

# House Education Committee

October 29, 2009

## Bachelor Degree Education in Michigan: Encouraging Access Through Educational Partnerships

David L. Eisler, President

Rep. Melton and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for taking time from your very busy legislative schedule to hear from Ferris State University. It is an honor to appear before you today. I very much appreciate this opportunity to present examples of working partnerships between community colleges and public universities. Through these collaborative efforts Ferris provides increased access to bachelor degree education throughout Michigan using existing resources.

Each of you has a significant interest in higher education and in Ferris State University, as we enroll students from each of your districts at our University -

Rep. Gino Polidori	26 students
Rep. Douglas Geiss	28 students
Rep. Timothy Bledsoe	45 students
Rep. Tim Melton	56 students
Rep. John Walsh	57 students
Rep. Steve Lindberg	62 students
Rep. Sarah Roberts	63 students
Rep. Tom McMillin	64 students
Rep. Deb Kennedy	80 students
Rep. David Nathan	84 students
Rep. Marc Corriveau	94 students
Rep. Lisa Brown	107 students
Rep. Jennifer Haase	114 students
Rep. Sharon Tyler	194 students
Rep. Phillip Pavlov	243 students

Rep. Barb Byrum	246 students
Rep. Larry DeShazor	275 students
Rep. Paul Scott	284 students
Rep. Richard Ball	325 students
Rep. Joel Sheltroun	364 students
Rep. Mary Valentine	641 students
Rep. Justin Amash	666 students
Rep. Tom Pearce	908 students

Collectively this committee represents well over one third of our current students. I want to emphasize the connection each of us has to our students and want to draw our focus to them. Our efforts here today are to provide access to quality education for our students, not to build or fuel institutional aspirations.

In beginning I want to express both respect and admiration for my community college colleagues. In our combined efforts, we are not competitors, but rather collaborators, and as you will see, they are our partners. Community colleges are led my men and women that I admire and respect. Working together we help change lives through the opportunity higher education provides. Our commitment to student access offers the opportunity that college provides for success, not just in a career but in life.

Some brief background on my experience and expertise may be useful for this discussion. This is my seventh year as president of Ferris State University, Michigan's fastest growing public university. In 2004 I served on the Cherry Commission where some of the ideas you consider today were advanced. During my first two years as president at Ferris I visited 25 of the 28 community colleges in our state, learning more about each institution and looking for potential academic partners. Before returning to Michigan I was the provost at Weber State University in Utah. While at Weber I helped develop many of the bachelor degrees for a sister institution, Utah Valley State College that was evolving into a 4-year university. Both Weber State University and Ferris State University are unique universities that have retained associate degrees on their paths to university status. Thus I bring an understanding and experience with degree development at both the 2- and 4-year level.

### **Ferris State University**

At Ferris State University we have actively embraced community colleges as educational partners. Through these collaborative efforts we provide bachelor degree access to students in the community where they live, using the facilities of the community college where many of them already attend. By doing this we eliminate the gap between associate and bachelor degree study and extend the opportunity of a Ferris State University to students who would be unable to relocate to our campus in Big Rapids. Through consortium agreements we provide seamless

financial aid support to these students. Under this approach students can begin work on the bachelor degree as or even before they finish the associate degree. Most importantly we build a career educational pathway for these students.

Today, through community college partnerships and outreach activities Ferris State University offers a broad cross-section of educational opportunities throughout Michigan –

- 31 bachelor degrees
- 17 certificates and endorsements
- 10 masters degrees

A complete listing of our degree and certificate offerings is included in your packet. It is worth noting that some programs on this listing are not offered on our campus in Big Rapids. One of the approaches and part of the skill and experience we provide is the ability to create degree programs and emphases that address the unique student needs of the location where it is offered.

Today we offer education programs at 22 locations throughout Michigan and on-line. Our current community college partners include –

- Alpena Community College
- Delta College in University Center
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Lansing Community College
- Macomb Community College in Warren
- Mid Michigan College in Harrison
- Mott Community College in Flint
- Muskegon Community College
- North Central Michigan College in Petoskey
- Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City
- Schoolcraft College in Garden City
- Southwestern Michigan College in Dowagiac
- St. Clair Community College in Port Huron
- West Shore Community College in Scottville

Student response to these partnered programs is both strong and supportive. Today over 2,600 students are currently receiving the opportunity of a Ferris State University degree through these partnered efforts in Michigan. The programs we provide are especially appealing to working students, as it allows them to continue their employment, raise families, and live in their current community while earning their bachelor degree.

In presenting this information about Ferris State University it is important to emphasize that what is provided here is only the snapshot of one institution's efforts. My colleagues at public universities throughout the state also provide many outreach efforts, some in very significant ways. Certainly many more degree opportunities are available than chronicled here.

## **Proposed Baccalaureate Programs**

Currently there are four possible areas of study under consideration for the expansion of bachelor degree granting authority. Allow me to address each programmatic area in turn.

### Nursing (RN to BSN completion)

Ferris State University has an accredited and established RN-BSN program. During this coming year we will offer the RN-BSN completion in seven locations with two other locations under consideration. Currently we have 362 students enrolled in RN to BSN completion programs. We are prepared to offer this completion program anywhere in this state, both at community colleges and regional hospitals. In the past we have responded to requests for cohort sections by offering classes as quickly as within six months of the request. Beyond the site-based programs, we also provide this RN-BSN completion on-line. This is ideal for areas in Michigan that do not have enough students to form a cohort or for students who desire a program that is flexibly scheduled.

### Concrete Technology

We have visited the World Center for Concrete Technology at Alpena Community College. It is truly an impressive facility and a unique resource for our state. There are natural parallels between the associate degree in concrete technology there and our construction management programs. Alpena Community College has reached out to us and we have worked very hard to partner with them. We are currently in discussions to offer a degree in Alpena with an emphasis in concrete technology within our bachelor of integrated studies.

### Culinary Arts

Ferris offers three degrees that are a natural extension of an associate degree in culinary arts. Our hospitality area provides bachelor degrees in both hotel and resort management, broadly-based degrees designed to create a career pathway into supervision or leadership positions. In a differently oriented approach we partner with the culinary program at Grand Rapids Community College, offering a bachelor degree in business administration with a professional track in culinary arts. These three baccalaureate degrees are reasonable approaches to career pathways for students graduating with an associate degree in the culinary arts.

However if the desire of the community colleges is to develop a bachelor degree in culinary arts, we will partner with them to develop this degree and offer it on their campuses. Currently we partner with Schoolcraft College and Northwest Michigan College, who both have extraordinary

culinary programs, and excellent facilities. It would be an exciting opportunity to provide additional opportunities for these culinary students and to expand our partnerships with them.

### Maritime Studies

Ferris State University has an exemplary relationship with the Great Lakes Maritime Academy, is the largest provider of baccalaureate education in Traverse City, and has been an educational partner with Northwestern Michigan College for over thirty years. Currently students who earn an associate of applied science degree from the Maritime Academy also can earn a bachelor of business administration degree from Ferris State University. All coursework is provided in Traverse City and this is an extraordinary example of an integrated associate\ bachelor degree. This degree was collaboratively developed between our institutions based on the understanding that maritime students were better served by a bachelor degree in business. It is a reality that many maritime graduates will not spend their entire career onboard a ship, frequently choosing later in their career to move off the water. The business administration is excellent preparation for this transition. However if a maritime studies degree is a pathway that Northwestern Michigan College believes is better considered for their graduates, they are a valued partner. If they are willing, we will work with them to develop and offer this degree.

### Accreditation

Ferris State University and our public university partners are all fully accredited to offer bachelor degrees. If the challenge today is to help current students, it will be impossible for community colleges to meet this need. Following an independent path of degree creation will require community colleges develop the degree and receive accreditation approval to offer it. This will be easily a 2½ to 3 year process, will require significant resources, and could take longer. As a fully accredited university Ferris State University is prepared to partner with community colleges to offer these degrees next year.

## **Higher Education and Its Future in Michigan**

It is worth considering the environment in which this proposed expansion is being considered. This is a time of great challenge for each of us in education. If there is a clear message from our state capital it is financial austerity, with billions of dollars in reduced state revenue. Stated plainly, resources to support our current education efforts do not currently exist. Further and sharp reductions are ahead. It is difficult to understand why Michigan would seek to expand its educational system today, when it cannot afford to support current institutional efforts at the K-12, community college, and university levels.

Today colleges and universities have record enrollments. Much of this growth is fueled by a Michigan unemployment rate of over 15%, the highest in our nation. It is common for people who cannot find employment to return to or stay in school. What this unemployment-fueled growth masks is the decreased number of students in the K-12 education system. The House Fiscal

Agency estimates that state pupil counts have returned to the same level as 1995. We have already experienced our third consecutive year of reduced numbers of high school graduates in Michigan. This decline is predicted to continue long into the foreseeable future. When employment does return to Michigan, the combined effect of these two factors will cause a decrease in higher education enrollment and there will be excess capacity in our colleges and universities. Expanding degree-granting authority will exacerbate this problem.

There is a very strong and compelling need for community colleges today and the role they serve in our state is essential. In considering our education efforts in Michigan I am drawn back to what for me was the most compelling lesson of the Cherry Commission and its deliberations.

This is simply told. If one were to ask 10 students in the ninth grade how many planned to attend college, 8 would answer yes. Returning to those same students four years later, only 4 would be attending college. Together higher education will work to address the needs of those 4 who do attend. Changing the future direction of our state depends upon changing the behavior of those 6 students who did not enroll. Here is the expanded role needed for community colleges and no one is better suited for this. The challenge we face in Michigan today is attracting these students to our community colleges, and helping those students succeed, some of whom will not be prepared for college success. Some community colleges are already tackling these issues in creative and productive fashion. This is where our state should be focused today, seeking to connect more solidly with high schools, and making the goal of attending college a reality for every student who wants to do so.

### Closing Thoughts

Ferris State University has a unique historic perspective on the challenges posed by change. When Woodbridge Ferris began his school in Big Rapids in 1884, it was also a time of financial challenge in west Michigan. The economy was dependent upon the timber industry and much of the forest was already logged out. Through his Institute Mr. Ferris educated students for a new reality, teaching them skills in business, pharmacy, stenography, and telegraphy that prepared them for the commercial economy.

One hundred twenty-five years later, Michigan finds itself in a similar time of hardship with the implosion of the domestic automobile industry. Today, just as when our 19th century extraction economy was experiencing inevitable decline, Ferris State University will continue to educate our citizens for the next economic reality by helping them acquire new skills that will allow them to succeed in a time of great upheaval and transformation. In doing so we will actively seek out partners to help extend opportunity where it may be needed. Through our combined efforts we can help ensure that our citizens will have the opportunity to benefit from the same extraordinary education that has benefitted so many of us in this room today.

At Ferris State University we take educational partnerships very seriously. We both want and desire to partner with community colleges. We believe we can address each of the content areas discussed above. If our current degree offerings do not meet the need, we are willing to work with our community college partners to develop the degree. What we can bring to this enterprise is significant experience, a sensitivity to associate degree students, and an understanding of preparation for job and career success.

This is at the core of what we do as a University. Our commitment to this effort is stated clearly in our mission statement –

*Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. Through its many partnerships and its career-oriented, broad-based education, Ferris serves our rapidly changing global economy and society.*

Today as you enter the House Chambers for your afternoon session, I would encourage you to look to the right just before doing so. That last full-length portrait on the right is of our founder, Woodbridge Ferris, commemorating his two terms as Governor of Michigan. His efforts were directed at providing education to everyone. Together I know that we can and will prevail in this absolutely essential endeavor.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for me to present these thoughts, ideas, and materials for your consideration and review.

These materials are available on-line at:

[http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/education\\_2009.htm](http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/education_2009.htm)



# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

### Degree and Certificate Programs Offered at Michigan Community Colleges

#### Bachelor Degrees

Bachelor Applied Science Digital Animation and Game Design  
Bachelor Applied Science Digital Media Software Engineering  
Bachelor Applied Studies Industrial Technology and Management  
Bachelor Integrated Studies  
Bachelor Science Accountancy  
Bachelor Science Automotive Engineering  
Bachelor Science Business Administration  
Bachelor Science Business Administration, BS Business Administration - Aviation  
Bachelor Science Business Administration - Maritime  
Bachelor Science Business Administration - Professional Track  
Bachelor Science Business Administration - Professional Track - Culinary  
Bachelor Science Business Administration - Professional Track - International Tourism  
Bachelor Science Computer Information Systems  
Bachelor Science Computer Information Technology  
Bachelor Science Construction Management  
Bachelor Science Construction Management - Architectural Technology  
Bachelor Science Criminal Justice  
Bachelor Science Dental Hygiene  
Bachelor Science Elementary Education  
Bachelor Science Health Care Systems Administration  
Bachelor Science Health Information Management  
Bachelor Science Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineering Technology  
Bachelor Science Human Resource Management  
Bachelor Science Information Security and Intelligence  
Bachelor Science Manufacturing Engineering Technology  
Bachelor Science Nuclear Medicine Technology  
Bachelor Science Product Design Engineering Technology  
Bachelor Science Quality Engineering Technology  
Bachelor Science Secondary Education  
Bachelor Science Nursing from Registered Nurse  
Bachelor Social Work

### Master Degrees

Master Business Administration  
Master Education Curriculum and Instruction - Administration  
Master Education Curriculum and Instruction - Special Education  
Master Education Curriculum and Instruction - Subject Area  
Master Science Career & Technical Education - Administrative  
Master Science Career & Technical Education - Instructor  
Master Science Career & Technical Education - Postsecondary Administrative  
Master Science Career & Technical Education - Training and Development  
Master Science - Criminal Justice Administration  
Master Science Nursing

### Certificates and Endorsements

Advanced Construction Management Certificate  
Business-to-Business Marketing Certificate  
Coding/Reimbursement Specialist Certificate  
Construction Administration Certificate  
Direct Marketing Certificate  
E-Commerce Marketing Certificate  
Facility Management Certificate  
Geographic Information Systems Certificate  
Homeland Security: Digital Security and Forensics Certificate  
Human Resource Management Certificate  
International Business Certificate  
Marketing Certificate  
Quality Technology Certificate

### Teacher Certification and Endorsements

Elementary Endorsement to Secondary Provisional Certificate  
Secondary Endorsement to Elementary Provisional Certificate  
Secondary Certifications and Endorsements  
Special Education Endorsement

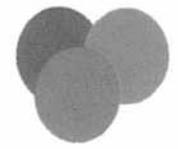
### Associate Degrees

Associate Applied Science Building Construction Technology  
Associate Applied Science Health Information Technology  
Associate Applied Science Respiratory Care

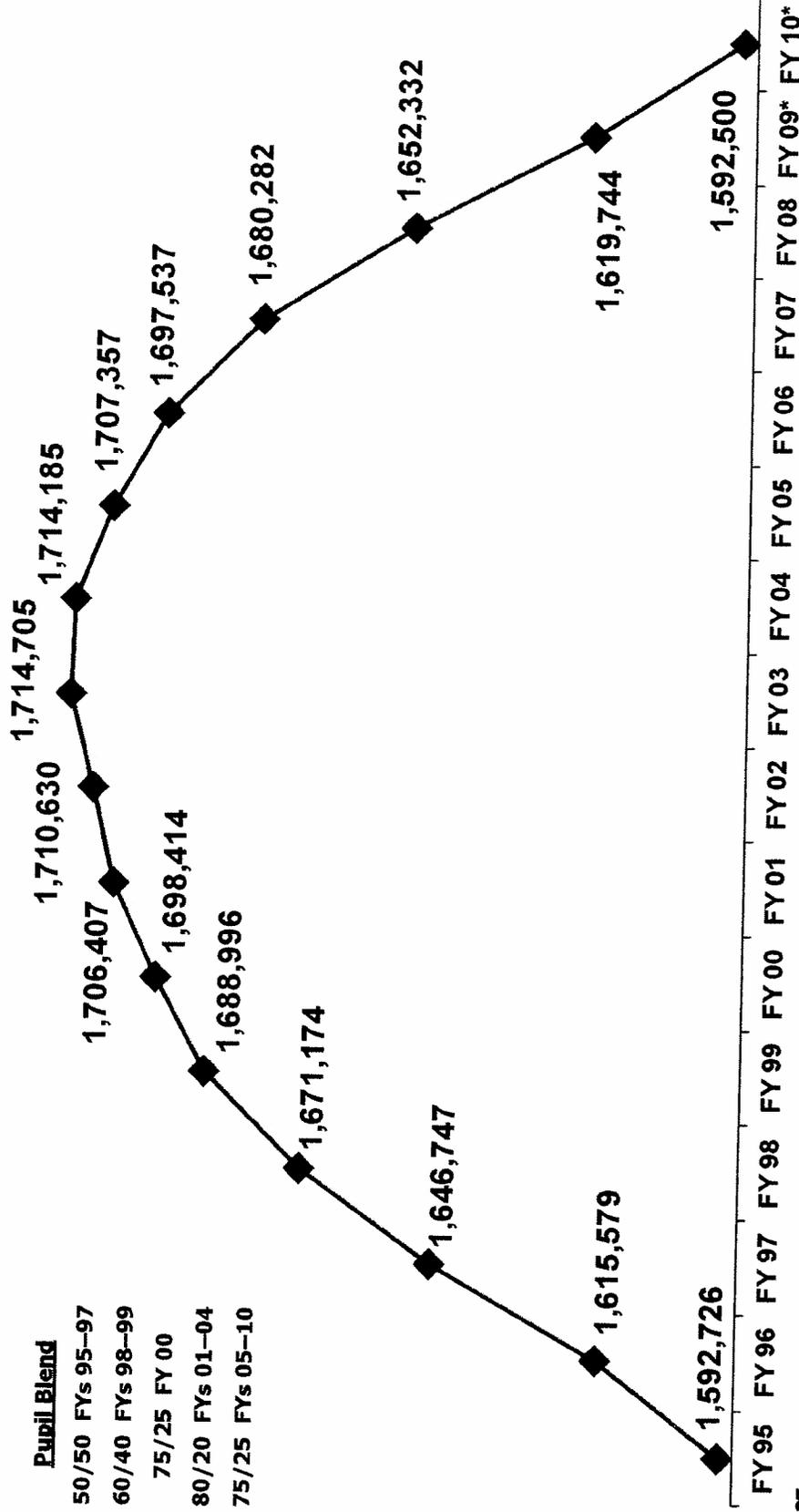
For further information contact -

College of Professional and Technological Studies  
Ferris State University  
<http://cpts.ferris.edu>  
(800) 562-9130

Or contact Ferris State University local offices in Alpena, Big Rapids, Grand Rapids, Dowagiac, Flint, Lansing, Muskegon, Petoskey, Traverse City, and University Center.



# Total Membership Pupil Counts



**Pupil Blend**

- 50/50 FYs 95-97
- 60/40 FYs 98-99
- 75/25 FY 00
- 80/20 FYs 01-04
- 75/25 FYs 05-10



\*FY 09 Unaudited Count; FY 10 May 2009 Consensus Estimate