

The Ferris State Torch

NINETY YEARS OF ILLUMINATING THE TRUTH

Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of March 10 - 16, 2021

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Ferris to return to 'normal operations' this fall

Many students and faculty feel ready to return as vaccine rollout continues in Michigan

Noah Kurkjian
News Editor

Ferris' President David Eisler confirmed in a press release last week that the university still plans to return to "normal operations" for the fall 2021 semester.

The university plans to reopen with 84% of classes projected to be hosted in person. This comes after the spring 2021 semester was only 38% in person with 8% of that being HyFlex, which are a mix of face to face and online.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Ferris State University has been able to stay open, and remain open, while providing a safe and healthy living, learning and working environment for students, faculty and staff," Eisler said. "With the extremely low number of COVID-19 cases on our campus and in our community, and with vaccines now available, we look forward to providing a fully in-person learning experience for our students. We are pleased and excited to be welcoming all students back to the Big Rapids campus, Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids and our off-campus locations."

Some faculty and students the university's optimism.

"This last year has been extremely difficult for many people, however, I believe that Governor Whitmer and the university have done a good job responding to the pandemic," said English professor Dr. John Cullen. "If people get their vaccinations and use common sense, I suspect there is an excellent chance



Photo by: Cassidy Jessup | Multimedia Editor

Ferris plans to operate with 84% of classes face-to-face in the fall

we will be ready to return to in-person learning for most classes in the fall."

Michigan has already dispensed over 2.5 million doses of the vaccine as of printing and with the Johnson and Johnson single-shot vaccine recently receiving emergency use authorization, more people will have access to the vaccine and will not have to return for a second dose.

Nuclear medical technology sophomore Brynn Krzyminski is in favor of returning to in-person classes.

"I am excited to return face-to-face I think the whole online thing is a sham," Krzyminski said. "I'm actually vaccinated and feel safe returning to in person."

Not everyone shared their optimism though. Social work sophomore Olivia Begin disagrees with the decision.

"I feel like Ferris is in it for the money and are not truly looking out for the students well-being," Begin said. "I feel like they are not paying attention to when students can actually get the vaccine or that not everyone that's offered a vaccine will take it."

According to the timeline given on Michigan.gov, most students won't be able to get the vaccine until mid-August unless they are medical or frontline workers.

Begin cited the mediocre dining options for the spring 2021 semester as well as an

increase in tuition even for classes that were being taught fully online.

In their press release, Ferris pledged to continue monitoring COVID-19 cases and continue to follow the directions laid out by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Cullen closed the discussion by saying "The COVID crisis should remind us life can change suddenly and everyone needs to be ready to respond in a responsible and flexible manner so we can control the problems rather than allow the problems to control us."

The science of social justice

Social justice program comes to Ferris in Fall 2021

Jessica Oakes
News Reporter

Ferris students will soon be able to get a Bachelor of Science in social justice.

This new program will be a collaborative endeavor of the College of Arts and Sciences and Education, College of Business and College of Health. Students will learn a variety of subjects, with a strong focus on history.

Throughout the degree, students will analyze past and present social injustices with their related movements.

History professor and program coordinator for social justice Dr. Jana Pisani emphasized the importance of this focus.

"Our position was that if you don't know what social injustices have occurred in history, how can you really go about making social justice happen?" Pisani said.

Along with history and general education courses, students in the program will also choose to study four out of 11 concentra-

tions. These include public health, criminal justice, Spanish, geography and political science.

In a recent press release, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Bobby Fleischman stated that graduates of the program will carry valuable insights into a variety of career paths such as health advocacy, law, criminal justice, and education.

The Board of Trustees approved the program in Oct. 2020. Pisani and Associate Dean Trinity Williams explained that collaborative plans for a social justice degree have been in the works for years.

"We were struggling with having the appropriate support for our political science major and our sociology major. So, different people were trying to figure out different ways of preserving those very important courses, to make them available to people across the university," Williams said.

Fleischman approved of the philosophy behind the social justice program and ac-

knowledged its proximity to founder Woodbridge Ferris' own mission toward opportunity.

"We will enter this program with great anticipation of the opportunities that will come for these students and the impact they can have as agents of change in our society," Fleischman said.

According to Williams, Ferris' mission can be summed up in one quote.

"My plea in Michigan – and it will be my plea to the last breath I draw, and the last word I speak – is education for all children, all men, and all women of Michigan, all the people in all our states all the time," Woodbridge Ferris said.

Williams described Ferris to be "quite progressive" for his time in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. She also highlighted the efforts of Ferris' wife and cofounder, Helen.

"If there were no Helen, I'm not so sure that the university would be here, she's very much a part of all of this. But because of the

time I, you know, at the turn of the century, I don't think she got the credit that she deserves," Williams said.

To Fleischman, Woodbridge Ferris put himself up to the challenge to "make the world a better place." Williams is certain that students share the same ambition today.

"We're all taught that to be fair, and to be just is important. I think, as we build societal constructions, we forget that. We build in impediments that get in the way for a variety of reasons, and some purposeful and some unintentional. It takes all of us, including young people, the whole generation of them, to change the world and to make it a better place," Williams said.

The social justice program will begin courses in the 2021 - 2022 academic year. Pisani stated that a full course list is on its way to the Ferris website.

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NEWS

Noah Kurkjian | News Editor | kurkjin@ferris.edu

Students with accessibility issues left waiting

Disability services working towards solutions, but in the meantime students struggle

Justice Kobish
Freelance Reporter

It can be easy to take getting around campus for granted, but for students with accessibility requirements, campus is not always the most welcoming place.

Kalina Mohnke is a psychology senior who uses a wheelchair and attending class isn't her only difficulty. Mohnke expresses difficulties related to attending sports matches, such as hockey.

"I have to go up four elevators just to get to my classes," Mohnke said. "At games the only accessible spot is the opposite side with the opponents. It makes you feel very much not like a student."

Director of accessibility and disability resources Julie Alexander said they have a liaison committee for students with disabilities to work on plans to fix issues like this. The group is made up of 20 students, faculty and staff who work on initiatives to make campus more accessible for all.

"A big initiative that we have for this year is going over some of those physical accessibility concerns and making sure that those things get into the five year plan for the university, so that there is a plan in place to address some of those accessibility concerns," Alexander said.

On Ferris' Disabilities Services webpage it requires students to fill out an Online Intake and schedule an appointment with an ECDS counselor. At this appointment, students and their counselor will discuss disability barriers and determine access solutions. The website says these accommodations will not fundamentally alter the course or program. Accommodations may be needed in the following environments: classroom, testing, campus housing, internships, clinical/

fieldwork placements, and any other environments that are required for your degree.

In summary, this means a student is to have access to programs and services of an institution regardless of the disability and is to be provided accommodations, as appropriate, to have access.

While the ECDS website says their goal is to have access to various environments and are working towards a plan, many students still have issues like Mohnke. This includes Dustin Norman, a digital animation and game design senior who uses a wheelchair.

In regards to the current state of the sidewalks around campus, Norman has concerns about hitting a pothole that he doesn't see because he is moving around fellow students.

Sidewalks aren't the only issues either. Norman also explained that many of the handicap buttons that open outside doors on campus often do not work, making getting into buildings difficult.

Alexander said the biggest problem with addressing the issues students with disabilities have on campus is not knowing the issue is there.

"If students can let us know right away if they noticed that problem, that would be great," Alexander said. "We do work with the physical plants to try to make sure that those are functioning properly at all times. But, there may be times when they're not, so they just need to let us know."

Norman also had trouble in the past with campus elevators, one time getting stuck in a building for the better part of a day.

"The elevator was having issues and I found out it was broken," Norman said. "I was stuck on the third floor of Bishop Hall for most of the day. I don't think someone should have to miss any class because of accessibility issues."

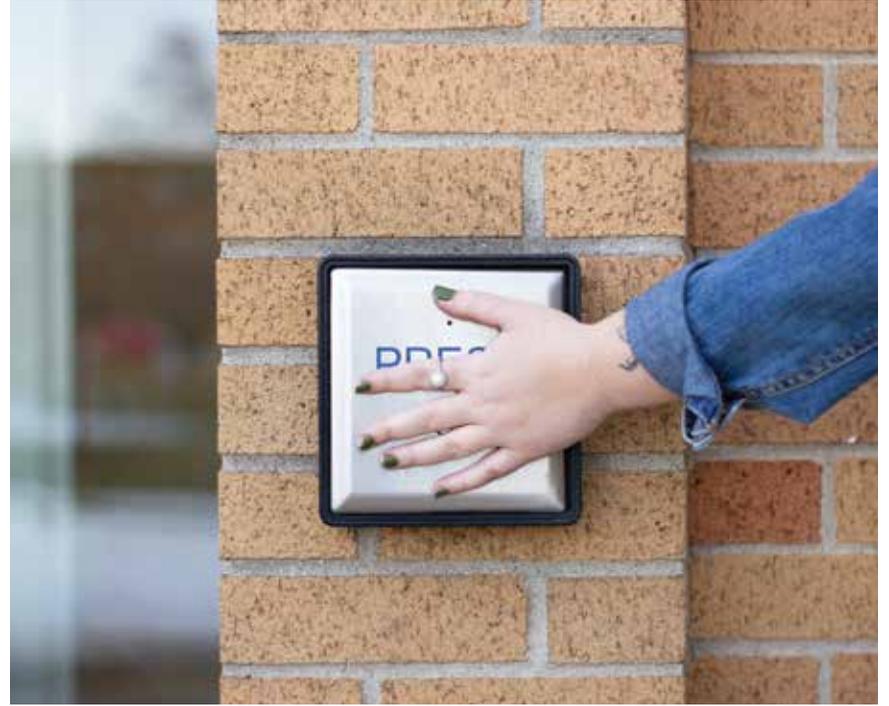


Photo by: Dylan Bowden | Torch Photographer

Students have reported that some of the handicap buttons to open doors do not work on campus.

For most of the year, getting around campus for students with accessibility needs is already a challenge. During the colder parts of the year, however, these troubles are made worse with the addition of snow and ice. Both Mohnke and Norman explained issues they had in the winter.

Mohnke lives in North Hall and there have been times where he can't get into his building because the snow is too built up. Alexander said she has received a couple complaints this winter about the snow build-up. When the complaints are received, she said works directly with the physical plant to fix the situation "as quickly as we can."

"If I had to go to the IRC computer lab, I would kind of have to fight my way through the snow to get to the lab," Mohnke said. "I remember this one time I literally couldn't get into the library because I couldn't get up the ramp because I kept slipping. I want to show regular students and I want to get the word out about disabilities more now. With a return to in person class set for this upcoming fall, it's important to keep looking for ways to make sure students with accessibility needs to be welcome on campus."

Cora Hall contributed to the reporting of this story.

WANTED

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Ferris State Torch

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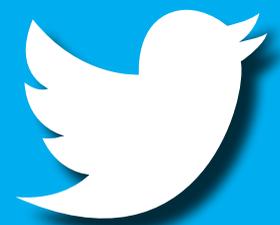
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- Copies of articles or other written work
- At least two references (recommendation letters not required)

SEND RESUME, ESSAY AND CLIPPINGS TO:

Garrett Stack, garrettstack@ferris.edu

DEADLINE: Wednesday, March 10, 2021



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THIS WEEK IN MICHIGAN NEWS

Catch up on news around the state

Noah Kurkjian & Brendan Sanders
News Editor, Sports Editor

News

Mich. – Frank Kelley, Michigan’s longest serving Attorney General has died at age 96 in his retirement community in Naples, Florida.

A family representative said Kelley died of natural causes on Friday evening. Kelley spent his career fighting for consumer protections and environmental regulations. He also helped pass the Michigan Open Meetings Act as well as the Michigan Freedom of Information Act.

Kelley told the Free Press that he never ran for governor because he felt he could accomplish more as attorney general, an office that he felt, at the time, was more powerful than the governor’s office.

Mich. – Beginning on Monday, March 8, Michigan residents that are over the age of 50 and have underlying conditions are now eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Then on March 22, everyone over the age of 50 will become eligible to receive the vaccine. This comes as the Johnson and Johnson one-shot vaccine was just given emergency use authorization by the FDA. The qualifying underlying conditions include cancer, COPD, diabetes, kidney disease, most heart conditions, obesity, pregnancy and others.

The CDC also announced that fully vaccinated individuals can gather indoors without masks but they still are asked to wear masks while in the general public.

Sports

EAST LANSING – Michigan State all but secured their bid to the NCAA tournament with an upset of rival No. 2 ranked Michigan on Sunday, March 7.

Winning 70-64, Michigan State improved their record to 15 – 11, while Michigan fell to 19 – 3 on the season. This marked Michigan State fifth win out of seven games, all coming against ranked opponents.

Sophomore guard Rocket Watts led Michigan State in scoring with 21 points to go along with four rebounds and four assists. Junior forward Aaron Henry also scored 18 points on the evening, to go along with five rebounds and three assists.

For Michigan, senior guard Chaundee Brown led the team in scoring with 13 points, along with four rebounds. Freshman center Hunter Dickinson was second on the team with 12 points to go along with seven rebounds and one assist.

Going into the Big Ten Tournament, Michigan State is the ninth seed, they will play eighth seeded Maryland on Thursday, March 11 at 11:30 a.m.

ANN ARBOR – Before losing to Michigan State in the final game of the regular season, Michigan beat Michigan State in the previous game on Thursday, March 4. Winning 69 – 50.

In a game taking place in Ann Arbor, Michigan improved to 19 – 2 on the season, while Michigan State would fall to 14 – 11.

Sophomore guard Franz Wagner led the Wolverines in scoring with 19 points to go along with six rebounds. Freshman center Hunter Dickinson would score a double-double, putting up 14 points to go along with 10 rebounds. Senior guard Mike Smith would lead the team in assists with five on the night.

For the Spartans, junior forward Aaron Henry led the team with 14 points, and his five rebounds also lead the team on the night. Henry was the only player on the team to score over 10 points, with the second highest scoring player being freshman center Mady Sissoko, who scored eight points on the night.

Michigan will enter the Big Ten Tournament as the No. 1 seed in the bracket, and they will play the winner of the Maryland versus Michigan State matchup on Friday, March 12, at 11:30 a.m.

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- ON THE RECORD -

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

Toilet troubles

Noah Kurkjian
News Editor

Bowls on bowls on bowls

March 2, 9:25 p.m., DPS officers were dispatched to Merrill Hall for reports of the smell of marijuana. Officers found three suspects under the influence and issues them all Minor in Possession citations.

Toilet troubles

March 5, 12:05 a.m., DPS was dispatched to West Commons for a reported vandalism of a toilet. The toi-

let was reported smashed with a rock. The case was closed as there were no leads.

They made a song about this

March 5, 10:05 a.m. DPS was dispatched to Lot 16 for a reported vandalism of a vehicle. Officers arrived to find a tire tired slashed. The case was closed for lack of leads.



CRIMES ON CAMPUS CAN BE REPORTED TO DPS AT -231-591-5000-

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Students with disabilities requiring assistance or accommodation may contact Educational Counseling & Disabilities Services at (231) 591-3057 ecds@ferris.edu in Big Rapids (including statewide students) or the Director of Counseling and Disability Services for Kendall College of Art and Design (KCAD) at (616) 451-2787 ext. 1136 MarieYowitz@ferris.edu in Grand Rapids. Employees and other members of the University community with disabilities requiring assistance or accommodation may contact the Human Resources Department, 420 Oak St., Big Rapids, MI 49307 or call (231) 591- 2150 Humanresources@ferris.edu.

Inquiries and complaints of disability discrimination may be addressed to the Director of Accessibility, Arts and Sciences Commons 1017, 820 Campus Dr., Big Rapids, MI 49307 or by telephone/email at (231) 591-3057 JulieAlexander@ferris.edu or to the Director of Equal Opportunity, 120 East Cedar St., Big Rapids, MI 49307 or by telephone/email at (231) 591- 2152 EqualOpportunity@ferris.edu.

Individuals with complaints of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, may address those complaints to the Title IX Coordinator, 805 Campus Dr., Big Rapids, MI 49307 or by telephone/email at (231) 591-2088 KaitlinZies@ferris.edu or to a Deputy Title IX Coordinator, including the Director of Equal Opportunity, as above; the Extended and International Operations Director of Student Services, 151 Fountain St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 or by telephone/email at (616) 643-5741 JocelynGoheen@ferris.edu; and the KCAD Dean of Student Success, 17 Fountain St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 or by telephone/email at (616) 259-1113 SandyBritton@ferris.edu.

Other inquiries or complaints of discrimination may be addressed to the Director of Equal Opportunity, as above.

Updated August 13, 2020

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Better Made for a better cause



Photo by: Cassidy Jessup | Multimedia Editor

Better Made promised a portion of their profits for the MS foundation for the third year

Better Made to donate to the MS foundation

Becca Witkowski
Freelance Reporter

The Michigan chip brand Better Made is partnering with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to make a difference during the month of March.

Better Made will be donating a portion of its proceeds from the sale of Family size and Value size potato chips, as well as 1.5-ounce bags of pork rinds, to the National MS Society located in Southfield, Michigan. This will be the third year the fundraiser has run.

“The donation goes to fund programs for those living with MS and research for new treatments,” Kelly Sakorafos, an event production specialist for the MS Society said.

Sakorafos also said the fundraiser creates “a lot of interest” online. That interest leads people to visit the website and learn about Multiple Sclerosis. Some individuals will then donate directly to the MS Society through their website.

In 2019, Better Made donated \$10,000 to the MS Society through the fundraiser. The following year, they donated \$11,000. It is hoped that the

number will continue to increase as the years go on.

The National MS Society aims to assist individuals living with MS and fund research to find treatments for the disease. They estimate that nearly one million adults in the United States have Multiple Sclerosis. Worldwide, over 2.3 million people have been diagnosed with MS.

According to the Mayo Clinic, Multiple Sclerosis is a disease where the immune system attacks the central nervous system. This can cause various complications such as numbness in limbs, shocking sensations, loss of vision, dizziness, and many other issues.

“They call it the snowflake disease because it shows up differently in almost everyone,” Sakorafos said. “I know someone who’s arm itched for years... it took forever for her to get a diagnosis.”

Sakorafos has seen the impact of MS in her own life. In 2014, her husband was diagnosed with the disease after losing feeling from his feet to his hips. His quick diagnosis allowed him to begin steroids to reverse the majority of what he was experiencing.

However, he is still dealing with some symptoms.

“He currently has some balance issues, loss of some feeling in his feet ... and loss of some taste on half his tongue,” Sakorafos said. “He is on immunosuppressants to keep his MS from relapsing again.”

There is currently no cure for MS, but various treatment options are available. Individuals affected by Multiple Sclerosis may be prescribed immunosuppressants and other medications to battle the symptoms. They may go through physical therapy and various forms of self-care to manage their symptoms. Treatments vary between individuals based on the symptoms they experience.

Donations to the MS Society allow the organization to do research into the disease and aid individuals dealing with it. Purchasing Better Made chips during the month of March would support a Michigan business and could assist the MS Society in discovering a breakthrough and a possible cure. Better Made chips can be purchased at Walmart and Meijer in Big Rapids.

FERRIS STATE TORCH



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LIFESTYLES

Marissa Russell | Lifestyles Editor | russem22@ferris.edu

The 2020 adoption surge: how are they now?

Ferris students share their adopted pet stories

Kendall Rooks
Freelance Reporter

The one-year anniversary of the mid-March quarantine is fast approaching and for many students the anniversary of their first pet adoption is also soon. During the quarantine, many Ferris students and homes around the world adopted pets in order to combat the loneliness of quarantine.

Shelters in the area saw a significant jump in adoption applications throughout the quarantine. Ingham County Animal Shelter reported in U.S. News that in August of 2020 they had 146 adoptions compared to 60 adoptions in August of the previous year.

"There was an increase in adoption and there was also an increase in veterinarian services, an estimated 20%," The director of Osceola County Animal Shelter Michelle Kuz said. "Many adopters have indicated how much their adopted pets have enhanced their time at home and helped them cope with both isolation and their need for exercise."

When computer information systems sophomore Hanna Bastien adopted her dog Addie in March of 2020, she helped Bastien to do exactly this.

"After I came home from joining the military I wanted to get my own dog. I needed a dog in the home," Bastien said.

Once the quarantine started Addie helped Bastien to stay active. Bastien and her roommate took Addie on a lot of walks



Photo by: Marissa Russell | Lifestyles Editor

Plastics engineering junior Brendan Edgington and Mr. Whiskers enjoy playing around his apartment together.

because there was nothing else for them to do.

According to Cate Arroe, the director of the Mecosta County Animal Rescue Coalition, their shelter saw a huge increase in dog adoptions. At one point the shelter was down to only two dogs up for adoption.

When plastics engineering junior Brendan Edgington's family cat could not get used to the 'college life', he had to take it home and decided instead to adopt his own cat. Edgington found Mr. Whiskers on Facebook for free and is thankful to have had him during the quarantine.

"Mr. Whiskers is very personable. If you're having a bad day with the quarantine and such, he's bound to make it better."

With adopting an animal comes a lot of responsibility.

"My advice to students is to put a lot of thought and research into getting a pet before you get one. They require a financial as well as a consistent time commitment. Also, it can be difficult to find rentals that will accept pets and that's how they end up in shelters when students move," Arroe said.

Edgington believes having a cat has been a huge responsibility, but is still easier than a dog.

"I don't have to take him outside, I do have to clean his litter box every day, but I don't have to be [home] constantly," Edgington said. "If I have to go to class, he can entertain himself. I put on Mickey Mouse Clubhouse for him to watch when I go to class."

Bastien experienced a lot of unexpected financial costs adopting her dog, "She has many allergies and has had to be taken to the veterinarian and animal hospital multiple times because of it."

However, she still recommends adopting a dog, "I would say do it. Having a pet is really rewarding for both the animal and the owner."

If you are thinking of adopting a pet, visit some of the shelters mentioned. Remember to research into the accommodations your specific pet and breed need in order to live a happy life.

A virtual end to a virtual year

Ferris seniors react to virtual commencement

Jerry Gaytan
Freelance Reporter

Ferris seniors were able to go to the first two days of the graduation fair last week to pick up diploma sleeves, caps and gowns for their graduation, which is being streamed on YouTube.

Ferris will host the Commencement ceremony for the seniors of Spring 2021 virtually with no tickets required. The ceremony is being done virtually to protect the health and safety of all who would be attending. The virtual commencement ceremonies will be broadcasted on the Ferris State YouTube Channel.

"I'm really sad about it being virtual," said Josh Cole a senior in Professional Tennis Management, "I'll be the first person from my family to get a college diploma. So, it's a big deal for me."

The day of the commencement will consist of four ceremonies starting at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

Criminal Justice senior Connor Kish wishes the commencement was in person because virtually would make it feel like another "Zoom meeting."

Graduates from classes of May 2020, Dec. 2020 and May 2021

are invited to the next in-person graduation according to the Ferris State Commencement page.

Welding Engineering senior Kyle Leonard said, "It sucks that my last few years here were being cooped up behind my computer."

When seniors were asked what they would change from the past year if they could, they said it would be COVID-19.

"I mean 100% it would have to do with COVID, like, I haven't been to shooters one time this year, like literally Not once. And, like, that's just such a big part of my lifestyle," said Cole.

The restrictions set on the public due to the pandemic made the seniors stay cooped up in the year they usually would not. Instead of hitting the bars and enjoying their last year of college Netflix was the safest substitution.

"I would have started looking for jobs a little bit sooner than I was but now I'm trying to look for jobs now," said Kish

Now that seniors are set to start their professional careers after college the job market is looking good for some.

"I actually just accepted a full-time job in Louisville, Kentucky,"

said Cole.

Kish who is in the Criminal Justice program claims the job market for this career is the best it has ever been.

"You go on the state website, where all the job postings are and there's literally like, 80 job postings right now," said Kish.

This year and the second half of last year consisted of almost all courses done remotely but the seniors remember the pre-COVID-19 campus.

"This year is so different than out of my four years here," said Cole.

Seniors intend to spend their commencement with friends and family to celebrate their accomplishments before they start their careers.

"Once I graduate, I'm going to be moving back home and spend time with family and just probably having a little celebration with them," said Welding Engineering senior Kyle Leonard.

Now with the future in sight, the seniors look back on their time at Ferris through memories and the lifelong friends made.

"I loved Ferris state it was a blast. I had some of the best memories and met the best people here," said Kish.



Photo by: Becca Witkowski | Torch Photographer

Grads can sign up to join the Alumni Association while picking up grad gear

Get a hobby



Photo by: Cassie Jessup | Multimedia Editor

Between classes and when she has free time Emily Gudzinski relaxes in the UC while playing Wizard 101 on her laptop.

Finding ways to pass the time in creative way

Alyssa Hubbard
Lifestyles Reporter

There's something satisfying about using free time to learn a new skill, play games or craft that helps pass the time and possibly help others.

Over the last year and throughout the pandemic, people have found that they have more free time during the day. There are many different ways to fill that empty space. Some people took this opportunity to find or rediscover a hobby.

Always finding new crafts and hobbies to try is Ferris pre-pharmacy junior Hunter DeWitt, who recently took up loom weaving. A couple years ago, DeWitt bought a loom kit from the store and decided to challenge herself with something new.

"When COVID first started and I was spending all my time at home, I cleaned my room and found my loom kit in the closet," DeWitt said. "I figured I'd try it out again to escape some of the boredom."

DeWitt's salvaged hobby has taught her very practical skills. She now knows how to weave yarn into intricate patterns, which she then transforms into scarves.

"It's helped me find some time to relax and work on something

that isn't related to work or school," DeWitt said. "It's also a handy way to make an inexpensive Christmas gift that's useful and meaningful, since you made it yourself."

Another student who returned to an old and just as functional craft is music and entertainment business junior Nicole Hollinsky.

During the lockdown last spring, Hollinsky chose to start sewing again. In April, they began sewing face masks for their old job at Tea Party Castle and realized they could create much more. After borrowing a cousin's sewing machine, Hollinsky said "[the hobby] grew from there."

Hollinsky's father taught them how to hand sew when they were younger. Back then, Hollinsky used this newfound skill to fix up falling apart stuffed animals and patch up holey clothes.

So far Hollinsky has sewn 30 face masks and four pillowcases.

"Sewing is so useful, even if you do it by hand," Hollinsky said. "I think everyone should at least learn how to sew by hand. It'll help you in the future when you don't want to throw that shirt away that has an obvious hole in it."

While hobbies like loom weaving and sewing offer handy abilities, there are many other ways, some non-traditional, that can teach

someone important skills as well.

Kendall illustration junior Emily Gudzinski spent her time getting back into computer games from her childhood, such as Wizard101, ToonTown, Club Penguin and more.

Gudzinski has learned and developed her skills in teamwork, communication and strategizing.

"What I like about my hobby is it gives me something to look forward to after completing work," Gudzinski said. "Also, it allows me to stay in contact with friends and gives us something to do together until things become safer to hang out. Not to mention, I get the chance to meet people who are interested in the same things I am."

Gudzinski guessed that she's probably spent over 100 hours playing computer games. She said that playing has helped her relax and have fun.

"I feel like my hobby has definitely helped with my mental health," Gudzinski said. "Being able to be in contact with friends and playing things with them would definitely distract me from things that [are] going on."

It's important to have a balance of work and play. Spending some time away from the stress of school and everyday life by having a hobby can do wonders.

Events calendar

WEDNESDAY

March 10

Frozen Tropics Spring Break: Rest and Relax with CLACS-

Contact: CLACS
clacs@ferris.edu
Location: Virtual
Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

First-Gen Wednesday Workshops - Registering for Classes

Contact: Dave McCall
davidmccall@ferris.edu
Location: Virtual
Time: 1 p.m.

LGBTQ+ Resource Center Coffee House

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

Virtual Game Show

Contact: CLACS
clacs@ferris.edu
Location: Virtual
Time: 8:30 - 9:35 p.m.

THURSDAY

March 11

Spring Graduation Fair

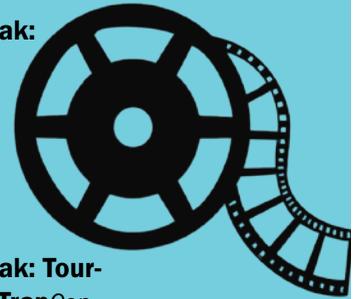
Contact: Lynn Miller
lynnmiller@ferris.edu
Location: Zoom
Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Frozen Tropics Spring Break: Tourist Day Photo Booth

Contact: CLACS
clacs@ferris.edu
Location: Zoom
Time: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Frozen Tropics Spring Break: Tourist Day Movie The Parent Trap

Contact: Lynn Miller
lynnmiller@ferris.edu
Location: Zoom
Time: 7 - 8:30 p.m.



FRIDAY

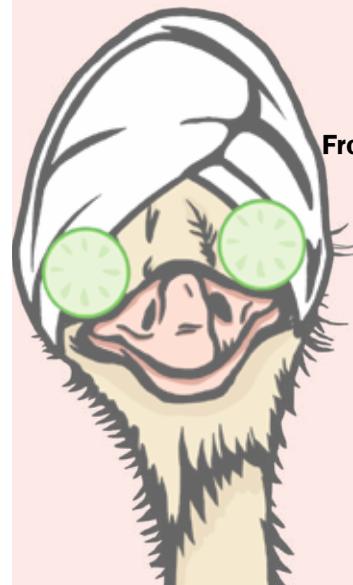
March 12

Frozen Tropics Spring Break: Spa Day

Contact: CLACS
clacs@ferris.edu
Location: Virtual
Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Virtual Study Abroad Workshop

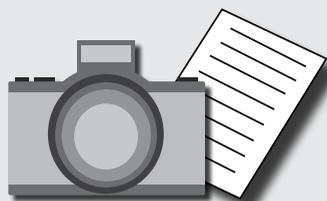
Contact: Megan Hauser-Tran
MeganHauserTran@ferris.edu
Location: Virtual
Time: 1 - 2 p.m.



For more events, check out calendar.ferris.edu

Graphics made by Production Manager Charlie Zitta

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The year students lost their spring break

Students have mixed feelings about powering through semester without week-long break

Meghan Hartley
Freelance Reporter

Last semester, Ferris announced that spring break — which would have begun on March 6 — would be cancelled.

At the time, the decision was made in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on campus. As of now, there are no scheduled breaks other than Easter Break in April. There are mixed emotions on the decisions made by the university.

Marketing junior Cassandra Asikainen said she has felt exhausted and worn out this semester in particular and is unable to take time away.

“I do believe the university should have

kept the break in, so the students could reset and relax for a week after a crazy year,” Asikainen said. “But I understand why the university did it, as many students would have traveled and that could bring a spike in COVID-19 cases on campus.”

Students are able to understand the precautions behind the cancellation, however, they can not help but feel tired from all the school work coming their way and believe there should have been an alternative break provided, such as an extended weekend.

Math education major Gavin Booher said having an extended weekend would be helpful to students who are struggling right now.

“I’ve noticed a few of my closer friends that have been a little overwhelmed. Recent-

ly, and with the fact that there’s no spring break, they feel a little more stressed knowing that they’re not going to have that break that they normally have during this time.”

Having no break at all has caused some students to feel more overwhelmed than past years and it could affect their performance for the rest of the semester, while potentially causing mental strain.

Not only are students feeling a mix of emotions, but some professors are as well. French Professor Daniel Noren said that he has pondered on this situation and can see both sides of the debate.

On one side, Noren said that there is a “tremendous advantage for opting out of spring break in a normal year” as it increas-

es the possibility of students being able to secure a summer job and hopes even now students will benefit from this decision.

On the other side, he said if Ferris had followed with the standard practice of having a spring break “we would all have more time to enjoy each other’s company” along with watching the seasons change.

While there are many perspectives on this situation as to whether or not there should have been a spring break, it can be inferred that as students we have learned how to balance school work in the midst of a pandemic.

A community effort | How Big Rapids helps those in need

Alyssa Myers
Copy Editor

Homelessness in Big Rapids might not be as extreme as it is in bigger cities, but it is a real problem in our township that affects people of all ages every day. Though there are some gaps, the people of Big Rapids do a lot to aid the less fortunate.

Our Brothers Keeper is a shelter in Big Rapids that has been in operation since 2013. OBK provides temporary shelter, structure and a support system needed for guests to make major, lasting lifestyle changes.

“We connect guests with appropriate local agencies and organizations to move forward in their goal to become self-sufficient in their own home,” OBK shelter administrator Lila Ecker said. “OBK staff assists guests with housing applications, state assistance, appointments to obtain their identification, etc. I meet weekly with guests to set goals, track progress and answer questions or address any concerns the guest has.”

While guests are staying at the shelter, they live typical lives. They use electronics like TVs and computers, work on housing goals, spend time in common areas, go to appointments and work when necessary.

“Lights on is at six a.m. at the shelter, [which] is the guest’s first opportunity for their hourly smoke break outside,” Ecker said. “Breakfast is typically cereal or toast and occasionally a warm kitchen cooked breakfast by staff. Lunch is from the cupboards or fridge on a normal day, and dinner is a hot meal cooked by staff or volunteers. Bedtime for children is eight p.m. and adults is 11 p.m.”

OBK is a nonprofit organization, and it depends strongly on community donations. Due to a deficit in funding, OBK can only afford to open its doors during the coldest months. This year, they extended their season, so they’re open 24 hours a day from Oct. 1- June 30. When they aren’t open, their guests must find somewhere else to go. Hemlock Park is a popular spot.

“The park has free wi-fi and a shelter to stay out of the sun or rain. We don’t commonly see them staying there overnight though,” Department of Public Safety Officer William Sell said.

“It is not uncommon to find those homeless sleeping under the bridge near Hemlock Park in Big Rapids, on church steps or

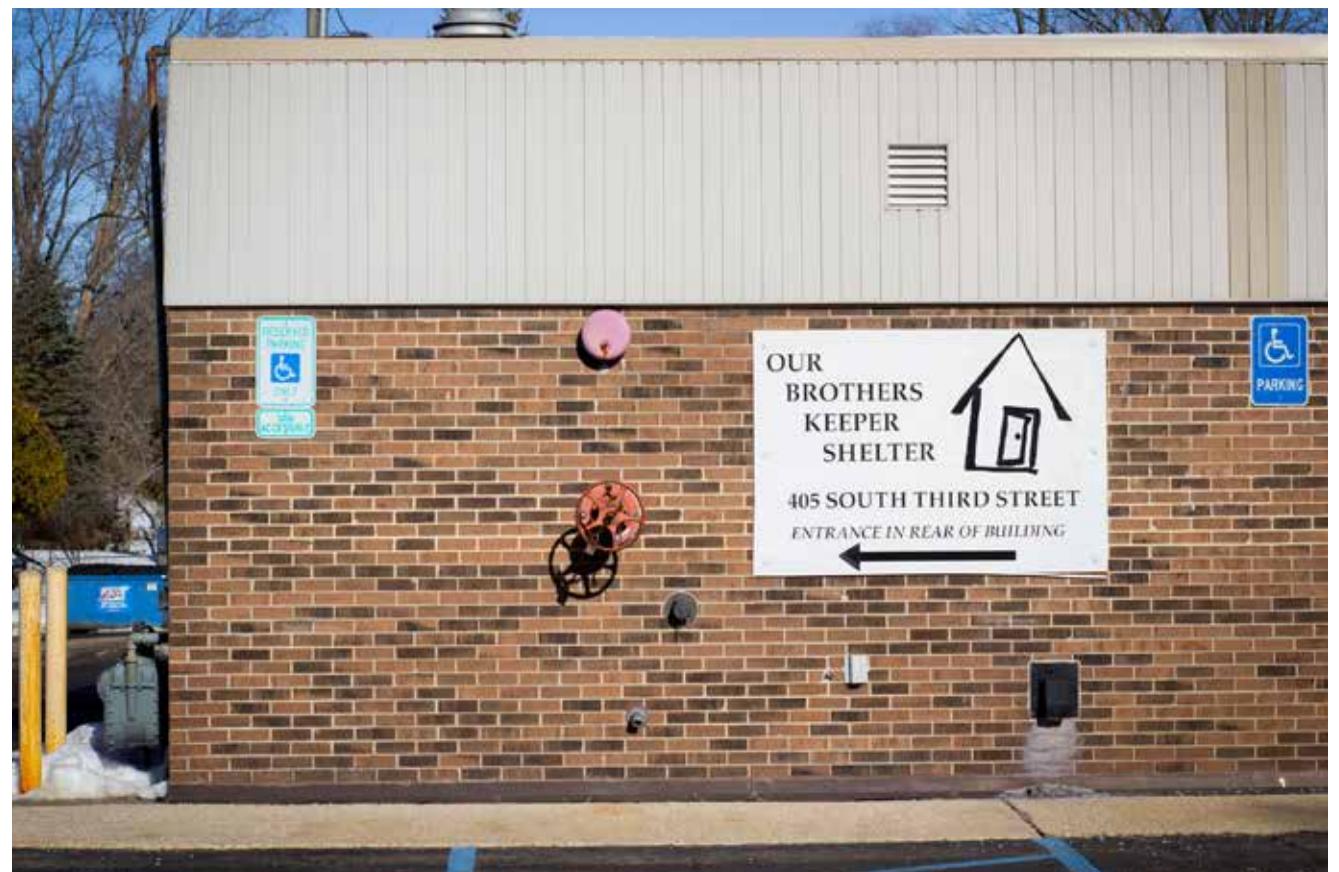


Photo by: Dylan Bowden | Torch Photographer

Our Brothers Keeper is the only homeless shelter for four counties so they provide shelter to a lot of people in the Big Rapids area and surrounding areas.

panhandling for money near Meijer in Big Rapids or the 131 highway on ramps,” Ecker said.

OBK wants to remain open year long, but to do that they need volunteers and donations. With enough funding they could acquire full-time status, which would qualify them for various state and federal funding opportunities.

“Donations go towards all OBK operational expenses, from payroll, to utilities, guest care and support, facilities, equipment and administrative costs,” Ecker said. “OBK depends completely on small grants and donations from individuals, businesses and other organizations. Without the generous communities we are surrounded by, OBK would not exist.”

Project Starburst is a non-profit, community-based pantry located in the basement of the United Church of Big Rapids. Though they are affiliated with a church, religious affiliation is not asked of guests.

“Project Starburst provides food and other basic needs, such as toilet paper, soap, diapers and other miscellaneous items and

has for 50 years,” Project Starburst executive director Diane Long said. “Clients that have come to Project Starburst know they will be treated with respect and a smile.”

In addition to that, they offer a monthly grocery program and individual case management. According to their website, they’ve served 10,859 individuals and provided 434,360 total meals.

They also rely on volunteers and donations.

“Volunteers are necessary to the survival of the agency, as we only have two paid staff. Donations of food, money or volunteer time are always needed,” Long said.

Big Rapids has an abundance of churches, and many of them pool together resources and time to offer services to the less fortunate. Grace Calvary Church falls into this category.

“We offer a paper and bath product pantry to those in need, and we do not require any specific things to receive the service,” Pastor Robert Weller said. “There are a lot of good food pantries, and a food card from the state helps with food, but [it] does not

help with toiletries, which is why we offer the service.”

Weller is also a full-time jail chaplain, so he offers a unique perspective on the situation in Big Rapids.

“There is a lot of help for individuals that are homeless — unless they have felonies. Incarcerated individuals do not have a lot of places to go when they are released in our area, because they do not, a lot of times, qualify for vouchers or HUD housing, and some will not qualify for the homeless shelter in our area. A lot of ex-inmates end up living in tents in our area. I would love to see more resources in our area for people that need help. People leaving jail have very few options when it comes to places to live in our area. We, as a community, need to come together and help more as people look for second chances.”

Though it isn’t perfect, Big Rapids offers many services and opportunities that cater towards the less fortunate. Most of these operations are run by non-profit organizations and churches. A donation of any size could do a lot of good.

OPINIONS

Cora Hall | Editor in Chief | hallc36@ferris.edu

The Ferris State Torch is published on 27 Wednesdays throughout the academic year. This student-run newspaper is printed by The Pioneer Group.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN: Celebrating influential women in my life

By Cora Hall

It's difficult to find the right words to express the meaning of being a woman.

But as I sit here on Monday, it's March 8 – International Women's Day, one of the best days of the year. It's a day we celebrate all that it means to each one of us to be a woman – I spend time reflecting on what I love about women and the women who influenced who I am today.

One of the reasons it's hard to fully convey the totality of what it means to be a woman is because with all our empowerment, there is an equal amount of challenges. With all the inspiration, there is adversity; with all the beauty, there is pain.

To me, to be a woman is to show your strength with grace and poise. To be a woman is to support other women and know we have each other's backs. To be a woman is to have the empathy to stand up for what's right, even when the issue doesn't directly impact us.

These qualities are ones I learned from incredible women I have interacted with or watched growing up. In honor of International Women's Day, I am going to pick a few women to talk about who are role models to me, even though the list is endless.

Let's start off with someone who is completely unsurprising to see on this list if you know me: Megan Rapinoe.

I still remember the exact moment I became a huge U.S. Women's Soccer fan. It was the 2011 World Cup and the USWNT lost in a heart breaker to Japan in the finals. It was the first moment 12-year-old Cora felt so much emotion for a team. Then, the next year at the 2012 Olympics, I avidly watched every women's soccer game and there was just something about Megan Rapinoe.

I loved the way she played. Her performance against Canada in the semi-finals with two game-equalizing goals is one I'll never forget. Now, she has become a role model in so many other ways. She was one of the only athletes to kneel in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick in 2016. Her activism and voice has been so influential and inspiring ever since. She made a statement that it's important to stand (or kneel) for what you believe in, even if you're one of the only ones.

The next woman on this list may also seem obvious: Rosa Parks. Growing up, I always had an appreciation and sort of awe for Parks. But this admiration became even stronger after sitting on a zoom call with John Matlock, one of our alumni who worked with Parks at the office of U.S. Representative John Conyers of Detroit. Matlock told us about Parks asking if she could take a day off work, and her unwavering belief that social change is a lifelong commitment.

It's a belief that I carry with me now, and it has brought me more clarity on my role as a journalist and in my everyday life. This past year has brought a lot of attention to social change, but a true commitment is lifelong and it's integrated into the way you live your life.

My next inspirational woman is Patsy Mink, a third-generation Japanese-American woman from Hawaii. She was a co-author of Title IX legislation as a U.S. representative in Congress. She was also the first woman of color elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and her career spanned 1964 to 1977 and 1990 to 2002. A leaflet from her 1977 campaign says, "I have been guided by a single principle: That everyone – rich or poor, powerful or weak – should get fair and equal treatment from government."

She was someone who put her words into action. Title IX ensured that any sex-based discrimination was eliminated from educational settings and advanced women's sports at the college level. It forced universities to create policies for reporting sexual discrimination and harassment.

It leveled the playing field for women to pursue any degree they wanted. When Title IX was signed into legislation in 1972, women only completed 7% of law degrees and 9% of medical degrees, according to the U.S. Department of Education. In 2017, the American Bar Association saw women making up 51.3% of all law students. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, women made up 50.5% of all medical school students in 2019.

Finally, my role models since I was born: my mother and grandmothers. I grew up watching these incredible women make sacrifices for our family to give us as much as they could. They instilled a work ethic in me that serves me to this day. They have shown me unconditional love and support and made every effort to help me succeed and achieve my goals. I learned from them what it means to be a mother and how to help lead a family. I consider myself incredibly lucky to have every one of them in my life.

All of these women and more are people I look up to and deeply admire. Regardless of whether they played a very involved part in my life, they were women who paved the way before me or were role models from afar. I will carry lessons learned from them wherever I go for the rest of my life.



Graphic by: Charlie Zitta | Production Manager

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!

Get vaccinated

If not for yourself, for those in your life at risk



Kaylin Johnson
Managing Copy Editor

I hate shots.

It's not the split-second of pain. I have hated going to the doctor's office since I was a kid. I have a phobia associated with blood and needles and have often found myself close to fainting at sight of either. I also have social anxiety disorder which doesn't make trips to the hospital any easier.

But on Friday, I braved myself and got my COVID-19 vaccine.

According to a study by Monmouth University, one in four Americans have said they won't get the COVID-19 vaccine. I could have found myself in this group; I've avoided the flu shot my whole life and put off doctor's visits until absolutely necessary, but the past year changed my outlook.

I may not be perfectly healthy, but my underlying conditions do not put me at a higher risk. It's not for myself that I chose to get the vaccine, but for those who are more likely to suffer. I got it so I could see my grandparents again, for a friend who has chronic lung issues, for a cousin with diabetes, for the kids at the daycare I work at and for so many others I may not even know.

For all these people, I got in line for my first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

The process was simple. After my temperature was read, I was checked in and brought to a large room where people were social distancing, waiting for their turn to arrive. It felt like an assembly line of sorts. There were two stations and two separate lines to keep things moving smoothly. I watched person after person step behind a curtain and return a minute later.

At my turn, I followed suit. I was ushered in, sat down, given the shot and then ushered back out. The whole thing couldn't have taken over 30 seconds.

The longest part was the observation period. We all sat six feet apart in a hall while waiting for some sort of reaction. Perhaps it was just me expecting

the worst outcome, but needless to say, once the fifteen minutes were up everyone looked relieved.

The thing that stood out the most to me was how kind and hardworking the hospital staff was. During the observation one nurse played trivia to keep our minds occupied. The nurses administering the vaccine barely slowed between patients, keeping the line moving and distributing as much of the vaccine as possible.

"We're so relieved to be busy," I heard one nurse say. The New York Times reported that an average of 2.16 million doses are given out each day.

So far, these dedicated front-line workers have administered vaccines to nearly 60 million people across the country, and now I am one of them.

As far as side effects, I experienced only arm pain and slight drowsiness for a few days following my first dose. I will say that the arm pain was quite significant, but a small price to pay for the peace of mind I get from receiving my vaccine.

Having the vaccine will not change most of my habits, though. I will still be wearing my mask, using an obscene amount of hand sanitizer and social distancing whenever I can. Even if my chances of catching the virus have been decreased, I'm going to think of others.

As Larry Corey, the co-director of the COVID-19 Prevention Network said in the Smithsonian Magazine, "You're self-protected, but you still could be a danger to other people, especially if you start using behavioral disinhibition, saying, 'I'm vaccinated, I'm invulnerable.' You could acquire COVID and it will be silent, and then you can infect a bunch of people who are not as lucky as you to be vaccinated at this point in time."

These procedures are not just in place for you, but for all of us, the high risk included. So, wear your mask, wash your hands, and when you are given the opportunity, get your vaccine.

Editor's Note: If you are eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine, you can find information on how to sign up for an appointment on Spectrum Health's website.

Minimum effort to raise minimum wage

Senate failed to pass one of the most popular proposals



Rebecca VanderKooi
News Reporter

On Friday night, the Senate rejected the proposal to increase the federal minimum wage, despite over half of Americans supporting the increase.

Since 2009, the federal minimum wage has been \$7.25 an hour. The New York Times explained that President Biden's proposal, as part of a larger stimulus plan, was designed to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025.

According to Newsweek, 76% of young people and 53% of seniors support increasing the minimum wage to \$15.

The proposal was designed to gradually increase the minimum wage to help employers adjust to the change. That way they did not have to increase the pay by \$7.75 immediately. However, even with that in place, the proposal was shot down by all Senate republicans as well as seven Senate democrats.

For 12 years, the United States has had the same federal minimum wage. According to the CPI inflation calculator there has been a 21.93% inflation rate since 2009. This means that the minimum wage payment would have gone a lot further in 2009 compared to today.

If someone works full time at the federal minimum wage, they will make approximately \$15,080 a year. According to the ASPE, the federal poverty line is making \$12,880 or less

a year. This means that working a full-time minimum wage job puts someone just \$2,200 over the poverty line.

Every single occupation is important in running this country smoothly. Higher level positions, such as doctors, lawyers and others are valuable. However, so are positions that people tend to overlook, such as food service workers, janitors and others. It is disappointing to me that despite the importance of the latter jobs it can be hard for individuals in these fields to make ends meet.

In addition, according to CNBC nearly 70% of college students work, many of which are minimum wage jobs. Students have the added struggle of trying to pay living expenses as well as school tuition. Tuition costs have risen exorbitantly throughout the years, but the minimum wage has remained the same, making it difficult for college students to pay the bills.

I am one of many college students who's worked multiple jobs throughout the years, often two or three at a time. All of this while trying to balance a challenging course load. My situation is not unique, it is one that many of my peer's face.

For students and working American's alike, it's a disservice to keep the minimum wage at its current rate. When people work full weeks, they should be able to support themselves and right now that's not always the case.

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FERRIS STATE TORCH

SPORTS

Brendan Sanders | Sports Editor | sandeb16@ferris.edu

Athletes speak out on mask protocols



Photos by: Cora Hall and Kevin McDermott

Both basketball teams have been able to play without masks due to daily testing, while volleyball has had to play with masks for the first few weeks of the season.

Athletics department remains tight-lipped on testing policies for specific teams

Austin Arquette
Sports Reporter

Having sports this year meant new policies, including the wearing of masks while playing. Some teams, however, have been exempt from masks during play due to more frequent testing.

Safe-to-play protocols were enacted by numerous sports organizations worldwide this year, including the NCAA. Assistant athletic director Rob Bentley provided the following statement on Ferris' COVID-19 protocols and declined to comment further or explain testing protocols for individual teams.

"Ferris State University student-athletes are asked to follow the guidelines and requirements established by the campus re-entry committee as it pertains to all COVID-19 protocols, including the wearing of masks. This includes at all team meetings, practices, workouts and competitions, unless specific testing requirements are met," Ferris State Athletics said. "The testing requirements vary by sport based on the risk level of the particular sport along with established NCAA, conference, state or institutional testing requirements."

In an announcement made from Ferris Athletics on Aug. 27 of last year, the department said that all student-athletes, coaches and staff members would be tested for COVID-19. The test was to be taken before any physical athletic activity was allowed, and after the first testing Ferris Athletics would conduct surveillance tests which composed of 25% of all team rosters every two weeks. Fast forward a few months later, and protocols seem to be unclear among the various sports teams at Ferris.

At the beginning of the season, both the men's and women's basketball teams had to practice in masks, and the women's team even played two games in masks. Since then, the teams have been tested six times a week and are able to escape the masks. Sophomore guard Mallory McCartney said that these masks add an entire new dynamic to the game.

"Playing with a mask causes you to get tired faster but also can affect communication not being able to hear everything," McCartney said. "Definitely, a team who does not have to wear a mask [has] an advantage against a team who does."

For some members of the team, they are forced to wear a mask during any team activity. Senior wing on the women's basket-

ball team Adrienne Anderson has a much different personal protocol due to an injury. Because Anderson isn't playing this season, she only is tested three times a week instead of six, and she has to wear a mask while participating in team activities.

"Personally, wearing one while running long distances and even quick bursts are very uncomfortable and makes it hard to breathe," Anderson said. "It would be easier to play without one, and I would say it's preferred that way. However, I do not think that having one on while playing carries enough weight to be deemed advantageous or disadvantageous, but it's hard to tell."

Anderson and McCartney agree that it's a challenge the team has tackled head-on and fought through, but they are just grateful to play. Anderson said that a nice reminder here and there is needed if a mask falls down, but besides that there are no penalties.

The men's team faces many of the same issues and standards. Sophomore wing Ben Davidson said that they are also tested six times a week and are not required to wear masks when they practice or play. Davidson agreed that the masks aren't that bad, but overall they are just happy to be playing the game they love.

Ewigleben Sports Arena holds the same intensity for the Ferris women's volleyball team; however, communication skills have become much harder for the team to get across due to masks. Unlike the basketball teams and hockey team, the volleyball team has to wear a mask during practices and games this season.

Junior middle hitter Samantha Hermann emphasized that volleyball team invests in good communication, but masks force the team to adapt their communication styles. Whether it's being louder, more vocal, clearer or using hand signals, these masks will not stop Ferris volleyball from competing at their highest potential.

With this new adaptation to the season Ferris isn't at any disadvantage, as all teams in the GLIAC are to abide by the same rules. There are not any penalties if a mask falls off or down during a game, but the Ferris volleyball team was instructed to wear them and follow the standards and protocols set.

With basketball ending and hockey soon to follow, it remains to be seen if more funds will be allocated to other sports to be tested enough to compete without masks. As a vaccines continue to roll out, it has yet to be seen about how that will be enforced in athletics.

Parkside ends Ferris' season

Women's basketball loses to Wisconsin-Parkside in first round of GLIAC playoffs

Brody Keiser
Sports Reporter

It was playoff time for the Bulldogs, but they were unable to extend their season with a 82-59 loss to Wisconsin-Parkside.

Ferris women's basketball team entered the GLIAC tournament with a 6 - 12 record and landed the ninth seed in the tournament. The eight-seeded Rangers proved to be too much for Ferris in the first round of the playoffs.

Parkside averaged a GLIAC league-high 75 points per game in the regular season, and they wasted no time putting points on the board against Ferris on Tuesday, March 2. In the first quarter, the Rangers scored 28 points and followed that with another 22 points in the second quarter, taking a 50 - 32 lead into halftime.

"They did an amazing job moving the basketball," head coach Kurt Westendorp said. "Defensively, we were just a step slow on everything. They hit 10 threes in one half, so that's tough to cover. You can see why they're the best offense in the league. I wish you could take that first quarter away, but that's not how the game is played."

For the game, Parkside shot 13 of 33 points from the three-point line. Westendorp had his Bulldogs playing different defenses in the first half to try to slow the Rangers down but switched to match up defense in the second half. While he noted that the second half defense was better, Westendorp added that, "It was just too big a deficit to overcome."

On Jan. 16, the Bulldogs beat the Rangers 91-89 after trailing 47 - 33 at halftime. Because the Bulldogs recorded that comeback victory against Parkside, sophomore guard Mallory McCartney felt her team could "definitely come back" and do it again.

Ultimately, her team was unable to pull out another incredible comeback, and McCartney felt that her team's offensive struggles were a big reason why.

"We need to put the ball in the basket," McCartney said. "We did not shoot great at all. We're a very gifted shooting team, but no one shot the ball good. Defensively, we had a few breakdowns. We need to play a

full, consistent game. If we made a couple shots, maybe that first quarter [could have been] a seven-point game rather than a 20 point game."

In the Jan. 16 matchup with the Rangers, McCartney recorded 25 points. She scored a season high 38 points against Purdue Northwest Feb. 20 but recorded just five points against the Rangers in the playoffs.

She spoke on the differences in her scoring performances throughout this season.

"It's a confidence thing," McCartney said. "When you see the first couple fall, it's really easy to keep shooting. On the other hand, when you don't see the first few fall, you think maybe this isn't this best shot. I need to go be a player, and I can't let anything really affect me. I have to know that sometimes my shot is the best shot. I need to not hesitate and be more of a threat that way instead of playing more passively."

For their playoff game against Parkside, Ferris got a team high with 16 points from junior forward Ellie Dykstra and 10 points from freshman forward Ariel Jenkins.

McCartney gave Parkside credit for the win but said it was disappointing for her team to lose the way they did. While she acknowledged that the Bulldog's record was not what her team wanted, she also has high hopes for next season.

"I'll say it right now: I think Ferris is going to win the GLIAC outright. I think we're going to be right back to holding the trophy," McCartney said. "We have all the pieces to do it, we just have to remember how it felt to lose and use it as motivation to go be the best team out there."

"COVID-19 hindered a lot of things. You never know when you could be shut down, so we were more just thankful that we got to play this season. Next year, we're going to be back to business. We'll be thankful for each game we get, but also focused on the big picture of wanting to go to the tournament and experience how amazing of a feeling it is."

In McCartney's freshman season, her team would have played in the NCAA DII national tournament had it not be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She looks forward to getting back to the tournament.



Photo by: Cora Hall | Editor in Chief

Ellie Dykstra would lead the team with 16 points on the evening.

Westendorp cherished every moment of this season because of the uncertainty COVID-19 creates regarding it. He noted that playing 19 games and having his young players play "a ton of minutes" was really important for the future of the program.

"Every minute that our young kids are on the court is a minute they're learning," Westendorp said. "That's why this season was so valuable for us. When we were in August and September, we didn't know what the season was going to look like."

In terms of how the roster will look next year, Westendorp said he is excited that his team will return so many players.

"We're a team that's not going to be graduating anybody," Westendorp said. "Every-

body that was out here is going to be back next year, plus we'll hopefully be plugging in some of those kids that were in street clothes and some new freshman. I'm really pleased with the way the program is trending. We're obviously not pleased with what the record was this year, but we have to look at things more big picture and see the experience that we have."

This season did not go how Westendorp or McCartney had hoped, but both appreciated that they even had a season to play. This upcoming offseason will be huge for the Bulldogs to achieve the goals McCartney has set, and with so many young, talented players, the future looks bright for the Bulldogs.

Sports Speculation: The only ones

A reflection on being one of the few to witness the 2021 basketball seasons

Brendan Sanders
Sports Editor

"Sports are rough this year."

That's the text I got from a friend of mine when the men's basketball season drew to a close on Thursday. It drew a reflection from me in the moment that I don't think they expected. Usually, I am passionate about my teams.

This year both the men's and women's teams missed the tournament after first round exits in the GLIAC tournaments; both teams had a losing record for the first time since the 2013 - 2014 season. However, that isn't the point of this article. Instead, I want to point towards the positive aspects of this season.

Any other year, I'd be disappointed, but this year, it was not about winning or losing.

Men's and women's basketball were able to pull off a relatively full schedule this year, with only a few game cancellations or postponements. Normally we would see 30 basketball games, not 20 like this year, as there was a minimal non-conference schedule for men's basketball and no non-conference for women's basketball.

In fact, all of the winter sports teams were able to see nearly a "full" schedule, as in only a handful of games were canceled.

We were able to observe the revival of sports here at the university, and even though these teams didn't see a tournament bid, they were able to play. They set the standard for a "post-pandemic" season. Basketball and hockey are the only teams that get to say they were the first sports to see action since sports were put on hold here at the university.

I reflected further: I looked into what I do and at the operation I'm running here as the sports editor for the Torch.

Due to GLIAC rules, no fans were allowed to be in attendance, making it so the only people who could attend these basketball games were the athletic staff and the media. Most of the time it was just us and the sports reporters from the Big Rapids Pioneer.

Looking back on it, I almost get emotional thinking about how special it was to be able to see these games in person, to take photographs as Walt Kelsner sinks a three, or Michael Peterson gets a rebound. To listen in as Rob Bentley interviews men's head coach Andy Bronkema or women's head

coach Kurt Westendorp. We were one of a very select group who got to witness these games.

There was notably an eerie silence to it all though. In one of the games I attended, Kelsner scored 39 points. I could almost imagine the arena going wild as he sank three-point shot after three-point shot. But in reality, it was quiet beyond cheers from his teammates.

A part of me wanted to drop the professional façade I have when reporting these games. Seeing a team or even a player who you've covered be successful draws out an inking of a fan. It almost happened again when I was covering both basketball and hockey games this year where I dropped what I was there to do and just became a fan.

But I stayed silent, and the teams played on.

This year isn't a season where we should look back on and be disappointed. We got to see some of the best basketball players in West Michigan take to the court. That's something that took more effort than people can even imagine in this time period. Being able to sit down and watch a group of athletes who I look up to play their hearts out almost made me feel normal again.

Starting out swinging

Bulldog softball begins season with strong tournament performances



Photo courtesy of Kevin McDermott

Sophomore pitcher Kristie Gray pitches in a 7 - 2 win against Cedarville.

Brandon Wirth
Freelance Reporter

On Feb. 18, the Bulldogs packed their bats, gloves, and uniforms and set off for their first road trip of the 2021 season.

The season began with the Lewis Dome Invitational in Rosemont, Illinois. While the Bulldogs did not take on the hosting Lewis University Flyers, they were able to play five games against teams around the region.

"Being able to get back out there is a victory in itself," Coach Kirsten Janes said. "Not just for us (coaches), but it is so much for the girls."

Ferris started off their season on the right foot with a 3 - 0 win Thursday over Lindenwood. The Bulldogs were led by a strong pitching performance from freshman McKenzie Cleland. Her complete game shutout performance was one of many great starts during the tournament, helping her earn the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Pitcher of the Week.

"She's throwing well," Janes said. "The way she is handled things was that of a veteran. That's been really cool to see."

The Bulldogs followed up the opening tourney win by adding two more close wins Friday, including an 11-inning, 18-run barnburner against Ursaline. Kylie Winkels led the team with four hits with Paige Kortz adding three more.

"The game took about three hours, which is roughly an hour longer than a typical game," Kortz said on the Ursaline game. "We could have easily 'rolled over' but our team and pitching staff came out every inning fighting."

Janes' team went on to win Saturday's opener 4 - 2 against former GLIAC competitor Findlay, thanks to sixth inning RBIs from sophomore Jessica Tucci and junior Ali Magiera. Although the Bulldogs took an early 2 - 0 lead in the nightcap finale, they ultimately fell 6 - 3 against Illinois-Springfield to finish the tournament 4 - 1 overall.

Despite not winning the tournament, coach Janes was happy with how her team performed in their first Dome Invitational.

"It's very different than playing outside and playing on turf," Janes said. "The girls came out with a chip on their shoulder and (went) out to prove a point."

The following weekend, the Bulldogs travelled to Owensboro, Kentucky, for the three-day Blue Bridge Classic.

Ferris's bats started out hot, winning Friday's contests 8 - 3 and 7 - 2. Junior shortstop Kodi Ramirez led the bulldogs with a combined four hits Friday, including a 2-run homer against Lake Erie in game one. First baseman Kaitlyn Orme also had three hits, three runs, and two RBIs throughout the day.

Saturday's games did not follow the successful suit of Friday. The Bulldogs suffered a 12 - 4 loss against Quincy followed by a 4 - 2 defeat to preseason ranked number 10 Trevecca Nazarene.

Orme lead the team with two hits in game two, with sophomore outfielder Justice Ruggles adding a double and freshman outfielder Abby Mitchell hitting her first collegiate home run.

"The first game we came out a little bit slow. We played a good second game but had a bit of adversity and things didn't go our way," Janes said.

Due to weather, the Bulldogs' Sunday games against Lake Erie and University of Indianapolis were cancelled. Ferris finished the tournament with a 2 - 2 split, putting their season record at 6 - 3.

"We played well," Janes said reflecting on the tournament. "Even from losses, (we're) becoming a better team. Those losses were not for nothing. We learned a lot about ourselves the entire weekend."

Although this season will include the challenges of COVID-19 protocols, the Bulldogs are not letting that stop them.

"Our team is simply excited to be out on the field and playing the game we love," Kortz said via message. "If we have to wear a mask to have a season, we will do it in a heartbeat."

Ferris is off to their best nine-game start since 2016, where the Bulldogs began with seven wins en route to a successful 36-18 season. Despite the Bulldogs coming off four losing seasons since that 2016 season, Coach Janes believes this team has great shape for a great season.

"We've got some returning veterans that have some great experience. Our freshmen and transfers bring a nice balance of energy and athleticism. I think that balance is what's going to help us excel. They're here and they mean business."

The teams' next contests will be on Mar. 17, where the Bulldogs will travel back to Lewis for a regional double header against the Flyers. For more information on Bulldog Softball, visit the Ferris Athletics website, www.ferrisstatebulldogs.com.

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