect and disseminate data about the University’s institutional effectiveness, both academic and organizational:

- Academic assessment processes include the Academic Program Review (APR) process, learning outcomes assessment, online course assessment, career planning assessment, student affairs assessment, student assessment of instruction, and academic program accreditation.
- Organizational evaluation resources include the Office of Institutional Research, the Office of Budgetary Planning and Analysis, the Banner system, and LibQual.

These evaluation and assessment processes:

- Are supported at the University level with financial support, staffing (when needed), and organizational encouragement and support.
- Include feedback loops that deliver the collected data to stakeholders and organizational offices for appropriate — and, when needed, corrective — action.
- Include established methods for collecting, processing, and reporting information and making the data available to all stakeholders.

Self-study comments:

Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris may need to increase efforts to “close the loop” in many of these assessment and evaluation processes. While the University community feels strongly that its assessment and evaluation processes are appropriate, adequate, and reliable, the application of the data collected could be more visible, transparent, and more widely shared. The self-study process concludes that while extensive credentialing and accreditation efforts ensure that Ferris’ academic programs meet or exceed the requirements of the professional areas, campus assessment of program, course, and operational outcomes must support these larger assessment and evaluation efforts. At Ferris, assessment is a part of everyday activities in all divisions and offices. The challenge is making this assessment information part of a transparent “loop” that feeds continual improvement and awareness of future needs.

Core Component 2D

Do all levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission?

Responding to a recognized need for improved communications and decision-making processes, University leadership introduced new strategic planning processes in 2007. These processes were built on Ferris’ tradition of open, participatory, and transparent decision-making...
and communication processes and resulted in the establishment of SPARC and the Strategic Alignment Planning process. The University’s Strategic Plan identifies the University’s goals, details the area(s) holding leadership for each goal, describes the status of progress toward meeting the goal, and includes detailed objectives for meeting the goal. The plan, available on the SPARC website, shows the current progress for each goal with a progress bar indicating percentage toward goal.

These planning processes and the Strategic Plan:
• Are based on the University’s mission, as applied to six organizational goals
• Are aligned with the University’s academic goals and planning
• Guide unified, aligned actions across the University affecting curriculum, physical plant, infrastructure, student recruitment, and employees’ use of quality-improvement approaches

To work effectively, these planning processes:
• Value university-wide, cross-divisional and cross-functional participation
• Proactively seek out areas of expertise across campus
• Provide direction for all divisional and college goals
• Rely on clearly articulated checks and balances at all levels

Self-study research efforts indicated that, overall, the University community feels that the planning processes allow for innovation and have clear channels of authority. The self-study process concludes that Ferris State University continues to address current challenges, including a tightening economy and a diminishing pool of potential students, with more extensive long-term planning and new ways of managing its resources. Preparing for the future not only requires foresight, forecasting, and efficient planning processes, but it also requires effective collection and application of forecasting, planning, and assessment data.

The Criterion Two committee confirmed, during their research activities, that the University’s leaders are continuing to monitor and improve the University’s planning processes, as well as the communication methods to increase awareness and involvement. The self-study process concludes that the University’s recent strides in this area, while still in their early stages, are providing the University with focused and directed leadership. The use of assessment and evaluation data in informing these directions presents an improvement opportunity. Broadening the university-wide engagement is another area for improvement, as a small proportion of the Ferris faculty and staff take the time to actively engage in these processes.
Did you know?
Ferris responds to changing state and global needs with dynamic programmatic changes.

Over its 125-year history, Ferris has responded to the economic needs of the state and region by offering courses, degree programs, training, and certification in a wide range of professional fields. In the past few years, curricular enhancements reflect challenges facing the state and also changes in course delivery and student demographics. This list highlights a few of these recent programmatic revisions:

| Critical state-wide need for nurses | • Accelerated 3-semester nursing degree for students w/ an earned bachelor’s degree in another field  
| • Online master’s degree in nursing  
| • Collaborative programs w/ community colleges |
| Institute for Alternative Energy | • Uses resources from existing technology programs (construction mgmt; HVACR, and facilities mgmt)  
| • Focused on reducing bldg energy use  
| • Sponsor of annual conference |
| Information Security & Intelligence program | • Combines Ferris’ expertise in Criminal Justice and information technology  
| • Addresses significant needs in federal and private sectors |
| Digital Animation & Game Design program | • Provides expertise to develop entertainment, but also visual simulations for business and industry |
| Resort and Event Mgmt certificates | • Combines resources from PGM, PTM, Hospitality Management, and Music Industry Management |
| Kendall’s MBA in design | • Collaborative management degree with emphasis in design |
| Doctorate in Community College Leadership | • Combines a business core and uses an interdisciplinary approach to prepare future leaders of Michigan’s community colleges |

Criterion Three: Student learning and effective teaching

Does the institution provide evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission?

Central to Ferris State University’s mission is a goal to prepare students for successful careers by offering career-relevant programs and relying on strong external partnerships. An institution that strives to provide students with immediate job-market skills and to prepare graduates for successful lifelong careers must assess student learning by focusing on programmatic goals and professionally-defined outcomes. Evidence of effective preparation for these professional areas is captured on several levels:

- In the placement and employment rates of the University’s graduates
- In graduating students’ scores on credentialing exams
- In program assessment of student learning and effective teaching
- In the course and program-level results collected and reported by faculty and academic leaders annually, according to the planned assessment methods and established standards
Core Component 3A

Are the organization’s goals for student learning outcomes clearly stated for each educational program in order to make effective assessment possible?

Ferris State University has a long history of practicing effective learning assessment. By the early 1980s, many University programs had established clear course and program learning outcomes and had begun systematic program assessment. The full process became centralized in 2007, and since then, Ferris has implemented several new processes to track assessment of student learning outcomes, focusing efforts on improving definition, implementation, and alignment of the assessment strategies in the colleges, programs, and courses across campus.

Internal assessment efforts include these:
1. Academic Affairs Assessment Committee (AAAC) is responsible for coordinating assessment efforts across academic colleges, units, and departments.
2. Academic Program Review (APR), a faculty-driven process administered through the Academic Senate, operates on a 6-year cycle, reviewing and assessing all academic programs.
3. University General Education Committee (UGEC), a university-wide committee appointed by and reporting to the provost/vpaa, monitors the effectiveness of the GE program, guides the work of the GE “area” committees, and completes regular assessment of the learning outcomes of the University’s students
4. University Curriculum Committee (UCC), a standing committee of the Academic Senate, leads the process for curriculum additions and revisions at the university level.

External assessment efforts and evaluation measurements include these:
1. Certification testing: Many of the University’s graduates must pass credentialing and/or licensure testing in order to become an active, practicing member of their profession. These results are reported in Section 3, the Institutional Snapshot.
2. Accreditation: Program-specific accreditation plays a key role in curricular development, curricular revision, and assessment of student learning. Learning outcomes are based upon standardized sets of skills and require demonstrated continuous assessment and improvement plans. A list of Ferris programs that maintain specialized accreditation is provided in the Federal Compliance section.
3. Advisory Boards / Professional feedback: A majority of Ferris’ programs use Advisory Boards as an external resource on curricula matters and information about current skill needs in the employment market.

Self-study comments: Self-study research efforts indicated that one of the strengths of Ferris' assessment program is its broad, university-wide reach and application. Ferris’ other locations are subject to the same assessment measures as on-campus. In addition, Ferris recognizes that teaching and learning take place in many...
environments and settings, all with established and appropriate assessment processes. The self-study process concludes that assessment continues to be a high priority at Ferris State University. Clearly stated outcomes, assessment measures, and data collection will continue to drive continuous improvement. Efforts will continue to involve more faculty in substantive discussions about the use of student learning assessment data to inform pedagogical and curricular improvements, especially at the program and department levels. In addition, documentation of improvements will be expanded with a goal of demonstrating increasingly positive results regarding students’ achievement of learning outcomes.

Core Component 3B

*Does the organization value and support effective teaching?*

Ferris demonstrates its value and support of effective teaching by recruiting, hiring, and mentoring faculty with demonstrated teaching excellence and expressed desire to support and develop student learning. The University supports effective teaching primarily through the efforts at the college level with its emphasis upon support for faculty in a variety of ways, including professional development funding and peer support, along with the activities of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL).

Innovative approaches to teaching and learning are both supported and recognized at Ferris through grant opportunities and annual recognition events and awards. These grant and recognition activities are also supported at various levels and from a variety of sources, from the Ferris Foundation to the Academic Senate and the Office of Academic Affairs.

*Self-study comments:*

Self-study research efforts indicated that the University supports effective teaching, and that the University’s support ensures instructional quality in varied learning environments. Research results emphasized that the University’s experienced educators — whose backgrounds are pertinent to their professional area — are a key strength of the University. The self-study process concludes that Ferris’ research and professional development programs, as well as the historical and ongoing emphasis placed on teaching, allows Ferris faculty to put teaching methods, innovative approaches, and student-centered course design at the center of their work. Another strength highlighted by the self-study process is the professional expertise and ongoing connections to business and industry that Ferris faculty are recognized for, and which they successfully bring into their classrooms. At the same time, a limitation is that the faculty evaluation process is not thought to be as effective as it could be in providing useful feedback for faculty and our processes to not always contribute to resolving teaching deficiencies easily.

Core Component 3C

*Does the organization create effective learning environments?*

Ferris State University believes that effective learning environments extend well beyond the classroom and begin with a foundation of academic and personal support for students. From academic advising to professional mentoring, Ferris provides students with many opportunities to obtain guidance from advisors,
counselors, and faculty members at all stages of their academic careers.

Over the past ten years, improvements and renovations are improving the University's instructional classrooms into physical spaces that encourage and support effective learning. Within its labs and clinics, Ferris also supports effective learning with innovative, state-of-the-art, and safe environments that replicate the work environments of the students' professional areas. Because of Ferris' career-focused mission, these clinics, galleries, labs, and studios are essential components of the teaching and learning that occur at the University and, thus, receive a consistent level of support and resources.

The University’s teaching and learning environments extend outside of the borders of traditional classroom space through experiential learning, service learning, internship opportunities, and online courses. These, too, are encouraged, supported, and enhanced through systematic reviews, revisions, and updates.

Self-study comments: Self-study research efforts indicated that the University provides effective and dynamic learning environments. Research indicated that effective learning environments are supported through several important processes, including faculty evaluation processes, a low faculty-to-student ratio, as well as numerous fruitful relationships between program faculty and industry, business, and the professions. The self-study process concludes that the University’s commitment to improving and using unique learning spaces, faculty connections with resources outside the University, as well as international and student-directed experiences are all clearly strengths in creating effective learning environments and advancing the University mission of preparing students for careers and lifelong learning.

Core Component 3D

Do the organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching?

In evaluating and assessing Ferris’ success in providing effective learning and teaching, the University's resources and support of each were also assessed. Ferris supports effective learning facilities with appropriate technology to foster innovation through the integration with the Campus Master Plan and the technology update program.

The University recognizes the breadth of facilities, strategies, programs, and systems of support necessary for providing effective teaching and student learning. This breadth is apparent in the library and resource facilities available at FLITE (the Ferris Library for Information, Technology, and Education), the Kendall library, the various resource collections across campus, the art galleries and music studios, the tutoring and writing support centers, as well as the clinical and technical labs.

These learning resources also include the many opportunities available for student engagement in campus and community life. More than 290 student organizations provide structured activities and encourage group interaction, individual development, social contributions, and awareness of professional issues. There is rarely a time when some enrichment or engagement opportunity is not present.
Self-study comments:

Self-study research efforts indicated that the Ferris community feels the campus teaching and learning resources — and support of these resources — are one of the University’s significant strengths. Among the specific strengths identified through the self study were these: the University’s campus and physical spaces, FLITE’s resources and facilities, the SLA program, the Writing Center and tutoring resources, the wide range of student services, and the extensive technical and computer services. The University is proud of its ongoing support for these resources, its commitment to continuing excellence and innovation in its use of the resources, and its continuing improvements to the physical resources and learning “spaces” that support effective teaching and learning. The self-study process concludes that Ferris’ history of being a leader in career-related technology from up-to-date, advanced health clinics to state-of-the-art engineering labs continues to ensure its excellence in the future.

Did you know?

External assessment is one measure of student learning at Ferris, including external certification, licensure, and accreditation. Ferris’ academic programs use both internal and external assessment data to measure student learning. Because of Ferris’ career-based focus, many of the University’s graduates must pass credentialing and/or licensure testing in order to become an active, practicing members of their profession. The table below identifies the professions requiring credentialing and/or licensure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Certification (for practice in Michigan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAHS</td>
<td>Nursing/BSN</td>
<td>National Council Licensing Examination-NCLEL-RN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAHS</td>
<td>Dental Hygiene/AAS</td>
<td>American Dental Association’s Dental Hygiene National Board Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAHS</td>
<td>Respiratory Care/AAS</td>
<td>National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COB</td>
<td>&quot;Professional&quot; Golf Mgmt./BS</td>
<td>Professional Golfers Association (PGA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEHS</td>
<td>Recreation Leadership Management / BS</td>
<td>Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEHS</td>
<td>Education/BS</td>
<td>Michigan Test for Teaching Certification (MTTC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEHS</td>
<td>Criminal Justice/BS</td>
<td>Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Pharmacy/PharmD</td>
<td>National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCO</td>
<td>Optometry/OD</td>
<td>National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criterion Four: The acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Over the past few decades, institutions of higher education have led in increasing the awareness that learning should not be confined to childhood or the classroom, but should take place throughout life and in a wide range and variety of situations and environments. This ongoing pursuit of knowledge has been a part of Ferris State University’s mission from its beginning as a re-training institution in the late 1800s.
Core Component 4A

*Does the organization demonstrate, through the actions of its board, administration, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning?*

Ferris’ commitment to lifelong learning is central to its core values, from its University, college, department, and program mission statements to academic degree programs that serve the needs of non-traditional students or those seeking to upgrade their professional credentials and expertise. The actions and activities of Ferris community members at all levels and in all environments — from Board and staff members to faculty and students — demonstrate this commitment.

The University formally supports this commitment through its policies, procedures, resource allocations, and community activities. Campus programs encourage student education and learning outside of their academic programs, including leadership, service, and activism opportunities. Faculty development is supported through many avenues including FCTL resources, programs, and activities; the sabbatical leave program; research grant and support programs. Administrative and staff development is supported through Human Resources development activities, the tuition benefit program, Summer University programs, as well as specialized training and education opportunities. Campus activities encourage community learning across the campus, providing students with opportunities to learn from each other, but also to learn from the University’s faculty, staff, and administrators. These activities demonstrate the value of lifelong learning through example.

*Self-study comments:*

Self-study research efforts indicated that the University community believes significant resources are being spent university-wide and by individual units in the colleges for professional development and that there is a clearly articulated commitment for continued professional development. The self-study process concludes that Ferris’ commitment to lifelong learning is evident in the development opportunities that range from training for more effective completion of day-to-day job tasks, wellness opportunities, and awareness of emerging community needs, to career development activities and financial support of research. Some concerns surfaced about the disparity among different personnel groups (e.g. support staff vs. faculty investments) and different support levels among different units or colleges, with some investing extensively and others being less supportive.

Core Component 4B

*Does the organization demonstrate that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs?*

Acquiring a breadth of knowledge and skills and exercising intellectual inquiry are integral to Ferris’ educational programs. This centrality is reflected across Ferris, from the breadth of the University’s academic programming, its dynamic curricular process, and its comprehensive assessment processes to the depth and breadth of its General Education program, its graduate and professional programs, and the reach of its co-curricular activities and opportunities.
Within their academic degree programs, students are encouraged to gain this breadth of knowledge and skills and exercise intellectual inquiry. These activities are supported through research opportunities, participation with professional organizations and groups, as well as involvement in career-related competitions and development activities.

Self-study comments:

Self-study research efforts indicated that knowledge, skills, and intellectual inquiry are central to the University’s educational programs and activities. Ferris’ comprehensive assessment and curricular development processes and a rigorous general education program support this centrality, which is also grounded in the University’s mission. However, although historically a “teaching institution,” Ferris is slowly increasing emphasis on faculty and student research. The self-study process concludes that, while this increasing research practice enhances the academic environment and complements effective teaching, the University’s engagement in advancing research must be considered carefully to assure it complements Ferris’ historic mission. Although widespread in implementation, assessment of students’ learning and the implementation of systematic improvements that result from assessment findings continue to demand attention.

Core Component 4C

*Does the organization assess the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society?*

Ferris State University has devoted special efforts and resources to prepare students for their careers and lives after graduation. In particular, Ferris emphasizes equipping them for the global, diverse, and technological dimensions of society. The University’s commitment to these efforts is expressed in the mission, vision, and core values documents. The University also promotes student learning in a global, diverse, and technological society through a wide variety of programs and services, including its General Education program requirements, international studies opportunities, Study Away program, multicultural organizations and activities, and the University’s extensive diversity initiatives and opportunities.

Experience with and expertise in using technology are also key components of nearly all of Ferris’ degree programs and classroom activities. Students in pre-professional programs are educated in the safe and effective use of current technology and in the innovative development of tomorrow’s technology and equipment. Technology tools are also central to the University’s classroom facilities, online courses, research and clinical labs, and educational resource facilities.

Self-study comments:

Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris is committed to providing students with an education that prepares them for the global, diverse, and technology demands of their futures. Ferris evaluates its success in meeting this commitment through several processes, including the Academic Program Review (APR) process, the General Education assessment activities, and other systematic measures. The self-study process concludes that the University is effective in preparing students for the global, diverse, and technological dimensions of society. Among the identified strengths are Ferris’ growth in areas of diversity, increased emphasis on diversity events, increased involvement in
the prestigious Fulbright program, and the access to cutting-edge classroom and laboratory technology. At the same time, evaluation of our effectiveness in all general education areas continues to challenge us.

Core Component 4D

*Does the organization provide support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly?*

The support structure that ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly extends beyond the transference of knowledge from faculty to student. The entire University community carries the responsibility and accountability for maintaining the integrity of all University practices, processes, and procedures. Maintaining integrity, practicing responsibility, and being committed to community service are components Ferris threads throughout the University’s daily practices with the intent that these values are interwoven into all of its members’ lifelong pursuits.

The goal of University practices and policies is to empower students to become effective and active learners, empower faculty and staff to become active participants in their professional communities, and empower administrators to become strong, effective leaders — and to empower all students, faculty, staff, and administrators to become responsible members of the Ferris community.

**Self-study comments:**

Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris is committed to supporting, maintaining, and educating all of the University’s members in ethical and responsible behavior. The self-study process concludes that the University’s practices and procedures that support this behavior exist in academic classroom content, in University practices with internal and external constituents, and are enforced by University policies. Academic integrity is central in our community, and “ethical community” is one of our core values.

Faculty development takes many forms, from self-directed learning and research, to more structured development that provides an integration of inquiry, service activities, and teaching responsibilities. One source of faculty development support is Professional Development Incentive (PDI) funding. The purposes of the PDI are to support and enable faculty members’ efforts to improve their teaching and their students’ learning. The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning manages and distributes the funds annually. This table provides an 8-year history of PDI expenditures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>PDI Expenditures</th>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>PDI Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY02</td>
<td>$33,625</td>
<td>FY06</td>
<td>$55,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY03</td>
<td>$13,800</td>
<td>FY07</td>
<td>$67,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY04</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>FY08</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY05</td>
<td>$37,300</td>
<td>FY09</td>
<td>$33,525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The variation in PDI expenditures from year to year is the result of many factors, including the range of PDI activities available, number of faculty completing PDI requirements, and FCTL initiatives that include PDI awards.*
Criterion Five: Engagement and service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways that both value.

Ferris State University has a rich history of engagement and service, beginning with the founding of the institution. Woodbridge N. Ferris was a remarkable visionary, creating an institution that sought and honored both diversity and service to the community. That culture of service and engagement remains institutionalized at Ferris today. As is evident in our mission statement, vision statement, and six core values, the philosophy of the University emphasizes the concepts of partnerships, collaboration, and putting theory into practice and service.

Core Component 5A

Does the organization learn from the constituencies it serves and analyze its capacity to serve their needs and expectations?

Through its administration, faculty, staff, and students, Ferris practices environmental scanning with its constituents. Several Ferris faculty and staff serve on governing and advisory boards in their communities of residence. As a result of this volunteer activity, faculty and staff are often aware of the very specific needs of area schools, businesses, and agencies and make efforts to link resources on campus to needs in the community. In addition, University members and groups participate and collaborate in significant ways with surrounding communities through organizational, programmatic, and individual contributions.

Established interactions include the Town-Gown Council in Big Rapids, internship placements across the state and region, active program advisory boards, as well as service activities coordinated through academic programs or offices. The University’s health clinics, which have served the needs of several key constituencies for many years, have also expanded or revised their services based on expressed or identified needs. Continuing assessment, evaluation, and scanning allows the University to provide new and continuing services, events, and opportunities for its internal and external constituents.

Self-study comments:

Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris continues to improve and enhance its community relationships. The community perception is that community relationships with Ferris have significantly improved in recent years through better communication and increasing engagement of Ferris faculty, staff, and students in service to the community. The self-study process concludes that, while Ferris has a tradition of service and can boast of a wide range of service and engagement activities, the University has not lost sight of the need to be aware of the changing needs of its internal and external constituents. At the same time, recognizing the importance of service to others, efforts will continue to involve larger numbers of faculty, staff, and students in serving others.
Core Component 5B

*Does the organization have the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities?*

The wide range of service and engagement activities and practices available at Ferris demonstrate the University’s commitment to providing students, faculty, staff, and administrators with the opportunity to engage in service, as well as provide the community and Ferris constituencies with the services, clinics, and activities they need. These activities and practices include health care clinics and programs; education and training activities; arts and culture events and activities; physical fitness and wellness programs; and social engagement activities and programs.

One of the key “capacities” that determines the University’s level of success in service and engagement activities is the human capacity for volunteer and service work. Faculty, staff, students, and administrators are involved in extensive volunteering in their communities, as well as on campus, and the number of volunteer hours officially logged demonstrate this high level of capacity and commitment.

**Self-study comments:**

Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris demonstrates and supports a commitment to provide services and maintain effective partnerships with the community. From the health clinics, museums, and galleries, to the many events that support community and constituent needs, Ferris shows a dedication, capacity, and commitment to service and engagement. The self-study process concludes that the community perceives Ferris as enhancing the quality of life in the area and making the community more vibrant and unique by providing activities, cultural events, and training. The community values the services that the University provides through the outreach clinics (optometry, dental hygiene, and pharmacy) and the students who serve as role models to area youth. At the same time, staff and student engagement varies immensely.

Core Component 5C

*Does the organization demonstrate its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service?*

Ferris’ responsiveness to constituent needs is reflected in the breadth of services and programs the University offers surrounding communities: the health care services offered; the range of education and training activities; the variety of arts and culture events and activities; the many physical fitness and wellness programs; and the extensive social engagement activities and programs. All of these programs and offerings reflect the University’s ongoing assessment and commitment to improve and respond to its constituents.

Ferris continues to respond to the community’s, area’s, and state’s needs in all of these service and engagement areas, but also by providing educational programs and opportunities for the University’s students that will meet their needs for future career and professional development. The University’s dynamic curriculum is another component of this commitment to identifying, responding to, and addressing the needs of its constituencies.
Self-study comments: Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris responds appropriately and effectively to the needs of its internal and external constituencies. One strength identified through the research is the value of the integration of the University and the local community and how this integration facilitates the University in understanding the needs of all constituents. The self-study process concludes that, because Ferris’ Big Rapids campus has always been an integral part of the local community with campus facilities, student housing, sports arenas, and arts and entertainment venues being situated within the community, the University enjoys a high level of involvement and engagement. Local restaurants, stores, churches, and civic organizations are, similarly, situated in close proximity to the main campus. This physical connection has always encouraged — and, in fact, required — the University to be aware of and respond to community needs. Our engagement with other communities is necessarily more limited, as most other locations have a limited number of personnel to interact with each community.

Core Component 5D

Do internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides?

Anecdotal evidence of the community’s and the University constituents’ appreciation of the services Ferris provides is abundant. In part because of the close physical proximity of campus and community, daily interactions provide clear indications of strengths and potential challenges. As in a family setting, addressing any problems or challenges quickly and efficiently is also essential in a tightly knit small town atmosphere. Assessing these services in a more formal, systematic way, however, is also essential to ensure ongoing and continual improvement.

Ferris’ health care clinics, education and training programs, arts and culture activities, physical fitness and wellness programs, and its social engagement programs and opportunities all conduct ongoing assessment and evaluation. The University’s commitment to assessment and improvement extends to all services, programs, and events that involve the community, as well as internal campus constituents. The University’s assessment practices in these areas could benefit from being more systematic and more widely distributed so valuable data can be applied to improvement.

Self-study comments: Self-study research efforts indicated that Ferris has assessment processes and mechanisms in place to ensure continuing responsiveness to community needs in all areas of service, from health care to entertainment. Research indicated, however, that in some areas, the “feedback loop,” while clearly apparent to those in the area’s leadership positions, was not visible to those outside of the area. For example, clinic survey results and entertainment venue assessments, while collected, evaluated, and applied for improvement, were difficult to locate from outside the area. The self-study process concludes that the University could increase efforts to make assessment data available more widely, increasing accessibility but also publicizing the demonstrated value of the event, program, or service.
Did you know?
Ferris’ Volunteer Center coordinates the University community’s ever-expanding commitment to service and engagement.

The Volunteer Center assists student, faculty, and staff with various programs and services and works with public and private non-profit agencies to identify areas of need. In the 2007-08 academic year, Ferris students as a whole reported more than 21,670 hours of community service. Coordinated by the Volunteer Center, Ferris’ Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) have contributed service hours to both campus and community groups and agencies. Nearly all of the 200+ RSOs on campus participate in community service projects during each year. RSOs are honored each year based on the number of hours they’ve served, the creativity and variety of their service projects, and the impact of their projects on the community. This table highlights the number of volunteer hours contributed by the RSOs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>9,240</td>
<td>8,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>6,042</td>
<td>5,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>10,248</td>
<td>11,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>9,703</td>
<td>11,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>9,944</td>
<td>14,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quick Reference: Self-study findings

(Note: Only the self-study results reported in this Summary are collected here for quick reference. Additional results and discussion are included in the full Self-Study Report.)

Criterion One

Core Component 1A
- University communities share an awareness and acceptance of the mission and values and are strongly committed to practicing them within their individual sphere.
- Ferris’ mission, vision, and core values are well defined and accepted, communicated broadly and consistently, and supported by activities that are consistent with the mission.
- The University’s diverse range of program levels and distinctive programming also reflect the institution’s commitment to its mission.
- Ferris’ mission has served the University well in the current economic downturn, as citizens acknowledge the value of preparation for careers, resulting in increased enrollments at the university.

Core Component 1B
- Ferris continues toward its vision of serving more diverse populations and a culture of inclusion.
- There is a positive and strong awareness of Ferris’ commitment to enhancing the diversity within the University.
- Ferris desires to be a truly diverse institution by providing an institution that is supportive, safe, and welcoming, and by embracing a diversity of ideas, beliefs, and cultures.
- The University has also identified improvement opportunities, including retention of minority students and recruitment of a diverse staff, and is addressing these challenges.

Core Component 1C
- There is widespread understanding and acceptance of the University’s mission and core values are evident across campus policies and procedures.
From program review, faculty evaluation, and support for professional development and faculty research, to university-wide diversity, planning, and budgeting initiatives, the University mission provides underlying guidance for all decisions.

The revision process led to increased visibility and increased transparency of the mission and values. With the University’s mission and core values positioned in central locations and in every day practices and procedures, all members are encouraged to reflect on their significance.

While the revision process may have been completed in 2008, the process of applying the mission across campus and communicating it across constituencies continues.

Many governance entities are both a strength and a limitation, with several often overlapping groups involved in University decision making, and with an occasional lack of clarity about which of these groups has responsibility.

Ferris’ institutional structure provides great opportunity for all interested stakeholders to participate in the governance of the University and Ferris’ long history and practice of participative management and governance continues to reinforce this structure.

At the same time, the self-study process revealed opportunities for the University to streamline its structure and processes that may lead to greater transparency and efficiency.

The University has developed policies, procedures, and practices that reflect its high standards and professional principles.

From the Board policies that direct overall operations to the student and Human Resources policies that focus on individual rights and responsibilities, Ferris continues to complete its tasks and meet its mission of preparing students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Ferris’ commitment to increasing visibility and transparency in all of its actions will help to ensure that Ferris should continue to be well respected.

Simultaneously, some inconsistencies in our policies were revealed. Whenever these are discovered, as we found with the transfer policies, improvements are initiated.

The University has developed more accurate forecasting methods to prepare for the needs of the future, in both academic and non-academic areas. From measuring enrollment trends, student service needs, and staffing requirements, Ferris is responding by considering the effects of these social, political, and economic events on the University’s changing student body.

Over its history, Ferris has always responded to the needs of the state and region by offering courses, degree programs, training, and certification in a wide range of professional fields. In the past few years, these curricular enhancements reflect the challenges facing the state, and they also reflect changes in course delivery and student demographics.
## Core Component 2B

- The University’s resource base that supports its education programs is both dynamic and responsive to the needs of the entire campus community.
- Ferris’ tradition as a teaching/learning institution ensures a focus on effective teaching methods, environments, and faculty support.
- Ferris supports and enhances its academic priorities not only with financial resources and support to develop its faculty, administration, and staff, but also by inculcating a culture that values professionalism and continuing development.
- At the same time, resource constraints exist and many areas have been asked to “do more with less,” and budgets have been declining in many important areas.

## Core Component 2C

- Ferris may need to increase efforts to “close the loop” in many of these assessment and evaluation processes.
- While the University community feels strongly that its assessment and evaluation processes are appropriate, adequate, and reliable, the application of the data collected could be more visible, transparent, and more widely shared.
- While extensive credentialing and accreditation efforts ensure that Ferris’ academic programs meet or exceed the requirements of the professional areas, campus assessment of program, course, and operational outcomes must support these larger assessment and evaluation efforts.
- At Ferris, assessment is a part of everyday activities in all divisions and offices. The challenge is making this assessment information part of a transparent “loop” that feeds continual improvement and awareness of future needs.

## Core Component 2D

- Overall, the University community feels that the planning processes allow for innovation and have clear channels of authority.
- The self-study process concludes that Ferris State University continues to address current challenges, including a tightening economy and a diminishing pool of potential students, with more extensive long-term planning and new ways of managing its resources.
- Preparing for the future not only requires foresight, forecasting, and efficient planning processes, but it also requires effective collection and application of forecasting, planning, and assessment data.
- The University’s leaders are continuing to monitor and improve the University’s planning processes, as well as the communication methods to increase awareness and involvement.
- The University has made recent strides in this area, while still in their early stages, are providing the University with focused and directed leadership.
- The use of assessment and evaluation data in informing these directions presents an improvement opportunity.
- Broadening the university-wide engagement is another area for improvement, as a small proportion of the Ferris faculty and staff take the time to actively engage in these processes.

## Criterion Three

### Core Component 3A

- One of the strengths of Ferris’ assessment program is its broad, university-wide reach and application. Ferris’ other locations are subject
to the same assessment measures as on-campus.

- Ferris recognizes that teaching and learning take place in many environments and settings, all with established and appropriate assessment processes.
- Assessment continues to be a high priority at Ferris State University. Clearly stated outcomes, assessment measures, and data collection will continue to drive continuous improvement.
- Efforts will continue to involve more faculty in substantive discussions about the use of student learning assessment data to inform pedagogical and curricular improvements, especially at the program and department levels.
- Documentation of improvements will be expanded with a goal of demonstrating increasingly positive results regarding students’ achievement of learning outcomes.

Core Component 3B

- The University supports effective teaching, and that the University’s support ensures instructional quality in varied learning environments.
- The University’s experienced educators — whose backgrounds are pertinent to their professional area — are a key strength of the University.
- Ferris’ research and professional development programs, as well as the historical and ongoing emphasis placed on teaching, allows Ferris faculty to put teaching methods, innovative approaches, and student-centered course design at the center of their work.
- Another strength highlighted by the self-study process is the professional expertise and ongoing connections to business and industry that Ferris faculty are recognized for, and which they successfully bring into their classrooms.
- At the same time, a limitation is that the faculty evaluation process is not thought to be as effective as it could be in providing useful feedback for faculty and our processes do not always contribute to resolving teaching deficiencies easily.

Core Component 3C

- The University provides effective and dynamic learning environments.
- Effective learning environments are supported through several important processes, including faculty evaluation processes, a low faculty-to-student ratio, as well as numerous fruitful relationships between program faculty and industry, business, and the professions.
- The University’s commitment to improving and using unique learning spaces, faculty connections with resources outside the University, as well as international and student-directed experiences are all clearly strengths in creating effective learning environments and advancing the University mission of preparing students for careers and lifelong learning.

Core Component 3D

- The Ferris community feels the campus teaching and learning resources — and support of these resources — are one of the University’s significant strengths.
- Among the specific strengths identified through the self study were these: the University’s campus and physical spaces, FLITE’s resources and facilities, the SLA program, the Writing Center and tutoring resources, the wide range of student services, and the extensive technical and computer services.
- The University is proud of its ongoing support for these resources, its commitment to continuing excellence and innovation in its use of the
resources, and its continuing improvements to the physical resources and learning “spaces” that support effective teaching and learning.

- Ferris’ history of being a leader in career-related technology from up-to-date, advanced health clinics to state-of-the-art engineering labs continues to ensure its excellence in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion Four</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Component 4A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The University community believes significant resources are being spent university-wide and by individual units in the colleges for professional development and that there is a clearly articulated commitment for continued professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ferris’ commitment to lifelong learning is evident in the development opportunities that range from training for more effective completion of day-to-day job tasks, wellness opportunities, and awareness of emerging community needs, to career development activities and financial support of research.</td>
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<td>• Some concerns surfaced about the disparity among different personnel groups (e.g. support staff vs. faculty investments) and different support levels among different units or colleges, with some investing extensively and others being less supportive.</td>
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| Core Component 4B |
| • Knowledge, skills, and intellectual inquiry are central to the University’s educational programs and activities. Ferris’ comprehensive assessment and curricular development processes and a rigorous general education program support this centrality, which is also grounded in the University’s mission. However, although historically a “teaching institution,” Ferris is slowly increasing emphasis on faculty and student research. |
| • While this increasing research practice enhances the academic environment and complements effective teaching, the University’s engagement in advancing research must be considered carefully to assure it complements Ferris’ historic mission. |
| • Although widespread in implementation, assessment of students’ learning and the implementation of systematic improvements that result from assessment findings continue to demand attention. |

| Core Component 4C |
| • Ferris is committed to providing students with an education that prepares them for the global, diverse, and technology demands of their futures. |
| • Ferris evaluates its success in meeting this commitment through several processes, including the Academic Program Review (APR) process, the General Education assessment activities, and other systematic measures. |
| • The University is effective in preparing students for the global, diverse, and technological dimensions of society. |
| • Among the identified strengths are Ferris’ growth in areas of diversity, increased emphasis on diversity events, increased involvement in the prestigious Fulbright program, and the access to cutting-edge classroom and laboratory technology. |
| • At the same time, evaluation of our effectiveness in all general education areas continues to challenge us. |

| Core Component 4D |
| • Ferris is committed to supporting, maintaining, and educating all of the
University’s members in ethical and responsible behavior.

- The University’s practices and procedures that support this behavior exist in academic classroom content, in University practices with internal and external constituents, and are enforced by university policies. Academic integrity is central in our community, and “ethical community” is one of our core values.

### Criterion Five

#### Core Component 5A
- Ferris continues to improve and enhance its community relationships. The community perception is that community relationships with Ferris have significantly improved in recent years through better communication and increasing engagement of Ferris faculty, staff, and students in service to the community.
- Ferris has a tradition of service and can boast of a wide range of service and engagement activities, the University has not lost sight of the need to be aware of the changing needs of its internal and external constituents.
- At the same time, recognizing the importance of service to others, efforts will continue to involve larger numbers of faculty, staff, and students in serving others.

#### Core Component 5B
- Ferris demonstrates and supports a commitment to provide services and maintain effective partnerships with the community. From the health clinics, museums, and galleries, to the many events that support community and constituent needs, Ferris shows a dedication, capacity, and commitment to service and engagement.
- The community perceives Ferris as enhancing the quality of life in the area and making the community more vibrant and unique by providing activities, cultural events, and training. The community values the services that the University provides through the outreach clinics (optometry, dental hygiene, and pharmacy) and the students who serve as role models to area youth.
- At the same time, staff and student engagement varies immensely.

#### Core Component 5C
- Ferris responds appropriately and effectively to the needs of its internal and external constituencies. One strength identified is the value of the integration of the University and the local community and how this integration facilitates the University in understanding the needs of all constituents.
- Because Ferris’ Big Rapids campus has always been an integral part of the local community with campus facilities, student housing, sports arenas, and arts and entertainment venues being situated within the community, the University enjoys a high level of involvement and engagement. Local restaurants, stores, churches, and civic organizations are, similarly, situated in close proximity to the main campus. This physical connection has always encouraged — and, in fact, required — the University to be aware of and respond to community needs.
- Our engagement with other communities is necessarily more limited, as most other locations have a limited number of personnel to interact with each community.

#### Core Component 5D
- Ferris has assessment processes and mechanisms in place to ensure continuing responsiveness to community needs in all areas of service,
from health care to entertainment. However, in some areas, the "feedback loop," while clearly apparent to those in the area’s leadership positions, was not visible to those outside of the area. For example, clinic survey results and entertainment venue assessments, while collected, evaluated, and applied for improvement, were difficult to locate from outside the area.

- The University could increase efforts to make assessment data available more widely, increasing accessibility but also publicizing the demonstrated value of the event, program, or service.
Reflections on the self-study results

How are we doing?

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<th>In what ways are our practices and policies <strong>CONSISTENT</strong>?</th>
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How are we **TRANSPARENT** in our actions and behaviors?

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What processes demonstrate that we are concerned with **QUALITY**?

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What examples do we have that demonstrate that we practice **INTEGRITY**?

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How effectively are we **PREPARING** for the future?

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How does the University provide you with **VALUE**?

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### How are we doing?

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**Criterion One: Mission and Integrity**

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**Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future**

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<td>Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching</td>
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Additional comments and reflections

Your contact information (optional):

Name
Campus address and telephone number
Campus email address

REMEMBER TO SEND COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, AND REVISIONS TO THE FERRIS HLC SELF-STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE: hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu