



Experts on Middle Eastern history speak at “Understanding Gaza”

High emotion and engagement in discussion on genocide accusation, Zionism



Photo by: Brianna Wichman | Freelance Photographer

Professors David Takitaki, Ron Stockton, Howard Lupovitch and Saeed Khan discussing the political complications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the panel on Tuesday.

Jessica Oakes
Editor in Chief

Today marks 200 days since Hamas' invasion of Israeli territory. At last Tuesday's panel, however, Political Science professor David Takitaki remarked that the conflict in Palestine stretches farther back than "the lifespan of everyone in this room."

At the David L. Eisler Center, the "Understanding Gaza" panel featured three guests from the University of Michigan - Dearborn and Wayne State University. The stage held Takitaki as moderator, political scientist Ron Stockton, Islamic studies historian Saeed Khan and Judaic studies historian Howard Lupovitch.

The majority of the audience remained silently engaged as the discussion continued until 8:30 p.m., an hour and a half past its scheduled end time. One student broke this silence when Lupovitch identified himself as "proudly Zionist."

Welding engineering tech-

nology senior Forrest Hamilton booed the speaker, calling Lupovitch a "colonizer."

"Zionism is founded in a colonial mentality," Hamilton said. "I think anybody should oppose people that come to talk about allowing people to be settlers, allowing people to take land or allowing colonization. I would not support this sort of rhetoric if it was coming from somebody who wants to own native Americans' land in the United States... or any land that is not theirs."

Lupovitch stated that his identity as a Zionist, someone who believes in the Jewish people's right to a homeland in Israel, coexists with his belief that Palestinians are also entitled to a state of their own.

"I am a Zionist. I'm also pro-Palestinian. I'm someone who believes at the heart of this conflict are two peoples with a deeply rooted historical connection to the same land," Lupovitch said.

The panelists swiftly continued their discussion with

Lupovitch, stating, "You're not the first person who's yelled at me."

This event was the collaborative effort of Ferris' Shoah Project, the Political Engagement Project and the Provost's Office. Provost Bobby Fleischman later gave the panel a 10/10 score for their dialogue and respect for one another.

"Bravo for Professor Takitaki's outstanding moderation and the skillful way he massaged the several recalcitrant audience remarks in a very respectful way that allowed for the audience to express their views without interrupting the panel discussion," Fleischman said.

Fleischman also lauded the panelists for staying respectful of each other's rights and sovereignty despite ethnic and religious differences.

Lupovitch and Khan are longtime colleagues at Wayne State. Throughout the discussion, they referenced each other's work where they agreed and offered counters where they disagreed.

Amidst larger conversations, one-state and two-state solutions, Khan argues that a three-state solution may be worth considering.

"I think a one-state solution and a two-state solution might fall thin," Khan said. "A three-state solution of a confederation of former British Mandate of Palestine states, Jordan, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders might be something plausible."

Lupovitch, familiar with his colleague's work, excitedly awaited to hear the theory once again. He predicted that when historians discuss the plan years from now, he will call it the "Saeed Khan plan."

"Please. I don't want anything named after me, whether this or gymnastics move," Khan said.

Khan was not the only panelist who has spent time imagining how such a long-standing conflict could one day be resolved.

Stockton, a political science professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn,

has researched the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. He approached the discussion from an analytical standpoint, beginning with South Africa's accusation against Israel of genocide at The Hague.

According to Stockton, any sort of solution to this conflict would require a "black swan" event. This is an unpredictable scenario outside of normal, reasonable expectations.

"...my black swan, this sucker's out there," Stockton said. "And it doesn't give a damn what we think. Our morality? Forget it. Our logic? Forget it."

Stockton, a self-proclaimed pessimist, maintained his belief that "history doesn't care who's right." His theory for a potential black swan event, something large enough to disrupt the conflict, involves improvised nuclear weapons.

"You could get cesium [from a hospital] and you could create a dirty bomb," Stockton said. "You put it in a backpack, you'd walk into

downtown Tel Aviv and stand in front of the Israeli military headquarters, and you blow yourself up. What you've done, is you have irradiated five to 10 square blocks of Tel Aviv, where 40% of all Israelis live."

During audience questions, Stockton offered advice to listeners who felt urged to help those affected by the violence in Gaza.

"The Israelis are going to do what they're going to do, and the Palestinians are going to do what they're going to do in this, and all we can do is be appalled. Maybe you can take a little step in saving your soul if you actually talk to someone whose family is involved in this," Stockton said.

By the end of the panel, the sun had set outside the David L. Eisler Center. The majority-student audience listened patiently for two and a half hours, then respectfully applauded the panelists before returning home.



News

Ember St. Amour | News Editor | stamoue@ferris.edu

Applications hit all-time high

Ferris receives record number of applications for fall semester



Photo by: Anthony Malinowski | Managing Copy Editor

Assistant Director of Administration Jason Daday talks to prospective students from Tri-County High School.

Kourtney Fairchild
News Reporter

Over 18,000 applications for the fall 2024 semester, marking a 40% increase from last year and an all-time high for the university.

A total of 18,860 students have applied to enroll for the fall semester so far. A majority of these applications are for the Big Rapids campus, but Kendall College of Art and Design has also seen a spike, a 47% increase from last year.

According to Enrollment Services, the only areas that haven't experienced a spike this year are the statewide hubs, which have had a nearly 20% decrease in applications.

Dean of Enrollment Services Kristen Salomonson said a variety of new changes were implemented this year that have contributed

these application changes.

For one, October was deemed "application month." During this month, Enrollment Services hosted a variety of social campaigns and contests and had recruiters throughout the state to help spread the word about the free application.

This is also the first year Ferris and Kendall were available on the Common Application, a service that over a million students nationwide use to apply for undergraduate programs. Salomonson said they've received a large number of applications from the Common Application, especially for Kendall.

Hotlines were established early in the fall semester for students to ask questions and get application and financial aid help. Salomonson said it was important to ensure students could stay up-to-date with what was

happening with financial aid and FAFSA changes.

According to Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications David Murray, Ferris focused more on telling the stories of Ferris students and the opportunities the university has to offer.

Murray said they've been working closely with the other colleges and departments across campus to learn about faculty, programs and students. To help get these stories out, they've increased their number of press releases and social media posts.

"I think more people are becoming aware of the opportunities Ferris State University provides," Murray said. "The more people learn about Ferris State, the more they understand the tremendous programs, expert faculty and support systems that are available to them."

Murray thinks getting the word out about the high placement rates for many of the programs at Ferris has also increased interest in the university and helped application numbers.

Since many changes have happened this year, it's unclear what caused the increase in applications. Both Salomonson and Murray agreed that getting the word out about what Ferris has to offer has helped and is something they will continue to focus on.

"While we can't call one year a trend, we're doing everything we can to make sure that we continue at this level and then beyond that for next year," Salomonson said.

Current and incoming students are encouraged to look on Scholarship Universe for available scholarships in preparation for the upcoming fall semester.

Second year of Lavender Graduation

LGBTQ+ community celebrates commencement

Kate Babel
Freelance Reporter

Lavender is not just a sweet-smelling flower anymore, it is a graduation ceremony coordinated by the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.

The point of Lavender graduation is to celebrate seniors taking place on April 24 in David L. Eisler Center Founder's Room 203.

Lavender Graduation celebrates students in the LGBTQ community. Only they receive not just rainbow cords and stoles but recognition for their many achievements and contributions to campus, all while working the same way as a regular commencement. This year marks the second annual Lavender Graduation at Ferris.

LGBTQ+ Resource Center Coordinator Becca Osborne organized the event.

"It's a smaller kind of recognition ceremony tailored towards our LGBTQ students and allies. It doesn't replace regular commencement, I can't give somebody their diploma or say whether or not they can graduate and that type of thing," Osborne said. "But they the students who participate, get a rainbow

cord and stole and tassel that they can wear at graduation if they want and it's just a nice way to recognize them,"

Osborne then explains how there is a PowerPoint that students can access that asks them what degree they are graduating with, what they want to do after graduating and so on. During a ceremony like the Lavender Graduation, students in the LGBTQ community can get the same commencement experience and not have to worry about the overwhelming pressure of regular commencement from large crowds of students. Osborne also mentioned that this year, she has had around 20 people sign up with the hybrid option, where students could attend over Zoom.

"It's just a way to highlight our students who are either LGBTQ or identify as allies in just a more personal space. So that way they get that recognition. Some people maybe wouldn't feel comfortable at something like commencement with such a large crowd of people. It might be a better option for them if they choose not to attend another graduation ceremony," Osborne said. "I think it's nice for the Ferris community to see like

we support our LGBTQ students and allies and there are you know things that we want to do to support them and recognize them for their hard work and accomplishments."

With support from the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, students can celebrate their achievements and feel comfortable at their graduation. This wasn't always the case. The Ferris State Lavender Graduation started in 2018, but the origins of Lavender graduation date back to the 90s.

According to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation on the Human Rights Campaign, Lavender Graduation was created by Dr. Ronnie Sanlo, a mother who was denied access to her children's graduation ceremony because of her sexual orientation as a lesbian woman.

What started as a small ceremony with just three people, now has become a nationwide annual event, where students like social work senior Nora Fiero can have their accomplishments acknowledged by all. Fiero expressed her opinion on Lavender Graduation as well as on graduating.



Photo by: Kate Babel | Freelance Reporter

The LGBTQ+ Center is open to all students looking for support and assistance.

"I think it's good to have a space where students can be not only recognized for their achievements and graduating, but making sure it's a space that's safe and affirm-

ing of their like gender and sexual identity," Fiero said. "I think that's important and to just kind of take that moment as a community and celebrate together like, yay

we did it."

For more information on Ferris' Lavender Graduation, students can visit the Ferris Calendar.

First women's networking event

Over 20 organizations gather for the FWN's Women's Resource Fair

FERRIS WOMEN'S NETWORK



Graphic courtesy of the Ferris Women's Network

Isabelle Marks
News Reporter

The Ferris Women's Network hosted the Women's Network Resource Fair, featuring various vendors and

resources from across Big Rapids, and was the first time this event happened.

The event happened on April 17, with a focus on various levels of wellness, according to the Director of

Accessibility and Disability Services Julie Alexander.

"This includes physical, financial, and mental/emotional wellness," Alexander said. "We will have over 20 vendors who are both on

and off campus. These are important resources for people to be aware of."

Alexander described the vendors as being varied, from many different fields.

"We will have financial experts from Lerner Financial and TIAA, as well as non-profit organizations such as Our Brothers Keeper, WISE, Angels of Action, Project Starburst and Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency," Alexander said.

The vendors provided brochures, additional resources and information about their services.

English senior Kiarre Newbill was already familiar with most of these resources but wasn't sure what to expect from the event.

"This would definitely be something they should target towards freshmen who are coming in," Newbill said.

"That way, they can learn about all these resources early on, because that's how I technically learned about them, from being here for so

long. If you've been here for a while, you know a lot of stuff exists, but if you're new here, you probably don't know about any of this stuff or how to access it."

Personal Counseling Center intern Sha-Tera Coleman emphasized the purpose of the event.

"It's important for us to network with each other and learn about the different resources that Ferris and even Big Rapids have to offer for students," Coleman said.

"Sometimes if you don't get off campus, you don't really know what's out there."

Coleman also highlighted how the Personal Counseling Center can assist anyone going through a rough time.

"Everybody at some point in their life goes through some kind of difficulty or hard time, whether it's anxiety, depression, stress or whatever it is," Coleman said. "Going to the Counseling Center is a way for you to get whatever is on your chest off and find coping skills and solutions."

The Personal Counseling Center is open to Ferris students and can be reached at 231-591-5968.

Hope House volunteer Chuck Bonning was also present at the event.

"What we do is provide medical care for people without insurance," Bonning said. "We're a nonprofit, Christian-based organization with 100% volunteers, including doctors and nurses. Additionally, we provide medication through Ferris Pharmacy."

There are also a variety of people who Hope House will help.

"We primarily serve uninsured, underinsured and low-income individuals, including Ferris students and the local community," Bonning said.

Hope House is located across from the Maple Street Bridge at 405 South Third Avenue. Hope House operates by appointment and can be reached at 231-598-9500.

MICHIGAN NEWS UPDATE

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

Michigan- Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced on Monday a plan to donate \$290 million to help replace lead pipes and to upgrade Michigan's water system.

This project is in partnership with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and aims to also provide 4,350 jobs according to CBS News.

Many of the water systems in Michigan are between 50 and 100 years old, and Whitmer announced the plans to replace them using the money in a press release.

"Every family in Michigan deserves access to safe drinking water and to know that we are protecting our lakes—both Great and small," said Governor Whitmer. "That is why I am proud to announce that we are supporting communities across Michigan with \$290 million of existing, voter-approved authorizations to keep building up water infrastructure under our MI Clean Water Plan. Since I took office, we have invested over \$4 billion to upgrade drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater facilities, supporting 57,000 good-paying jobs, but we know we still have more work to do."

The Michigan Pipe Trades Association President Price Dobernick stated how the plan will be beneficial.

"Plumbers know that high-quality water infrastructure is critical to keeping families safe," Dobernick said. "We support today's \$290 million investment that will create and support good-paying, union jobs for our brothers and sisters while ensuring Michiganders have access to clean drinking water. We are grateful to Governor Whitmer for prioritizing water infrastructure—a total of \$4 billion since she took office, supporting 57,000 jobs—and will keep rolling up our sleeves to fix pipes, replace sewers, and handle everything in between."

The funding will be available through loans and split between the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and Clean Water State Revolving Fund.

GLOBAL NEWS UPDATE

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

United States - On Monday the US Supreme Court weighed the options for punishing people for sleeping outside while considering the homeless population.

The case is being weighed after a case in Oregon, where a law has been implemented according to BBC News. The town, Grants Pass, has deemed that anyone who has camps set up or is sleeping on public property to be against the law. If found doing so, they can be fined \$295 or receive up to 20 days in jail.

"Sleeping is a biological necessity," said Justice Elena Kagan. "And for a homeless person who has no place to go, sleeping in public is kind of like breathing in public."

Other judges, however, had a different opinion about the laws regarding sleeping and camping regulations for the homeless.

Back in 2018 some of the homeless population sued Grant Pass, saying that the law about camping goes against the eighth amendment according to the Washington Post. The eighth amendment prohibits the use of excessive bail, excessive fines and unusual

punishments. The argument made was that the punishment of being fined or put in jail was excessive, as there is nowhere for them to go.

"Where do we put them if every city, every village, every town lacks compassion?" Justice Sonia Sotomayor said. "Are they supposed to kill themselves, not sleeping?"

The decision is expected to be made on whether the eighth amendment has been violated and whether the law will remain in Oregon in the earlier part of summer.



Recognizing double award winner

Awards distributed to this year's faculty, staff and team winners



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

Becky Johnson-Hines, one of many winners, accepts the Distinguished Teacher Award.

Tate Zellman
News Reporter

On April 18, the university hosted the Distinguished Faculty, Staff, & Team Awards to honor this year's winners.

The Director of Accessibility & Disability Resources Julie Alexander won two awards at the ceremony, including

the Distinguished Service Award and the 2024 Helen Gillespie Ferris Award.

The ceremony began at 3 p.m. and took place in the David L. Eisler Center ballrooms. There were about 90 attendees, which included faculty, staff, community and board members.

The awards began with

the vice president of Academic Affairs Provost Bobby Fleischman, listing off the Academic Awards. The Staff and Team Awards were listed off by Associate of Applied Sciences Director of Admissions Kasey Ninke. Additionally, the 2024 Helen Gillespie Ferris Award was presented by Annual Giving Manager

Jennifer Yontz-Barger. The Faculty, Staff and Team Award winners are as listed.

"The validation is motivating for the times that are really hard," Alexander said. "Ferris is such a great place to work, and the job is not easy. The people make it amazing and make it so that I keep coming back and show-

ing up. And to keep taking on the tasks so I have that validation is amazing."

Alexander dedicated her awards to her team in the disability center. She stated that she can't do what she does without them, and they are her biggest cheerleaders.

The award winners had representatives attend the ceremony with them to show their support. The Accessibility Facilitator of Education Counseling & Disabilities Holly Benjamin came to represent Alexander.

"She's an amazingly positive guiding force in my journey at Ferris," Benjamin said. "Not only for her experience working in this field but also her passion for the principles of belonging. She doesn't us [disability service colleagues] as below her, she doesn't see us as advisory faculty, she sees us as people."

According to Ninke, who distributed the Staff and Team Awards, nominations can be opened months before the ceremony. She was able to explain what all is taken into account in order for the nominees to put their names in and how the winners are chosen.

"We [admissions committee] open up nominations in December, and anybody that is nominated has to have been a Ferris employee for at

least two years," Ninke said. "And then we go based on the form that's filled out for the recommendation. It's some general questions on why are you nominating them and what do they excel at. After we get all the nominations, the committee and I reach out to people that were nominated and ask them if they would like the nomination."

Ninke added that if the faculty or staff accept the nomination, they fill out a questionnaire about what they do and what accolades they have. Furthermore, the committee interviews each nominee in the final stages, according to Ninke. Based on the interviews, the committee then compiles everything and picks who they have for the year.

Of the award winners, two of them were unable to attend the meeting. Assistant Dean of Enrollment Services Eric Haner had an illness, and Adjunct Instructor of Languages and Literature Dr. Sarah Rescoe had an unexpected scheduling conflict.

Most of the faculty and staff who attended the meeting will come together for the final Academic Senate meeting this academic year, taking place on May 1 from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ON THE RECORD

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

McLouin at Ferris

April 16, 11:45 a.m. - An ID was found at the David L. Eisler Center. When officers picked it up, they realized it was a fake. The student was referred to student conduct.

Expiration alteration

April 16, 1:23 p.m. - Officers were checking cars in Lot 9N, and they found a vehicle with a parking pass that had an altered expiration date. The person was given a citation and referred to student conduct.

Fight, flight, flee

April 17, 11:30 p.m. - Officers were dispatched to a fight in progress in a parking lot. When they arrived on the scene, there was no one there and nothing on the scene that indicated injuries.

Party rock turned it down

April 19, 11:30 p.m. - After receiving a noise complaint at Cardinal Court, officers responded. There was a social gathering with music. The group was asked to turn down the music, and they did.

Shattered glass

April 19, 9:00 p.m. - The glass of an exterior door in Miller Hall was broken. The case was closed due to a lack of leads, as there was no camera facing the door.

4-20 closing time

April 21, 2:42 a.m. - Officers pulled over an individual who was drinking and driving. The individual was arrested.

Culture

Giuliana Denicolo | Culture Editor | denicog@ferris.edu

Lighting the path

HLCC invites keynote speaker to share his story

Ni'Jah Rankin
Culture Reporter

A lively crowd of 100 sat together to listen to guest speaker Ovi Vasquez talk about his success story on Tuesday, April 16.

The Hispanic/Latino Cultural Center invited Vasquez, a national keynote speaker, to speak to Ferris students. Along with several Ferris students in the crowd, three high schools around Michigan attended the event.

Vasquez was born in Guatemala on a small farm. He came to America to help his mother work but decided to go to school and get an education despite objections from his mother.

After moving to the United States, he had to work and go to school while having to learn English at 17. He ended up being able to graduate high school in three years and go to college.

Throughout his speech, he spoke about how, despite all the hardships in his youth, he continued to push forward and become the successful

man he is today.

He has worked for multiple large corporations, including Tesla, Uber, Apple and General Motors. He currently makes over \$600,000 a year traveling across the United States, telling his story to inspire people.

He believes that telling his life story helps students plan their lives for the better.

"The story, situations or strategies I share brings light to [students] path," Vasquez said. "We can change lives that way."

In 2023, only 6% of students at Ferris identified as Hispanic or Latino. HLCC director Sonia Treviño believes that Ferris needs representation for Hispanic/Latino students on campus to share the same cultural background and experiences.

"This message is something that is said over and over again," Treviño said. "To see it in action, with someone who looks like them and talks like them, is very inspirational."



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

Keynote speaker Ovi Vasquez steps up to further engage with the sizable amount of students in attendance.

CONT. ON PG. 7

Disc golf champ

Benji Zorn wins 2024 College Disc Golf National Championship



Photo courtesy of the Professional Disc Golf Association

Benji Zorn's score card for the Collegiate National Championship Tournament.

Blase Gapinski
Culture Reporter

Benji Zorn took home the 2024 men's Division I Collegiate disc golf title with a comeback, making it Ferris' fifth D1 disc golf championship victory.

Since joining the disc golf team freshman year, Zorn has had one goal: becoming a disc golf national champion. After two years of dedication and resilience, he brought home a championship title as a sophomore.

After his first round of 18 holes against 200 other D1 disc golfers, he took eighth place, allowing him to move on. The top 16 players guarantee themselves a chance to win it all by playing the final nine holes. Zorn had been in this spot before and was relieved to make it there again.

"The weather conditions weren't great which were similar to last year's tournament and some of those

really good players struggled because of the wind. I was able to solidify myself in the top 16, so I knew in my head I was still in it and had a chance," Zorn said.

Zorn was exhausted after his first individual and team round but knew he needed to finish strong. His goal for the last nine holes was to play as smart as possible. Instead of trying to make risky throws to advance himself further, he played technically and went with his instincts.

"I still had that last singles round so we rallied together, listened to some music and got warmed up," Zorn said. "I was nervous at first because there were at least 75 spectators. For me, it was about staying loose. Not taking it too seriously allowed me to just feel good and let my game shine."

Zorn took the opportunity at hand and finished his round three under par. The cards in front of him were still finishing up and needed

to make one final birdie putt for it to be a tie game. To prepare for a playoff, Zorn went to the first hole, where he relaxed and acknowledged how lucky he was for this chance. The conditions and pressure got to his competition, their attempts fell short, and Zorn was crowned the champion.

After the 2023 national results, Zorn and the team set out for improvement.

"Last year I was right in it, I was playing really well and I ended up taking tenth which was tragic," Zorn said. "Last year really stung so this whole year was dedicated to grinding and motivating the team. We didn't play as well as we wanted but I felt like that title was right there and I let it slip through my fingers."

CONT. ON PG. 6

Marching on

Ferris marching band returns, raises over \$7,000



Photo courtesy of Ferris Archives

The 1950 Ferris Institute marching band poses in front of the Alumni building.

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

Starting in the fall of 2025, the Ferris marching band will return to the field for the first time in over 30 years.

Since last year, Ferris has been looking at reinstating the marching band. Now, with

the help of the new Director of Orchestra and Pep Band Daniel Atwood, the official return has been announced.

"In the posting for the job, [Ferris] mentioned the possibility of creating a marching band," Atwood said. "Part of my role coming in was to create a proposal for President

Pink...to see if it would be feasible to bring the marching band back."

The proposal included an expected five-year budget and considerations regarding equipment, uniforms, rehearsal and storage space and anything else needed to move forward, such as a two-

week-long band camp before the fall 2025 semester.

"We anticipate there being scholarship awards available but none of that has been fully determined yet," Atwood said.

The possibility of credit hours for being a part of the marching band has also been a topic of discussion and has yet to be confirmed or denied.

Since the approval of the proposal, there have been efforts to raise money to support the marching band, including involvement in One Day for Dogs.

"We raised over \$7,000 on that one day," Atwood said.

With the money raised, the alumni and community interests have been captured.

"When you don't have a marching band performing on the field there is something that feels lacking even though our pep band does a great job, to have a marching band in full uniform [on the field] creates a whole different college game day atmosphere," Atwood said.

This atmosphere is not only emphasized by Atwood but also by students who have already joined the coming marching band. Digital animation and game design sophomore Brandon Lee also felt including a marching band does something special for a crowd.

"There's much more of an impact getting people excited and involved," Lee said. "Instead of looking at a little yellow and red section in the crowd, we see [the band] spanned across the entire football field and we're all thinking look at us. This is Ferris, this is who we are and this is our impact [making] everyone around us just build in excitement." Lee said.

For psychology freshman Katelon Armentrout, being on the field means showing their family what he can do.

"Marching band was always kind of a show and tell for my family," Armentrout said. "When my family came to homecoming, we just played a few songs and hung

out. It's not as cool as when my mom can say 'Oh there's my kid on the 40-yard line.'"

Information security and technology junior Matthew Koontz felt the marching band gave him a community.

"It's a great way to get to know people and have a lot of fun," Koontz said. "You get to be a part of something."

These students and many more have already committed to the Ferris marching band and are excited to get back to doing what they love.

The Ferris marching band will be hitting the field on the first football game during the fall of 2025 and invite students, faculty and the community to come and support Ferris athletics and the band.

Any students wanting to get involved can reach out to Atwood at danielatwood@ferris.edu.

DISC GOLF CHAMP CONT.

Zorn was originally from Iowa and relocated to Grand Rapids, Michigan at a young age. He was introduced to disc golf at age 12 by neighborhood friends, where they would build their courses with just two acres and three baskets. Half a year later, he played his first junior tournament competing against kids his age, and finished in fifth place. After taking a year off of competing, he told his dad he wanted to start

first. He graduated with a 4.2 GPA and landed his first sponsorship from Innova Disc Golf, which he refers to as the "Callaway of Discs." He knew he wanted to focus on education while furthering his disc golf career.

"I looked at many different universities but they didn't really have disc golf teams which was really important to me. I scheduled a visit with Leonard Johnson the head coach, and I really felt like a division one athlete," Zorn said. "He took me around

"For me, it was about staying loose. Not taking it too seriously really allowed me to just feel good and let my game shine"

playing tournaments again. He realized there were and still are stigmas surrounding the sport that might make it seem like a hobby, but Zorn was all in.

"There was definitely some hesitancy but my parents trusted me with their whole heart," Zorn said. "When I was 14, they would drive me to the disc golf course, drop me there for three hours and I would just play two or three rounds and that has definitely made me a good player. A lot of people get into this sport during high school, and I was able to really develop my skills while I was still in middle school, so that definitely was an advantage."

Throughout his high school career, Zorn played in as many tournaments as possible to get a taste of victory while still putting academics

campus, gave me some merch, showed me the championship rings and told me I was going to win one myself one day."

Zorn has been able to establish many new relationships along the way. He met his girlfriend, Delaney Beckett, during their first semester of freshman year. Beckett is a sophomore double majoring in Spanish and elementary education and is the women's disc golf team captain.

Beckett was instantly supportive of Zorn's disc golf career and actively supported the team during the 2022-23 season. Since she joined the team, their relationship has only strengthened.

"The base of any relationship is being supportive and understanding one another," Beckett said. "I'm the one who can get through to him



Photo courtesy of the Professional Disc Golf Association

Benji Zorn and his girlfriend Delaney Beckett celebrate their success in the championship.

if he's ever frustrated so it's about being there even when the energy is high. Now that I play, I am able to understand him more. A lot of times people don't realize what a job or sport really entails so it's nice to be able to put myself in his shoes."

She and the team rushed to celebrate with Zorn after they knew he was the winner.

"We had just finished our team round so I wasn't able to watch his final nine holes. I kept refreshing the scores while sitting on a bench trying to find his score," Beckett said. "The team came and

got me so we could watch the other team's final putt. As soon as we knew it wasn't going in, everyone started rushing to him and crying. Everyone on the team was there and we were all just so proud."

With the season and spring semester coming to a close, Beckett and Zorn are planning on studying abroad together in Costa Rica over the summer.

Ferris' disc golf founder and retired faculty member Leonard Johnson assembled his first team in 2006. Since the formation of the disc golf

team, they have won eleven total national titles. Using his connections with alumni was how he found out about Zorn. Johnson cherishes the relationships he can build with his players and considers Zorn a second son. His favorite memory from the 2024 season was seeing Zorn come back and win despite being behind.

"I couldn't be more proud of the fact that he's only a sophomore," Johnson said. "You can just tell that he has a drive, a focus and the talent. Those three qualities are why I'm not surprised that he

was able to pull it off."

With no seniors leaving this year, Johnson is confident about this team's next chapter.

"I think this group has been much more involved and dedicated than many of the groups in the past," Johnson said. "We played more tournaments than any other [Ferris] team up to this point and they're ready for more. We've got so many great things to look forward to together and I'm just really excited about the future."

Media Minute

“The Tortured Poets Department”

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

On April 19, Taylor Swift released “The Tortured Poets Department.” The original 16-track album was released at midnight, followed by 15 additional songs at 2 a.m.

As the title hints, the album is full of tortured thoughts from what we believe is mostly about her past relationship with Matty Healy.

Swift has been known for writing songs about her relationships and has faced media backlash for years in doing so, “The Tortured Poets Department” was deemed as just another breakup album upon its release, but I think it’s so much more than this.

The lyrics mock those who saw this album as only a breakup album. The context of these tracks is mature and not just in the explicit warning attached to the seven tracks. Swift has been known in re-

cent years for challenging the music industry by increasing the vocabulary in her songs with words that most fans have to research the meaning of. This fact alone proves that this album isn’t just the breakup album it seems to be. It’s a true heartbreak mentioning the potential marriage and kids that could’ve been, and even a few mentions about drugs taking over her relationship.

No matter the opinions revolving around Swift, she continues releasing music for everyone, switching up genres and outdoing herself every time. We can see her love for music and expression with every new album.

This album is a 10/10. I went through a journey listening to this album; it was truly poetry, and I can’t imagine rating this anything but perfection.



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

Attendees participate in Ovi Vasquez’s rewarding presentation about personal success.

LIGHTING THE PATH CONT.

Finance senior Lianna Moodie works for the HLCC. She believes it’s important for students to meet people with similar backgrounds on campus to help them feel like they are not alone.

“Having representation on campus shows [students] that they belong and serves as a motivator,” Moodie said. “You’re going to want to strive for that same excellence.”

In the crowd, both high school and Ferris students interacted with Vasquez by cheering and finishing his sentences throughout his speech.

Nursing freshman Cynthia Marcelino came to listen to Vasquez speak. She thought that it was great to be able

to see someone from her culture share their story.

“I like how I can relate to Hispanic culture and know that no matter where you are from you can still make it,” Marcelino said. “It really helps knowing that he’s Hispanic, I’m Hispanic and if he can make it, I can make it.”

Vasquez emphasized that it does not matter whether he has an accent or comes from a poor village in Guatemala during his speech. He also wanted the audience to know to break away from any limits that people hold them to.

Social work senior Stephanie Ramos believed that Vasquez kept her and the high schoolers engaged during the whole speech while also helping her believe that she could achieve

her goals.

“At Ferris, there are not many representations when it comes to speeches,” Ramos said. “It’s a good way to connect with the students and relate to them.”

At the end of the speech, Vasquez gave the three most interactive audience members a Starbucks gift card and took pictures with the students.

Vasquez also has scholarship opportunities for students worth \$4,000,000 on his app, “OVinspires Scholarships.”

Updates on HLCC events can be found on their Instagram @ferrishlcc.



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EDITOR'S COLUMN:

Thank you, Torch



Photo by: Jessica Oakes | Editor in Chief

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Editor in chief Jessica Oakes' graduation cap for the spring 2024 commencement.

Jessica Oakes Editor in Chief

I am finally passing the Torch and have the graduation cap to prove it.

Working at this newspaper since freshman year has easily been the most influential piece of my college experience. I've succeeded, failed and grown more than I could have predicted three years ago.

Watching our staff grow in both number and maturity is my greatest pride. I can't wait to see what they do next year.

I could write hundreds of op-eds about the importance of a student-run newspaper and hundreds more about the people I met through this job. For the sake of time and

page space, I'll focus on three things I'm most grateful for.

First, our advisor Garrett Stack. He doesn't like to take much credit for the work produced at the Torch, but I know how invaluable his influence is.

From the beginning, Stack trusted me to find a lead and run with it. He never hesitated to answer my questions or offer guidance when asked, but it wasn't his intention to control a single word we printed. More often than not, the most important thing he told me was to "stop fretting."

Because of Stack's straightforward teaching and advising methods, I learned how to stay calm in the newsroom. Mistakes are always critiqued, but they're nothing

to fixate on for longer than one edition. This allowed me to become a more confident student and reporter every week.

Next, I want to thank Dr. Bill Pink for helping me usher in a new era at the Torch.

As an underclassman, I found myself in the midst of a tense relationship between Ferris' faculty and administration. This relationship was older than me and expanded much farther than I ever learned on the job. The Torch was unable to get in contact with a large portion of administrators, decreasing the quality of our work and deepening this rift in the process.

The week Pink was announced to be David Eisler's successor, he told me that I

never needed to thank him for offering his time to the student newspaper. I'm taking this moment to clearly and intentionally ignore that. Pink's administration, which coincides with my time as a leader at the Torch, marked a turning of the tides.

If someone had told us years ago that Torchies would one day meet with the president, the provost and other vice presidents, we may have laughed. Today, it is reality. I appreciate this effort and see it as a step in the right direction for transparency at Ferris.

Finally, I owe countless thanks to two people so close to me, even as I moved from being their friend to their boss.

To Giuliana and Dylan, I don't know what this year would have looked like without you. We weren't always happy with the job, ad-space or even with each other, but you always kept me anchored to what this newspaper meant to me when I started.

There was a time I feared I'd never find community at Ferris. I know you can relate. Now, it is so clear that the Torch doesn't work without deep relationships. I'm so happy to have experienced mine with you both.

Dylan, good luck next year.

Womanhood friends

The importance of having female friendships

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

My favorite thing about being a woman is my best friend.

For as long as I can remember, I have been influenced to compare myself to other women. Women are almost always pinned against each other in media and given the stereotype of being fake when it comes to friendships.

When I think about this, I realize that the media and stereotypes are wrong. Some of the most vital moments of my life have been with my best friend. Having women friendships is one of the most important and influential parts of womanhood. It's not just me; within the past few years, psychology has been expressing this very fact.

According to the National Library of Medicine, women's friendships are a support system. They discovered an increase in a "woman's sense of self." These studies share that a higher level of intimacy was found compared to other friendships.

When I put this study in perspective, I couldn't agree

more. My best friend and I found each other in first grade and grew closer in third grade, and we have been attached at the hip ever since. We were always together, so our classmates mixed up our names because it was always just "Whitney and Harmony." When I tell people this, they always ask if it annoyed me, but honestly, it just showed how true our friendship was.

My best friend is my other half. Yes, we are women, and so what if we share excitement over clothes and makeup? I love talking about these things with her, but the times we spent laughing over nothing at 3 a.m. and watching all 41 episodes of Dan and Phil play the Sims 4 in one weekend are just as important to me. I won't let our friendship dwindle to this stereotype that we only talk about "girly things."

These conversations are not just "girly things," they are a connection. It's womanhood bonding, and it's not just hair and nails, it's support and someone who doesn't judge you.

There's something so moving about women's friend-

ships. I love my best friend more than most things in my life. She's been with me through thick and thin, and we've embraced our femininity more and more over the years. We wear matching outfits and dye our hair to match the others. If she wears makeup, I do. If she wears a crop top, so do I.

We match each other and go into the world ready to make it ours with our makeup and outfits, and we call each other beautiful. We laugh at things that make no sense because that is what women's friendship is. She makes me the woman I am meant to be. A woman who isn't afraid to express femininity and has more support than she could ever need.

Whitney will be there for every important aspect of my life, and all my "BFF" necklaces will be worn around her neck because that's what it means to have a best friend.

I love Whitney in a way that helps me see the true value of life, friendship and womanhood. She is my favorite part of being a woman.



Photo courtesy of: Debbie Christman

Harmony Goodman (left) and Whitney Berry (right) in second grade.

A campus explorer's journal

Exploring Ferris' nooks and crannies

Kate Babel
Freelance Reporter

I have always liked to think of myself as an explorer whenever walking around, so when I first arrived on campus in my first year, I was curious about what new things and places I would see and worry about finding everything.

When I first arrived on campus in 2022, I was nervous, to say the least. Like any other student, I was afraid of being so far from home and being late to class on the first day, but then I remembered something my mom did with me and my brothers throughout the years as we attended grade school.

Before the first day of school, when we were younger, we would tour the halls after receiving our schedules to find where our classes would be. We did the same during middle school and high school, so when the time came for me to attend Ferris, I decided to take the first few days to look around campus.

Aside from getting my steps in, I found out which

buildings my classes were in and explored the other buildings that were not a part of my major. While I walked through, I eventually figured out how to use these buildings as my "weather Shortcuts." This means that whenever it gets cold or begins raining outside, instead of soaking my shoes in snow and puddles, I could walk through the buildings and emerge on the other side.

I have used the Business Building as a shortcut during the winter when walking to the Rock Cafe and the Center for Virtual Learning on my way to the library. There is also the connecting hall between Starr and the Science Building and a shortcut from the Science Building entrance to the Williams Auditorium.

Occasionally, I would use that time walking through to look around and learn about that building. I would see where the classrooms and labs were held, and sometimes I would peer inside. Not during class hours because that would be silly, but when the rooms are empty, I have found recording studios,

study spaces, a room with a green screen and many more. It is great to discover new places and meet new people, so I recommend exploring campus.

My job at the Torch also took me to many unfamiliar places I hadn't been before. I explored anywhere and everywhere on campus and still found some new surprises.

In early April, some of my friends found a room that hardly anyone used and showed me, which has become my new study space. This is one room I am keeping a secret.

Another good part about exploring campus is that you could do it on your own or with friends. It is fun and you get plenty of exercise. My time overall on campus so far has led me to discover these new rooms, winding hallways, and new walking routes. So, I would take the time to walk around and explore if I were you because you never know what or who you might find.



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Sports

Dylan Rider | Sports Editor | riderd1@ferris.edu

Championship aspirations

Men's tennis team clinches GLIAC conference outright, women's earn No. 2 seed



Photo by: Jack Starkey | Freelance Photographer

Sophomore Esunge Ndumbe serves against the Michigan Tech Huskies.

Connor Grypma
Sports Reporter

Both Ferris tennis programs ended their regular seasons with a weekend sweep of Michigan Tech on Friday, April 19, and Lake Superior State on Saturday, April 20.

The weekend slate ex-

tended the men's win streak to 10 straight matches and earned the Bulldogs the GLIAC regular season championship. The women finished second in the conference, earning the team a first-round bye for the GLIAC postseason tournament.

Head coach Mark Doren extended praise to both

teams following the weekend of play.

"Everyone came to play today, especially our seniors on senior day," Doren said. "They all came in so clutch and really stepped up to provide energy for the matches. Bringing that positivity was so important to us. Tennis is a sport that has more failure

than anybody so being able to control our emotions was huge for us this weekend closing out the regular season."

Men's tennis

The men's team (15-4, 6-0 in GLIAC) won both matches with a 6-1 score.

On Friday, the men dropped the doubles point but dominated the singles flights to win the match overall.

Seniors Jan Koupil and Benjamin Lortie, junior Alessandro Santangelo and sophomores Esunge Ndumbe and Eric Kovacs won their matches in straight sets. Senior Yanic Alexander Mader drew the victory in three sets.

Saturday's match clinched the regular season championship for the Bulldogs and continued their hot streak going into playoffs.

The men took the doubles points behind wins from all three pairings before winning five of the six singles matches to make the score 6-1 and seal the GLIAC conference.

This regular season championship is the 21st in program history and the seventh for the Bulldog men in the

last nine years.

Lortie's confidence is unphased heading into the GLIAC tournament after a championship win.

"The entire team is feeling good," Lortie said. "From one to six, it doesn't even stop at the guys on the court. We've got big plans and big matches ahead of us still, but I don't think we could be any more confident. We're looking forward to it."

Women's tennis

The women's team (12-8, 6-1 in GLIAC) won Friday's matchup against Michigan Tech before wrapping up the regular season with a 7-0 sweep of the Lakers on Saturday.

Friday saw the women take the doubles point early behind the team of senior Morgan Waller and sophomore Ana Sofia Hernandez Ferrer and the tandem of senior Sophie Daavetilla and junior Parker Nolan.

The Bulldogs' singles flights piled on with straight-set victories from sophomore Maria Fernanda Hernandez Ferrer and freshman Katherine Ernest. Ana Ferrer, Nolan and Daavetilla also captured

straight set victories to score 6-1.

The women swept the courts on Saturday, with all doubles and singles flights winning their matches in straight sets.

With the win, the women's team clinched the two seed and still earned a first-round bye in the GLIAC tournament this weekend.

Senior Amelia Laverdiere knows the team still has work to do despite the senior night win.

"Six of us are graduating soon so it was a really fun day to play our last match at home," Laverdiere said. "Our team culture this year is truly amazing and we had a great season overall but the job is not done yet. We are still working hard to achieve our goals of a championship."

Both teams are set for GLIAC championship tournament play starting on Saturday, April 27, at the Midland Tennis Center in Midland, MI. With both teams being top two seed, they earn a first-round bye and will compete toward a championship birth the following day. Match times are to be determined later this week.

A bulldog forever

Ben Davidson's Bulldog story comes to a close

Jeffery Walker
Sports Reporter

Ben Davidson, a 6-foot-3 Bulldog from St. Clair, finished his basketball career with the team's first trip to the Elite Eight since 2018.

High School Recruitment

Davidson was a stand-out player at St. Clair High School. As a senior, he averaged 19 points and four assists per game. He was a two-time MAC Gold MVP, Blue Water All-Area choice and was selected as one of the top 50 players in Michigan by Prep Hoops and Inside Prep Sports. Those honors also made Davidson the ninth-best shooting guard in the state.

Being recruited out of high school, Davidson had gotten offers from multiple DII schools, and only a few DI

schools looked at him. Ferris State offered him a scholarship when he was a junior. By the time he was a senior, Ferris had won a national championship. Davidson knew he made the right decision to commit to the Bulldogs because he wanted to win.

Recruited by head coach Andy Bronkema and coach Jim Lake, Davidson started his career at Ferris as part of the first recruiting class to come in after the national championship in 2018.

Addis Habtewold, who is like an older brother to Davidson, reflected on the hope he carried for Davidson to play college ball.

"I always had big hopes for Ben playing basketball in college," Habtewold said. "I think back when he was a kid he used to play my Xbox, [which led to] his food all over my controller. We used to play in the driveway and

now I look up to talk to him."

Davidson's college career makes those messy controllers worth it.

College Career

Redshirting his first year, Davidson went from the number one option on his team to the last one, and he knew it.

"The difference between high school and college [is that] you were kind of able to coast a little bit like in practice in high school," Davidson said. "But you come to college and there was zero question I was the last guy on the team. If everyone got a chance to play the game, I would be the last person to play."

CONT. ON PG. 12



Photo courtesy of Torch Archives

Ben Davidson shoots past a Lake Superior State guard in March.

Softball splits weekend

Ferris picks up two wins against Wisconsin Parkside and Purdue Northwest



Photo by: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer

Sophomore Jady Joseph hits a homerun against Wisconsin Parkside on Saturday.



Photo by: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer

Freshman Alexis Kozlowski catches a foul ball for an out against Purdue Northwest.

Nolan Matthews
Freelance Reporter

The Bulldogs claimed victory in two of their four games in Big Rapids this past week against the Wisconsin Parkside Rangers on Saturday, April 20, and against the Purdue Northwest Pride on Sunday, April 21.

The Bulldogs were scheduled to face the Davenport Panthers on Wednesday, April 17, in Midland, but were canceled due to inclement weather conditions and were not rescheduled.

Ferris (23-22, 11-1 in GLIAC) won game one of the series against the Rangers (17-28, 8-12 in GLIAC) on Saturday by a score of 5-0, then lost a close game in the second matchup by a score of 8-6, before splitting the doubleheader against the Pride on Sunday, winning game one 1-0 and losing game two 2-1.

Senior southpaw pitcher Aryn Gallacher got the start for the Bulldogs in game one, throwing a complete game shutout of the Rangers while allowing four hits, walking two and striking out three.

The Bulldogs struck early in the game, thanks to an RBI triple from freshman infielder Alexis Kozlowski, who scored sophomore infielder Jady Joseph. Joseph then showed why she earned GLIAC Player of the Week, thanks to a two-run home run in the bottom of the third.

In the bottom of the fifth,

freshman outfielder Ella McDonald scored from third on a fielder's choice from Kozlowski. In the bottom of the sixth, freshman infielder Emma Gillard scored from third on a ball hit to second base from junior infielder Brooklyn Verbeek.

In game two, the Bulldogs lost a close game to the Rangers. Freshman pitcher Ashley Webb got the start for the Bulldogs, throwing 3.1 innings, allowing eight hits, four earned runs, one walk and striking out one, before being relieved in the fourth by sophomore Sophie Wisniski. She threw 0.2 innings and allowed three hits, two earned runs, one walk and one strikeout.

Gallacher relieved Wisniski in the top of the fifth inning, throwing one inning, allowing three hits and one earned run before being relieved by sophomore Izabella Regner, who threw two innings, allowing no hits, no earned runs and no walks while striking out three.

In the bottom of the third, down by five, the Bulldogs struck back on a two-RBI single from sophomore catcher Emily Killion, scoring Joseph and sophomore designated player Abby Meyer. Gillard followed that up with a two-RBI double to left field, which scored Killion and Kozlowski, and then Verbeek smoked an RBI double of her own to left field, which scored Gillard. The Bulldogs attempted a comeback, being down 8-5 in the seventh when Killion

scorched an RBI single up the middle, which scored Kozlowski. The comeback ended, and the Bulldogs fell to the Rangers.

In their second doubleheader of the week, the Bulldogs faced off against the Pride (27-19, 12-8 in GLIAC)

In game one, Gallacher got the start on the bump for the Bulldogs, throwing a dominant eight-inning complete game, allowing 10 hits, no earned runs, three walks, and three strikeouts. The Bulldogs had five hits in the game, three of which came from McDonald, Joseph and junior outfielder Maddie Gkekas. Kozlowski was the deciding factor in this game, where she stepped up in the bottom of the eighth and delivered a walk-off RBI double to deep center field, which scored Joseph from first.

Kozlowski recounted her approach going into that critical at-bat.

"I had her timed up very well, so I trusted my bat," Kozlowski said. "I wasn't trying to do anything too extreme, just a base hit to get on for my team."

Game two was yet another pitcher duel with Webb on the bump, throwing a complete game, allowing five hits, one earned run, no walks and striking out one.

Webb recounted how she bounced back from her rough second inning.

"Just having my team behind me, were all really close, and it's beneficial knowing they have my back,

especially when I give up a hit just knowing I have them behind me."

The Bulldog's lone run came in the bottom of the fourth when Gkekas reached first on an error from shortstop, which scored Verbeek from third on a throwing error to home plate. The Bulldogs attempted a comeback in the bottom of the seventh, having bases loaded with one out, but couldn't manage the comeback and unfortunately fell to the Pride.

Coach Jake Schumann spoke about how he feels

heading into the last stretch of games, being two games out of first place in the GLIAC.

"We're playing consistent baseball, we're playing excellent defense and our pitching has been outstanding, I would like to score a few more runs," Schumann said.

Schumann credited his assistant coach and wife, Sharon Schumann, believing that "she does an excellent job with our pitchers."

The Bulldogs finish off the regular season this week, beginning with a doubleheader

in Big Rapids against Lewis University on Tuesday, April 23 at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. before heading on the road on Friday, April 26 in Detroit, facing off against Wayne State at 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Then finishing off the regular season at Saginaw Valley at 12 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

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PLAYER'S CORNER: Kadyn Blanchard



Photo courtesy of Torch Archives

Kadyn Blanchard bolts across the court while playing against Davenport University on Jan. 19.



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Caden Hofmann
Sports Reporter

With the Ferris women's basketball team's record-breaking 2023-24 season at an end, the Bulldogs begin to look ahead to the new year with a similar mindset and mentality.

Junior guard Kadyn Blanchard answered some questions about her expectations, pressure and expanded role as a senior and leader.

Q: You have been a starter since you came here as a freshman. Do you feel any more pressure now that you're a senior and seen as a mentor to the younger players?

A: I wouldn't say it's pressure, I feel a larger sense of responsibility. I welcome that and want to be the leader. I want to show the younger girls how things should be done and instill our culture. It may seem like pressure from an outside perspective, but I like being a leader and someone for everyone to look up to.

Q: What is the biggest thing you've learned from the leaders before you to prepare you for this role?

A: It's easy to become somewhat of a dictator when you're in a leadership role. They taught me to be more positive. A big thing we talk-

ed about is that we all want to hang out with each other and want to be with each other. We never go to practice and games, then it's done, and we always ask everyone to hang out and include everybody. They taught me that to connect and be a team, we have to be friends off the court as well.

Q: You guys are losing some key rotational pieces, but you are also returning a lot. How big is continuity, and what will the transition be like?

A: We have seen what we can do, we want to go above and beyond that and be better. We know what it takes now, and we know all of the challenges that we have to overcome and the work we have to put in the offseason. We have pretty high expectations, and we are all ready and excited for next season.

Q: Where are your expectations going into next season, and what's the next step for the team?

A: We have seen what we can do, we want to go above and beyond that and be better. We know what it takes now, and we know all of the challenges that we have to overcome and the work we have to put in the offseason. We have pretty high expectations, and we are all ready and excited for next season.

Q: Do you feel like winning

is the new standard here now? Is it less of a desire and more of an expectation?

A: Yes even this past year, we felt like we were expected to win. We have what it takes to win, and we know what it takes to win. Especially dating back to our first game against Grand Valley, it was a whole new feeling for me because we all felt like we knew we were going to win that game. When we played them before, it was more "Oh, they're our rival." It's going to be a good game, but this year we knew we were the top dog and we could win that game. It made us all feel super connected as a team being on the same page.

Q: What is one thing you plan on adding to your game or expanding on for this upcoming season?

A: I've been working a lot on shooting off the dribble and expanding my range. I have a lot in my bag, and it's nice this off-season I get to work on new things. Last season, I was unable to do anything new because it was all rehab coming off of my injury. I want to be more efficient and take more, great high-percentage shots.

A BULLDOG FOREVER CONT.

Still, Davidson knew he had to work hard to see more minutes in the following years. He made his primary focus to get in shape. Davidson would spend time getting extra weightlifting sessions to get his body ready to handle college play while also finding ways to improve his shot selection to have better shot percentages and become a better defender.

The extra work paid off for Davidson, as each year passed, he became a more efficient player.

In the 2019-20 season, Davidson played his first season for Ferris after his red-shirt season, where he averaged 2.3 points per game in 13 games played on seven minutes per game. It was not until the 2020-21 season he broke out with 8.4 points per game in 19 games played and four games and started averaging 21.1 minutes per game. In the 2021-22 season, he averaged 11.9 points per game in 31 games off the bench.

During his final two seasons, he started every game for the Bulldogs. In the 2022-23 season, he averaged 13 points per game in 33 games with 27.9 minutes

per game. In his final season, he appeared in 36 games, averaging 26.9 minutes per game and 13.7 points per game. He also played a huge role in getting the Bulldogs their sixth GLIAC championship and Elite Eight appearance in the NCAA DII Tournament, both for the first time since 2018 when Davidson was recruited to continue the Bulldog's success.

Something that seemed to have eluded him had finally happened, and he said accomplishing that felt right, and it was an "awesome feeling" for him in his final season.

Head Coach Andy Bronkema is proud of who Davidson has become as a player and a person.

"He represents everything that you want a player to represent when it comes to your program," Bronkema said. "It didn't always come easy. He got through a lot of hard times and challenging times and came out on top, so he brought our program back to the Elite Eight, and he did it with high character hard work, and just the old-school qualities that you want out of young men, so pretty cool story. He did it the right way."

Davidson graduated in the spring of 2023 with an education degree. As a stu-

dent-athlete, he had to navigate his time between his family, personal time, being a student and an athlete. But education was important for him, as his parents were teachers. Now, he will teach future generations.

After College

Davidson will now be looking to start his career after basketball. Inspired by his parents, Jon Davidson and Diane Trout-Davidson, he chose to pursue a teaching career.

"When I came to college, I really didn't know what to do," Davidson said. "You had to sign up for something obviously, and I signed up to be a teacher because that's all I know. I fell in love with it right away. That definitely had a huge impact with both my parents being teachers."

Back at home now, Davidson is searching for a teaching job in the Blue Water area. Still wanting to be connected to basketball, he will be helping coach at his former high school.

Davidson says he will always remember his time as a Bulldog with all the memories made with his best friends and coaches.