



FERRIS COVID-19 CASE COUNT		LAST UPDATED: OCT. 19
NEW CASES THIS WEEK	CUMULATIVE CASES	ACTIVE CASES
59	253	53

# After two long years, Riley Blair finds her voice

Women's basketball alum speaks up about sexual assault after case gets 'swept under the rug'

**Cora Hall**  
Editor in Chief

*Editor's note: the following story contains graphic details of sexual assault.*

Two years and three months have gone by since Riley Blair's lost her sense of safety. A year and a half has gone by since she took the stand in a packed courtroom and retold all the details of the night of July 7, 2018. Three months ago, the man who pled guilty to sexually assaulting her was released from prison.

He served eight months.

Darren Smith, a former Ferris hockey player, was on trial for five counts of criminal sexual conduct, all felonies, in April of 2019. He faced a maximum of a life sentence. The case never made it to trial, however, and Smith was given a plea deal that included Michigan Holmes Youth Trainee Act protections, making all of the court records from the case and his sentencing sealed.

HYTA, which applies to offenders ages 17 to 23, results in the court not entering a judgement of conviction after the offender formally pleads guilty to charges against them.

Blair, a Ferris women's basketball alum, called the eight month prison sentence "a slap on the wrist," which was almost shortened this spring when she got a call that Smith's early release was being requested due to COVID-19 cases at the prison he was held at, which was not listed due to HYTA protections. Blair submitted a letter to the judge and the request was denied.

Smith, an Ontario native, served his full eight months and was deported to Canada in July upon his release.

The case began with Smith's arrest on July 12, 2018 and ended in the fall of 2019 when the plea deal was agreed upon. Over the year and a half of court dates, Blair communicated with former gymnast and lawyer Rachael Denhollander, who was the first woman to publicly accuse former Michigan State and USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar of sexual assault. Denhollander called the plea deal a "joke" and "bullshit," according to Blair, and said she would have taken her case if she hadn't moved. Denhollander also said Blair's case had the most evidence she had ever seen in a case like that.

After speaking with Denhollander, Blair spoke to the prosecutors and they reexamined the deal, which Smith said he was not going to take. Mecosta County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Amy Clapp had told the Torch at the time that a plea deal was unlikely and she fully intended for the case to go to trial. Blair said she went back and forth on plea deals throughout the case, and had many discussions with the prosecutors about what she would accept.

"I'm a really firm believer that—obviously it varies situation to situation—locking someone away for 10-15 years, which is what he was looking at, if they did proceed with the trial, is not going to be beneficial to anyone," Blair said. "They need help, if your mind is wired like that, that's how you reason through things, you need assistance on top of punishment. So that was always my biggest thing that I told her too, that I'm not going to sit here and lose sleep over the amount of years in prison. That's not what I'm going for, I'm not out to get revenge, I want to make sure he doesn't do this to anyone else."

"I wouldn't even allow myself to even consider the idea of what had happened."

—Riley Blair



Photo by: Cora Hall | Editor in Chief

Riley Blair stands in front of the Ewigleben Sports Complex, where she used to plan out her arrivals in order to avoid crossing paths with the hockey players.

## One night in July

In July of 2018, Blair was in the middle of nursing school at Ferris, which meant going through the summers, and Blair was completing her clinicals at Helen DeVos Children's hospital in Grand Rapids. That particular day was during her labor and delivery rotation, a 12-hour shift from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Blair had driven from Big Rapids, and was up at 3:30 a.m. on July 7. Blair, who said she is a visual learner and didn't want to miss anything during her shift, recalls eating nothing but a sandwich that day.

After her shift ended, she drove back to Big Rapids. The Ferris women's basketball overnight camp was the next week and some of her teammates had come a night early to hang out.

A few of their friends came over as well, and there was a group of about 10 drinking together at their apartment. Blair admitted she was underage at the time and used a fake ID to get into the local bar, even though she was exhausted and originally wasn't even sure she wanted to go.

When her and her teammates arrived at Star Shooters, they immediately started ordering drinks and Blair remembers at least four rounds of shots being ordered.

The summer crowd was fairly thin at the bar, but Blair said

they ran into some hockey players there, including Smith. It wasn't an unusual occurrence for the teams to hang out, as one of Blair's teammates was dating a hockey player at the time. She has no recollection of the events of the night after arriving at the bar until the middle of the night in her bed.

"I just remember feeling the sensation of — I was wearing a cloth bra — and remember feeling it tearing open and I remember feeling this bad pain in my lower lip," Blair said. "I woke up and I was so confused. I had no idea what was going on. I was still very intoxicated and I was so out of it that I just kind of slipped back out of it."

The next thing she remembers is coming back into consciousness when she felt extreme pain in her vagina, and her room was so dark she could only see the outline of a head.

"I don't know how to put it into words—the most fear by far that I've ever felt in my whole life and to the point of being completely frozen. Just completely paralyzing," Blair said. "I think it was a combination of things. Obviously when you're under the influence, your reasoning and rationale is completely altered, so I had that going on. I had no idea who it was and what had happened so then my next memory isn't until waking up the next morning."

Her memories of what transpired during the night didn't come back to her immediately. It wasn't until a few months of therapy that Blair was able to recall repressed memories of her assault.

"I've been told a lot of things from a lot of different professionals that sometimes your brain will block things out. Or if it was just another loss of consciousness from how much alcohol I consumed," Blair said. "All of that was completely blocked out the next morning. So initially my first thought when I woke up was I was naked, he was naked and I was like what happened?"

Blair, unaware of Smith's relationship status at the time, said the woman who she assumed was his girlfriend barged into her apartment at 6 a.m. and dragged Smith out of her apartment "basically wrapped in a sheet" after yelling at both Blair and Smith.

Still feeling intoxicated, Blair wandered out to her living room where her friends were sleeping on a pullout couch and tried to go back to sleep, with no success.

"Just a pit in my stomach," Blair said. "You get a pit in your stomach when you go talk in front of a lot of people. My entire stomach had been flipped and tied into a million knots. My mouth, partially because I was hungover, but I couldn't create enough saliva, I felt like I was choking on my spit."

Blair's roommate came downstairs after hearing the commotion and Blair remembers asking her why Smith was in her bed. Her roommate's face went pale and her eyes widened and she responded "What do you mean he was in your bed?" and began to ramble about how he told her he was going home and she had checked on Blair before going to bed.

Her roommate went on to explain that Blair had gotten too drunk at the bar so their designated driver picked them up and they helped her into bed. Her roommate and their friends then went to Taco Bell to get food, where they ran into Smith, who hopped in their car in the drive-thru. At that time, Blair was passed out in her bed, and Smith began sending her vulgar messages over Instagram. Blair said one read "really nice, wanna fuck?" which she did not see until the next day.

Smith came back to the apartment with Blair's roommate to hang out and eat. When everyone decided to go to bed, her roommate said they offered him a ride home to his apartment a few minutes away. He declined, saying he would walk. Her roommate checked on her one last time before going to bed and once again asked Smith if he needed a ride back. He turned down the offer and assured her he

Riley Blair | see page 5

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# NEWS

Ry Rodriguez | News Editor | rodrir16@ferris.edu

## Plot to kidnap Whitmer reveals severity of political climate

### Has hateful rhetoric and extreme actions been encouraged by political climate?

**Veronica Mascorro**  
News Reporter

On Thursday, Oct. 8 Michigan authorities revealed that a group of men had been arrested for plotting to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Six men, who identify as members of a right-wing militia group called the Wolverine Watchmen, were arrested and charged with plotting to kidnap Whitmer before the November elections. Seven others were charged under Michigan's anti-terrorism law for allegedly seeking to recruit an army of 200 to storm the Michigan Capitol and ignite a "civil war."

The Wolverine Watchmen, according to an article written by the New York Times, were meeting over the summer to practice building explosives, firearm training, and combat drills in preparation for the kidnapping. The group wanted to take Whitmer to a "secure location" in Wisconsin for a "trial".

In a press conference on Thursday, Oct. 8 Whitmer reacted to the news of the arrests.

"I knew this job would be hard, but I'll be honest, I never could have imagined anything like this," Whitmer said.

The news of the kidnapping plot has been a shock to most and has struck up a discussion on the current political climate.

Digital animation and game design junior Zachary Noorman wouldn't say he's very active in politics, but he tries to stay engaged with the current events. Noorman couldn't believe it when he first saw the news. He drew connections between the kidnapping plot and how disconnected the country currently feels.

"I think there needs to be a change, it's very divisive, people are out to get each other, they're trying to prove each other wrong and everything is very argumentative. There should be less of that and more of working towards common goals," Noorman said.

Noorman believes that the current administration has added to the division in the

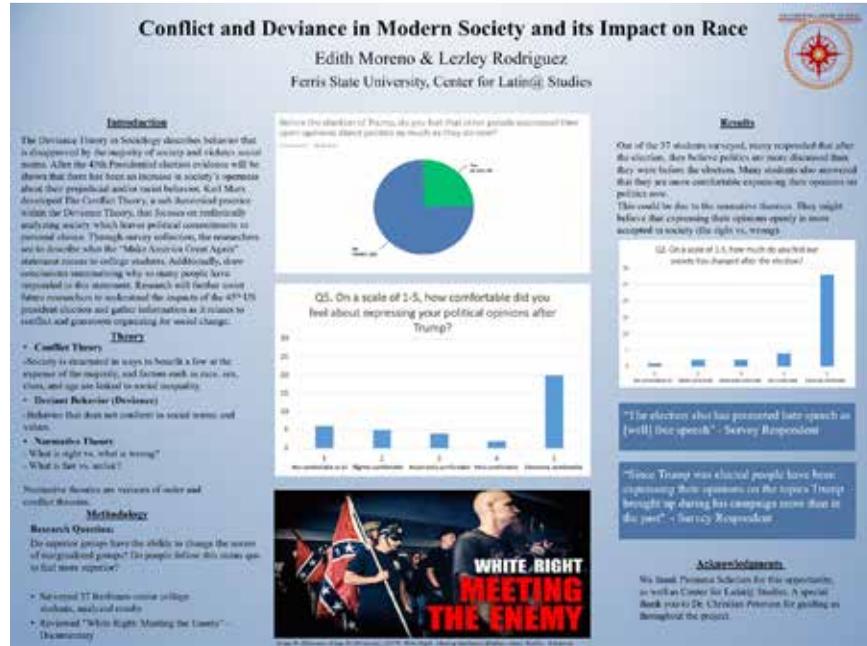


Photo courtesy of Edith Moreno and Lezley Rodriguez

Human resource management senior Edith Moreno and business administration senior Lezley Rodriguez completed a research project on President Trump and the ideologies he has openly expressed.

country and has allowed others to be more open about beliefs they'd usually keep to themselves.

"I think the current administration, and a lot of what Trump in particular has said, has encouraged some of the more hateful rhetoric you hear," Noorman said. "The kinds of people who have those harmful and even racist mindsets are being propped up and encouraged and it's definitely bad news."

Digital animation and game design sophomore Jack Davis also wouldn't consider himself to be heavily involved in politics, but he agreed with Noorman. Davis believes that the administration has heavily encouraged hateful speech and ideas from different groups of people.

"Having someone in power and even be publicly recognized when they have harmful beliefs, such as racist or white nationalist views, and excusing that sort of thing in

public lets people who are more in the closet about those more harmful views be more open themselves."

This idea ties in with a research project that was done through the Center for Latin@ Studies by human resource management senior Edith Moreno and business administration senior Lezley Rodriguez. Their research project "Conflict and Deviance in Modern Society and its Impact on Race" focuses on analyzing President Trump and the ideologies that he has openly expressed.

In their research project, Moreno and Rodriguez surveyed 37 Ferris students, 28 of these students, felt that people were more open about their political opinions after the 2018 presidential election.

"Our research showed us that the theories we were testing were valid and that the presidential election really did create a change in the political field," Moreno said.

"People feel more open and willing to share their opinions; whether they be something one can consider good or something else that could be considered hate speech."

One of the anonymous survey respondents Moreno and Rodriguez quoted on their project specifically blamed Trump for the increase in expression of opinions.

"Since Trump was elected people have been expressing their opinions on the topics Trump brought up during his campaign more than in the past," the respondent said.

Many ideas President Trump shares are through his twitter account @realDonaldTrump. In April he tweeted "Liberate Michigan" in response to Whitmer's orders to shut down the state to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many, including 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden, believe that this tweet helped contribute to the plot to kidnap Whitmer.

"When the President tweeted, 'liberate Michigan,' that's the call that was heard. That was the dog whistle," Biden said during a campaign event in Southfield, Michigan on Friday, Oct. 16.

Even former Homeland Security official, Miles Taylor, has agreed that the president has a heavy influence over groups of people that will take what he says to heart.

"[T]he president's rhetoric has served as a loaded gun for those groups who have since taken his words as sort of permission to do what they're doing," Taylor said during an interview with CNN after the first presidential debate in response to Trump not condemning white supremacists.

Taylor also stated that he believes Trump has created favorable conditions that allow domestic terrorist groups to rise

Despite argument in court that there was no real plan set in place by the group, a federal judge has ruled there is enough evidence to go to trial.

Moreno and Rodriguez's research poster can be found in IRC 131 on display to anyone who visits the Center for Latin@ Studies.

## THIS WEEK IN MICHIGAN NEWS

Catch up on news around the state  
Ry Rodriguez  
News Editor

**COVID-19 CASE COUNT**

**Positive Cases – 159,337**

**Deaths from COVID-19 – 7,323**

**Recovered Cases – 109,539**

**\*NYT    \*\*Michigan.gov**

**Capital Update** – On Oct. 16, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed a law for all Michigan schools to require the national suicide prevention line to be printed on student identification cards. On the same day, a Michigan Court of Appeals judge blocked the 14-day extension to turn in absentee ballots, after the election. On Oct 18, the Governor responds to President Trump's appearance in the state of Michigan and chants of 'lock her up' stating "it's incredibly disturbing that the president of the United States, 10 days after a plot to kidnap, put me on trial and execute me – 10 days after that was uncovered – the president is at it again and inspiring and incentivizing and inciting this kind of domestic terrorism."

**Sports** – In High School sports volleyball has moved into the playoff season with football barely behind starting next week. Both work as bracket play with volleyball championships being Nov 21. and football on Dec. 5 or 6, depending on the school. Big 10 football is back, starting on Oct 24, the Michigan Wolverines will match up the Minnesota Gophers at 6:30 p.m. and the Michigan State Spartans will play Rutgers University the same day at 12:00 p.m. On Oct. 18, the Detroit Lions made and held a lead over the Jacksonville Jaguars making it the second win for the Lions. The Lions are now third in the NFC North with a .400 overall win percentage.

# Two Townhalls, one messy debate

Ry Rodriguez  
News Editor

On the day of the scheduled second debate Oct. 15, President Trump and Joe Biden held two separate townhalls at the exact same time on different networks.

As typical townhall discussion works, they allowed members in the audience to come up and ask the candidates questions.

The main questions were on mask-wearing, COVID-19, fracking, and other political gaffs the candidates have said.

Viewers had a hard time watching the townhalls, either flipping between or watching both at the same time, it was hard to make up their mind.

"To be honest, if I would have put them on at the same time, I feel like I would have been watching the first debate again," mechanical engineer sophomore Matt O'Rourke said.

The moderator, for Trump's townhall, Savannah Guthrie asked multiple questions along with the audience.

Among those questions, QAnon was brought up and asked why they have not been denounced, with Trump's response being, "I just don't know about QAnon." This stated a back and forth, with the President and the moderator.

QAnon is a conspiracy group that has had multiple 'affiliates' who have been harming people in their attempts to bring down sup-

posed pedophile rings.

On the other hand, former Vice President Joe Biden was asked by an audience member, "besides 'you ain't Black' what do you have to say to young Black voters who see voting for you as further participation in a system that continuously fails to protect them?"

The candidate responded with, "Well, I'd said, first of all, as my buddy John Lewis said, it's a sacred opportunity, the right to vote. You can make a difference. If young Black women and men vote, you can determine the outcome of this election. Not a joke. You can do that. And the next question is, am I worthy of your vote, can I earn your vote," avoiding the gaff all in all.

Saturday Night Live made light of these town halls, emphasizing the question dodging from Joe Biden, the banter of Trump and Guthrie, and the fact that both townhalls were at the same time.

Some asked the question, 'why did they not debate', and the answer is, the format was supposed to be virtual since the President's rendezvous with COVID-19, and he did not agree to the format which canceled the debate.

"I really wanted this debate to happen so I could try to decide who I could vote for, I am still on the fence and these town halls were just a cluster," criminal justice freshman Jake Withee said.

The next debate is slotted for Oct. 22 at 9:00 p.m. on every major news network.

# Parking passes possibly reimbursed



Photo by: Madison Kettlewell | Torch Photographer

Lot 3 on campus is a residential lot in front of Hallisy and Vandercook Hall.

Rebecca Vanderkooi  
News Reporter

The Department of Public Safety has announced that if the university goes fully online for the spring semester it will provide partial reimbursement to students who bought year-long parking permits.

For students who plan to buy parking passes specifically for the spring semester the permits go on sale the Monday of final exam week, Dec. 16. However, they can be purchased whenever the student needs it.

"I did full refunds of student permits for the first four weeks of classes (fall semester). Usually, full refunds are available the first two weeks," said Carla Hatfield the parking clerk.

"I'm currently living in off campus housing with all online classes. I bought a parking pass this year, but my apartment complex reimbursed me for the cost of it," Sara Springstead a sophomore at Ferris explained.

Grace Miller is also a sophomore; she is currently

living at her family home in Howard City. Her classes are completely online this semester.

"I didn't buy a parking pass this year, I work on campus, so they provided me one for the areas that I work in," said Miller.

Fewer students are on campus this year than in typical years due to a 10.5% decrease in enrollment as well as a higher increase in online classes.

"I don't think the school should require students to pay for parking this year, but the general public should pay for meters, we could be given passes for free or a reduced cost due to classes being held virtually," said Springstead.

Last year between the dates of Oct. 13 and Oct. 19, 2019, Ferris Department of Safety issued 316 tickets totaling \$5,025. This year The Ferris Department of Safety issued 287 tickets totaling \$5,125. The money from the tickets goes towards the university general fund.

## - ON THE RECORD -

A roundup of this week's crime at Ferris State University

### Taco rang the police

Ry Rodriguez  
News Editor

#### Just need to clean

Oct. 12 8:00 p.m. A civil dispute broke out at the Granger building. The custodial staff called 9-1-1 after students would not leave the building while working on projects. After the cops were called twice the students were instructed to leave so the custodial staff could clean.

#### Fast and furiously unlicensed

Oct. 13 8:16 p.m. A non-Ferris student was pulled over on Family Drive near Ferris Drive, for not having headlights on while at night and going 45 m.p.h. in a marked 25 speed zone. It was found the driver had a suspended license and was issued a court appearance ticket.

#### Hide and seek

Oct. 14 1:36 a.m. Ferris State Public Safety executed a warrant to arrest a suspect for obstruction of justice - failure to appear at court - taking the suspect to the county jail, where they wait to appear in front of the court for more charges.

#### Taco rang the police

Oct. 15 12:35 a.m. A drunk person walked through the Taco Bell drive-thru ordered food and began to yell at the workers for not giving them the food they did not pay for. Ferris DPS had to remove the man from Taco Bell, but no arrest was made.

#### Something to nothing to criminal

Oct. 15 5:20 p.m. A student's ex-boyfriend did not take the break-up lightly. The Ferris student had to lock themselves in their room while the ex-ried to bang on the door and not give up. DPS was called but the ex left the scene before they showed up. Ferris issued a trespass policy against the ex so he would stay off campus. Three days later he showed back up onto campus trying to stalk and harass the Ferris student. DPS respond to the call again and a chase ensued. The ex got away, but not without two counts of fleeing and eluding in the 4th degree, stalking, and reckless driving. A warrant is being sought for his arrest.


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## REGISTER FOR WINTER COURSES!

# Biden's college policy isn't all it's cracked up to be

## With unstable funding and an underestimated cost, this plan is unlikely

Noah Kurkjian  
Copy Editor

One of Joe Biden's leading policies to get the youth vote is a promise to pay tuition for those whose families make under \$125,000 annually, but it's not all it's cracked up to be.

The policy states "Providing two years of community college or other high-quality training program without debt for any hard-working individual looking to learn and improve their skills to keep up with the changing nature of work," and or "Make public colleges and universities tuition-free for all families with incomes below \$125,000."

While this plan is good in theory, bipartisan support is unlikely, the planned funding is unstable, the estimated cost is off by about 50%, it could cause harm to the stock market and this doesn't account for things like education inflation.

Funding for this plan is assumed to be the same as the plan proposed by Bernie Sanders as there is no mention of funding on Biden's website. Sanders proposed a tax on Wall

Street speculation. This has issue because of the way speculation works and how difficult it would be to determine if an action was speculative or not.

Speculation in this context is defined as "the purchase of an asset (a commodity, goods, or real estate) with the hope that it will become more valuable in the near future."

Dr. Alex Cartwright, assistant professor of Economics said "If you tax speculation, then they're going to do less of it, and there will be less speculation in which to tax. It's also very hard to define the difference between speculation and actual investing."

Less speculation could harm the economy in a big way. Speculation provides the liquidity and ability for people to off-load stocks and other assets they may not want, and without that, a stock market crash could come soon after.

Cartwright also added that they were underestimating the cost of this program significantly. "The Biden campaign has estimated the cost at \$600 billion, but many have calculated it out to being almost double that," he said.

The plan didn't lay out any of the math used to get to the \$600 billion, either. They also fail to lay out their projections for the economic stimulation this program would provide, which seems to be a thing most voters care most about.

"This plan is honestly just stupid," social work sophomore Olivia Begin said. "This will cost too much and they could do it better. My idea would be a government funded, online university that would offer the same quality of education, but in the way public primary schools operate,"

This plan also doesn't account for "education inflation." A concept that says if more people are qualified for a position, then employers will raise the required qualification for that position. With this plan making college more lucrative for people that wouldn't attend for reasons that aren't financial, education inflation is bound to happen.

There was an overall lack of clarity in this plan and while it is just a campaign platform, more information is needed for it to be taken seriously. The Trump campaign does not have any polices listed for college funding reform.

## The future of job hunting

### Students struggle to find placements in pandemic job market

Rebecca Vanderkooi  
News Reporter

The pandemic has moved many events and internships online, which has made it more complicated for students to make career connections and meet potential employers.

The junior and senior years of college are typically a time for students to find internships in their field of study. However, for professors and students alike this year is shaping out to be different than it's ever been.

For the education department it has been an especially trying time because throughout the years at Ferris the students do various levels of internships, fieldwork, and student teaching within the local school districts.

"Big Rapids Public schools has chosen not to have any of our interns," said Debra Warwick, the student teaching placement coordinator. "That was a huge loss to us, and we miss those mentor teachers because they're darn good at what they do. But we also need to listen to the administration and the teachers."

However, Reed City has taken a lot of the Ferris education students, as have Morley, Cadillac, Tri County, and White Cloud. It hasn't all been smooth sailing though.

"I got a phone call from a principle, and a COVID case just got discovered in the classroom so the teacher now needs to quarantine, and the rest of the kids have to quarantine. Of course, one of our pre student-teachers is in the classroom so she now has to quarantine," Warwick said.

Warwick further explained that this is at least the seventh time a situation like this has happened so far this year.

Despite the challenges for students and professors alike it has also been a time of learning and creativity.

"They'll be better teachers because of the craziness. Things aren't going to throw them, because how often do we have pandemics? We hope we find a cure for this one and things will go back to normal, but I don't think we will ever forget this. There might be some good that comes out of it," said Warwick.

Things haven't been as difficult for

the journalism and technical communication departments. Mostly because writing is easily able to be adapted for remote working and learning.

"I've actually been surprised at how much of a non-issue COVID has been for our majors so far," said Zachary Wendler, the head of the journalism and technical communication program.

"We're doing a lot of the usual support stuff we do every year--having a kickoff meeting, mentoring students as they search, and so forth," Wendler said.

One benefit of the program being relatively small is that it's able to work more one on one with students and accommodate their situations.

"We want our students to be pretty advanced in their coursework. Beyond that, we're looking for our students to do 200+ hours of hands-on work that includes lots of professional writing," Wendler explained. "We've got the same expectations but are trying really hard to keep our students working remotely," added Wendler.

Human resource management senior Edith Moreno has been looking for a job or an internship to begin upon graduating.

"It is a bit more difficult to find internships because of the pandemic, but at the same time a lot more companies are turning to online resources for their recruitment. By putting these opportunities online, I think it takes the pressure off the student looking for work while also making it difficult to find the "right fit" when it comes to the job or internship," Moreno explained.

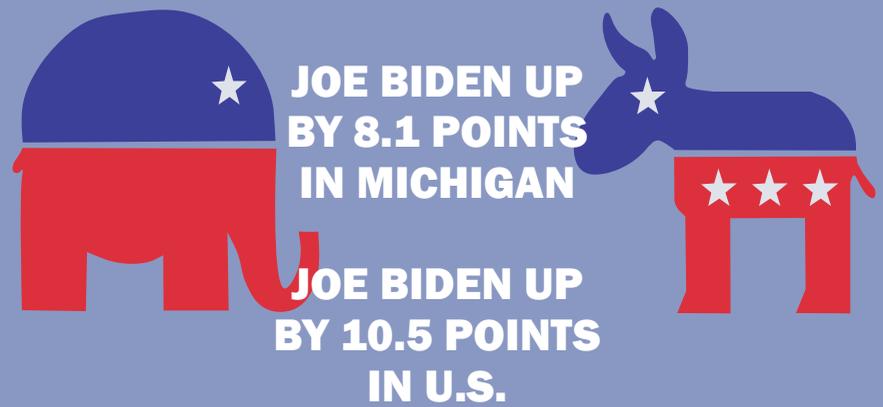
In addition to internships upcoming graduates like Moreno are thinking ahead to their careers and jobs they hope to find upon graduating.

"I am concerned about getting hired as a new grad due to the pandemic because it's a lot harder to interview and make connections the way we normally would. I'm afraid the employer might not see everything I have to offer by just looking at my resume," Moreno said.

Nationally this year has been difficult for recent graduates. In December of 2019 new graduate unemployment was at 3.9% and by June of this year it was at 13.3%.

## 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION UPDATE

### POLL NUMBERS



**Oct. 15** Both candidates held townhalls at the same time. President Trump's townhall focused on QAnon, mask policy, and policing, while at the other townhall with former Vice President Joe Biden, the topics were about fracking, the green new deal, and his gaffs.

**Oct. 16** Both campaigns focus on battleground states with Biden visiting Southfield Michigan talking about trying to balance the courts and the future of the affordable care act. Trump visited Ocala, Florida and held a rally that had an abundance of anti-maskers including Rep. Matt Gaetz and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

**Oct. 17** President Trump visited Michigan at Norton Shores, a suburb of Muskegon, inciting the crowd to chant 'lock her up', referring to Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer. Later in the day he also visited Michigan's neighboring state, Wisconsin.

**Oct. 18** The DNC chairperson announced the early vote totals are up towards 25% of voters in the states of Wisconsin and Arizona, stating democrats are showing up to vote early. President Trump visited Arizona in hopes to keep the state swaying towards the republican side.

**Oct. 19** This was the last day to register to vote online for the state of Michigan. You can still register to vote all the way up till the election, voters just have to walk into their clerk's office to register now.

**Oct. 21** Former President Barack Obama made his first appearance for Joe Biden in the battleground state of Pennsylvania.

would walk. After going upstairs, she texted him to let her know when he got home.

He never responded.

"I wouldn't allow myself to even consider the idea of what had happened," Blair said. "I went back in my room and I looked in the mirror and I noticed that my lip was busted open."

She rationalized it, telling her roommate she must have been so drunk she hit her face on something. She then found her sheets rolled up on the floor with vomit all over them, and said she was so drunk she must have vomited everywhere. Then she found her cloth Calvin Klein bra, ripped apart on the ground, and told her roommate she was so intoxicated she couldn't get her bra off.

"Riley, come on," her roommate responded.

Later that day, Blair noticed severe swelling and burning in her vagina. Blair said she was scared to even touch her body and was in denial the whole day.

"It was like I could touch my body, I could see it and it was like I didn't know it," she said. "My body knew before I would even allow myself to acknowledge what had happened."

It wasn't until she noticed fingerprint-shaped bruises on her arms and thighs in the shower that she began to fully realize what had happened.

"You get bruises all the time playing basketball. But I hadn't played in a couple weeks and they were very particularly shaped bruises," Blair said. "I was thinking 'what is going on here?' and I was staring at them for a second and I put my thumb up and that's when I realized, these were thumbprint shaped bruises."

She called a former teammate that day, and broke down crying on the phone. Her friends suggested she get a rape kit done, but Blair refused at first, not wanting to make allegations when she could not remember anything from the night before. But after a few days, she agreed to go to the hospital and get examined.

"I had shame and blame on myself like never before," Blair said. "As an athlete I've always been hard on myself with basketball and even with school. I think everyone is their own biggest critic. But those next few days I just was in the worst—as I came to terms with things more—I was at the lowest spot I've ever been in my self-critique."

"My self-talk was so negative. It was 'You slut. You put this out that that's the kind of respect you get from people, is that they have the control over you. Anyone can decide if they want you.' And it was all on me. It was the worst few days of my whole life."

Blair said she sat down at her computer one night and googled "how do you know if you've been raped?" She wouldn't make any accusations unless she was sure it had happened. The lists that came up had physical injuries listed and feelings of depression, but it was two words she read that sent chills down her spine: torn clothing.

Her bra, nearly ripped in half, came to mind and her entire body tensed up.

"That was the time I let myself accept it and thinking of the aggression and lack of respect and everything that would go into that specific act of tearing someone's bra off. That I was so incompetent that I couldn't or wouldn't even be able to take my own bra off, that someone took it into their own hands and was that aggressive and careless towards me and my body, it was just completely overwhelming. I couldn't even process that act within itself," Blair said.

#### A divided community

Both Blair and Smith were Ferris athletes at the time of the assault. It was something that caused a not-so subtle divide in the tight-knit community, even between Blair and her best friend, who was also a women's basketball player. After Blair told her about the assault, she went to Smith's apartment to talk to him. When she came back, she told Blair he said he didn't do it, so maybe she shouldn't get a rape kit done.

The athletics community was hard to navigate for Blair after that; it was uncharted territory for everyone. After Blair told her coach, not knowing she was a mandatory reporter, she had to file a police report and after giving his name to the Ferris Department of Public Safety, Ferris Athletics wanted to do more education in response. That's when the news got out.

Blair suffered from extreme social anxiety, even around

other athletes she was friends with before. She couldn't go to the grocery store alone, or fill her car up with gas. She had panic attacks at the drop of a hat.

"I would go to other teams sporting events and his teammates would be there and sitting a few rows down in the bleaches and—I'm not even exaggerating—would be turned around, staring at me. I was uncomfortable walking through the sports complex," Blair said. "I would literally base what door I entered for workouts off of the hockey players' schedule, so I wouldn't have to even cross paths with them...even when I wanted to feel an escape from it, there was no way, unless, honestly, I went home to Livonia, was the only time I ever felt rest or peace."

Any discussions with her former best friend always ended up in comments like "it's not too late to drop charges," and "this is going to ruin his whole life," or "they're going to tear you apart in a trial." Eventually Blair learned that she was reporting her every move and things Blair told her to Smith's defense, which resulted in Blair moving to a new apartment.

"I just remember my skin crawling in a time when I was already so uncomfortable in my skin," Blair said. "I couldn't find comfort through anything. I had nowhere to go, these were the people that I was trusting in a few of the most vulnerable moments. I just felt like my trust and my sense of safety was the biggest thing that I lost."

#### Her own voice

In every step of the process, Blair was doubted, questioned and felt disrespected. First from a close friend. Then by a nurse at the hospital, who told her "well, we all get drunk and fall down and get bruises." Most of all, though, by the judge at Smith's sentencing.

Blair said she gave a victim impact statement at the closed sentencing, which lasted nearly half an hour. It was as if they sat there quietly because they were required to, but as soon as she finished, she could tell her words had gone in one ear and out the other. Yet, Smith's stack of papers, with letters of recommendation from coaches and friends, was referenced over and over. According to Blair, the judge apologized to Smith for making him say he was guilty of assault twice.

She went into the sentencing hoping to get some closure, hoping for an apology or a sign of remorse for what he did. She got neither.

"I feel like he took the most chicken way out of this. Obviously his reputation was tainted but he thinks that this is all getting, for the most part, swept under the rug," Blair said. "At the sentencing, it was just actually unbelievable the way the narrative that was used that he had already lost so much, being a student athlete. He lost his scholarship, he had been kicked out of school, he had served a couple weeks at one point because he broke the bonds of his tether, he had already suffered so much and there's this stack of letters from his coaches."

"All these people talking about he's a good student, a good teammate, a good friend and the judge referenced those and took those into consideration. 'We're going to show Mr. Smith some leniency,' were actually the words used."

The text messages that were submitted as evidence, however, were not considered, according to Blair. Texts that referenced sexual contests and other girls to check off his list. Texts that included racist language that showed "utter disrespect for human life," according to Blair.

She felt like she was the only one advocating for herself throughout the whole process.

"There were so many times I lost my voice and that it was not even asked for," she said. "Or if it was asked for, it was like, why am I even talking? Because you're not listening. And that was exactly how I felt again and again and again, and so I wasn't even surprised at the sentencing, I was exhausted."

#### A survivor

Blair now lives in Grand Rapids, where she works full-time at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. She got a dog this summer to keep her company, an aussie-doodle named Lennie. She tries to fill her time reading and began training for a half-marathon this summer.

Each day is a process mentally for Blair, who was diagnosed with anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress



Photo by: Cora Hall | Editor in Chief

Blair got a puppy this summer to keep her company in Grand Rapids, an aussie-doodle named Lennie.

disorder. There are stretches of days when she feels like she's doing really well, and then one thing triggers her and it's back to square one. Some nights, she has nightmares that shake her for days or even weeks. There are days when she begins to slip into the "hole of worthlessness" as she called it and feels shame in everything she does.

Learning her triggers has been part of the healing process, and many have been amplified by moving across the state from her family and living alone.

"I'm going to have setbacks and I just try to really chalk up the good days as a big win," Blair said. "Even a task as simple as going to the grocery store alone. Or going to get gas or going for a run by myself. I've really allowed myself to celebrate and enjoy those moments."

Her biggest reservation in speaking up now was having people pity her, or treat her like she was someone who was fragile.

"Talk to me like I'm a person, don't talk to me like I'm damaged or like I'm weak or like I need to be coddled, because I hate that," Blair said. "I have learned how to know what I need and be really blunt about it. I feel like I've also learned a lot from this experience, it's helped me grow in that aspect and standing up for myself and knowing what I want and not doing things just to please people."

Survivors of sexual assault have things taken from them that they may never get back. For Blair, it was her ability to relax.

"Wherever I go, each person on the street is a threat until it's proven to me that it's not. It's been really difficult to enjoy a lot of things in my life because I'm always in that fight or flight, I'm always expecting a threat everywhere I go," she said. "That sense of safety...there's always a healthy amount that a normal person has, a healthy balance, you can access a situation and identify what is an actual threat, what's something you can actually sit back and enjoy. I can't do that. At least not yet. It's always expecting the worst."

For now, Blair is at peace with not always being OK, and is focusing on embracing her emotions, the good with the bad. There may be bad days ahead, but she knows that there will certainly be good ones, too.

She is a survivor of sexual assault, and while she kept her name private during the trial, she isn't anymore; her name is Riley Blair.

"There were so many times I lost my voice and that it was not even asked for."

—Riley Blair

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# LIFESTYLES

Marissa Russell | Lifestyles Editor | russem22@ferris.edu

## Bar life changed, but still alive



Photo by: Benjamin Totten | Torch Photographer

Sawmill Saloon is located at 1003 Maple St. and has been open throughout the summer and the fall semester due to their large outdoor area.

### Students not letting pandemic stop their drinking and social habits

**Matthew Miller**  
Lifestyles Reporter

The college night life is a taste of freedom most young adults look forward to they're away from parents for the first time, but this past semester has not been typical.

Bars have been closed and gatherings have been cut-back, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encouraging virtual and outdoor gatherings with a limited number of people. As restaurants and bars reopen, regulations have changed how they would normally operate.

Construction project management senior Dawson Forner said that the restrictions are making it seem like college doesn't have a social aspect anymore.

"I hate showing up to a place and then realizing I don't have a mask," Forner said. "Having to have a mask nowadays is just as important as having your wallet or cellphone. Without one, you aren't going to be getting too far."

Others like communications junior Sawyer Trantham said that the restrictions of having to wear a mask as you order a drink don't keep him from having a good time.

"I am honestly happy that Shooters is opening back up,"

communications junior Sawyer Trantham said. "Even though they are following social distancing guidelines and you are not able to get to interact with friends you see across the bar, I am still happy to be out and about."

Shooters is open at limited capacity for the time being, and drinks are available for take-out. According to a Facebook post, masks are encouraged but not required despite Michigan regulations stating "businesses must not allow indoor gatherings of any kind unless they require individuals to wear a face covering."

Other popular bars in Big Rapids are Gypsy Nickel Lounge and Sawmill Saloon, both of which have been open since the summer months. Since Gypsy is a restaurant with an outdoor patio and Sawmill has an outdoor seating area they both met requirements to stay open throughout the pandemic.

Sawmill has a few signs posted encouraging masks, but not everyone thinks the bar is truly complying with the state-wide mandates.

"They do not enforce masks or social distancing at all," pre-pharmacy senior and Gypsy Nickel employee John Nguyen said. "I think they should at least enforce the workers to

wear a mask."

Nguyen views the restrictions as something here to help patrons. He believes anyone who doesn't follow them is just being selfish and that there isn't really a point in not following them because they don't interfere that much with what you are doing.

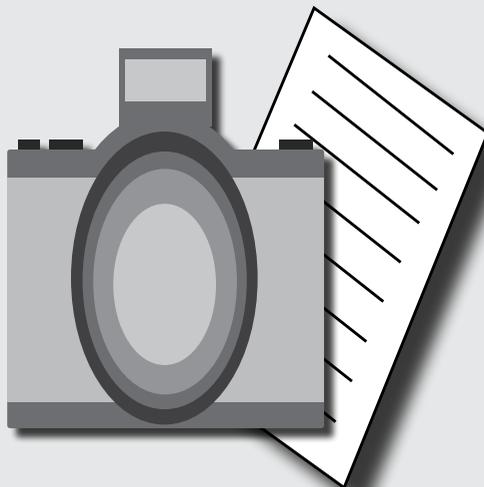
As an employee at another local bar, Nguyen has been able to see the contrast between bar regulations first hand.

"The things we do at Gypsy to keep everyone practicing social distancing is enforcing masks when they walk in the building or are standing, but when they sit down to socialize or eat they can take their mask off," Nguyen said. "I can't say anything about students who are being irresponsible or not, but hopefully they are mindful of their actions and surroundings."

Michigan regulations still require that food service establishments must maintain six feet of distance between each party and cannot exceed 50% of normal seating capacity.

*Kaylin Johnson contributed to the reporting of this story.*

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# Meet your ambassador: Leo Almanza

## First-generation college student grateful for his support

**Kendall Rooks**  
Lifestyles Reporter

The 2020 homecoming ambassador has been announced and Leonardo Almanza came out on top as this year's winner.

Almanza is originally from Fennville, Michigan and is a senior in the criminal justice program. Almanza is involved in Ferris life and is a part of five registered student organizations including Sigma Lambda Beta Fraternity, Peer Educator/Staff Lead: Anti-Violence Alliance, Hispanic Student Organization, Student Leadership Activity & Advisory Council, Student Alumni Gold Club, as well as the being the president of the United Greek Council. When Almanza is not busy with RSOs he enjoys playing football, Fortnite and riding horses.

COVID-19 changed the way that Almanza and the other candidates campaigned this year.

"I knew that social media was going to be my best tool to reach the audience," He stated, "With everything going on with this virus it is very difficult to engage with students in person. It took a little bit of adapting, but I'm doing my best in managing, to say the least. The whole point of college is to be able to have engagement with students, whether it is with events, speakers, or activities around campus. The way I view this change is not to think that we lost many activities we've done in the past, but to view as ways we can create new events. It's all about adapting to the environment."

Almanza is very grateful to be elected as the ambassador and did not have very high expectations of winning in the first place and was excited to even be considered as a nominee.

"The biggest thing is the fact of how much support I had. In addition, being a first-generation student, statistically I'm not even supposed to be at school. Let alone even having the opportunity to run for such a high position. So, I'm blessed and speechless to say the least."

Almanza added, "I could not be in my position with everyone's support and push. I want to say a special thank you to my mother for pushing me to become the best version of myself. I know I would not be here without her. Also, as a Mexican not many people get to have these types of opportunities. So, I want to be an example to all the Hispanic community that it is possible. That if you have the mentality to truly want something, then you'll go out your way to go and get it. Never settle for anything less. Become the best version of yourself. You decide how far you want to go in life."

The homecoming ambassador's job after winning includes being the MC for the 2020 Torchbearer Awards Ceremony held at the end of the spring semester. They also work alongside Entertainment Unlimited to help present and introduce artists or events throughout the school year. Along with these jobs the ambassador also receives a \$500 scholarship.

Almanza spoke about his plans for his scholarship stating, "I plan on donating it to my fraternity here. The reason why is because although I did win this for myself, I could not have been in this position without being a member of this fraternity. "The fraternity will give you more, than what you can give it." That is a quote that I was taught when joining and I never truly understood what that meant until seeing all the work I've done, but if you see all the work I've done and traced it back. It all goes back to my fraternity."

He emphasized that none of his work really matters if it does not have an impact on the future. As the new homecoming ambassador, he strives to try his best for the minority communities so that they can know

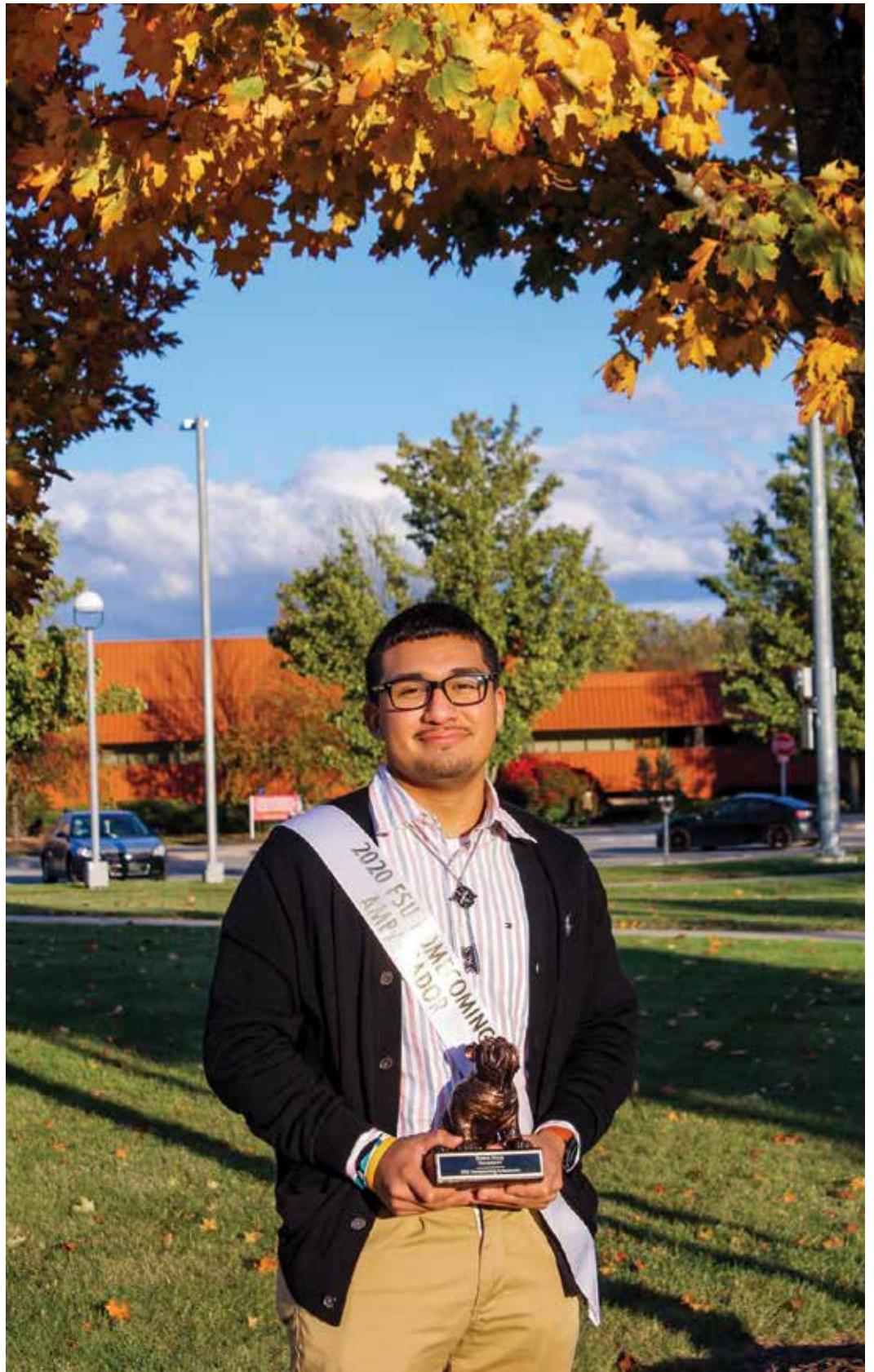


Photo by: Madison Kettlewell | Torch Photographer

Criminal justice senior Leonardo Almanza was chosen by students as this year's Homecoming Ambassador.



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## 2020 DECEMBER COMMENCEMENT

**Saturday, December 19, 2020**  
Virtual Commencement

College	Contact	Phone #	Location
Health Professions	Richelle Williams	(231) 591-2263	VFS 210
Arts & Sciences	Gayle Driggers	(231) 591-3666	ASC 3052
Business	Carri Griffis	(231) 591-2493	BUS 200
Business (graduate students)	Shannon Yost	(231) 591-2168	BUS 200
Engineering Technology	Joyce Mudel	(231) 591-3983	JOH 200
General Studies Graduates	Shelly VandePanne	(231) 591-2360	ASC 1039

**Note:** You must satisfy all of your degree requirements before you officially graduate and receive your diploma.

**Cap and gowns**, may be purchased at the Ferris State University Bookstore (located in the University Center, 805 Campus Drive, Big Rapids MI 49307) or online at <https://ferris.shopoakhali.com> and have it shipped to you (a shipping fee will be charged). The deadline to order for Undergraduate and Graduate degrees shipping through the website is December 4, 2020.

**Virtual Commencement Slide** - To personalize your slide please visit Virtual Commencement at <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/current/Commencement/virtualcommencement.htm>. Information must be submitted by the end of the day on Wednesday, October 21st.

**Diploma Cover & Alumni Pin Pick up** - For those Graduate who selected yes to walk you may pick up your diploma cover and Alumni Pin during the following times in the University Center on main campus in Room 123.

10/21	10:00 am - 1:30 pm	11/09	12:00 pm - 3:00 pm	11/13	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
11/05	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	11/12	11:00 am - 3:00 pm	11/17	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

### Saturday, December 19, 2020

Time	College
10:00 am	College of Business College of Health Profession
1:30 pm	College of Arts & Sciences College of Engineering Technology

For special accommodations or for more information regarding the Commencement ceremony, please visit the Commencement website [www.ferris.edu/commencement](http://www.ferris.edu/commencement) or call (231) 591-3803.



# Student host reflects on John Mulaney interview

Lane Steffke talks about comedian live stream

**Veronica Mascorro**  
News Reporter

Students came out by the hundreds to watch stand-up comedian John Mulaney answer questions, even in the event's virtual format.

The homecoming comedian event which typically happens in person was held virtually on Thursday, Oct. 9 and 236 students watched the live stream.

Music and entertainment business senior Lane Steffke serves as this year's Entertainment Unlimited president and homecoming committee president and was the student who got to interview Mulaney.

Before the show Steffke had briefly interacted with Mulaney for a few seconds but they didn't really interact until it was show time.

"He is one of my favorite comedians, so I was definitely excited for him to be doing this show," Steffke said, "I was nervous day of show for the interview, but as soon as we started the nerves went away."

During the show Mulaney quickly began to ask Steffke questions as well, creating an environment that was more of a conversation.

"Although it was a Q&A, we wanted it to have a natural flow which allowed him to add some funny commentary as well," Steffke said.

Steffke recognizes that it can be difficult to do comedy virtually and felt that the format they went with fit well with Mulaney's content.

"I think students were still able to enjoy it because we were able to bring such a big act. Because the event was virtual, we were able to afford someone bigger than usual, which helped make it more enticing," Steffke said. "John Mulaney is also big among college students right now, so I



Photo taken during live stream

Music and entertainment business senior Lane Steffke was the moderator for the John Mulaney Q & A.

think people were excited to see him."

Both EU and homecoming traditionally rely on events that are held in-person such as stuff-a-plush, and the homecoming parade. But with the restrictions from COVID-19, it's put a damper on the way many events across campus are held.

"It has definitely been more difficult to hold events. With less students on campus and tight restrictions on what we are able to do, it is hard to engage students in ways that we have before," Steffke said.

Nicholas Smith is the coordinator of activities at the Center for Leadership, Activities, and Career Services serves as the advisor for EU and the homecoming committee has begun looking ahead a bit to plan out the following year's festivities.

Planning for the following homecoming will begin during

the spring semester as normal, however a lot more "what if" conversation will be likely to occur.

With everything constantly changing it's also to soon to say whether things will be virtual or whether it will be back in person. The committee has hopes for an in person show but can take advantage of the event being virtual by getting a larger comedian. The format of the show will as well depend on the comedian and what type of show they'd be willing to host.

Mulaney ended off the show by saying that he'll have to come to Big Rapids in person one day. When asked about this comment, Smith kept things mysterious.

"You never know, we have had some pretty cool performers come to campus in the past," Smith said.

Students will have to wait for the next homecoming comedian to be announced next fall.

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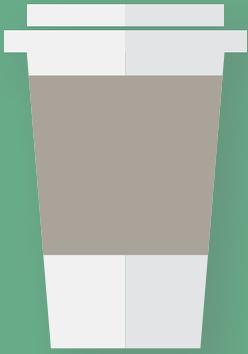
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# Events calendar

## WEDNESDAY

Oct. 21



### Virtual Career and Internship Fair

Contact: Kathryn Thomas  
KathrynEThomas@ferris.edu  
Location: Easy Virtual Fairs  
Time: 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

### LGBTQ+ Resource Center Coffee House

Contact: Sarah Doherty  
lgbtqcenter@ferris.edu  
Location: Virtual  
Time: 4 - 6 p.m.

## THURSDAY

Oct. 22

### Lunch Time Crunch Time

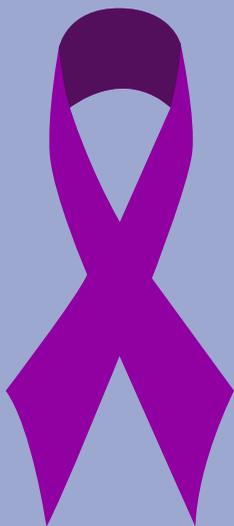
Contact: Anna Douglas  
annadouglas@ferris.edu  
Location: Student Recreation Center  
Time: 12- 12:30 p.m.

### #PurpleThursday Tabling

Contact: Erin Davis  
davis33@ferris.edu  
Location: North Campus Quad  
Time: 12 - 2 p.m.

### Five Star: Marc Reede

Contact: Michele D Albright  
michelealbright@ferris.edu  
Location: Virtual  
Time: 7 - 8 p.m.



## FRIDAY

Oct. 23

### Virtual Study Abroad Workshop

Contact: Megan Hauser-Tran  
MeganHauserTran@ferris.edu  
Location: Virtual  
Time: 1 - 2 p.m.

### Diversity and Inclusion Summit

Contact: Nick Smith  
nicholassmith@ferris.edu  
Location: Virtual  
Time: 2 - 4 p.m.

### FriGay Gaymes

Contact: Sarah Doherty  
lgbtqcenter@ferris.edu  
Location: Virtual  
Time: 3 - 5 p.m.



## MONDAY

Oct. 26

### Easy 2 Mile walk/jog/run

Contact: Anna Douglas  
annadouglas@ferris.edu  
Location: Student Recreation Center  
Time: 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

### Virtual Cooking Show

Contact: Anna Douglas  
annadouglas@ferris.edu  
Location: Virtual  
Time: 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.



For more events, check out [calendar.ferris.edu](http://calendar.ferris.edu)

# Fighting the dorm loneliness

Students and Residential Advisors try to make the best of their new circumstances

Alyssa Hubbard  
News Reporter

Since move-in day in August, students and residential advisors in the dorm halls have been trying to find new ways to socialize.

Many changes were made to the way students and RAs alike can interact within the halls. What was once a social hotspot for making new friends with fellow students has now become much quieter.

Ward Hall RA AJ Arechiga noted that he has been struggling to build strong connections with his residents because of the unusual circumstances.

"For me it has been difficult getting to know my residents and connecting faces to names," Arechiga said. "I think the most difficult part has been the helpless feeling I get when residents come to talk about the lack of socializing they experience on their floor."

Arechiga understood that this is a difficult time for everyone to feel comfortable hanging out around the hall. He has still made it a priority to ensure that his residents have fun living in the dorms and make new friends.

RAs needed to modify how they connected with the residents on their assigned hall floors, and how to help them get out of their rooms. One way to encourage students out are the hall programs.

These programs are usually hosted in the main lobby areas of each hall. Some events offered are movie marathons, game nights, and physical group exercises like yoga.

So far, Arechiga has either hosted or helped with four different programs in Ward. Five students came to his first event, "Frisbee on the quad," and that is the most participants he has had attend since then. One of the newest rules when having these social gatherings is a limit of ten people wearing masks and safely distancing.

"It's difficult to get residents to come out and interact, mainly because some are cautious of the virus, and I would like to be respectful of their precautions," Arechiga said. "For the most part, I try my best to send out emails to my residents and encourage them to come to programs. I have also introduced residents to one another in hopes of them becoming friends and breaking out of their shell. I also encourage residents to reach out to me if they are bored or need someone to talk to. I've tried to make it very clear that I am here to be their friend."

Residents attending programs feel that during events they can be safe and have fun at the same time. Many emphasized that while they were still attending in person events they were being cautious of the number of people in attendance and how many were wearing masks.

They have also said they feel grateful that everyone in their hall community is doing their part to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Devin Bearer, a freshman living in Puterbaugh hall, says that there has been a real community forming since move-in day. She says that she's been able to meet people through regular, non-scheduled everyday activities in addition to events put on by RAs.

"The RAs in my hall have been hosting a lot of events," she says. "There was a huge event for pumpkin painting, a lot of people showed up for that, and I was able to meet more people. There's also a 'Just Dance' event that's recurring and that one is super fun."

Some students have been hanging out and playing games in the halls even when events are not going on.

Zach Miller is a freshman in graphic media man-

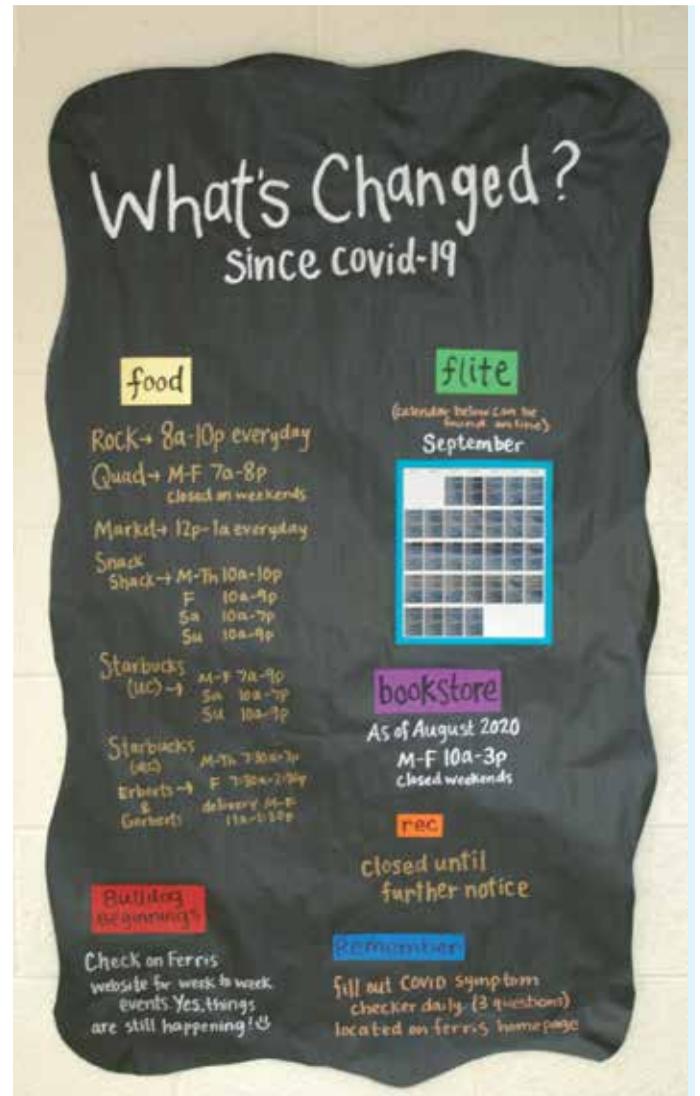


Photo by: Benjamin Totten | Torch Photographer

Dorm events have changed this year and not as many students are participating, according to RAs.

agement who frequently finds activities to do with his friends around North Hall.

Miller and his friends have chilled in the lobby, cooked in the kitchens, played pool or ping pong, and watched movies together. They try to invite new people to join them whenever they hang out. The group takes necessary precautions when they get together, so that they can be an example to show that having a great time with friends can still happen.

"It is still a lot of fun, just because we have to social distance doesn't mean you can't yell at your friends from across the hall," Miller said.

Miller expected that he would be in his room often, and that was not the case. To his surprise, Miller made new friends quickly and he finds himself out of his room most of the time.

Another student who has discovered different ways to connect with friends is weld engineering technology sophomore Nathan Hard.

Hard and his friend group meet up at the Quad on campus or go out into the town to grab a bite to eat.

Students knew when they moved in that it would be a different experience than they're used to. Some students have adjusted well and are still having a good time, despite their odd circumstances.

Arechiga explained his reason for becoming an RA was to make certain that students, particularly freshmen, have an overall positive experience in the halls. He hoped to build a community for Ward Hall and be a role model for younger residents, helping them however he can.

"It is important because everyone deserves to have a good social experience their freshman year and meet new people," Arechiga said. "I want to get students involved to adjust to student life here at Ferris and meet new people because that's what college is all about."

RAs and students have been able to find a fulfilling community on campus while still being safe and cautious of others.

Meghan Hartley contributed to the reporting of this story.

# SPORTS

Brendan Sanders | Sports Editor | sandeb16@ferris.edu

## Freshman frustrations

Freshman athletes finding it difficult to acclimate to college life

Brody Keiser  
Sports Reporter

Freshman athletes are finding that the transition from high school to college life and athletics to be a difficult one.

The move from high school to college is stressful for most students. Students must learn how to live on their own, be responsible for themselves and manage their workload. Athletes must do the same things and also balance it all with their athletic obligations.

This stressful transition has not been made easier by the shift to online classes. Many student-athletes are having trouble adjusting to learning online.

"I don't really like it," freshman football player Vincent Cooley said. "Online learning for me has been tough because I'm not an online person. I like to do face-to-face because I learn better that way,"

Cooley, a native of Detroit, came to Ferris on a football scholarship. He chose to come to Ferris over other schools because at Ferris, "they treat you like family." He said the Bulldog coaches and players made him feel at home.

With the GLIAC's decision to postpone the Fall 2020 season, Cooley and his football family have yet to take the field for the Bulldogs.

"For us freshman, we have to adapt to not having football and really focus on our schoolwork because there's nothing else to do," Cooley said. "We just have to focus on academics and get that down to make sure we're still eligible to play."

Like Cooley, freshman volleyball player Hannah Tecumseh has focused on her schoolwork in the absence of sports. Her desire to receive a top education in pre-optometry was what drew her to Ferris.

While Tecumseh felt that she adjusted better than others to college life, she did acknowledge feeling homesick in her first few days on campus. She is also learning to successfully balance everything on her plate.

"Time management is definitely the most difficult part about being a student-athlete because after hours of practice, weightlifting, and conditioning the last thing you want to do is homework, quizzes, or labs," Tecumseh said. "It is a true test of your mental strength because you have long nights of studying and early mornings of practice."

Freshman volleyball player Kaylee Maat was frustrated about not playing competitive volleyball to start her first year as a Bulldog. However, she has come to appreciate the downtime.

"It was nice to come in and have some time to get used to how things are done and get used to managing school and athletics at such a demanding level," Maat said.

Like Maat, Cooley also expressed frustration over not being able to play competitively. He is used to playing football throughout the summer, but this year had to take most of the summer off.

Without football in the summer months, Cooley found it difficult to jump back into training, saying that conditioning is "pretty tough."

"Some of us took time off since we aren't competing. Now that we're back into training, some of us are really out of shape because we've been sitting and relaxing for so long," Cooley said.

Tecumseh expressed similar difficulties jumping back into training after months of having no access to gyms to train in.

"It feels great to be back in the gym but getting in shape after having access to nothing is difficult," Tecumseh said. "Working out in a mask is tough too because it makes it hard to get air when you are out of breath."

Cooley also said working out in masks is "definitely harder," but that he is slowly getting used to it.

Cooley, Tecumseh, and Maat all wished their freshman experience could have started under different circumstances. All three players wished they could go out and make more friends, meet new people, and experience college life as most freshmen in the past would have.

However, COVID-19 has made it tough, if not impossible, for them to do that.

## Ferris replaces softball field, batting cages



Photo by: Benjamin Totten | Torch Photographer

Scott Wilcox and Kristin Janes cut the honorary caution tape to celebrate the improved softball field.

## \$200,000 project brings new turf and cages to softball field

Brendan Sanders  
Sports Editor

Softball saw a step up in facilities get completed last Thursday with the official ribbon cutting of the improved Varsity Softball field.

On Thursday, Oct. 15, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to promote the completion of the softball field upgrades. This event saw the entire softball team, project facilitators, and athletic staff attend to show the community these improvements to the stadium.

The improvements to the field include a completely new turf infield, which replaced a field that was previously completely dirt. The outfield was laser graded so that it is now flat and drained properly along with better fertilizing and overseeding. The stadium also received brand new batting cages and artificial bullpens.

"It is absolutely beautiful and everything that we could've asked for," softball head coach Kristin Janes gave compliments on the upgraded facility. "We are ridiculously excited to get going using it. There have been so extremely influential people who have been a part of this project."

Originally planned two years ago, the total budget for this project was \$245,000. The work was done by Ferris' physical plant and saved \$35,000-\$40,000 dollars. This was the first athletic field that was completed by Ferris States' physical plant staff that normally oversees and maintains Ferris State's facilities.

Grounds supervisor Scott Wilcox gave insight into the evolution of the project.

"It actually came together in the final hour. The contractor was hired, my guys came in last minute and said we can do this and save money." Wilcox said. "The physical plant was willing to take a listen to it and we bid against the contractor and were substantially less than they were."

Many of the players were also excited about the improvements to the field, with sophomore first baseman Kaitlyn Orne expressing her delight about the improvements.

"It's one of the most beautiful fields I've ever played on," Orne said. "there are some nice facilities around in the GLIAC but I think ours is going to be top of the line now. The pitching and batting mounds are some of the best I've ever seen, and I've played all over the country and all of Michigan and our field is the top field I've ever played on."

Junior outfielder Madison Mcleod also gave a positive review for the facility.

"I love it, it was exciting to see everything all new and redone," Mcleod said. "It will give us the swagger to make us play good. Basically, like a feel-good play good mentality."

Some of the improvements haven't been completed yet, such as installing new foul poles, a windscreen that will go across the outfield, and new backstop pads are still in line to be added to the rapidly improving stadium. Janes explained some of the benefits of these new improvements.

Softball | see page 11



The Ferris softball team celebrated the ribbon cutting of their new turf field on Thursday, Oct. 15.

Photo by: Benjamin Totten | Torch Photographer

### Softball

Continued from page 10

"It will be incredibly more beneficial to us, our problem has been the weather in the springtime, so either the fields too wet or it's too hard, or we get rained out snowed out whatever. Now we don't have to worry about that now because this artificial surface drains, now there should be almost no moved games or canceled games and we should be able to bring more home games to us because we don't have to worry about the weather." Janes said.

Orne echoed these sentiments but also talked about some of the playing advantages a turf field provided over dirt.

"I think the turf field is going to be great because it's going to not have as many funky hops as you would if it was on dirt. On turf, it's going to be nice and flat and won't jump up at you as much. It's going to be definitely nice sliding onto a base as it will be a nice easy slide instead of getting all scraped up." Orne said.

The Bulldogs will have to wait until the spring season to see any competition on the field, but when they do they will be looking to improve upon their 2019 record of 20-34.

## THIS WEEK IN SPORTS LAST YEAR



Torch File Photo

**Brendan Sanders**  
Sports Editor

This time last year, Ferris State volleyball improved to 16-4 on the season with a wins against Walsh and Rockhurst. This pushed the Bulldogs to #14 in the nation at the time. Ferris had the highest hitting percentage in the GLIAC at .259 and was fourth in the conference in kills with 827. Senior outside hitter Allyson Cappel sat at fifth in the conference with 223 kills and third in kills per set with 3.84. The team was also second in blocks, second in points per set, first in digs per set and second in kills per set.

The Bulldogs' stats ranked well nationally. They were Top 20 in four different categories: hitting percentage, digs per set, assists per set and opponents hitting percentage. Along with that, they were Top 25 in kills per set and senior setter Maeve Grimes was Top 25 in assists per set.



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Updated August 13, 2020

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

# COLUMN: Who is the true G.O.A.T?

## MJ vs. LeBron debate still has not changed

**Austin Arquette**  
Sports Reporter

When in talks about the greatest of all time in the terms of basketball, the immediate name that comes up is Michael Jordan every time.

With LeBron James winning his fourth title on Oct. 11 against the Miami Heat, the LeBron James vs Michael Jordan debate has once again kicked into high gear as James begins to close in on Jordan's six championships. The debate can go on for centuries as there are so many different accolades to dispute between the two men. For starters both Jordan and James played in two different eras of basketball yet both men have accomplished so much.

Currently, Jordan beats James in the championship category as Jordan has six rings to James' now fourth ring after the Lakers championship. Jordan also won the finals most valuable player award each of the six times he won the championship. Unfortunately, James has only won four finals MVPs but has reached the NBA finals a total of 10 times in his career.

Ferris sophomore guard Ben Davidson explained his view on the James vs Jordan debate.

"There was only been one person ever to lead the league in scoring, win MVP, be first-team all-defense, and win the NBA finals, and these are four impossible things, and his name is Michael Jordan, and he has done it four times." Davidson said.

If you want insight into the championship idea of why Jordan takes this category over James, think about this. If Kyrie Irving doesn't hit a game-winning killer shot against the Golden State Warriors in the 2016 NBA finals of game seven, he would only have three championships, and if Chris Bosh doesn't rebound the ball off a missed free throw and kick the ball out to the corner to Ray Allen and he doesn't hit a game-winning three-pointer James would then only have two championships.

Either way, the stat that Jordan has as many titles as James does losses in the NBA finals is shocking. While it's amazing to reach the finals 10 times in a career, it hurts your chances of being the G.O.A.T when you lose a championship six times. Overall, the debate of championships goes to Michael Jordan. "Lebron's not the G.O.A.T because he's playing in the soft-

est era we have ever seen in NBA basketball," Stephen A. Smith said on an episode of First Take on Oct. 8, 2020.

With this comment from Smith, many can agree that Jordan played in the tougher time of the NBA while James is protected with more regulations to protect players and the easy calls for fouls that can be made. Jordan had to always fight and claw as more things were acceptable back in the day and continuously made incredible shots and drives to win championships and games all around. Jordan played in the most physical era of basketball as the NBA back then had fewer rules against hand-checking than in today's version of basketball.

As you look into the era's each player played in it also goes to show that Jordan not only played with tougher defenses and still competed as the G.O.A.T as he accomplished 10 scoring titles. James has only one scoring title in his long 17-year career. Everyone knows that James is the only player to come right out of high school to join the NBA and to debunk this it does not add to his side of the G.O.A.T debate. While Jordan spent three years in North Carolina he still completed 15 seasons in the NBA even though he took a year off to pursue a career in baseball. But, even taking time off from the game Jordan came back into the league won three of his six championships in a three-peat run and set the long-run record of 72 regular-season wins.

While it sounds like Jordan runs away with this debate, we cannot ignore the achievements that James has made. He is still playing effectively, as he is now third in all-time leading scores in the NBA only behind Kareem Abdul-Jabbar at number one and Karl Malone in the second spot.

Davidson talked about some of James' positive attributes against Jordan.

"Lebron has two things on Michael Jordan, which is longevity and that goes more with today's medicine and people are playing longer now and Lebron is a better passer," Davidson said. "Lebron did come back from a 3-1 to beat the 73-9 warriors, which personally is the greatest finals win of all time."

James has completed more points, rebounds, assists, blocks and has a higher average shooting percentage than Jordan did, however this goes back to the dilemma of playing in two different eras. James has also been on the All-NBA team 16 times to Jordan's 11 and been on the All-Star team

16 times as Jordan was a 14-time NBA All-Star. However, Jordan was named to the All-Defense team nine times as so far James is only been All-Defensive six times.

"Lebron's the second-best player of all time no doubt, but I do think Michael Jordan is better, while I do think it is close, I believe Michael Jordan is the greatest player of all time," Davidson said. "My favorite thing people said about this debate is that Jordan was playing electricians and mailmen however, those people were in the NBA, they were the best players in the at that time, and nobody was even close to Jordan."

Lastly, the debate usually ends with who had more help as basketball is a team sport not an individual sport. The way to look at it goes like this, Jordan did have Scottie Pippen, but James has had Dwyane Wade, Chris Bosh, Kyrie Irving, Kevin Love, Ray Allen, and now today Anthony Davis. While other players have been a part of Jordans teams everyone states that Jordan needed Pippen but flip the script and look at James and you see more help with not just one all-star but multiple in James' entire career. James has played with a total of 16 all-stars where Jordan only played with six. Therefore, throughout James' entire career he has had more help to not only reach the NBA finals but only win four out of 10 times getting there.

"The 2011 NBA finals, people don't talk about it enough, while Dirk and a washed-up Jason Kidd beat Lebron with his heat team that was the first super team." Davidson said, "Jordan beat 20 all-stars in the NBA finals and Lebron only beat nine, so Michael Jordan has beaten double the amount Lebron has in the NBA finals."

Overall, the debate can continue to go on as it should since James' is still in the NBA today and continues to produce however until he has made more statements in the books and the championships area, he will not be able to claim the G.O.A.T status from Jordan and until James' at least evens the column of championships won, until then there is no debate.

Jordan isn't just the greatest basketball player of all time, but the greatest athlete of all time Davidson alluded to because of what he did with the game Nike, his own brand today, and it's just unreal that he shot some of the toughest shots and made them as he is smaller than James. Michael Jeffery Jordan is the greatest of all-time NBA basketball player as of today.

# Getting to the polls

## Ferris SAAC informs students on how to vote

**D'Andre Head**  
Interim Sports Reporter

As the presidential election unfolds this year, many people are pushing for younger people to vote.

Many stories showing statistics on voting are indicating that less than half of Americans voted in the 2016 presidential election. A majority of them included young voters.

The Ferris State Student-athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) wants to push the message to students on why they should make the decisions to vote. The SAAC is an organization that promotes the messages of Bulldog student-athletes. Their goal is to help student athletes stay involved in the community and get their voice heard. This semester, they have turned their attention towards getting students to register to vote.

As the election is three weeks away, students are coming together and finding ways to get the message out for people to find an alternative ways to vote. Recently, the SAAC released a video on Twitter by student-athletes on how you can register and still vote this November. Student-athletes in the video expressed how students can check your regis-

tration at the Secretary of State and steps you can take forward to get a ballot or vote in person before the deadlines.

SAAC treasurer and senior wing for the men's basketball team, Micheal Peterson, described the intentions of the voter registration initiative.

"SAAC's goal was to get as many Ferris State athletes registered to vote as we could. We felt it necessary with this election being very important to a lot of people. What we hoped to get out of this initiative was to shed light on how easy and important it is to vote." Peterson said.

The video was produced and distributed through multiple channels of social media including Ferris State athletics website on on both the SAAC's twitter account. Vice President of SAAC and senior midfielder Bri Rogers described the process of the video coming together.

"It was mentioned by us in a meeting about a month ago now, then two weeks later we came together and formed a committee with four of us. We then approached Harrison (Watt), our social media coordinator, I wrote the script for it and it all was pretty seamless. It has been pretty well received so far and we're glad to

see that," Rogers said.

The committee that was formed to produce this video included Bri Rogers, Caleb Walker, Edina Taerbaum, and Thomas Hursey. In the video, student-athletes give clear instructions on how students can register to vote in the upcoming election. They also explain how voters have a large responsibility to determine the country's future, especially in Michigan. SAAC advisor and associate athletic director, Sara Higley explained the importance of the video.

"Student-athletes are leaders and our SAAC leadership wanted to stress the importance of voting and to help create awareness and interest within the entire student body to get out and vote safely," Higley said. "They wanted to bring awareness to the importance of voting and provide information on how students can register to vote, how to request an absentee ballot, and how to vote safely."

Voting this year means students are being part of making values for the leaders of the countries, states, and local cities. Peterson saw that it was already making a difference among his teammates, as the men's basketball team went from having half of its members registered to vote



Our very own @Ferris\_St\_SAAC gives you the lowdown on how to Vote this November! Not registered? There's still time!



4:28 PM · Oct 3, 2020 · TweetDeck

Senior midfielder Bri Rogers in the SAAC's voter registration video.

to 100%. His coach had walked the team through how students could register online. Rogers described the other measures teams took making sure their teammates were registered to vote.

"We tried to put a thing out in all of our group messages to communicate with the soccer team something like "Like this if you're not registered to vote" then we got them the resources they needed and where to go to register to vote." Rogers said.

As the SAAC is promoting this message, they want students to remember one thing, find the best alternative to vote and staying safe while you vote. Rogers gave one last message

to fellow students on the election.

"My message is just get out and vote. I think that the biggest way for the youth population to get their voice heard is through voting. That's my biggest message for all the student athletes here at Ferris and all the students. It's something that I'll definitely doing this November 3rd and I think as many people as possible should go out." Rogers said.

With election day, Nov. 3, coming quickly, the video that the SAAC produced can be found on the Ferris State SAAC Twitter @Ferris\_St\_SAAC, or on the Ferris State Bulldog website.

# Running into Week Seven | Fantasy running backs you should start this week

We have now been through six weeks of this fantasy football column and featured quarterbacks, running backs, wide receivers, and tight ends each once. That means we will go back to running backs for this Week 7 column.

In Week 7 **Antonio Gibson** and the Washington Football Team face the Dallas Cowboys. **Devin Singletary's** Buffalo Bills go head-to-head against the New York Jets.



Brody Keiser  
Sports Reporter

Gibson has established himself as the leader of the Washington Football Team. Despite the presence of J.D. McKissic, Gibson has shown potential to be a true three-down back with multiple receptions in all but one game this year. In fantasy, volume is king, and Gibson has reached double digit touches in every game this year.

With strong showing against talented defenses like the Baltimore Ravens and Cleveland Browns, Gibson proved that he can compete with the elite front sevens in the league. While Dallas's front seven is not as ferocious as the Ravens or Browns, they are still talented. However, Gibson will overcome the Dallas front and have a big game.

With Dak Prescott done for the year, the Cowboys offense will be much different and probably not score as much. As such, I expect this game to be a grind-it out type of game that features plenty of both team's ground games. That means a lot of touches for Gibson, and plenty of fantasy upside.

Singletary is a talented running back, there is no doubt about that. However, he is a much better NFL player than a fantasy player. He played well in two games without Zack Moss, but the rookie is expected to play against the Jets. When Moss was healthy, this was a true backfield by committee.

The Jets held Singletary to 53 total yards in Week 1, and I expect another low yardage output from the Bills running back. Moss will demand goal line and short yardage work as well as a fair share of early down work, leaving few touches for Singletary. Moss even recorded three receptions and a receiving touchdown against the Jets in Week 1, while Singletary did not find the end zone until Moss was sidelined.

I expect Gibson to outperform Singletary this week, and frankly, I do not think it will even be close.

Two players who will boom this week:

**Raheem Mostert:** The Patriots are really good at shutting down the opposing team's top player. They will slow down George Kittle but watch Mostert run all over them.

**Terry McLaurin:** Dallas has allowed a league most nine touchdowns to wide receivers (as of Week 5). McLaurin will rack up the yards and find the end zone.

Two players who will bust this week:

**Derrick Henry:** You have to start him, but he plays Pittsburgh. Temper expectations for the Titans back.

**Allen Robinson:** He is one of the most underrated players in the league, but the corner that will shadow him in this one is not. Jalen Ramsey will win the battle against the Bears wideout.



Graphic by: Charlie Zitta | Production Assistant



Austin Arquette  
Sports Reporter

With fantasy football beginning to get tough on who to start or sit due to the game cancellations, moved bye weeks, and injuries, it becomes more important to pay attention to who's in your line-up. Singletary and the rest of his team play the Jets in week seven and this game will be a blow out.

While Gibson has established himself as the top back on the Washington football team that doesn't mean he is a top back all around. The Washington football team has been nothing shy of dealing with issues and have just recently handed the team back to Alex Smith which is a step in the right direction. However, as they play Dallas, I believe the game will be mostly a shootout much like all the Cowboys games this year.

Singletary may share a backfield but is still used tremendously in the backfield. Especially against the Jets who are just falling apart more and more by the day, I see Singletary and the rest of the Bills to have their best games of the season.

While it is true Singletary had a tough time week one against the Jets, I don't see that repeating itself. This Bills team have found their identity as an NFL team and will continue to pass and run it down opposing teams' throats when needed. Singletary is talented just like Gibson no question but eventually Gibson must have a bad game and I think it will show in Dallas.

Even when Moss played with Singletary, they both got good touches and were a true running back committee as Brody alluded too, however Singletary is the lead back and will establish himself as that leader against the Jets as he runs all over them. While the touches may be split Singletary will use what he is given to the best of his advantage and make it worth starting him.

Two players who will boom this week:

**Keenan Allen:** With the emergence of Justin Herbert Allen's production has only rose and will continue to rise against the weak Jacksonville defense.

**Odell Beckham Jr.:** OBJ has come back into the top wideout conversation after the Browns began to play football and against the Bengals, Odell and Baker Mayfield will torch this defense.

Two players who will bust this week:

**Todd Gurley II:** While he plays Detroit this week I see Atlanta having one of its worse offensive games with no true direction of this franchise.

**Robert Woods:** The Bears have been great as usual on defense and it will continue with the Rams as Jared Goff will be chased a lot in this game.

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# OPINIONS

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## EDITOR'S COLUMN: Let's talk about OCD

By Cora Hall

The "O" in OCD does not stand for organization and using the term to describe your organizational habits is hurtful to those who suffer from this mental disorder.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder at its worst is a debilitating disorder, at its best a day to day struggle for most who are diagnosed. Before one of my friends from high school posted on her Instagram about her diagnosis freshman year of college, I had no idea the extent that OCD impacts people. It was shocking to see, considering she was in the top ten of our graduating class and had gone on to Northwestern University. But that's just another example of how mental illness can affect anyone.

I am currently minoring in Psychology, and have taken a myriad of classes, but most importantly Abnormal Psychology. This course was taught by a faculty member who is a practicing clinical psychologist and the content goes over all the mental disorders and how they impact a person and the current treatments. It was eye-opening, and I would recommend the class to anyone, because it taught me even more how to be empathetic to those who are diagnosed with a mental disorder.

Empathy is really at the heart of talking to a person who has been diagnosed with a mental disorder. Even if you cannot fully understand the depth of what they are going through, your empathy and kindness can mean more than you know. The best way to learn empathy is to educate yourself; to realize that others' experiences can be—and probably are—completely different from yours.

Your personal experience is just that: personal. Everyone has a different set of experiences that influenced who they are and how they act. To assume something about someone without knowing their perspective is incredibly ignorant and harmful.

Last week was OCD awareness week, and in light of that, I want to attempt to educate anyone reading this on what OCD is and how it can completely impair your ability to function in daily life. My friend was gracious enough to answer some questions about her experience with OCD and I hope after reading this, you will reconsider how you use the term OCD.

*Editor's note: Quotes have been edited for length and clarity.*

**Just to be correct, were you diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder or obsessive-compulsive personality disorder? And you were diagnosed at the end of your freshman semester at Northwestern in 2017?**

I was formally diagnosed with OCD, specifically a fear of contamination and harming others, in December of 2017. I then spent the remainder of my freshman year of college at home on medical leave recovering.

**What was it like to realize that you needed to get help for the problems you were experiencing and getting diagnosed with OCD?**

By the time I was formally diagnosed, I was basically at a total point of dysfunction and I had no idea what was going on, so having a name for what I was experiencing was actually a huge relief. I had no idea what OCD actually was, so I just thought my anxiety, which I have always had, was going off the rails.

It was really tough to accept that I had to miss the rest of freshman year, since I really loved college and am a very achievement oriented person. For a couple of months showering and eating and sleeping was basically all I could do, which was a drastic change from my lifestyle and was tough to accept. However, I was lucky to have access to the care I needed, specifically Exposure Response Prevention, a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

**What were specific fears or actions have you experienced?**

I became increasingly convinced that I was going to be responsible for spreading germs that would cause someone to get sick. I became terrified of the dining hall, door handles, shoes, bathrooms: anything that felt "dirty." This progressed to the point in which trying to get clean in the shower took several hours, and I probably spent a couple of hours a day washing my hands until they were cracked and bleeding.

This fear of contamination is rooted in a sense of over-responsibility for the wellbeing of others. My brain perverts my natural and healthy sense of empathy, instead telling me that I am personally responsible for what happens to others to an unreasonable extent. For example, if I buy a particularly expensive dinner or even a latte (anything luxurious) my brain will typically tell me that I could have donated that money and that I am a bad person for not doing so. I know this is not true, and I have learned to identify that as an OCD thought, but it is still something I deal with.

**Would you describe OCD as a debilitating mental disorder when it is at its worst?**

OCD is absolutely a debilitating disorder. In the span of a couple of months I went from a student at a top 10 university to someone who could not shower in less than two hours, took nearly an hour to get dressed, and could not cook for myself. I was in immense mental pain, I lost a lot of weight, my hands were cracked and bleeding, and I could not function on my own.

**How does it make you feel when you hear others use the term OCD to describe things that are clearly not OCD?**

It is certainly frustrating to hear people use OCD as an adjective, because it shows a clear lack of understanding of the severity of the disorder. That being said, so many people truly do not know what Obsessive Compulsive Disorder means, which highlights the need for increased education and awareness. It becomes hurtful when celebrities like Khloe Kardashian continue to treat OCD as a quirky, fun organizing vibe despite having faced repeated criticism. If you know better, do better.

**How would you describe your life now, is your life somewhat back to normal? Or is living with OCD a completely new normal?**

While I am very grateful to have made great progress in my recovery, OCD is a constant in my head and something that I will always live with. I am graduating college in the spring, am able to exist in the world and do the things I want to do, and have a life filled with joy and love. That being said, OCD is a chronic condition that I will always have to manage, but I am so lucky to have the tools and support I need in order to do so.

**What has it been like this year living through COVID with OCD?**

OCD during COVID has been tough, especially at the beginning when we weren't sure about how dangerous surfaces were. I have mostly been overwhelmingly grateful that I did the hard part of recovery prior to the pandemic so that I have the tools to deal with this now. I have immense empathy for people whose OCD has flared during the pandemic and who don't have access to care.

**What is something you wish people know about OCD?**

OCD is an incredibly heterogeneous disorder that looks different between people, in addition to morphing within the same person over time. Because the disorder is so poorly understood, people often suffer in silence, confusion, and shame for so much longer than they should have to. I also wish that the health profession (and people at large!) understood that Exposure Response Prevention works! It is the only evidence-based treatment for OCD, so it is really important to have a therapist that is properly trained. Finally, I wish all people with OCD knew that they are loved, that they have the capacity for a full and wonderful life, and they're not crazy. Recovery is really tough, but possible, and so worth it.



TUNE IN TO OUR WEEKLY  
PODCAST WITH RY RODRIGUEZ

The Torchcast can be found on our website, Facebook page and YouTube channel

# GAME ON

Video games are perfect stress relievers



Austin Arquette  
Sports Reporter



Whenever you need to get out of your own head or just want something to do to relieve stress, video games can help.

People tend to do some of the craziest things to relieve stress but winding down to a relaxing video game is always a good time, regardless of what video game it may be such as playing Madden, 2k, Fortnite, Pub-g, Apex Legends, or even the classic games like Galaga, Pac-man, Solitaire, and many more.

Video games can have a positive impact on your life and can help you relieve stress after a long day. While video games help relieve stress, they also provide multiple other benefits that will improve certain aspects of your life. Video games can help increase your memory, mood, perception and vision, decision making and problem-solving skills, mood, social skills, physical fitness, youthfulness, curiosity, learning and so much more.

When you find yourself in the need of a good stress reliever a go-to game like Fortnite usually helps. Fortnite is a great example of a video game that helps relieve stress because you can either play the game with a group of friends, a single friend or even alone. Playing in the Fortnite world allows you to escape from reality and not deal with the stressors around you. Fortnite helps you become more relaxed, allows you to complete challenges and earn accomplishments for your achievements. As you play you also are in control of your character and the actions you take to proceed in the game as you see fit to win.

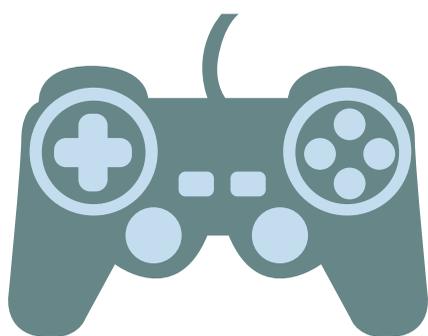
While video games allow for creative freedom and more control outside of the normal

world, they also tend to increase the release of dopamine which is often referred to as the “happiness hormone.” The release of this hormone often occurs when we do something we really enjoy. When you play a video game dopamine is released and makes the game worthwhile to brighten anyone's day. While the release of this hormone allows for more happiness it also creates a sort of recharge to come back to reality.

If you allow just a little bit of your time in everyone's busy schedule to sit down and relax with a good video game you will notice your stress float away. While others will say that it's a waste of time and that you can do more productive things with your time or that video games just cause more stress, those statements are all wrong. While video games can cause more stress if you don't win or struggle in a part of the game, once you do win or complete your task the feeling it brings you is instant satisfaction and joy. Playing a video game, no matter, the genre you begin to be happy and just forget about your stress and enjoy yourself.

Even with the inability to go outside, you get the physical attributes while you stay indoors and play video games such as using a Virtual Reality headset. This also gives you more as an escapee from the real world. Oculus Rift, PlayStation VR, and HTC Vive are examples of VR systems. Since exercise is helpful with stress-relieving all these headsets provide that action and incorporate physical actions in each game.

Video games take your day and twist it around to make it a million times better. Anytime you can pick up a game and spend some time just relaxing and escape the real world just for a little bit in your busy schedules because the truth is we all can use an escape from reality every now and then, especially nowadays.



# Dealing with phone anxiety

How social anxiety affects my job as a journalist



Brendan Sanders  
Sports Editor

For my entire life, I have dealt with high anxiety. It has kept me from talking with people, it has made me turn down many opportunities growing up; to this day I have trouble just calling or talking to someone I don't know.

That makes my job in journalism that much harder, as it may take me several hours to work up the courage to call someone for a pleasant 15-minute conversation. I fear that I will be the socially awkward person that I am whenever I talk to someone new.

So why do I do a job that forces me out of the comfort zone that I constantly try to stay in? Well for one, I really love my job, despite the constant butterflies in my stomach. Two, I've learned about a few ways to deal with the anxieties that surround me.

Phone call anxiety has been the toughest issue for me for the past couple of years. I hate to admit it, but my senior year of high school saw me have to call the bus garage to help set up an event for one of my classes. I couldn't do it, actually panicking so badly that I started crying right there in front of my classmates, at 18 years old. Nice.

The embarrassment of that day drove me to swallow any sort of pride I had. When I decided to become a reporter, I knew that I would have to face this fear head-on. Now, my job requires that I talk to people over the phone more than ever.

So, my advice on phone call anxiety is this: to make a call you only have to be brave for about 10 seconds. Once you have the number typed and ready to call, take about ten seconds to build yourself up. Say that you can do this, that you are good enough to call this person. Once those ten seconds are up, push the call button. Once you do this, you are committed since the phone is most likely ringing on the other



end of the line.

The second way to mitigate your anxiety is by acting. Should you hide your personality? No. But if you can momentarily role play as someone who has enough confidence to speak to a crowd, even if it's only for a few minutes, then you can make yourself seem to be the one in control.

My anxiety and stress really kept me from becoming a good communicator. Many of the fears I had back then I still have today such as:

“What will they think of me?”

“Am I taking them away from something?”

“Will they be angry that I didn't call sooner?”

By momentarily suppressing these thoughts, even if it's just long enough to initiate conversation, you can learn that most of the time these anxieties are just figments of your imagination.

While anxiety is extremely hard to deal with, doing different things to try to mitigate these issues can make minimize anxiety from being the sole focus of one's life.

## GOT AN OPINION?

### HOW TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Deadline for submissions every Friday by 5 p.m.  
Cora Hall | Editor-in-Chief | Email: hallc36@ferris.edu

1. Think of a topic that you feel strongly about.
2. Write out your thoughts in a coherent and respectful manner.
3. include a headshot and some information about yourself (location, age, etc.).
4. Email your opinion to the editor for a chance to have your work published in our next issue!

**Election Day is  
November 3.**

**You can vote early.**

**You can vote  
by mail.**

**You can vote on  
Election Day.**

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