

## Ferris football program reprimanded by NCAA

### Coach Tony Annese suspended for one playoff game, program to pay 17k in damages and fines

Dylan Rider  
*Opinions Editor*

Following the NCAA's one-game suspension of football coach Tony Annese, Ferris students have taken to social media in droves to voice their opinions.

The NCAA announced on March 23 that the Ferris State football program will be reprimanded for incidents that occurred during last year's national championship game. The reprimand is comprised of a one game suspension from a future playoff game for head coach Tony Annese, \$15,383 in restitution to the McKinney, Texas Independent School District and a \$2,500 fine.

A statement from Ferris State University details the incidents from December.

"Two football student-athletes lit and began smoking cigars in Ferris' McKinney ISD Stadium locker room during the celebration following the game," the

statement said. "A small number attempted to remove Ferris State University branded temporary wall stickers to keep as souvenirs inside the locker room after the game."

The Torch opened a poll to allow students to anonymously share their thoughts on the punishment. The majority of the responses were critical of the NCAA's decision.

"Honestly, I think it's a joke," one response read. "The media glorified Joe Burrow when he smoked a cigar in the locker room after [Louisiana State University] won the National Title in Division I. It's the NCAA who chooses to have the DII National Title at a high school. I don't care where it is, the rules should be applied the same no matter where you're playing."

Mercedes-Benz Stadium, where Burrow and Louisiana State won the 2020 national championship, is a "non-smok-

ing, non-vaping and tobacco free campus." However, it does not look like the university faced any reprimand for Burrow's cigar smoking. The only thing known is that, according to Burrow, he was almost arrested following the win.

The reprimand against Ferris went viral. BarstoolDetroit's Twitter post regarding the matter, which was captioned with "Free Tony Annese," received nearly 2,000 likes, 237 retweets and 59 replies. Their Instagram post had nearly 7,000 likes and 251 comments.

BarstoolFerris' post added to the virality with 1,246 likes and a caption that read "Maybe we shouldn't play in high school stadiums."

Annese's suspension is one that will have to wait to be served, as he will be allowed to coach for the entirety of a regular season that has yet to begin before facing a one game suspension in a postseason the Bulldogs



Photo by: Dylan Rider | Opinions Editor

**Coach Tony Annese led the Bulldogs to back-to-back NCAA championships.**

have not yet qualified for.

The NCAA's statement alleges that Ferris athletes have behaved inappropriately before the 2023 national championship game.

"The subcommittee noted the head coach is responsible for the actions of the individuals within the program, and this circumstance was not an isolated instance, given the program has

committed multiple cases of misconduct recently," the NCAA said.

Ferris football seemingly attempted to appeal the reprimand, as the DII Championships Appeals Subcommittee had "upheld" the penalties.

Ferris State Athletics declined to comment on the suspension, restitution and fines any further than their released statement.

## State of faculty union relations following settlement

### FFA and administrative leaders speak on settlement and future contract

Jessica Oakes  
*News Editor*

Two weeks after the Ferris Faculty Association and the university reached an \$800,000 settlement, focus shifts to contract discussions for the next collective bargaining agreement.

The FFA's current contract went into effect in November of 2018 and expires on June 23 of this year. Both union leaders and administrators have expressed the desire to complete current contract negotiations without repeating 2018's history. Five years ago, FFA members went on strike during the first week of the fall semester following months of disagreements.

Provost Bobby Fleischman is pleased with the settlement on online course capacity from an academic standpoint. He stated that it will offer an opportunity to "revisit online education," bringing Ferris "into alignment with what other universities are doing." He also sees it as a step forward for all of the Ferris community, including faculty, staff and students.

"On both sides of the aisle, [the settlement] is sign of good faith," Fleischman said. "It's an illustration of how faculty and administration can work together and have positive outcomes. I'm very hopeful that that sort of collaboration carries over to contract negotiations."

On behalf of the administration, Associate Provost of Faculty Operations Steven Reifert meets with the FFA for matters pertaining to grievances and settlements.

"I think we're where we need to be and [are] glad we came to an agreement," Reifert said.

While Reifert called recent discussions "collegial" and "agreeable," FFA Vice President John Caserta was less than pleased and views the settlement as a "Band-Aid."

"It was the most arduous process I've been involved in in my 42 years here," Caserta said.

President Bill Pink is not present for contract discussions or settlement meetings, as has

been his choice throughout his entire administrative career. To stay informed, he does meet with both administrators and union leaders separately for periodic updates.

"I have been pleased to hear that the conversations are already happening between some of our folks on the administration side and the union side," Pink said about contract discussions. "I've been pleased to hear that those conversations have been progressing well. I would hope that we can continue to do that."

He hopes to see a positive trend in relationship building between the administration and every union on Ferris' campus. He expressed his commitment to

this relationship building and to work through civil differences in a "much better" way than he has heard and seen before.

"I'm a believer that we need to show a better example to our students of what connection, collaboration and relationship needs to look like," Pink said. "The negotiation is important, yes, but what we do after that is just as important to me... We have to build better relationships between the both of us because the folks who benefit from that are students. That has to be the case. If not, shame on us. Us being all of us."

The Torch will continue its coverage on contract discussion throughout the spring semester.

# News

Jessica Oakes | News Editor | oakesj3@ferris.edu

## Gotion update

Pink addresses rumors about housing 'Chinese nationalists'

Jessica Oakes  
News Editor

President Bill Pink released a video addressing the claim that Ferris intends to house hundreds of Chinese citizens employed by Gotion Inc. last Thursday.

Pink released his statement on YouTube, encouraging the community to be cautious when listening to "rumors" and "falsehoods."

"Let me give it to you first-hand... As president of this university, I can tell you that no one from that company has had a conversation with me asking Ferris State University to house anyone on this campus," Pink said in the video.

Ferris has been involved in the planning of an electric vehicle battery plant since September of last year. Concerns about the factory's environmental impact and parent company are now surfacing on both university and national levels.

While Gotion Inc. is head-

quartered in Silicon Valley, it is a subsidiary of Hefei Guoxuan High-Tech Power Energy Co. based in China. Gotion's Inc.'s own Vice President of North American Operations Chuck Thelen has responded to claims made by Republican gubernatorial candidate Tudor Dixon that the company has an allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party.

"There is no CCP organization influence. No person on the leadership team is a CCP member. There is no CCP organization or influence to the [North American] operation," Thelen said. Thelen plans to appear in multiple interviews and press releases in the coming days because "the truth has not been out there yet."

"I'm surprised that people are making the claims as wildly as they are," Thelen said to the press last week. "The other claim that we're going to inundate the Rapids with 250 migrant workers from China, that makes no sense. We will bring our centers of



Photo courtesy of Ferris State University YouTube Channel

**President Pink speaks on Gotion commentary and Ferris involvement in video statement.**

expertise, experts to help set up the equipment and the process. That will probably be somewhere between 20 to 50 people."

Recent coverage from the Big Rapids Pioneer reports that Thelen, Pink and Big Rapids Township Supervisor Bill Stanek have all signed non-disclosure agreements, potentially limiting their

ability to confirm or deny claims from the public.

"When asked where these folks would live, [Thelen] simply stated, 'We would build housing for them.' When we questioned where, he ceased talking about the topic," Big Rapids Township Treasurer Penny Currie said to the Pioneer.

Ferris will host an informational panel about the Gotion factory on April 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the David L. Eisler Center. Panelists will feature representatives from Ferris, Gotion, the Right Place non-profit organization and various fields including water, energy and waste.

## Zero to a million in five days

AI language models may shift education as we know it

Noah Kolenda  
Editor in Chief

Just a few short months ago, the most advanced AI chatbot available to the public was CleverBot, an AI that would turn out responses closely related to what was inputted without adding much to the conversation. Today, a simple one-sentence prompt can turn out anything from an Olive Garden ad script to an essay nearly fit for turn-in.

Launching on Nov. 30, 2022, OpenAI's ChatGPT rose from zero daily active users to over a million by Dec. 4, 2022. This prompted other tech giants like Microsoft's Bing division and Google to put out Bing AI and Google Bard on Feb. 7 and Feb. 6, respectively.

### HOW WE GOT HERE

First released to the public as ChatGPT 3.5, this version was built on 175 billion parameters, or data points, to turn out answers to the public's queries. This version was able to take text-only inputs of 3,000 words and respond with text of limited length. It could also receive passable grades on law, business,

medical and other college-level exams.

In just three and a half months, OpenAI released ChatGPT 4. This version is able to accept 25,000 word inputs and utilize a trillion parameters to generate your answer. But most importantly, it's now able to accept inputs like images and sounds. These advancements took the AI language model from just passable with the aforementioned tests to landing it near the top. Remember, this happened in just under four months and still remains at no cost to the personal end-user.

Head of Ferris' AI program and Dean of the College of Business Dr. Logan Jones has already been dealing with AI and machine learning and its role in academics. He says this is a leap from what we've had before.

"If you look at quantitative sources like for math, we've been seeing those in academics for a while now," Jones said. "Students can take a picture of an algebra problem, and it will show them the answer and the work... But this is the first one that I know of that's at a quality where you

could have a machine write you an essay for a class or a cover letter for a job."

### IT'S ALREADY INFILTRATED

These tools are in free public beta, accessible to anyone with a Google or Microsoft account. It's safe to assume that if you haven't already played with an AI language model yourself, you probably know someone who has.

English professor Dr. Nate Garrelts has studied how AI may impact literature education but wasn't quite expecting the wave of these AI language models.

"It did become an overnight problem," Garrelts said. "I did a sabbatical research project in 2018 using AI to study literature. At the time, it wasn't very good at writing and was really limited to sentiment analysis. But I was shocked at the amount of progress that happened in those intervening five years, how accessible it became to the public immediately and how quickly word spread."

Garrelts believes he's already experienced instances of students using AI to assist them

in their coursework, causing him to go out and learn more about it and draft a statement on AI for his students in an attempt to dissuade them from using it by explaining its limitations.

"There are a couple of tells," Garrelts said. "An AI is only knowledgeable about the things it's been programmed to analyze. So, if a student asks it about something it doesn't know about, some AI will admit they don't know... but others will just invent something based on what you asked."

Garrelts went on to describe how after receiving responses to a lesser-known short story that didn't quite make sense, he turned to AI and asked the questions he assigned to students. Sure enough, AI turned out 20 possible answers to the question.

He further explained examples of when he asked students to compare two poets of varying difficulty to interpret. Where most students would acknowledge this difficulty and may even admit they are unsure if they're correct, he was receiving a few perfect, polished, textbook-style answers that didn't match the student

they came from.

Some students didn't even seem to be reading what these AI language models had generated before they turned their responses in, according to College of Arts, Science and Education Dean Dr. Randy Cagle.

"One of the first instances of this [that] was brought to my attention was from a professor who had a student submit something... where they clearly just cut and pasted a response without looking at it," Cagle said. "It included the sentence, 'As a language model, I do not have personal beliefs...' just right there as a dead giveaway."

The Torch also spoke with students who had admitted to using tools like ChatGPT to assist them in coursework. One claimed to have used ChatGPT to speed up the process when making a presentation due to the redundancy they felt in the assignment.

"It wasn't information I was unfamiliar with," the student said. "With my workload, I felt it was just easier to have an AI write it

**AI Language Models**  
see page 3

# Aspiring Educators of Michigan host panel for future teachers

## The shortage of educators and the pursuit of passion

**Ember St. Amour**  
News Reporter

In the midst of a nationwide teacher shortage, education students at Ferris are preparing to join the workforce.

Last Thursday, the Aspiring Educators of Michigan Registered

Student Organization held a panel with teachers and a social worker that touched on the teacher shortage and what it means to be a teacher today.

According to CNBC, 300,000 teachers and staff have left schools from 2020 to 2022. Also over the last few years, teach-

ers have been posting on apps such as Tik Tok about how they were leaving their teaching jobs, stating that they were being underpaid, overworked and feeling under appreciated by staff and parents.

Big Rapids high school teacher and panelist Jason Gielczyk discussed why this phenomenon is happening and how students can ready themselves for the job.

"Once you graduate, you may struggle [with] getting the job you want," Gielczyk said. "Although in this day and age you might have your pickings because [COVID-19] did a number to a lot of teachers and they're getting out. So hopefully you're all ready to go. Like I mentioned earlier, passion and purpose. If you have that, you'll be well, you'll be good and like your job."

The panel focused on how those in the education field can be prepared to deal with students with disabilities and what some of their struggles might be as well.

Hillside middle school teacher

Anthony Barnes explained how he dealt with a student who needed some extra support with writing.

"I gave [a handwriting book] to him on like the last day of school," Barnes said. "I said, 'Just do this over the summer, be totally cool.' He came back the next day and was like, 'Look, Mr. Barnes, I can write.' Have you ever seen that moment for a kid, when [it] just clicks, the bubble bursts and they realize? That's what I'm in for. This is the light bulb moment for me."

Secondary education senior Tyler Savides attended the panel. He is looking forward to getting a job and has confidence that he will get one.

"Every single school that I've stepped into has relative hiring and is continuing to hire," Savides said. "They're losing teachers like flies from overwork and burnout to retirement age. COVID just kind of destroyed peoples faith in the system. So it's going to be fine for the next probably five years."

Social work professor Danette Crozier was also at the panel.

She has years of experience in the field, specifically in special education. She explained how she continues helping students when she starts to feel burnt out.

"[When] you're going out into the field, buy yourself a traditional hardbound journal," Crozier said. "When something happens, you can jot [it down]. You don't have to 'journal,' journal, just write down a phrase that a student said to you, put the date on it [and] treasure those... There's going to be days where you want to give up and you want to walk out. You open that journal and you read what former students have said to you, those things that fill your cup back up."

At the end of the event, panelists left attendees with hope for their future as educators. They were advised to let their students see them as human beings and to open up to them as they continue to learn and grow.



Photo by: Maddie Epps | Torch Photographer

**Education professionals Jason Gielczyk (left), Anthony Barnes (center) and Danette Crozier (right) discuss the differences between IEPs and 504s.**

## AI Language Models

Continued from page 2

for me versus me spending the time trying to word everything correctly."

The student further discussed that they spoke with their peers and found they spent nearly a third of the time on the presentation as those who did it on their own. They went on to share how little they had to assist the AI to get it to turn out a presentation they were comfortable with.

"There were a few parts where I wish it had gone a bit more in-depth," the student said, "so I went back and added a few things... but other than that, it hit everything right on the nose."

They admitted that while their presentation may have lacked a bit of depth compared to their peers, they felt no fear that their instructor would be able to detect

they had used ChatGPT to assist them. They said that while they wouldn't use it on every written assignment, they could see where it could take the monotony out of some work.

### WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Mostly everyone that responded for this story shared a similar sentiment: the pedagogy will shift because of this.

In the short term, some professors are switching up what they give to their students as sources. As seen in his statement on AI, Garrelts has opted to switch up his materials to lesser-known stories so that AI will have less of a chance of being able to assist in student assignments.

In the long term, we just don't know yet. Both deans and faculty don't quite know where this will land, especially in a society

where the online modality is becoming so prevalent for higher education.

"It's hard to imagine a case where higher ed is confronted with something that's requiring potentially such a fundamental shift," Cagle said. "Online is where many people see the future of education. With traditional college-age enrollment declining, universities want to make that up by using online education to reach adult learners remotely... We're in a wait-and-see because we just don't know its extent yet, but we do know we're also looking at something consequential as well."

Cagle was skeptical of the alleged AI detectors companies

were marketing to universities. He cited their claim to function like current plagiarism detectors where a percentage figure is given that suggests how much it thinks AI wrote. He continued that even those weren't 100% foolproof and maybe we need to think a bit bigger and step outside the box of detectors.

"The new stuff coming out is going to be trailing behind this for quite a while," Cagle said. "Where we're at, I'm not sure if that's the route we should take just trying to constantly fight this. Maybe we look at another way to assess students to ensure that they're getting the things they need out of these classes. While we don't have great tools at this point,

we're not helpless either."

In the meantime, the common message was nearly universal: if you feel stuck or need help, ask questions and talk to faculty. The university employs these experts in their field for a reason. They suggested that the downside to this is the education the student is missing by not doing the work themselves.

"You get out of your education only and exactly what you put into it," Cagle said. "These kinds of shortcuts may benefit you in the short term, but they're dishonest. In the long run, they undermine what you're out to achieve."

## ON THE RECORD

A roundup of this weeks crime at Ferris State University

**Jessica Oakes**  
News Editor

### CAMPUS SUITES CARD SWIPER

March 21, time unknown - An instance of fraudulent debit card transactions was reported from a student at East Campus Suites. The case is currently under investigation, and there is no current suspect.

### BOND BRAWL

March 21, 7 p.m. - A threat complaint was reported from Bond Hall. A student was being threatened to physically fight by an ex-friend. The complainant wants no contact with the suspect.

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# RISE for free college

The program encouraging free college disappears from campus

**Meghan Hartley**  
News Reporter

Ferris' RISE Free is leaving campus for the time being, as they recently removed their Student Navigator Network program that helped bring it to the university.

According to social work senior Emma Lentz, who was a student navigator for Ferris' RISE Free branch, there were navigators at Central Michigan University, Northern Michigan University, Western Michigan University and Michigan State University.

"RISE Free came to Ferris just this past summer [around] May or June," Lentz said. "I was looking for remote work, something similar to the social work program. I found RISE Free on Indeed... RISE Free is our parent organization, and then we house the Student Navigator Network. The way that they do that is they hire and train people at different institutions across the country."

RISE Free is a national non-profit organization that fights for free college tuition and inspires students to become civically engaged. According to their website, they were founded in California in Sept. 2017. It is notably known as the organization that helped make the first two years of community college free in California. Since then,

they have been able to expand their organization through their Student Navigator Network program.

The Student Navigator Network program recruits current college and university students to provide one-on-one assistance to other students that need financial help. Student navigators have appeared at schools in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan.

Lentz began her training in the fall of 2022 alongside social work senior Makayla Babson, who joined the Student Navigator Network shortly after. While Lentz and Babson were being trained, they weren't allowed to start helping students. Instead, they took the opportunity to spread the word about the organization.

"A lot of the things we were doing were class presentations," Babson said. "Before we were going to be able to get students to use the program, we had to do the advertising and set the groundwork."

While Lentz and Babson were building interest for RISE Free, unfortunate news awaited in the near future. Lentz says they got a call on March 10 from their "most superior boss" and were informed that due to financial issues, the Student Navigator Network program as a whole was no more.



Photo Courtesy of Emma Lentz

**Former RISE Free employee Makayla Babson educated students on the organization.**

"There is kind of a specific distinction," Babson said. "RISE Free is a national nonprofit that has other initiatives that they're still doing. The Student Navigator Network... ended nationally, so RISE Free is no longer on campus. RISE Free does other things, and they hire people and they're called fellows, and they try to get the vote out on campus. That could still be something that could come to Ferris, but the Student Navigator Network is no longer."

Babson says the news seemed unexpected, not just for them, but for the organization as well. Lentz added that, although anything they could say would just be speculation as to why the program went under, it was a

financial issue.

Because the program ended, the girls are now out of work and have little faith RISE Free will return to campus with similar affect.

"We're broke now," Lentz said. "We were laid off with very little notice. It's upsetting... We still made those connections, which is helpful for us in the field of social work, but we put a lot of work [into] something that never really took its first steps. It was devastating a little bit for both of us emotionally and financially, and the Student Navigator Network won't come to Ferris ever again."

During their time as navigators, they helped five students in the first two months of the spring semester. Now, Lentz and Bab-

son encourage students to take advantage of the programs at Ferris if they are in financial trouble, such as the food pantries, the Bulldog Basic Needs Alliance, the Community Mental Health and the Department of Health and Human Services office in Big Rapids.

While their official positions are gone, Lentz and Babson are still open to taking emails from students needing guidance or help on what to do if they are in a difficult position while at Ferris. They say they don't mind taking a few minutes out of their day to email someone and point them in the right direction if they are feeling overwhelmed.

## New LGBTQIA RSO, DAISE, created this semester

DAISE aims to create space for education and acceptance surrounding sexuality and identity

**Nolan Harris**  
News Reporter

As of March 23, DAISE is an official Registered Student Organization at Ferris. It is an organization focused on providing education and safe spaces for anyone who is struggling with their identity.

Social work sophomore Al Alley and Digital animation and game design freshman Sherlyn Trejo-Villegas are the co-founders of DAISE. The name is an acronym that stands for Diversity, Advocacy for Identity and Sexual Empowerment. They aim to make this an organization that can offer education and socialization for all identities on campus with

a focus on the queer community.

Although the organization just started, it already has around 15 members, and with their first event hosting around 40 people, they are sure to grow quickly.

"One of the biggest goals of this RSO is I wanted to build more solidarity between groups and really create a safe space for LGBTQIA folks, as well as a system of support," DAISE President Alley said. "I saw that there was a need for an LGBTQIA+ RSO on campus... DAISE will focus on the socialization, education and advocacy of marginalized communities."

The leaders of DAISE are trying to strike a balance between being a social club and an educa-

tional organization.

"As important as it is to be educating about what goes on in the LGBTQ community, its also important too for there to be a social aspect," Trejo-Villegas said. "Sometimes students need spaces in which you can just relax and have fun."

The first DAISE event was more focused on the social aspect with games, food and time to socialize with the other attendees.

"I came to the event because I wanted to find a safe space for people like me," Digital animation and game design sophomore Zoey Wiser said. "I will definitely be looking to join."

As Trejo-Villegas is also a member of the Center for Latin@

Studies, DAISE has a close relationship with the other cultural RSOs on campus. The director of the CLS has provided equipment and mentorship through the process of building this RSO. Other collaborators attending the event included the Hispanic Student Organization, the Black Student Union, the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance and more.

"I see DAISE as doing something like the CLS does," Trejo-Villegas said. "It's important to have an RSO to bring a lot of change on campus... Oftentimes we feel very separated and alone, and it is hard to navigate the outside world with everyone criticizing and discriminating against you."

DAISE already has a number of

events planned for this semester and the upcoming fall semester. One such event is the welcoming ceremony, which is scheduled in the first weeks of the fall semester. It will be an opportunity where faculty and students will be invited to socialize and show new students the different spaces on campus and where the faculty and staff can help students with academics and discrimination.

For this semester, the next event DAISE has planned is smaller in scope and focused on self care during finals in the LGBTQ Resource Center.

# Opinions

Dylan Rider | Opinions Editor | riderd1@ferris.edu

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Ferris State University  
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## Torch Staff

- Editor in Chief**  
Noah Kolenda  
(231) 999 1405  
kurkjin@ferris.edu
- Production Manager**  
Sienna Parmelee
- News Editor**  
Jessica Oakes
- Culture Editor**  
Giuliana Denicolo
- Sports Editor**  
Brody Keiser
- Opinions Editor**  
Dylan Rider
- Multimedia Editor**  
Marissa Russell
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- Managing Copy Editor**  
Alyssa Myers
- Copy Editors**  
Faith Gleasure  
Marlow Losey
- Distributors**  
Dayna Gesinski  
Ready For Life
- Advisor**  
Garrett Stack  
(231) 591-5869  
GarrettStack@ferris.edu

## EDITORS COLUMN:

# *I feel failed by the US government*

**Noah Kolenda**  
*Editor-In-Chief*

Hosting videos about any topic under the sun, from books to baking, news to nature or whatever your heart desires, a single tap can transport you into a world of creativity and entertainment. Yet, despite its allure, TikTok faced challenges in Congress last week due to security concerns held by the US government.

While this was happening, nearly 600,000 Americans were experiencing homelessness, according to the New York Times; roughly 10% of Americans were facing food insecurity, according to the US Department of Agriculture and over 40 million people are being crippled by an average of nearly \$40,000 in student loan debt, according to the Education Data Initiative. I could go on and on about climate change, all of the inequity that women, minorities and the

LGBTQ+ constantly face or the fact that healthcare costs are out of control, but I believe my point is clear.

I gather that change in any of these areas won't happen overnight. Still, it's disheartening to instead watch five hours of Congresspeople asking questions that don't make sense about an issue they can't seem to articulate. Women have lost federal protection for abortion care, yet Congress is spending its time debating security concerns they didn't have until two years after TikTok was purchased by ByteDance.

Trans people are under attack nationwide, but the concern of Congress lies in whether or not TikTok measures the dilation of users' pupils. It just stings to know what's wrong in this country and to watch our elected governing body spending its time meandering around an issue that was solved nearly a year ago when

ByteDance transferred US user data to Oracle servers inside the US with backups in Singapore.

Make no mistake. I'm not suggesting we shouldn't be doing something about the effects social media has on us, or the companies potentially misusing our data or even ensuring young children stay off the apps. I suggest that the government use its time wisely and examine social media as a whole, as it's clear to me this has strayed past concerns of US user data being safe, accessible by foreign governments or stored offshore.

I'm frustrated that I feel I can't trust my government to act in my best interest. I'm frustrated that issues that should be nonpartisan have become so polarizing they just fall by the wayside due to gridlock and that they're spending their time in a way that, to me as a constituent, looks incredibly wasteful. But what frustrates me most is that

we even need to be having these conversations in 2023.

This is a reminder I hope you'll heed: your elected officials work for you. Their job is to best represent the beliefs of those who elected them, and if you're ever unhappy with what they're doing or they're not keeping their word, you have the right to let them know how you feel about it. This week I felt inclined to share my feelings.

If you ever want to get in touch with the people that represent you, it's as easy as going to house.gov or senate.gov and entering your zip code or state at the top. This will show you your representatives and their contact info. Give them a call or send them an email and let them know how you feel. They quite literally employ people just to communicate with you. Take advantage of it. Democracy doesn't have to stop at the ballot box, folks.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: *Sienna Parmelee*

**Sienna Parmelee**  
*Production Manager*

I'm Sienna Parmelee, and I'm the face behind the design of the paper you're holding.

As a senior in the design program, being a designer means being a visual storyteller, something I do through layout, graphics, apps and more. The Torch has allowed me to expand my creative thinking and apply it in new ways, from updating the design of the paper, to branding the special editions you've seen this year.

Over the summer, I interned at Instrument, a digital agency in Brooklyn, New York and Portland, Oregon. There I had the opportunity to work for Apple TV, working with a team to brand collections that went live on the app. The experience was engaging and left me thinking about applying what I've learned to school and work.

I applied what I learned to creatively brand our special editions, such as our October voting guide, Black History Month insert, and Women's History Month edition on page 8. On top of branding the special editions, I also brought my illustration skills to complement the stories.

My process included a lot of research. Like our reporters, I take my time to find inspiration, learn facts and apply them to a visual solution. For this month's special, I aimed to create a brand that strayed away from a gendered design. You'll notice the use of yellow and black to call attention to the heavy topics being discussed.

When I'm not designing, I'm telling stories in new ways. For example, I've directed a short film that will be released in the next few months, focusing on how anxiety and depression can affect overwhelmed college students. In addition, I illustrate and create art that pulls inspiration from comic books, and I'm even writing and illustrating my own comic series that calls attention to climate change. When I'm not telling stories, I'm consuming them. If you've read my articles in the paper, you'll know I'm a huge fan of television and video games.

In the future, my goal is to use my skills to assist directors and writers in telling their narratives through production design in films and television. My favorite designer is Annie Atkins, who created the branding for Mendl's

Bakery in a personal favorite of mine, "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

Telling a story is something all of us at the Torch value, and we've all taken this job to improve our skills. But remember,

creating and sharing a narrative is much more than words on paper. A story can take shape in any medium that takes a reader, user or viewer on a journey.



Photo by: Sienna Parmelee | Production Manager

# The battle of the college snow day

## Ferris' newfound leniency on snow days is welcomed

**Nolan Harris**  
News Reporter

Ferris famously has a reputation for not canceling classes for weather. However, that reputation may be changing, as a number of days were canceled due to snow this year.

With winter over, we can hope that the blizzards and six inches of snow are behind us. I remember there being a sunny day back in January and thinking that this winter would be a calm one. That was pretty foolish of me, as we had flurries, blizzards and snow fall, which caused Ferris to cancel multiple days of classes.

When comparing the snow days that occurred each year through Ferris history, Ferris has been much more likely to call a snow day in recent years. In the weeks leading up to spring break, we had two half days off, and many professors took the initiative to cancel classes themselves or move their lectures to Zoom.

In the spring semester of 2019, there were around seven days called off for snow. Before the storm of 2019, it had been nearly two decades since a snow day was announced.

I, for one, welcome this shift in attitude towards the snow day. As a student, I obviously love having class canceled. A snow day is like a get out of jail free card. When you have spent the weekend stressing over an upcoming exam and the winter clouds bless you with a billowing blizzard, it's one of the best feelings of winter.

For me, the potential of a snow day holds an excitement that goes back to when we were children. It is a time to enjoy the warmth of the homestead, get a toasty drink, watch the snow and enjoy a respite from the ever encroaching due date.

Of course, there are more empirical reasons to allow more snow days. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning reports that 43% of car collisions

occur during hazardous weather, with 370 fatalities in the span of four years between 2016 and 2020.

Something like a dangerous commute should not be taken lightly, especially with a campus filled with the demographic of people that car insurance companies see as a liability. I'm looking at you 18-25 year old men.

For those off campus who rely on their cars to commute to Ferris, a sudden flurry presents a real danger. Canceling class for these conditions can save our faculty and students from a fatal crash, or at the very least the cost for a tow truck after being pulled out from a ditch.

The difficulty of the commute during the snow doesn't stop at cars. For people with disabilities, a snowy, salted sidewalk can pose a serious issue. Wheelchairs can get stuck, patches of ice can be disastrous and at times sidewalks can be inaccessible if snow has been piled on

top onto the walkway.

It is important to consider the experiences of the entire student body when choosing to have class during a snowstorm. I do not mean to imply that Ferris is not aware of these issues and not doing their part to address the dangers.

Universities like Ferris closely monitor the local weather reports. This allows them to identify the time that the snow fall will be at its worst and how that aligns with active university hours. Pairing such accurate information with a battalion of snow-fighting-mobiles allows the city to take care of the snow before brunch time.

The snow day we had on Feb. 27 was an interesting case because it was caused by a sudden flurry in the middle of the day. With snowfall during the prime time for classes and there being too much snow too quickly, the storm was too sudden for any meaningful snow-removal at-

tempts to be effective. So maybe the university isn't interested in being more lenient on snow days, but is instead dealing with harsher and less predictable storms.

Either way, this is my takeaway, and it is a moral I learned from "Jurassic Park." Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should.

Just because Ferris can monitor the storm, push all the snow into parking spaces and salt the ever-loving hell out of the sidewalks doesn't mean we should continue with classes as usual. Not everyone on campus has the luxury of snow tires, heated cars and the dexterity to avoid sheets of ice. Honestly, nothing is lost in taking the safest action of canceling classes.

In fact, some things are gained from taking a break and enjoying the winter weather instead of fighting it.

# Recent recognition of foreign films

## How international films have gained traction this past year and where you can watch them

**Lucas Gill**  
Web Editor

It's safe to say that the past year has been great for movies and their fans. The highs of last year have thoroughly outweighed the lows of 2022 with instant classics such as "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and "Babylon." One aspect that has been on the rise this past year is the amount of recognition for international films.

A couple of examples came with the results of this year's Oscars. Edward Berger's adaptation of "All Quiet on the Western

Front" was nominated for nine different categories, taking home four wins in total. Berger's iteration won awards for best cinematography, production design and original score, along with its best international feature award.

Guillermo del Toro beat Disney at their own game with his rendition of "Pinocchio," winning the Oscar for best animated feature. This is very much deserved, as del Toro's "Pinocchio" has extremely talented and expressive stop motion animation and is a breath of fresh air compared to Disney's sea of reboots and remakes.

It's not just last year's films that have gained more traction this year. A handful of original cult classic films have been steadily moving towards mainstream audiences, with some hitting impressive milestones.

Originally released in 2019, Bong Joon-Ho's Korean thriller "Parasite" was generally favored by audiences. The film was put on the spotlight at the 2020 Oscars, where it won the award for best international feature that year.

"Parasite's" continued success has led it to becoming the first movie to hit one million 5-star

ratings on Letterboxd, a social app that is designed for users to track and rate films. It now sits at the number two spot on Letterboxd's official list of the top 250 narrative feature films, just below Elem Klimov's 1985 war film "Come and See."

One aspect that I think is great about modern day movie bingeing is the wide access that streaming services have to offer. These services, with the plenty of variety they offer, have the potential to let others broaden their horizons when it comes to movies. Anyone can watch almost anything from the comfort of their own couch.

So the next time you sit down to watch a movie, I suggest watching something new. Maybe a film from a different director or a film in a different language. It's good to try something outside of your comfort zone every once in a while. Who knows, you may find your new favorite film!

Below are some of the most popular streaming services and the highest rated international films they have available to stream.

## WHERE TO WATCH

### NETFLIX

- "All Quiet on the Western Front" (2022) - Edward Berger
- "Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio" (2022) - Guillermo del Toro
- "Roma" (2018) - Alfonso Cuarón

### HULU

- "Parasite" (2019) - Bong Joon-Ho
- "Pan's Labyrinth" (2006) - Guillermo del Toro
- "The Worst Person in the World" (2021) - Joachim Trier

### HBO MAX

- "Drive my Car" (2021) - Ryusuke Hamaguchi
- "City of God" (2002) - Fernando Meirelles, Kátia Lund
- "My Neighbor Totoro" (1988) - Hayao Miyazaki

### AMAZON PRIME

- "The Handmaiden" (2016) - Chan-wook Park, Park Chan-wook
- "Cold War" (2018) - Paweł Pawlikowski
- "The Salesman" (2016) - Asghar Farhadi

### TUBI

- "Audition" (1999) - Takashi Miike
- "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" (2009) - Niels Arden Oplev
- "Ida" (2013) - Paweł Pawlikowski

**Women's History Month 2023  
Torch Special Edition**

# WOMAN TO WOMAN



DEAR WHITE WOMEN—PAGE 7 BRICKS—PAGE 8 SAFE SPACES FOR WOMEN—PAGE 8 FEMINIST MAJORITY LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE—PAGE 9  
BEING A WOMAN IN SPORTS—PAGE 9 TRUSTEE AND CEO WEARS GREATNESS WITH A BADGE—PAGE 10

## Dear White Women,

**Katie Shantz**  
Torch Guest Writer

## I AM A 21-YEAR-OLD, QUEER, ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN. I AM A FEMINIST, AND I SUPPORT VERY FEW WOMEN.

..When I heard about the murders of 35-year-old Christina Yuna Lee and 40-year-old Michelle Go — who were both killed in unprovoked attacks in New York City — I was heartbroken and scared.

As I grappled with the realities of Lee's and Go's deaths, I began to ask myself questions: How many more Asian-American women must die before the mainstream media considers it coverage-worthy? Am I going to get pushed in front of a train? And where are the voices of my white, feminist friends when countless Asian-American women have been murdered?

Between tone-deaf declarations for justice, dismissing calls for solidarity and concerns over their egos being threatened, it is clear that a shared fragility among most white women is alive and well. Nowadays, protests seem like an event for most white women, who do arts and crafts the night before all for a social post with the word "intersectionality" tossed somewhere in the caption.

If we're talking about recent news, it wasn't until the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade that white women came out in the millions. Suddenly they cared and knew how to organize. Women of color have been protesting for reproductive freedom

and access for a long time.

In the most critical moments of showing up for marginalized communities, I've noticed either an immediate reaction of defense about their "feminist-ness" being challenged or, well, crickets. Even among so-called progressive white women.

It is this type of behavior that drives white feminism — the type you most often see in mainstream western media. White feminism is, and always has been, for cisgender, white women and girls, and that's how it's been embedded in political discourse.

Let's go back. White feminism can be traced throughout the history of the feminist movement in the western world, starting with the suffragettes who advocated for the right of white women to vote at the Seneca Falls Convention. The participants included middle and upper-class white women.

No Black women attended the convention. None were invited. By the 20th century, Black suffragists who represented intersectional feminism at its best were drowned out by white feminists, who insisted their activism and presence at landmark events were pure fiction.

Today, white feminism caters to and teaches white women to be like white men.

You're often taught to be dominating, to foray into male-dominated careers, to "girl boss" your way to the top, usually without pushing for white men to hold more accountability.

If the goal of your feminism is to get equal or higher power with white men, you're going to have to oppress a bunch of marginalized people, including women of color, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

So, as tone policing, white saviorism and centering all continuously play out in a seemingly never-ending loop, it is painfully obvious that most white women believe that one of the worst things that can happen to them is being called racist or having their commitment to upholding true feminist ideals questioned.

I can assure you it is not. Seeing people who look like you being brutally murdered, turned away from different opportunities due to race and underlying biases, being expected to live up to hypersexualized tropes and stereotypes tying back to race and a plethora



Photo provided by Katie Shantz

of other scenarios that are a reality to most women of color are much worse.

In order for the feminist movement to truly be progressive and intersectional, white women must acknowledge the damage they've caused and take on their share of the work. If you feel yourself dismissing the words and experiences of women of color because you think they're overreacting, it's probably because of your ego.

We are long overdue to dismantle this system, so it's in your best interest to listen and learn from the women who fall, completely unsupported, through the gaps of your version of feminism.

## Bricks

And their many uses

Zoe Ann Wendler  
Torch Guest Writer

# WHEN I THINK OF WOMEN'S HISTORY, I THINK OF BRICKS.

..When the police raided the Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969 — not quite four years before *Roe v. Wade* was decided — their intent was to assault and arrest as many gay and trans people as they could find, because Stonewall was not only a place where gay folks congregated, it was one of few places in New York that welcomed transgender women.

They dragged anyone they suspected of being trans into the bar's filthy bathrooms, strip-searched them to check their genitals and arrested anyone whose clothes and bodies didn't, in their opinion, match.

The raid was brutal. It was the second police raid on Stonewall that week. And the queer patrons of the Stonewall Inn decided that they'd had enough. Two of the trans women who managed to avoid arrest, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, were amongst the first of Stonewall's patrons to fight back.

It has long been an apocryphal part of the story that Johnson threw the first brick of what turned into a massive, multi-day uprising and gave birth to the modern gay and trans rights movement. If you're queer, you owe your civil

rights to these Black and Puerto Rican trans women.

In the end, women's rights have always boiled down to a single, simple idea: biology is not destiny. My body is my own, to do with it as I see fit.

This was the same foundation the Seneca Falls Convention argued from in 1848 when it demanded women's right to vote, to own their own property and to live independently. It's the same foundation Simone de Beauvoir wrote from when she argued that the central oppression women face is "reproductive slavery." It's the same foundation that Ruth Bader Ginsberg argued for when she won *Roe v. Wade*, securing women's freedom from that reproductive slavery. It's the same foundation Mary Bonauto argued for in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which secured queer people the right to marry. It's the same foundation the ACLU argued for in its victory in *Bostock v. Clay County*, which secured employment protections for gay and trans Americans.

Brick by brick, we've built our rights. Hand in hand and heart in heart, together, we've risen.

And every step of the way there



Photo provided by Zoe Ann Wendler

are those who fight to tear those hard-won rights away from us. To send us back into the darkness. To control our bodies and our souls. To reduce us to nothing more or less than human livestock.

They came for us in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, which stripped women of our constitutional right to choose how and when we became pregnant. They're coming for trans people right now and have filed over 470 bills throughout the nation — including right here in Michigan — to strip away our right to live as ourselves. And they stand in front of cameras, look right into them and argue that "transgenderism must

be eradicated." As if trans people could exist aside from whatever they think "transgenderism" is. As if they'd stop with subjugating trans people if they achieve it. They're already trying to strip us of the right to marry who we choose again as they push their vile agenda.

Brick by brick, they try to tear us down, to send us back into the darkest places, to total subjugation to their will.

When I think of women's history, I think of bricks. They exist to build: strong, enduring and rough. It takes patience and skill to lay brick well, to build homes and classrooms and clinics. Places where we can be safe and warm and happy.

That's what bricks are made to do, and that's what we all want to use them for.

But all things have other uses when kindness, empathy and basic human decency fail.

We forget too easily how our rights were won. Women's suffrage was not won by respectability. It was won by riots. The right to abortion was not granted to us, a gentle privilege for good behavior. It was secured through massive nationwide riots. The right to marry who we choose and to work as our authentic selves was not handed to us because we asked nicely. They were won by Black and Puerto Rican trans women.

## FINDING YOUR SAFE SPACE

Women from different on-campus organizations share their safe spaces

Kylah Robinson  
Culture Reporter

Traversing the world as a woman can be a scary thing. The first thing you are told when you're old enough to go out into the world is "be careful" and something along the lines of "always carry something to protect yourself."

When coming to college for the first time, it's essential for women to find places with other women that relate to them, along with spaces that make them feel safe enough to freely express themselves. On Ferris' campus, many have found safe spaces through groups like sororities, Registered Student Organizations and offices that are welcoming to all students.

Third-year social work major Ha-

zelle Williams is in multiple RSO's at Ferris. They all give her a safe space for different reasons and have all become a part of her. She is the president of the Delta Zeta chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc., attends the Real-Life campus ministry and works in the Office of Multicultural Student Services.

"[The] OMSS makes me feel comfortable just being Black on campus," Williams said. "The campus ministry that I go to makes me feel safe as a Christian and be able to talk about and share my faith."

The SGR sorority organization was founded in 1922 at Butler University, where members of the Ku Klux Klan resided right across the street from the university at the time. During that period, the found-

ers created the sorority to create a safe space for Black women.

"In the face of all that adversity, we were able to rise above and lift one another up," Williams said. "If the world isn't going to, we got to make sure we're willing to do it for each other. So that's what we're about."

Second-year pharmacy graduate student Kalisa Williams also found comfort in a sorority. She is the president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. She finds comfort in DST and in old activities she used to do when she first came to Ferris.

"When I first got here, I did have a safe space," Kalisa said. "I played basketball when I got here, so the basketball team was kind of my favorite space coming in. Then after my first semester, I started going into the OMSS office and started seeing more people of color on campus."

Being a woman to Kalisa means taking pride in who you are and feeling confident in yourself and in the things that women are able to do that others can't.

"A woman is everything," Kalisa said. "I feel like we try to bring women down a lot, but being a woman is probably one of the most amazing things you can do. It just shows everybody that not only men can do it, a woman can do it too."

Although sororities are a way

to create a safe space and give a place of sisterhood, some people may want something that is less of a commitment. Health care systems administration junior Nicole Ly frequently interacts with student organizations.

Ly started at Ferris earlier in the pandemic and was unable to find safe spaces in places like the David L. Eisler center or the IRC connector. Instead, she found that offices like the OMSS and the Center for Latin@ Studies gave her comfort.

"I feel like the moment you walk into the door at the OMSS or the CLS, you're greeted. And even though it seems like a really menial thing, it just makes my day," Ly said. "As a student, when you've had a long day or just want to see a friendly face, you can know that there's going to be someone there to listen to you and help you."

Ly's current perspective shows that Women's History Month is a time when we can celebrate our achievements as women and come together and lift each other up. However, it's also a time for everyone to celebrate women.

"We have a special month dedicated to us, especially with all the oppression that we have," Ly said. "I feel like it's really important to acknowledge this and continue to grow into a better, more efficient community together."

While Ly was able to join an or-

ganization as a safe space for her, Unique Robinson created an RSO for Black women to dance and show off their personalities. Robinson created the Golden Majorettes RSO because of her past dancing experience and the lack of representation on the Ferris dance team.

"I noticed that the dance team that was here wasn't really a form of dance that I liked... I didn't really see that many [Black students] on the team," Robinson said. "So, I was like, 'I don't really think it'd be a good fit for me. Why don't I start something where it's only people of color?'"

In Robinson's opinion, the safe spaces that make women feel comfortable depend on the women's personal preferences.

"If you like dance, [join] the majorette team," Robinson said. "If you're looking for more of a sisterhood, there's always the You Beautiful Black Woman RSO and Sistah Circle program. But then if you're looking for change, there's [the] Black Student Union."

Each of these groups offer women a safe space on campus for different reasons. Working together to participate in and expand the reach of these spaces gives more women a chance to be free and truly comfortable.

**RSO Spotlight: Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance**

‘Don’t mess with this group of women,’ Julie Alexander said

Giuliana DeNicholo  
Culture Editor**ON A GRAY OCTOBER AFTERNOON, FERRIS STUDENTS WERE GIVEN BLOODY REMINDERS OF THE STATE OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN BIG RAPIDS.**

Roe v. Wade and the county’s only Planned Parenthood location had both been lost to history. But on this day, across from the graphic images known as “abortion victim photography” stood a new group of students.

They lifted signs reading “My body, my choice” and gathered a crowd of over 30 students in front of the David L. Eisler Center. They are the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance.

**The beginning**

The National Organization for Women was an activist group at Ferris that went dormant during the pandemic. The campus went months without having a feminist group until a Ferris chapter of the FMLA, a national organization, opened shortly after Roe V. Wade was overturned. Meetings are now held in FLITE 214 on Mondays at 5:15 p.m.

FMLA president and social work sophomore Samara Tyus helped with the launch of the feminist group alongside the other founding officers. During the first meeting, the officer positions were filled and the FMLA was born.

Without the FMLA, Ferris’ campus lacked a strong feminist voice. Current students are familiar with periodic pro-life demonstrations that rarely include opposing views.

“In Big Rapids, it’s very easy to feel isolated and to think that you’re the only one who thinks the way you do,” FMLA advisor Julie Alexander said. “And seeing [the] FMLA out in the community and seeing them at the Women’s March is helpful, not just for Ferris, but for the Big Rapids community as well.”

As director of accessibility and disability services, Alexander is highly involved around campus, but she is most proud to be associated with the FMLA. She believes the women of the group are “amazing leaders and collaborators.”

“Don’t mess with this group of women,” Alexander said.

Alexander sees the FMLA as a way to unite all women in a time of need. To her, there are many women out there who “need the camaraderie” to remember that they aren’t alone.

“I think we’re really responding to a need that women have on campus because, as we see it, [there’s] a rollback on women’s rights,” Alexander said.

Tyus didn’t expect to find herself leading a feminist group in Big Rapids. Her vice presidency in the group was cut short after a founding officer stepped down after one semester. As president, Tyus feels she was “thrown into it in a good way.” The group has helped her realize her own leadership abilities, and she expects it to do the same for others.

“I hope that other people can start to see themselves as a leader, as an activist and as a feminist,” Tyus said.

Criminal justice sophomore Ayanna Curry first explored the world of feminism as one of the FMLA’s first Black members. After seeing a group of Ferris feminists in front of the David L. Eisler Center demonstrate in the name of a woman’s right to choose, she followed FMLA flyers all the way to FLITE 214. She now considers it another safe space for her

to speak without fear of judgment or shame.

“I feel like [the] FMLA also has that platform for people that have atypical voices to the city of Big Rapids,” Curry said. “[The] FMLA is the platform for taboo conversations.”

Supporting the voices of students like Curry has been a goal of Tyus’ since she first ascended to the presidency.

**Beyond white feminism**

Tyus believes the group continues to become more diverse. At the very first meeting, she was the only person of color in the room. As a person of mixed race, she prioritized diversifying the group.

“What I really like about [Tyus] as a leader is how intentional she is about making sure that the group has diverse voices,” Alexander said. “I love the relationship with [You Beautiful Black Woman] and seeing more people from that group coming in and being part of [the] FMLA.”

In honor of Black History Month, Tyus arranged for the FMLA to host a conversation about white feminism. As explained during the conversation, white feminism refers to activism that excludes the voices of women from minority groups.

The purpose of this conversation was to “keep [members] in check” and informed on the experiences of non-white women. Tyus has noticed a change in tone during FMLA meetings since inviting members of cultural groups to join.

“A lot of people say they’ve never seen themselves as a feminist because they were always Black first,” Tyus said. “I thought it was

just amazing to hear people say that they now see themselves as a Black feminist.”

To biology freshman and YBBW member Tyra Draper, a feminist is a strong and opinionated woman. As she just attended her first meeting this month, Draper is proud to add to the diversity of the group but believes there’s always room for more.

“It really is important because a lot of people’s stories are different in many shapes, sizes [and] sounds and being one Black person isn’t always enough,” Draper said.

Both Draper and Curry encourage adding more voices to the on-campus conversation surrounding intersectional feminism.

“[The FMLA is] about giving and receiving knowledge about feminism and the different types of feminism, how men can be feminists, how Black women can be feminists — it’s not a white woman thing,” Curry said. “I feel like every feminist is a resilient person because you got to fall and get back up.”

**Growth and awareness**

During one of the most recent meetings, the FMLA introduced a new storytelling series. The group visited Ferris’ Museum of Sexist Objects to find pieces that spoke to them. Throughout the rest of the semester, members will use their experience in the museum to write personal journal entries about their own lives as women.

For many, this was their first visit to the MOSO. Misogynistic relics from the near and distant past lined the walls. These include political merchandise, children’s toys and objectifying clothing. One section is devoted to offensive t-shirts, proudly proclaiming phrases like “Don’t say no, just say ho” and “Loud wives lose lives.”

Surrounded by hundreds of years’ worth of sexist history, Tyus focused on the future of the FMLA. She is looking forward to years of growth and awareness for Ferris feminists.

Find the FMLA on Bulldog Connect or Instagram @ferrisfmla to get involved.

**BEING A WOMAN IN SPORTS**

Stephanie Shaw recounts her experience in sports and how she couldn’t stay away

Stephanie Shaw  
Torch Guest Writer

My journey in athletics started at a young age. At three I started dancing, then I started tee ball, basketball and soccer. Later, I played volleyball, softball, golf, pole vaulting and finally decided my true passion was basketball.

It helped having an older sister who encouraged my participation in everything that she did. After high school, she pole vaulted for Michigan State University, so it’s easy to guess where I ended up.

I loved this path, but I also wanted to take my athletic career in my own direction. My sister told me about the varsity rowing team at Michigan State, which gave me hope.

I prioritized my new goal, learned a new sport and tried out for the team. After six rounds of cuts, I was officially a member of the Michigan State varsity rowing team. That year we won the Big Ten Championship and were sixth in the nation.

I’ll never forget that feeling of becoming a Big Ten Champion and the excitement my teammates and I shared, knowing our hard work had paid off. The respect I have for the women on that team and the bond that we share is something that I will cherish for the

rest of my life.

After college, I spent several years working in a non-athletic field and coached high school basketball on the side. It was in those moments as a coach that I realized how much I missed being part of a team. I missed the competitiveness that athletics brought to my life.

A few years later, I found myself back in the thick of it. In June 2022 I joined the Ferris State Athletic Department as the coordinator of athletic events and summer camps.

I recently traveled to Florida with Ferris’ softball team over spring break. I witnessed twenty-five young women face adversity. They had a grueling schedule, playing 12 games in a single week. And for us Michiganders, playing in 85 degree weather is not always easy.

Throughout the week, their confidence and determination to win grew. I could see their support for one another grow even stronger. I could see them pick each other up after a loss and celebrate their victories.

I couldn’t help but think back to my time as a women’s collegiate athlete. As I watched these young women bond as a team, gain respect for each other as individuals and cherish their time together like a family, I was

reminded why I loved athletics back then and appreciate it now.

Ferris has approximately 180 female student-athletes that compete at the NCAA collegiate level. While that fact on its own warrants celebration, National Women’s Month is another great way to commemorate and acknowledge our female athletes and those who support them.

I’m honored to be a part of this female athletic community and strongly encourage any women that are interested in sports to pursue a career in athletics.

Photo provided by:  
Bill Simpson of Ferris  
athletics

## Trustee and CEO wears greatness without a badge

'We support other women, and we rise together,' Vivian TerMaat said

Jessica Oakes  
News Editor

# VIVIAN TERMAAT IS NEW TO HER ROLE ON FERRIS' BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND BELIEVES IT IS "IN PERFECT ALIGNMENT" WITH HER WORK AS CEO OF GIRL SCOUTS OF MICHIGAN SHORE TO SHORE.

### A successful woman in West Michigan

...Despite her role within Girl Scouts and a collection of professional achievements, TerMaat chooses not to wear her success "like a badge." Instead, she leads with the goal of maintaining kindness and humility.

"You can be a person of great achievement, but to wear it like a badge is off-putting to me," TerMaat said. "What I learned from my grandmother was that you can do great things and still be approachable and gracious."

TerMaat is a CEO and certified fundraising executive who has spent her career climbing the professional ladder in sales and nonprofit work. Before taking her executive role with Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore, she refined her financial and interpersonal skills in the greater Grand Rapids area.

"What spoke to me was that when you're in any kind of sales position, you make or break on your own merit," TerMaat said. "The power isn't in other people's hands. It's in your own hands."

TerMaat studied communication and media studies as well as Spanish at Western Michigan University. As a young girl, she wanted to be a reporter and imagined growing up to be a combination of Barbara Walters and James Bond. Soon after her first career pivot from media to sales, she became a top monthly performer as an account executive at the Grand Rapids NBC affiliate WOOD-TV.

With striking trajectory, TerMaat moved her career from sales to full-time childcare, then to the advancement office of Wedgewood Christian Services. She never feared changing directions to find what spoke to her.

It was her passion for children that led her to senior roles in GSMISTS and Wedgewood.

"You have to find a path that gets you excited, that almost gives you goosebumps. When you're talking to people about it, your energy goes up," TerMaat said.

As another active member of the Grand Rapids community, President Bill Pink first met TerMaat through their shared work at Wedgewood. The organization offers educational counseling and residential services to youth, adults and families in need.

"She was great to work with, great to interact with and was, in my opinion, one of the reasons why [Wedgewood] had so much respect from me," Pink said.

Pink refers to the board of trust-

ees as his eight bosses. With TerMaat gaining a seat at the table, he sees her as a "strong piece of the puzzle."

### Fixing each other's crowns

From childhood memories with her Chilean maternal grandmother, to her current work with "courageous," "fantastic" Girl Scouts, TerMaat believes women thrive through mutual support.

"[Girl Scouts] support each other to try new things," TerMaat said. "That's what we want as women. Somebody said at an event, 'We should fix one another's crown.' Adjust it. If it's crooked, you go and you help her. We support other women, and we rise together."

From 2002-2013, TerMaat stepped back from her successful sales career to work as a stay-at-home mom for three "incredible" daughters. When she decided to return to the workforce, she once again had to find what spoke to her. She sought guidance from an important woman in her life to begin this new era.

"[TerMaat's] talents and ambitions were obvious from the start. All she needed was a gentle push," friend and mentor Polly Hewitt said. "I hope I gave her that. In turn, she gave me the joy of seeing a younger woman find herself professionally and thrive. That joy for her success continues today, a full twenty years later."

Hewitt and TerMaat met for a thoughtful conversation about career exploration. The two women wrote the next chapter of TerMaat's life story in a "pretty, pink notebook."

"Let's start over," Hewitt said on that fateful day. "What are you good at?"

By combining her care for children, relationship building and desire to make a difference in the community, TerMaat found nonprofit fund development. This led her to leading roles in the advancement office at Wedgewood, where she met advancement officer Kori Thompson.

Thompson appreciated TerMaat's ability to see potential in employees, many in their first advancement position, and challenge them to reach a higher goal. Thompson was "encouraged" by TerMaat's example of female leadership.

"I think that we want to make sure that any voice at the table is valued, whether that's a woman or a person of color, anyone from any background," Thompson said. "It was always really encouraging to see women in leadership. [Ter-

Maat] especially was not afraid to assert herself."

TerMaat was certainly never afraid to assert herself in the classroom, where she returned after 11 years of motherhood to kickstart her career once again.

### Passion for education

"[My grandmother] would say in Spanish to me that it's a beautiful thing for a woman to have a career and accomplish her dreams," TerMaat said. "She would encourage me to study harder. She's somebody who I don't go a day without thinking about."

While studying to earn a master's degree in general management

from Aquinas College, TerMaat renewed her appreciation for education. She humbly recalls being the "annoying" student who would come to class early, sit in the front row and regularly have her hand raised.

As a non-traditional student, she marveled at how fortunate young scholars are to be able to learn full-time.

"I was envious. I thought, 'Oh my goodness, you are full-time students, some of you. What a privilege to have that time to just really devote to your studies and all the opportunities that college campuses are full of,'" TerMaat said.

During her graduate studies,

TerMaat focused on how much she learned rather than the grades she earned. While interacting with young college students, she noticed that they are under immense pressure to perform.

"I see much more pressure on [establishing contacts and networking]. And while those things are great, we don't want it to come at the cost of still enjoying being a college student," TerMaat said.

Because education does not cease once one graduates, TerMaat is now focused on listening to and learning from the Ferris community for her position on the board of trustees.



Photo provided by Vivian Termaat

# Sports

Brody Keiser | Sports Editor | keiserb1@ferris.edu

## Hockey looks toward next year

Bulldogs end promising season with high hopes for 2023-24 season



Photo by: Dylan Rider | Opinions Editor

Noah Giesbrecht prepares to make a save during Ferris' 3-2 victory over Bemidji State on Feb. 10. He confirmed that he will return to the Bulldogs next season.

Dylan Rider  
Opinions Editor

Bulldog hockey's offseason begins as they reload for next October.

Ferris swept the Bowling Green Falcons in a best-of-three series with two overtime wins to win their first playoff series since 2016 before a hard 7-2 loss against the Mavericks in Mankato upended their season.

On paper, the Bulldogs only recorded one more regular season win and two more playoff wins than they did last year. However, to co-captain senior forward Brendan MacLaren, the playoff win means so much more.

"It was absolutely huge for our program and especially meant a ton to my senior class," MacLaren said. "The junior and senior classes really went through struggles early on in our college careers, and then towards the end we finally got the program back on track. We were able to get past the first round of playoffs and knock off Bowling Green, which is awesome. It was probably the best feeling I've had as a

college hockey player. I know I'll be able to get a chance to run it back again next year."

MacLaren isn't the only senior confirmed to return for a fifth and final year. The Bulldogs' leading scorer this past season, senior forward Jason Brancheau, also confirmed he will back.

Brancheau, who had struggled with injury since his freshman year, suited up for 35 of the 37 games played this season. In those 35 games, Brancheau led the Bulldogs with 13 goals, eight assists and was tied for first in points with 21.

Another standout for the Bulldogs was sophomore goaltender Noah Giesbrecht. The Canadian-born goaltender took over as the starter this season after the usual plan of splitting starts between goaltenders was abandoned. Giesbrecht played in 32 games and started 25 of them. In those games, he recorded 3.08 goals allowed on average and a .906% save percentage.

Giesbrecht ranked in the top-50 for save percentage this year. He placed 49th in all of D1 college hockey. Giesbrecht set-

led into Ferris and hasn't looked back since.

"This year I got the confidence under my belt," Giesbrecht said. "When I was given the opportunity [to start], I felt like I was ready. It was definitely something I trained hard for in the offseason, and [I] plan to run it back again next year and come back even stronger."

With his talent being flashed all year, it's not a shocker that there were rumors of Giesbrecht possibly departing Ferris to pursue a professional contract. Giesbrecht didn't mince his words when addressing the rumors, saying "Yeah, I'll be coming back

next year."

Head coach Bob Daniels is "thrilled" to have those players coming back.

"We've got some good freshmen coming in," Daniels said. "Our freshman class [this year] I thought was very good... I think we're deep and we've got some offensive capabilities. We have to show improvement, but the personnel is pretty good."

As expected, not every player from the 2022-23 team will return next year. Co-captain senior defenseman Matt Slick, who was a grad-transfer from Holy Cross, had no eligibility left and has signed with the Adirondack Thun-

der of the ECHL. Senior defenseman Blake Evennou confirmed that he will not be returning for a fifth year.

As for forwards Cade Kowalski and Dallas Tulik and defenseman Brenden Rons, the remaining seniors, there has been no confirmation regarding their decision.

As highlighted in a recent Torch article, the freshman class played a role in Ferris' improvement this year. With the returning seniors and the infusion of another freshman class, there could be a perfect storm brewing for the Bulldogs to be a high-end team that this university has not seen in a very long time.

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# Tennis opens GLIAC play at home



Photo by: Evan Hibbard | Torch Photographer

**Amelia Laverdiere plays a forehand during doubles competition in Ferris' loss to Wayne State. Laverdiere and her doubles partner, Sophie Daavettila, lost to Wayne State, but the Bulldogs won the doubles point.**

## Men's tennis victorious over Wayne State, women fall despite strong effort

**Joseph Nagy**  
Sports Reporter

### Men's tennis

The Bulldogs knocked off defending national runner-up Wayne State in a thrilling 4-3 finish to start undefeated in GLIAC play last Friday.

As the two pre-season favorites for the GLIAC championship, head coach Mark Doren's #22 ranked Bulldogs had this date circled on the calendar as a possible preview for what could come later this season in the GLIAC conference championship final. With the best tennis of the season on display, the Bulldogs narrowly beat one of the nation's top teams.

Securing the initial doubles point by a 2/3 margin gave the Bulldogs some much needed momentum going into the singles sets. Wayne State came firing back with a clean sweep of singles one, two and three, however, it was the bottom three singles that allowed the men to claim victory for Ferris.

"Our depth is what carried us to this win," Doren said. "To get the doubles point then 4,5,6 singles was the perfect way to pull off the upset."

The pairs of Yannic Alexander Mader and Erik Kovacs and Alessandro Santangelo and Esunge Ndumbe won their doubles matches. Mader and Kovacs topped their opponents 6-1. Santangelo and Ndumbe also won in convincing fashion, posting a 6-2 victory.

With Kovacs as Ferris State's #1, he had the tall order of taking on Cedric Drenth. Both players had already earned GLIAC player of the week honors, but it was Drenth who won in two sets 2-6 and 5-7. Jan Koupil, Ferris' #2, dropped identical sets to Wayne State's Daniel Gray at 4-6. Mader won his inaugural set 6-4 against Niklas Karcz but dropped two in a row, 2-6 and 1-6.

In need of a much needed boost of confidence, the Bulldogs found it on court #4. A slight back and forth of volleys brought out the emotions as junior Ben Lortie took two sets (6-3 and 6-4) from Dom Spicer.

"We went into the match really hungry, and it paid off with the doubles point at

the beginning," Lortie said. "That allowed us to settle into single more confidently."

Freshamn Ndumbe already saw success on the day, securing a doubles victory. Staying in control from start to finish, he helped the Bulldogs clinch the upset win in two sets, 6-2 and 6-3.

With an overall score of 3-3, the possibility of the upset was on the shoulders of position 5 sophomore Santangelo. He won his first set with a score of 6-4, however, Luke Laws of Wayne State returned the favor, bringing it to the final set with a score of 6-7. With all other matches concluded, all eyes were on court #2, he would take the final set 6-1, providing one of the most electric atmospheres that have been seen in the Ferris Racquet Center in recent history.

"Very strong performance from our freshman Esunge at position 6 and Alessandro at position 5, who played some of the most quality tennis I've seen in a while to clinch it for us," Lortie said. "Super happy with the results and excited for the rest of the season."

The Bulldogs faced arguably one of the toughest challenges coming off of the spring break Florida trip. However, the overall performances from start to finish show that the depth of the team is going to be the reason they could go farther than most.

### Women's Tennis

Two top 50 teams found themselves competing last Friday afternoon at the Ferris Racquet Center to start conference tilts. At #50, the Ferris women's team came in as heavy underdogs, especially with the Warriors cracking the top ten just a week before.

Notching a 5-2 loss at the end of the day, there was a strong showing of top of the conference talent by the Bulldogs. However, Wayne State was coming with three wins out of their last four games and were looking to stay hot.

The Bulldogs got off to a hot start by securing the doubles point. Morgan Waller and Ana Sofia Hernandez Ferrer got business done with a clean 6-2 win over #45 pair Anais Ruysen and Malak

Arafat. Parker Nolan and Maria Fernanda Hernandez Ferrer followed suit with a 6-3 win of their own.

"Our women's match may look like a loss on paper, but the tennis I saw today was a win in many ways," Doren said.

Junior Sophie Daavettila held the sole singles win for Ferris State, claiming it in three sets, 2-6, 6-3 and 6-2. Ruysen, her opponent, was ranked #16 in singles in all of D2 and was one of the favorites to win GLIAC women's player of the year.

"It wasn't easy, especially coming from a bit of a rough start in my first set," Daavettila said. "As the match went on, I was able to lock in and find my rhythm."

At position two, Waller held in to the end of the first set but lost 4-6 and 0-6 in the second to Marta Komar of Wayne State. Ana Hernandez Ferrer also fell in two matches to Dea Gorgidze, 5-7 and 2-6. Position six single Kennedy Dumas fell 4-6

and 3-6 to Shanice Weekes.

Nolan and Maria Hernandez Ferrer had strong chances to bring the Bulldogs back into contention. Injuries plagued the team and squandered any hopes of the upset.

"It was neck and neck the whole match, and, unfortunately, the injury bug hit us in the middle of the match, and unlike teams sports you can't sub someone in," Doren said.

The men's and women's squads are set to be back home on Friday, March 31, to play host to Purdue Northwest, as well as getting back after it on Saturday, April 1, against Davenport at the Ferris Racquet and Fitness Center.



Photo by: Mariana Searl | Torch Photographer

**Benjamin Lortie (front) and Jan Koupil compete during doubles play during Ferris' victory over Wayne State.**

# Softball opens home play with losses

Jeffery Walker  
Sports Reporter

The Ferris softball team (12-18) lost two games in the doubleheader to Northwood University in the home opener.

The first game was a 7-1 loss in seven innings where the Bulldogs gave up 13 hits and walked six batters.

The Bulldogs used three different pitchers in the game. Aryn Gallacher took the loss in the first game and gave up six hits, three runs and two walks. She recorded one strikeout in 2.1 innings pitched.

The Bulldogs also committed an error in the game.

Kristie Gray came in and pitched 2.2 innings, surrendering five hits, two runs, one walk and two strikeouts. Mauri Viness pitched two innings, giving up two hits, two runs and three walks.

Offensively, the Bulldogs were shut down by Northwood's Hailey Lester. In seven innings, the Bulldogs only got four hits, one run and struck out five times.

Leading the Bulldogs offensively were Evelyn Blood and Kaitlyn Orme. They both doubled in the fifth inning, leading to the Bulldog's lone run where Orme drove in Blood.

Abby Meyer and Abby Mitchell both singled in the game. Meyer also had the Bulldog's only steal of the game.

In the second game, the Bulldogs lost 18-10 in six innings, as they gave up 17 total hits while walking 10 batters.

The Bulldogs used five pitchers in the game with Gray picking up the loss as she pitched for one inning. She allowed four earned runs off three hits and three walks.

Catherine O'Donohue pitched 2.2 innings, surrendering five earned runs off, six hits, two walks and one strikeout. Kristina Baar faced three batters and walked

two of them. Sophie Wisniski pitched one inning and allowed three earned runs, five hits, one walk and one strikeout. Gallacher pitched one inning and surrendered four runs.

Offensively, the Bulldogs had a much better game, scoring 10 runs off 10 hits.

Orme tripled and singled while bringing in an RBI and a stolen base as well as scoring twice. Kylie Winkels doubled twice, bringing in three RBIs and scoring twice, and Josie Prince also doubled and scored once.

Meyer singled twice and scored twice, Blood singled twice, bringing in two RBIs and scoring once. Natalie Teague singled, bringing in one RBI and scoring once, and Jady Joseph hit a sacrifice fly.

In addition to Orme's stolen base, Prince and Brooklyn Verbeek also stole a base.

The Bulldog's offense totaled seven RBIs, five walks, nine strikeouts and left six runners on base.

"I think we have to start in the circle," head coach Jake Schumann said. "I don't know the number of walks, but it's high... We have to get strikes early, we have to get ahead."

The Bulldogs will look to continue to improve as the season goes on and league play approaches.

The Bulldogs are entering a road trip, as the next six games will all be away as they take on Grand Valley, Davenport and Purdue-Northwest.

The next home game will be on Sunday, April 2, as they take on Davenport in a doubleheader with games starting at 1 and 3 p.m.



Photo by: Courtney McMillan | Ferris Athletics Photographer

**Kylie Winkels prepares for a pitch during Ferris' 18-10 loss to Northwood. She had two doubles, three RBIs and two runs scored in the game.**

## Final Four predictions

### Sports Staff

Is your bracket busted? Our's sure are. This March has been wild, and we're here to give our predictions on how it'll wrap up.

### BRODY KEISER

#### SDSU over FAU

Offense wins games in March, right? That was my argument for Alabama over SDSU and then Creighton over SDSU. But here are the Aztecs, still dancing. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Give me SDSU.

#### UConn over Miami

Miami beat one of the best teams in the Elite Eight because they got into the paint and scored at the rim. The absence in that game of Texas center Dylan Disu cannot be understated. UConn's interior defense won't allow Miami to score inside, and no one has played a better tournament than Dan Hurley's squad.

#### Championship: UConn over SDSU

Assuming UConn makes the championship, I like them to win it. When they play well, they don't have a weakness. Congratulations Husky nation, I probably just jinxed you.

### DYLAN RIDER

#### SDSU over FAU

The Aztecs are on a mission this year after multiple March disappointments. The

Owls upset a white hot Kansas State team in the Elite Eight, but I don't think they have what it takes to extinguish an Aztecs team who is looking to burn years of futility in March.

#### UConn over Miami

For the first time since 2014, UConn is in the Final Four. The closest game they've had so far in the tournament was a 15 point win over Saint Mary's. Unfortunately for the Hurricanes, I think this is the Huskies' world, and the Hurricanes are living in it.

#### Championship: UConn over SDSU

The Huskies are a dominant team, while the Aztecs are running off pure revenge for years past. It's an unstoppable force hitting an immovable object. I think it has to be the Huskies here. For the Aztecs, it's not that they're not on fire, it's the fact that the Huskies are hotter than hell.

### JEFFERY WALKER

#### Miami over UConn

Both teams score over 78 points per game. The Huskies have a better defense, but in the end, it will be the Hurricanes and ACC Player of the Year Isaiah Wong who pull out the victory to advance.

#### FAU over SDSU

Both teams are playing in their first ever Final Four. In the end, I like the Cinderella Owls of FAU to move on.

#### Championship: Miami over FAU

In the game to see who runs Florida, this is where the Cinderella story ends and the Hurricanes come out on top. The Hurricane's veteran leadership and the high-scoring offense will be too much to handle.

### BRANDON WIRTH

#### SDSU over FAU

The Aztecs' defense has been lights out, holding opponents to an abysmal 17% from the three-point range. While FAU rebounded many other teams, I believe SDSU will force a slower, methodical game in which they've used to beat Alabama and Creighton.

#### UConn over Miami

One year after falling in the Elite 8, Jim Larranga's team is in the Final Four. Do I believe they have the ability to extinguish the red-hot Huskies that have defeated their opponents by an average of 22.5 points per game? No, I think UConn's red-hot three point shooting and stingy defense will push them on.

#### Championship: UConn over SDSU

This is the most fundamental battle of an elite offense versus an elite defense. I looked back at Final Four history to find some insight. First, the higher overall AP-ranked team has cut down the net in three of the last five games (Kansas in 2022, Virginia in 2019 and Villanova in 2018).

Second, in the last seven championships held in Texas, five of the games played into the favor of an offensive team with over 140 combined points. Third, the Big East has won five championships since 1997, while the Mountain West has zero.

### JOSEPH NAGY

#### FAU over SDSU

The Owls have a record of 35-3. Let me repeat that again, 35-3. I think that Saturday is going to be the end of the road for the Aztecs. If Darrion Trammell can't get the job done, they will lose. They haven't put up more than 75 points this tournament.

#### Miami over Uconn

In this tournament, the Huskies have dominated. But the Hurricanes have also dominated. Miami has had the toughest route out of the four remaining teams, that will show during their next game against UConn. All in all, we're going to be in for a high scoring game between these teams, and I'm here for it.

#### Final Prediction: FAU over Miami

Even with Miami on their redemption tour to make up for their early exit in the ACC tournament, I think FAU is going to take it all. What better way to end this one of a kind tournament in one of the more crazy years that we've seen than have a new lowest seed to win the tournament.

# Culture

Giuliana Denicolo | Culture Editor | denicog@ferris.edu

## Women of achievement panel



Photo by: Kylah Robinson | Culture Reporter

Students gathered together to learn about leadership experience.

### Students come together to hear advice about being a woman in a leadership role

**Kylah Robinson**  
Culture Reporter

The Office of Multicultural Student Services hosted a women of achievement panel to learn more about leadership experience and to share their knowledge to a room filled with around 30 Ferris students, 90% of whom were women.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. member and Ferris State alumna Sandra Caddy was one of the panelists along with Kaylee Burke, who is the former director of the Center for Latin@ studies. Caddy is the current CEO of the Women's Resource Center in Grand Rapids, while Burke is the current Director of Program & Strategy at the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Some advice that Burke and Caddy gave to the women sitting in front of them was to stand together and to not be afraid of reaching out and speaking out.

To Caddy, women need a sisterhood to create collaborative energy. However, that is something she believes can't be done alone. When Caddy was working at Inforum Michigan, she was the only woman. She changed that so other women would have the same opportunity that she did.

"I had to threaten to leave Inforum if we didn't actively practice and put measure-

ments in place to bring [in] other women," Caddy said. "I was the only one [then], and now, six years later, we're the majority."

According to Burke, when you're told no, figure out why and learn from it.

"You are going to hear no a lot, but keep saying yes and keep getting things to push forward," Burke said. "I think back to my social worker skills [and say], 'This perspective I hear you saying no to is talking about this, but can I tell you more about this perspective.'"

Pre-medicine biology junior Khi Hunt was one of the three men that attended the event. Although there were a small number of men in attendance, he was in tune with the panelists and took something with him.

"I love our women," Hunt said. "I want to learn something new from them. I learned to hold nothing back and just speak, even when you're scared."

Another piece of advice the panel provided pertained to their leadership styles. There are many different ways people can show leadership. Some are extroverted leaders who speak out, while others are introverted leaders who get things done without being in the open.

"I think of myself as a quiet leader," Burke said. "I can be

boisterous when I need to be boisterous, but I really like to understand what the strengths of others are around me and how do I uplift them throughout that process. I don't always need to be the person front and center."

While Burke is more of a quiet leader, Caddy is people-centered and someone who believes in good customer service. She believes in giving people your best. Although she was told this at a young age, she didn't fully understand it until later in her life.

"Giving up your best simply means you don't give people your second hand," Caddy said.

Junior health care administration and Sigma Lambda Gamma member Nina Barber expressed that the panel event was memorable for her.

Being a woman to Caddy means being your authentic self and never changing who you are. To Burke, womanhood is the strength in the literal and physical functions of women's bodies that do not exist in men and celebrating the women that created paths for others.

If you would like to know more about the Women's History Month events hosted by the OMSS, visit their Instagram @fsuomss or stop by their office in FLITE 159.



Photo by: Kylah Robinson | Culture Reporter

Panelist Sandra Caddy (left) tells a story from her childhood as moderator Ayanna Curry (right) and the audience listens.

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# A true Bulldog

## Sara Higley's rise through Ferris Athletics

Jasmine Baar  
Freelance Reporter

From a fan in the stands to a senior associate athletic director, Sara Higley's thirteen-year rise through the Ferris Athletics program started with a dream of being a sports agent.

When she was young, Higley would come to Ferris to watch football games. Since her mother worked at Ferris, she spent a lot of time on campus as a child.

"It's home," Higley said. "I grew up here, and to be able to come back and build a successful career in what I love to do has been amazingly surreal."

Higley knew when she was twelve years old that she wanted to work in sports. Initially, her dream was to be a professional sports agent.

During the first day of her introduction to sports management, her professor asked the class how many of them wanted to be sports agents. When she and almost every other student raised their hand, the professor cautioned them.

Higley understood then that her field was highly competitive, and she needed to figure out how to evolve her dream.

Higley had always imagined working in professional sports. However, after her time studying at the University of Michigan

and seeing the success of their program, her mindset shifted. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in sports management, Higley took a part-time job at Ferris working alongside the softball coach as a compliance assistant in December of 2010. After two semesters, she was hired full time as compliance coordinator.

After three years as compliance coordinator, in 2013 Higley began working towards her master's at Ferris. In 2014 she became assistant athletic director for three years. During her time in that position, she graduated with a master's in business administration. Higley was then promoted to associate athletic director in 2017 and held the position for two years before eventually being offered her current position.

Since 2019, Higley has been the senior associate athletic director and the senior women's administrator. Higley described herself as someone who is always looking for more responsibilities.

Higley believes that she's been able to advance her career at Ferris because she has made herself "indispensable."

"When anyone needed something done, I would step up, so I was able to get experience in taking on different roles," Higley said.

Though Higley has had many

job titles and has been successful in her career, she admitted that she suffers from imposter syndrome.

"Sometimes I'll go into meetings and think, 'What do I have to bring to this conversation?'" Higley said.

Higley strongly believes in "faking it until you make it." She thinks that being comfortable in your own skin, finding your voice and learning how to use it are key aspects to succeeding as a woman in a male-dominated field.

As the senior women's administrator, she is the highest sitting female within the department in every NCAA school. This position ensures that the female voice is heard.

"I give my voice to all athletes, not just females, but being able to bring a female perspective to a field that is mostly run by men is so rewarding," Higley said.

Higley explained that through her continued experiences, she realized her dreams can change and grow. She advises others to "never let other people dictate your path."

When thinking back to her professor that discouraged his students from being sports agents, Higley realizes that she needed that push to encourage the growth of her dreams.

"It wasn't him telling me that I couldn't, but me realizing that's



Photo courtesy of Ferris State University

**For watching football games here in childhood to becoming senior associate athletic director, Sara Higley has committed herself to Ferris.**

not really what my path should be," Higley said. "I fell in love with college athletics, and as cliché as the saying is, if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life."

She hopes to see herself become the next athletic director in her future at Ferris. As she is still

working towards her PhD, Higley also believes that one day she could outgrow the intense schedule of athletic life. If she ever becomes tired of the long nights and travel, she could see herself becoming a professor at Ferris teaching business administration or sports communication.

# Black Student Union's week of events

## Celebrating Black History Month

Marlow Losey  
Copy Editor

In honor of Black History Month, the Black Student Union hosted a week-long series of events to unite students and those looking to get involved with the group.

Criminal justice freshman Lauren James is president of the BSU and, according to her, the week of events was originally supposed to be held during February, Black History Month. The group decided to postpone the events so they could focus on planning more thoroughly.

James wants the BSU to be a place for students to go when they have a problem. Their goal for this Registered Student Organization is to "make campus better for students."

"[Students] can come to us, and we will help them when it comes to speaking with the president and when it comes to petitions," James said. "It's also a space where you can come and talk about what it means to be Black. Even if you're not Black, you can still come and voice your opinions."

The BSU kicked off the week with a poetry slam event. Students across campus were welcome to stand in front of their peers in the David L. Eisler Center to perform poetry of any kind. The goal was to give students a creative outlet.

Since the end of the semester is creeping up, finals will be here in no time. With this, digital animation and game design senior Jaylen Woods believes that students have a lot of built-up emotion and stress that needs to be let out in a healthy way.

"We are two months away from finals," Woods said. "You have a lot of emotion built up because of stuff that might be going on, and [you need to] let it out. Poetry is a creative outlet, and I want that for people like us. That's a big thing."

The poetry slam served as an icebreaker to get attendees ready for the rest of the BSU's week of events.

On Tuesday, March 21, BSU members and participants joined together in the DEC to watch "The Wood," a romantic comedy about three childhood friends that reminisce about their childhood.

For the third night of events, the BSU hosted a discussion called "Let's Talk Change." This event's purpose was to encourage students to share problems they've run into on campus, especially surrounding race. Many comments related to the safe spaces Black students have on campus.

"We don't say [anything because we're] scared, but we need to talk about it," marketing major Ashley Jordan said in front of the group. Jordan shared her story of facing racism within her dorm and how

this led to her getting reported for trying to handle the situation herself.

An anonymous student also talked about being charged with vandalism when they tore down and reported a racist note.

"I was confused, but I took it down," the first anonymous student shared. "I didn't rip it down, I neatly removed the staples and took it to the front desk. I took it down because it shouldn't have been there in the first place. [The RA staff is] supposed to be monitoring what is written on that board for this specific reason. A few days later, I got an email from the Student Code of Conduct saying I was in violation due to vandalism."

Another anonymous student discussed the racist comments and slurs they noticed written on whiteboards outside their room or on papers that were slid under their door. Many students shared that they don't feel they're being listened to or taken seriously. When trying to take action, they are often told that "things like this happen."

Jordan believes that the reason the BSU exists is because "everybody is experiencing some type of racism in some type of way."

"There's power in numbers," Jordan said. "They look at it differently when it's just one student, but [when] it's 54 students experiencing similar issues, now they have to look at the university to solve

the problem."

After many stories and a lot of debate on how to solve these issues, the night ended with pizza and snacks.

"I don't care if you're Black, white or other, we all deserve respect as a human," Woods said. "We're all here for the same thing. At the end of the day, I want to watch all Black people walk across that stage."

After collaborating with Diversity Advocacy for Identity and Sexuality Empowerment and other minority safe space organizations, the BSU invited students to the fourth event of the week, Black Storytellers.

This event was for students to dive into the world of storytelling in children's literature. Students worked together to brainstorm a concept for a children's book as a creative outlet with no censorship against Black culture. Many groups wrote stories from the perspective of a Black child learning to care for and have fun with their natural hair.

On Friday, March 24, the last night of the BSU's events, students gathered to compete in a spades card game tournament.

Though the week ended, cultural events for Black students and beyond can still be found on the Ferris event calendar.