



Dining hall changes

Rock Cafe implements rules against to-go containers



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

The Rock Cafe has strengthened their policies regarding to-go containers and taking food outside of the building.

Emma Walters
Freelance Reporter

Signs emerged at the Rock Cafe last week stating that students are no longer allowed to bring outside containers into the building. The signs also indicated that taking food out of the dining hall would now be considered theft.

This change came suddenly, with the signs implemented at the end of the fall semester. It occurred following an increase in students utilizing personal containers to take food home.

A meal plan is mandatory for students born on or after Sept. 1 of the academic year who have not lived on campus for two academic semesters and whose permanent

residence is more than 50 miles from campus.

The Ferris meal plans range from \$2,400 to \$3,000 in the 2024-2025 academic year, depending on the chosen plan.

For students who are required to have a meal plan and have not chosen one, the "gold" meal plan is automatically assigned. This meal plan costs \$2,830.

Biology freshman Bailey Smith explained that the cost of the meal plans makes it unfair that students are no longer allowed to bring containers in.

"I feel like we should be able to take out food, because we pay for it," Smith said. "I feel like a lot of food goes to waste, so letting students have it is better."

Hot food left on the bar line at closing time is thrown away. Other cold items are stored according to food safety guidelines.

The Quad Cafe offers to-go options, such as the to-go containers, which are no longer offered at the Rock Cafe.

Social work freshman Haley Froese expressed concern over the classification of taking food out of the dining hall as theft.

"It's a heavy term to use just for something like this," Froese said. "You're paying for the meal plan, you might as well take food."

The university has not defined what theft is in this context.

Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications Dave Murray ex-

plained that students utilizing personal containers posed an issue for budgeting.

"One of the challenges was students were enjoying a meal, then filling containers with food to bring back to their residence halls or apartments for meals later – in effect, taking extra 'swipes,'" Murray said. "Some of the containers were rather large, estimated to be the equivalent of four or five 'swipes.' Budgeting and meal planning leans heavily on the number of swipes, so allowing students to bring food back to their rooms throws off that planning and budgeting. That has the potential to dramatically increase the prices of meal plans, and the university strives to keep those as affordable and accessible as

possible."

Murray also stated that students bringing containers in posed a health code violation.

Despite this, the meal plan terms and conditions do not expressly state that students are not to bring personal containers into the dining halls.

Business administration senior Gage Grafton expressed that the classification of taking food out of the dining hall as theft is an over-exaggeration.

"If I grab a cookie and walk out and eat it as I'm walking out, I don't consider that theft," Grafton said. "It's all you can eat right? If they're swiping in and getting their food and leaving, and they're not sitting down eating and then grabbing a

bunch of food and leaving with it, I don't see a problem with that. I think that it being called theft is unnecessary."

The Rock Cafe currently closes at 9 p.m. Students with late classes or tight course schedules are now expected to sit down for all meals within the dining hall, rather than taking food to have later.

Froese expressed sympathy for students impacted by this change.

"I've had that happen," Froese said. "I was just like 'Wow.' Now I have to go to bed hungry after my long class. I was pretty upset about it."

At this time it is unclear if the university will bring back the approved to-go containers for the Rock Cafe.

News

The Shimadzu Core Labs received an \$800,000 grant. Find out where the money came from and where it's going to go. **PG.3**

Culture

Join the International Student Organization as they ring in the Year of the Snake with a vibrant Lunar New Year celebration! **PG. 5**

Opinions

Studying abroad is usually a once in a lifetime experience for students. The pros, and some cons, of the experience vary from program to program, but is it worth it? **PG. 9**

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Despite one being a freshman and the other a graduate, goaltenders Martin Lundberg and Noah West are a strong tandem on and off the ice. **PG. 10**



News

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

Michigan

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

A five-year-old was killed and his mother injured after an explosion on Friday in Troy.

The explosion happened at The Oxford Center after its hyperbaric chamber exploded according to The Detroit Free Press. The boy was found inside of the chamber, while his mother was found just outside.

The boy was identified as Thomas Cooper. The family set up a GoFundMe to raise funds for funeral expenses.

As of Monday, Feb. 3, the cause of the explosion is still under investigation.

National

Connor Grypma
Sports Editor

This weekend, the Los Angeles Lakers and Dallas Mavericks agreed on a groundbreaking trade. The Lakers sent Anthony Davis, Max Christie and a first-round pick to Dallas for superstar Luka Doncic, Maxi Kleber and Markieff Morris.

General Manager Nico Harrison said that Dallas was nervous about Luka's conditioning issues and said the team didn't want to commit to a supermax extension this offseason. Doncic was set to earn 345 million dollars in a deal with Dallas, but his trade voids his eligibility.

Global

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

Planetary defense systems in the United Nations are closely monitoring an asteroid that has about a 1% chance of hitting the Earth.

The estimated date when the impact may occur is December 22, 2032.

According to BBC News, when asteroids are detected with a small percent rate of hitting the Earth, the percentage decreases more over time.

The European Space Agency is currently unsure if the asteroid will be viewable in 2032 for them to determine its path.

Protesting politics

Reddit post gains traction in Michigan and Big Rapids



Photo courtesy of Wiki Commons

President Donald Trump recently signed in many new executive orders.

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

The past few weeks have brought mixed reactions with the new presidential executive orders, with which some are calling for protest.

There have been 45 executive orders passed as of Feb. 3, according to the Federal Register's website. Enforcing the Hyde Amendment, declassifying assassination records, including John F. Kennedy, more border security, are among the orders signed.

The United States also withdrew from being a part of the World Health Organization last month after the inauguration.

In a forum on Reddit, users called for protests in each state's capital on Feb. 5. The forum was created on Jan. 25, and has since gained over 53,000 members.

"This isn't coming from some big organization or outside group—it's people like you, in every state, stepping up and making it happen," One user wrote. "Each

event is being organized by passionate individuals in their own communities—people who see what's happening and refuse to sit back. They're handling local logistics, coordinating with others in their state, and making sure the protest reflects the needs of the people actually living there."

The specific issues of the protest include equality, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, climate change, public health and safety and gun violence according to Newsweek.

While the flyers started in Reddit, it made traction through several social media posts including Instagram stories from locals in Big Rapids.

Digital animation and game design senior Livia Konkle shared how she felt social media impacted society.

"I just think we aren't able to get the information out fast enough for it to be tricky," Konkle said. "It has worked in the past, but they're absolutely censoring us, and we no longer know

how to spread a mask word without online or social media, which is the problem."

In addition to the traction that the forum has picked up in Michigan, there are users from multiple states who have planned to protest within their own capital.

One user even went as far as to create two different poster types for each of the states including the dates, locations and times that the protests are supposed to occur at.

Those who wanted to protest were also encouraged to wear specific colors and some users even posted specific guidelines based on other protests they had went to.

"Non-violence is essential for public opinion and appearance," One user wrote. "Where white tshirts and carry American flags. Hold up signs that make a powerful statement for the country and rest of the world to see, preferably nothing lude or violent. Absolutely do not bring alcohol or drink alcohol beforehand."

The forum was also filled

with lots of discussion about ways that people could protect themselves from being identified, as well as things protestors should be aware of, including wearing gas masks.

Konkle commented on how the fashion statements being addressed on the site were similar to past events in history.

"I know that throughout history, wearing certain colors or doing something certain has been a sign of solidarity," Konkle said. "Like I only recently learned that women would wear red lipstick to show solidarity together,

Konkle also expressed her worries about what was going to happen with some of the new laws that are in effect, and is curious about what will happen over the next month.

As more decisions are made, bills are signed and things are changed by President Donald Trump, the Torch will continue to cover how it effects Ferris students, staff, faculty and the community.

Shimadzu Core Labs awarded grant

Science lab to use grant for their studies

Kate Babel
News Reporter

Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services awarded an \$800,000 grant to the Ferris Shimadzu Core Laboratories for wastewater studies.

Student employees working in Shimadzu Core Laboratories are conducting tests of wastewater samples from under the Ferris campus and surrounding communities. These tests prevent illnesses such as COVID-19, RSV, Norovirus, Influenzas A and B and E. coli from spreading throughout the water systems.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy partnered with Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services to fund a new type of technology using tests for viruses and other sorts of bacteria in wastewater as a means of public health information.

Professor of Biological Sciences and Lab Director of Shimadzu Core Labs Dr. Schuyler Pike discussed how the grant funded a new form of technology.

"So the instrument itself is cutting edge. The digital droplet PCR is cutting edge because it is so sensitive it can detect one case in a dorm in the wastewater," Pike said. "We take wastewater and we'll condense it down to the RNA and the wastewater, and then we'll test the RNA to see if there is any RNA from viruses. It's super sensitive. It can detect one part per billion, one part per trillion of viral DNA."

Pike explained how monitoring the wastewater using this polymerase chain reaction technology is done. Digital droplet PCR technology measures the amount of DNA and RNA inside a sample. In this case, it separates the RNA and DNA so it can track which RNA matches up to viruses inside the sample if there are any. While it was used during the pandemic, this technology could detect the COVID-19 virus before the clinical data could show COVID-19 inside a communi-

ty area.

This \$800,000, known as the "Sewer Grant," allowed Shimadzu Core Labs to expand their research to detect other diseases. They have tested it all across campus, ranging from North campus areas like North Hall and Clark Hall to South campus dorms like Merrill/Travis, Pickell and Brophy/McNerney Halls. They have also inspected other community areas, including Ludington, Cadillac, Grayling, Lake City and Reed City.

Laboratory technician and Ferris alumna Heather Schoenherr explained why wastewater studies are important for the community.

"Our job is especially important in rural areas because we cannot rely on clinical data to know about the health of the community because normally in rural areas, people don't have health insurance, they don't have the money to go to the doctor or they don't trust the medical professionals," Schoenherr said. "So sometimes the only way to know what is going on in these communities is through wastewater monitoring. That's why it's important that we continue to get grants and do our jobs because we don't actually know what's going on with the population."

Student employees working in Shimadzu Core Labs actively participate in testing wastewater samples using various equipment. They each expressed their gratitude for the grant, as it funded their research and their work experience.

Biotechnology and forensic biology senior Leah Levandowski shared her thoughts about the grant.

"I think it's great. I mean there's always fear that we're going to lose our grant. That's just part of working at a lab," Levandowski said. "So being able to get a grant again and it be that big, I think it's amazing and it shows that there is still a need for the work that we're doing."

Levandowski further stated that while working in the lab, she has gained leadership and troubleshooting skills not usually seen in the classroom.



Photo by: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer

The Shimadzu Core laboratory houses state of the art equipment used for the detection of diseases.

Students in the biology field experience real work in labs and learn how to use the equipment that comes with conducting these tests. While some students gain much-needed skills and experience outside of the classroom, others see the grant as a gateway to the future of lab work and student employment.

Biology and pre-med senior Donna Williams expressed her thoughts about what the grant could do for the lab in the future.

"To know that we got that grant to keep doing our E. coli project is really awesome because we do it all summer long," Williams said. "I think we could do more projects as a lab if we could continue to get more funding. I think there's a lot of potential here, and it could just make more opportunities for students on campus."

Williams also explained how working in the lab taught her how to do necessary tasks such as RNA kits, plating, color tests and working with others in the same fields as her.

Pike expressed his pride towards his current and previous students who worked and continue to work on this project, ensuring there will be more projects like this in the future.



Photo by: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer

Ferris students carefully conduct research in the lab, providing them with experience that benefits both their careers and educational learning.

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Student-athletes give back

SAAC hosts their first blood drive



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

The Red Cross was able to collect over seven boxes of donated blood.

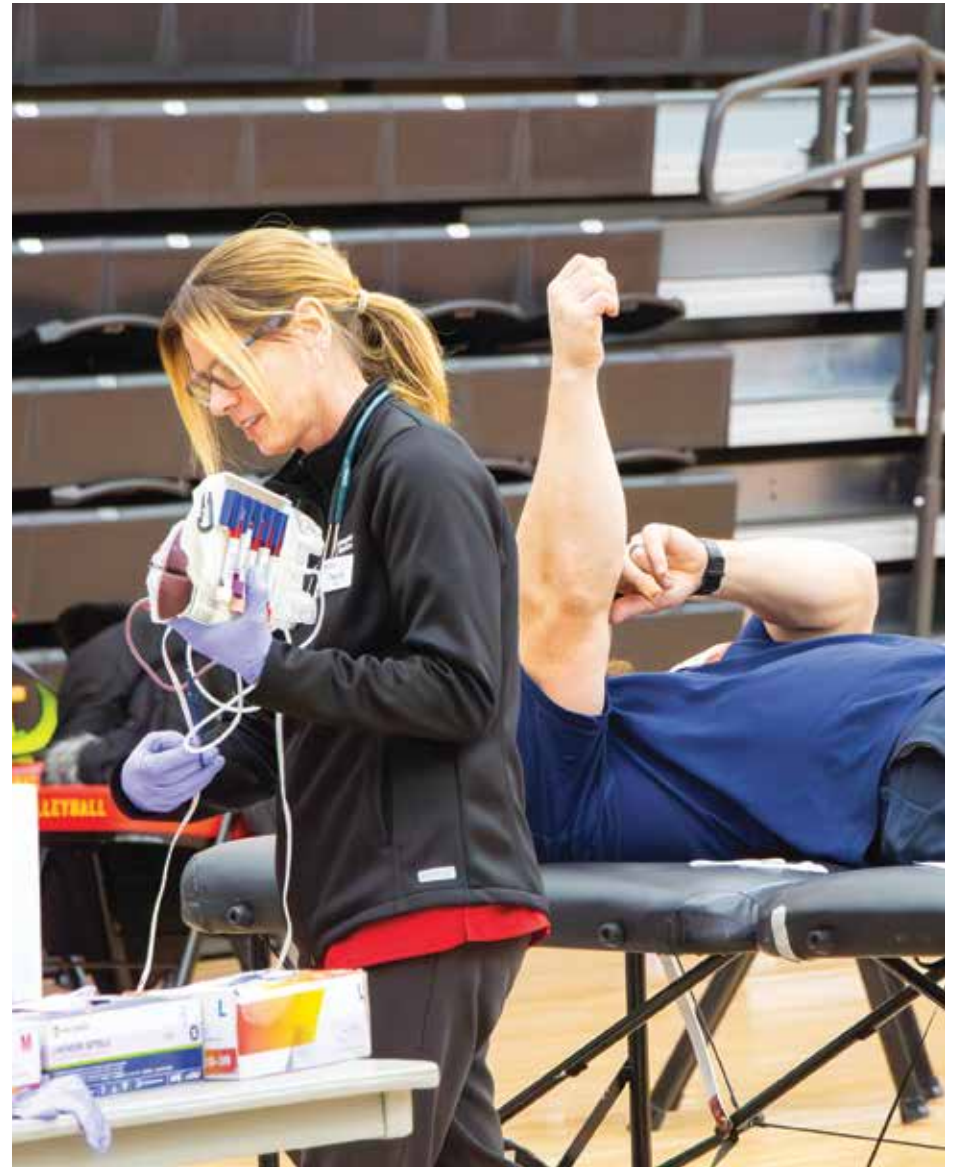


Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

A registered nurse from the Red Cross caps blood from a donor.

Kate Babel
News Reporter

Ferris student-athletes and the community were brought together on Jan. 30 for the first-ever blood drive hosted by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

In partnership with the Red Cross, the SAAC held a blood drive in the Ewigleben Sports Complex, open to students and the Big Rapids community.

Compliance and Student-Athlete Success Coordinator Justin Jackson explained why he wants student-athlete involvement in community service.

"I try to get them to understand that being in the position that they're in, they have an obligation to give back to the community because the community gives them so much in terms of their support," Jackson said. "Especially during the games and get them to kind of pay attention to people in the stands and making sure they understand that we only get so far with the stuff that we can do inside so it's nice to have that support from the community so the only thing that we can do to thank them was to give back."

Jackson further stated that the blood drive serves

as the student-athlete's way of repaying the community for their years of attendance and support for Ferris sports teams.

Word spread throughout the student-athlete community, encouraging them to donate their blood, which helps patients in West Michigan hospitals.

Secondary education junior Morgan Seog started the idea of the SAAC hosting a blood drive.

"I joined SAAC last year and Justin gave me the opportunity to be the community service chair this year so that's a role that I took on," Seog said. "My mom actually

does blood drives back home a lot so that's kind of where I started the idea from and I figured it was a good way to just kind of connect the community of Big Rapids together to help save lives."

Seog is a member of the Ferris women's golf team. Due to an injury she sustained last year, she spent her recovery time taking action in brainstorming different events that both athletes and the community could get involved in.

Athletes who signed up to either give blood or volunteer had the blood drive count towards their community service hours.

Nursing freshman Ashley Thomasma volunteered her time to the blood drive, working the front desk and checking people in.

"So my teammate asked me to, and I thought that it was for a good cause and so I thought I might help out," Thomasma said. "I think it's a great idea and having the community come out and help is definitely a great cause."

While some student-athletes like Thomasma volunteered their time, others donated their blood.

Television and digital media production junior Aimee Cupido is a member of the

women's tennis team who donated.

"I've done it before. I think it's for a good cause. But I also wanted Buffalo Wild Wings," Cupido said.

Nervous before heading towards the testing area, Cupido expressed that she knew she would feel dizzy afterward but was happy that she would receive the Buffalo Wild Wings coupon when it was over.

The SAAC plans to host another blood drive in the upcoming fall and the following spring.

ON THE RECORD

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

Cash grab

Feb. 3, time unknown - A student at Brophy Hall reported that their Cash App was used to buy two items from a clothing store.

Phantom cries

Jan. 31, 3:35 p.m. - Officers were dispatched to Cardinal Court after they received reports that someone was yelling for help. Officers could not locate the source.

Traffic stop turned arrest

Feb. 1, 7:57 p.m. - Officers stopped a vehicle near Family Drive for their taillights out. Officers then discovered that the driver did not have a license and that there was a warrant out on them. The driver was arrested.

Culture

Blase Gapinski | Culture Editor | gapinsb@ferris.edu

Embracing the year of the snake

A Lunar New Year celebration from around the world



Photo by: Shaunti'ara Reynolds | Torch Photographer

The Lunar New Year celebration invites students to experience Chinese traditions, including red envelopes and customary food dishes.

Grace Heethuis
Freelance Reporter

The International Student Organization kicked off the Year of the Snake by celebrating the Lunar New Year on Jan. 29.

The celebration began with the opening of red envelopes, a tradition common in Chinese culture at the start of the Lunar New Year. The event featured board games, karaoke and food from China One Buffet in Big Rapids.

Red envelopes are typically exchanged with friends and family and contain money. They represent community, prosperity and good luck in the coming year.

Ferris students opened red envelopes with paper cards with special notes and a list of lucky days based on each person's Chinese Zodiac animal.

Digital animation and design junior and ISO President Nhi Tran reflected on popular Lunar New Year traditions, such as opening red enve-

lopes with money inside.

"So lucky money, we don't just give money because we want to give money to the others. It's a sign of wishing other people to have luck and wealth," Tran said.

The Lunar New Year follows the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar. Each year is represented by one of the 12 animals that make up the Chinese Zodiac.

Each animal is believed to influence the traits of people born during that year. The animals in the zodiac are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

Many people believe their animal plays a significant role in their lives, while others view it as simply a fun tradition.

Immigration and Student Service Coordinator Yue Moua shared his Chinese Zodiac animal and its meaning to him.

"Mine is a rat. According to the Zodiac, the rat finishes the race first. I hope that's

true," Moua said.

The rat is also considered a symbol of wealth, intelligence and adaptability.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated in many countries and is filled with various traditions. Some of these include eating special foods, cleaning, honoring ancestors and playing traditional games.

In her home country of Vietnam, Tran and her family have always celebrated Lunar New Year.

"We have a special theme for each day," Tran said. "Usually on the first day we will clean the house and organize it so it looks nicer and is prepared for the new year. We also go and visit our family all over the city, like grandparents and aunts. One day in the week, we will go to the cemetery to pray for the dead and visit them."

The celebration of the Lunar New Year was particularly meaningful for many Ferris students, especially those who couldn't return home

to celebrate with family and friends.

Biotechnology junior and ISO Committee Chair Prasanna Maharjan helped organize the event.

"I know students usually go back home to celebrate, but due to classes and everything, it's kind of hard for them to go back all the way because not a lot of people live in Big Rapids," Maharjan said. "This space gives them a chance to celebrate with new people and friends and make new memories."

Many students in atten-

dance participated in karaoke, some for the first time. One of those students was Claire Sa, a foreign exchange student from Kookmin University in South Korea. Sa shared her experience at the event.

"My favorite part was karaoke because this is the first time I sang in front of people I didn't know," Sa said. "I usually do karaoke with my friend, but this time there were many people I just met for the first time. At first, I was shy, but after singing, I was really excited and it was

so fun."

The Lunar New Year celebration brought students together to mark the start of the new year. The event helped reconnect old friends and encouraged students to make new ones.

"It's really special just bringing people together, especially very different people," Moua said.

In the future, the International Student Organization hopes to host an even larger event to celebrate the Lunar New Year and include more students in the festivities.

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Togetherness through karaoke

First-Gen RSO and Black Student Union bring karaoke night to the community



Photo by: Ciara Brooks | Torch Photographer

Students enjoy the event while performing karaoke and meeting new people.

Tate Zellman
Freelance Reporter

The First-Gen registered student organization and Black Student Union kicked off the semester with a lively Karaoke Night, an event designed to bring the Ferris community together.

Held Jan. 30, at the David Eisler Center Rankin Stage, the event featured a mix of performances, fun and a welcoming atmosphere.

The event brought a positive, high-energy vibe, with between 10 and 25 students singing, cheering on their peers or enjoying donuts and hot chocolate. For many, the night wasn't just about karaoke, it was about bonding with fellow students and feeling part of a larger community.

For criminal justice senior and First-Gen RSO President Janiyah Moore, the event was all about creating a space where students could feel like they belonged.

"We wanted to create a space where people could just be themselves," Moore said. "A place where everyone feels welcome and can

connect with others."

In her third year as president, Moore describes the First-Gen RSO as a "home away from home," highlighting the group's role in providing support for first-generation students on campus.

The night also served as a reminder that everyone, no matter their background, can find a sense of belonging.

While the event was organized by the First-Gen RSO and Black Student Union, it wasn't exclusive to members of those groups. It was about creating a space where students from all walks of life could come together, share in the fun and feel connected.

Co-faculty advisor for the First-Gen RSO Emmanuel Ogua emphasized that the night was more than just about singing—it was about building a sense of belonging.

"This is about more than just a fun event," Ogua said. "It's about creating community. Ferris isn't just for one group of students, it's a place for everyone. All voices should be heard, and we aim to bring people together, share experiences and support each other."

Even those who weren't planning to perform found themselves joining in, encouraged by the crowd's warmth and support. Some took the stage for the first time, empowered by the inclusive environment.

Ogua also spoke about the importance of hosting the event at the David L. Eisler Center, a central, public space that made the event accessible to all students, regardless of their affiliation with the First-Gen RSO or Black Student Union.

"We wanted to create an event that would attract everyone, whether or not they identify as first-gen or part of the BSU," Ogua said. "The idea was to make it a space for the whole campus to come together, celebrate and have fun."

One standout performance came from welding engineering technology sophomore Gabriella Buerkel, who sang "Nothing Really Matters" by Jaedynn Latter. Buerkel, who identifies with both the first-gen and Black student communities, said the event was especially meaningful for students who share those

identities.

"A lot of Black students at Ferris are also first-gen," Buerkel said. "Having this kind of community to connect with is so important. It helps students feel supported and gives them a space to belong."

The welcoming atmosphere allowed attendees to embrace their individuality while also feeling united in the larger Ferris community. Whether students were performing on stage, enjoying the music or bonding over shared experiences, the karaoke night offered a rare opportunity for all to step outside their usual circles and build new connections in a supportive environment.

As the evening drew to a close, the sense of community among attendees was clear. Karaoke Night wasn't just a fun activity, it was a reminder of the power of coming together, celebrating diversity and creating lasting connections across different groups on campus.

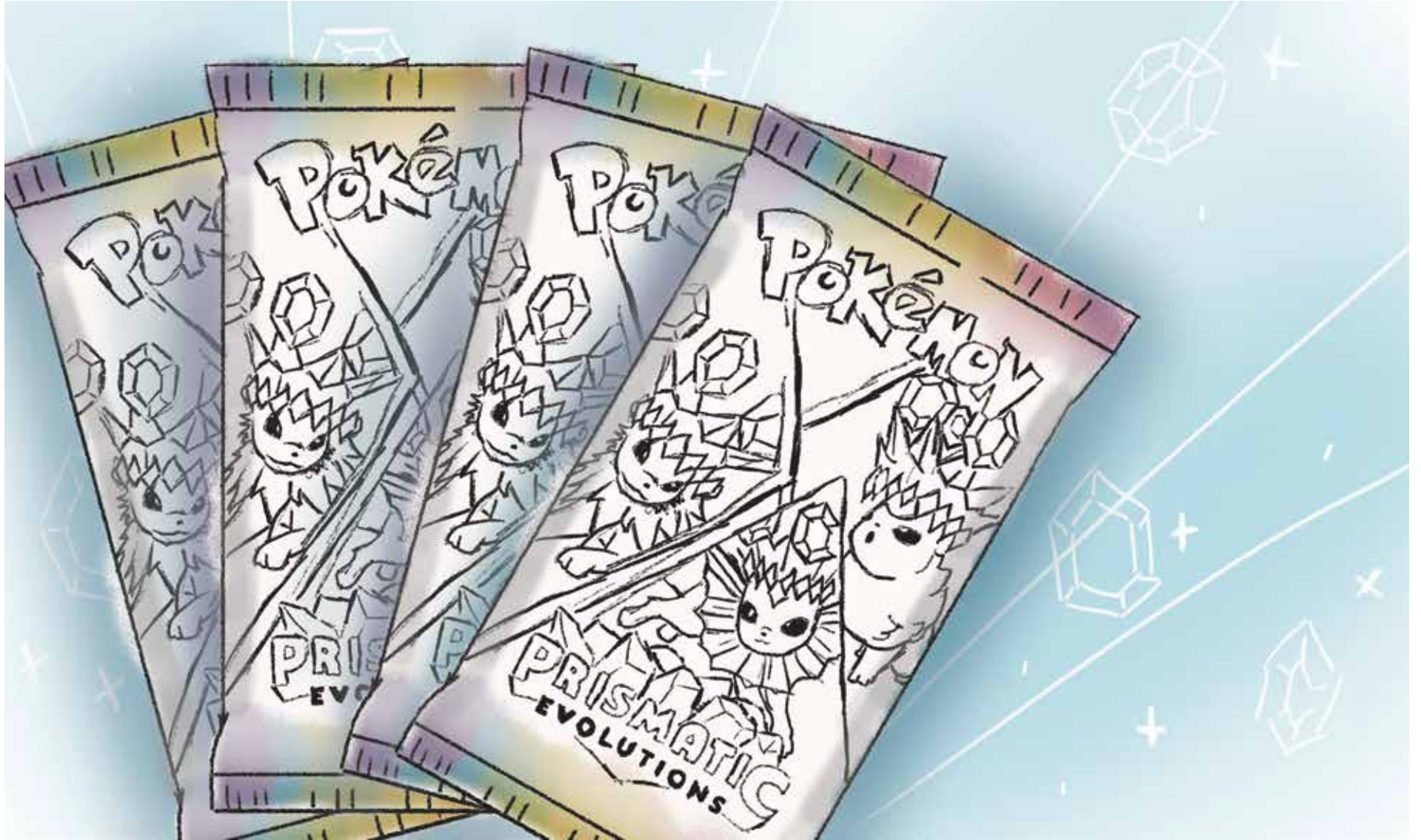
Heard on Campus

"I'd ask for help with this exam, but I'm pretty sure we're all just pretending to understand the material at this point."

Hear something funny on campus? DM us on Instagram @fsutorch for your submission to be possibly featured

Lacking luster

Fans left disappointed by newest Pokémon card set



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Max Sorek
Freelance Reporter

On Jan. 17, the Pokémon Company released 2025's first set, Prismatic Evolutions, which left collectors and shop owners in Big Rapids scrambling as limited stock and scalpers made it nearly impossible to get the highly anticipated cards.

Featuring special illustration rare cards of the fan-favorite "Eeveelutions," the eight Pokémon that evolve from Eevee, this set was on track to dazzle rookie and veteran fans alike.

Limited stock and scalpers have made getting the newest products a nightmare. The set, featuring fan-favorite Pokémon from the Eeveelution line, was anticipated by collectors and casual fans alike.

However, problems began the moment pre-orders went live: the Pokémon Center, a store dedicated to the franchise, sold out within minutes. Similar issues occurred in big-box stores like Target and Meijer, where scalpers bought entire shelves, leaving casual consumers empty-handed.

Not everyone was happy with the release of Prismatic Evolutions. In response to customer complaints, the Pokémon Company promised a reprint, though there

is no announcement on the release date.

The owner of TOFA Games in Big Rapids Brendon Carlington was unimpressed with the set and the lack of availability.

"I think it's the Pokémon Company's fault. I was told by my distributor that I wasn't going to get any [Prismatic Evolutions] months before the set released," Carlington said.

The combination of low stock and scalpers buying up all the products hurt the release of this anticipated set. Most small game stores couldn't get any stock, similar to TOFA Games.

Carlington was also disappointed with the card artwork.

"It's largely a reprinted set. I did not expect it to have good pull rates. Hence why the craze behind certain cards became super high beforehand," Carlington said.

Prismatic Evolutions has become an example of how scarcity and high demand can turn a fun hobby into a frustrating and sometimes expensive pursuit. Whether or not the reprint will solve these issues is yet to be seen, but it's clear that collectors aren't the only ones feeling the impact.

The previous set featuring Eeveelutions, Evolving Skies, was notorious for low

pull rates, meaning collectors would have to spend a fortune in search of one of those rare cards. "Evolving Cries," as fans deemed a fitting title for the set due to the unlikelihood of pulling a card worth any value.

According to TCGPlayer.com, in an article by Peter Day, the Eeveelution cards were about one in 332 packs. Those specific VMAX, which is a special type of power-up for Pokémon and is featured on rare full-art cards, were found to be in one of 1,994 packs.

Fans were hoping that Prismatic Evolutions would differ from Evolving Skies in pull rates, allowing collectors and battlers to find their chase cards or the cards they'd like to own, easily. Much to their disappointment, Prismatic Evolutions was quite like Evolving Skies and received its fitting nickname: "Traumatic Delusions."

Welding engineering technology sophomore Jacob Johnson expected this outcome and clarified the situation.

"There has to be a reason for a chase card to be a chase card. Evolving Skies at least had other chase cards than Eeveelutions," Johnson said.

Though the odds of pulling certain rare cards in Prismatic Evolutions are slightly better than in the previous

set, the limited number of packs available still makes it difficult for fans to get what they want. Even with these challenges, collectors were eager to get their hands on Prismatic Evolutions when it launched.

In general, most of the cards in Prismatic Evolutions are reprints of older cards from Japan's Terastal Festi-

val set, but now available in English. However, one new feature in this set is the introduction of special shiny cards, like Masterball and Pokéball, which fans have never seen in English before.

Compared to the Japanese version of the set, the English release is more difficult to find and often much more expensive. Some collectors

have also found that buying specific cards from other fans is more affordable than buying packs, especially since resellers mark up prices.

Overall, seeking out Prismatic Evolutions doesn't seem profitable right now.

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Opinions

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

Our Location:
Arts and Science Commons 1016
820 Campus Drive
Ferris State University
Big Rapids, MI 49307

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EDITOR'S COLUMN:

Country of confusion

Trying to make sense of America's political identity



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Dylan Rider Editor in Chief

American politics has been a true whirlwind for many this past week.

Between a federal grant and loan freeze, confirmation hearings and a politicized tragedy, it feels almost hard to breathe.

For the first time since the election in November, I feel incredibly disillusioned. My brain has been clouded in anger for the better part of a week.

I'm annoyed and apathetic to the current state of this country. I know I'm not alone on this either.

Monday, Jan. 27's memo from the White House stating that the federal government "must temporarily pause all activities related to obligation or disbursement of all federal financial assistance" confused many, even those in the government.

Not even two days later, the memo was rescinded. Or, at least, I think it was. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt then took to X, formerly known as Twitter, to add to the confusion.

"This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze," Leavitt said. "It is simply a rescission of the OMB memo. Why? To end any confusion created by the court's injunction. The President's EOs on federal funding remain in full force and effect, and will be rigorously implemented."

Oh, okay. I still have no idea what's going on. A legal challenge seems to be blocking it for the time being.

Perhaps my expectation of the government's ability to communicate both concisely and with clarity was something doomed to fail from the beginning.

This political "when it rains it pours" sequence worsened as the week went on.

Wednesday, Jan. 29 brought news of a military helicopter colliding with a passenger jet. In the tragedy's aftermath, 67 people are dead. Families are mourning while searchers are still collecting the bodies of the fallen.

It's awful. Unfortunately, accidents like this happen and we may never know what exactly happened that fateful night in D.C.

However, while the American people mourn the country's worst airplane-related accident since 2009, our president took it upon himself to speculate that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, or DEI, was a possible cause for a mass tragedy.

Not to mention his doubling down on the idea when asked about his DEI speculation.

"Because I have common sense," President Donald Trump said. "And unfortunately, a lot of people don't."

We're living in the most absurd timeline. Playing the blame game after a tragedy isn't a new idea. It's a non-partisan issue. Politicians using a devastating situation for political gain is nothing new.

With this being the case, why am I so angry? Why is this week's confusing and dumbfounding sequence of events getting to me? Why now?

The easy answer is that I care about politics to the point that it hurts.

I know this. But I don't think the week of political exhaustion is normal for me. It's obvious our government is a complete and utter mess. I've complained about it under Joe Biden, and I'll complain about it under Trump.

I don't know why I've reached my breaking point. But I have. Snarky comments and pointing fingers around tragedy are tiresome. A certain opposing political party

being so ridiculously useless is tiresome. The government is tiresome.

It's counterproductive to point at those who helped land us in the situation and laugh. I have disdain for a lot of Americans. I'm sure Americans hold the same amount of disdain for my thought processes. We're here in the present situation. I take no joy in the failures of the government.

My point with all this is that I'm confused. I'm disillusioned. America is feeling less like America. Again, I just don't think I am the only one that feels this way. We shouldn't have to feel this way. None of us. When does the feeling end? Will it?

Go study abroad

My experience in Italy and why you should do it



Photo by: Ember St. Amour | News Editor

One of several ruins in the Roman Forum.

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

Over this winter break, I took the opportunity to study abroad, and I would recommend that you do.

Studying abroad was something that I have wanted to do since I was in high school. I originally wanted to do a full semester, but due to scheduling, doing a winter term was my best option.

I went through a Ferris affiliate program and found myself leaving for Rome on Dec. 28, where I stayed for three weeks.

I know that studying abroad is expensive and it's not easily affordable for college students, however there are scholarship options available, which range depending on how long you'll be abroad.

Through the program, I had my flight, apartment and meals all taken care of so all I had to do was show up at the airport and then collect my meal vouchers and grocery cards in Italy.

For me, this was the first time I had ever traveled outside of the United States, and honestly, I was nervous. I'm sure that most people who have thought about studying abroad have chosen not to for this reason, but I know that the second I was on that plane, my nervousness turned into excitement.

Due to it being a winter class, I did have three hours of class five days a week, which, depending on your college schedule, but most days flew by due to the number of activities and discussions.

I took intercultural communication, meaning several of my class days were spent walking around different parts of the city and seeing how Italian culture differed from the U.S.

When I wasn't in class, there were several tours set up for me to explore the city, including the Colosseum and the Vatican. I was also located right in the heart of the city in the Trastevere section, allowing me to ride the tram

to classes and take in the sights of the city.

I will say that studying abroad culture shock, even for three weeks, is very real. In the time that I was over there, I adapted to dinner time being much later, bottles not having caps that screw all the way off, paying for water and tax automatically being included with everything.

It was intimidating having to learn all of this during the first week that I was there, but it also gave me insight into how things that I considered to be normal are not always normal everywhere.

The hesitation about studying abroad can be real. I know that there were a few things that I didn't care for while I was abroad. I'm someone who needs a lot of personal space, and one of the things I noticed while I was in Italy was how little personal space seemed to matter.

However, these negative experiences didn't take away from the overall experience I had over there. They were

mere seconds long in comparison to the amazing experiences I had during my time there. Change is scary, and going abroad is scary, but at the end of the day, I don't regret this experience for even a second.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators found that 1% of students in higher education participate in study abroad. While I didn't do a full semester, I am still a part of the few who have had the chance to study abroad.

As I near the end of my time here at Ferris, I know that my study abroad experience will stick with me far longer than any class I took here. Memories are a core part of one's self, and I'm happy to be walking away from college with the memory of getting to go to a new country. I hope you consider making that a part of your college memories too.

Third year's the charm

My journey to getting more involved at Ferris

Carly Judge
Copy Editor

During my first two years at Ferris, I'd describe my involvement on campus as practically nonexistent.

I attended a few events for freshmen and a few meetings for registered student organizations, but couldn't make the commitment. Once I got comfortable with my friends and classes, I didn't feel like trying anything else.

However, this past year I've started getting more involved. While it may have been a little late, with only three semesters left, I decided to take advantage of the opportunities in front of me and explore more of what Ferris had to offer.

The first thing I decided to do was get a job on campus. After looking at my resume, I realized that I'd need more experience if I'm graduating in the next year. Exploring on-campus jobs led me here, to the Torch, and a whole new side of Ferris.

Now, I wouldn't consider myself a nosy person, and thought I was pretty aware of things on campus, but boy was I wrong. Every week, I'll attend our meetings or read the articles that have been written and find out things about Ferris that I never knew.

It took the part of me that loves learning new things

and staying educated to satisfy something I didn't know was missing. I get to explore the world of journalism while staying updated on all things Ferris, which is a win-win for me.

I also chose to join an RSO this year. I had gone to a few of their meetings in the past but never truly connected to the club or felt like getting more involved. After becoming friends with someone in the RSO, I was convinced to join again and explore what they offered.

Now, I enjoy it so much and have been given so many new opportunities to learn more about my major in the real world and attend very beneficial events.

The American Marketing Association has opened up my life to new people and experiences that I'm so grateful for. I got to go on a volunteer trip to Cedar Point, improve my professional and career development and much more. I even have the opportunity to attend a conference in New Orleans for a marketing competition. Honestly, freshman me would've been running away as fast as she could.

Getting involved on campus didn't require joining every club I could or attending every event possible. I chose what I would be comfortable with and knew I would be interested in. Leaving my

comfort zone and trying new things was one of the best things I could've done for myself this past year.

Looking back, I regret not putting myself out there earlier, but at the same time, I don't think I was truly ready. Even joining an RSO or getting a job on campus took a pretty large push and support from other people.

So my advice, as someone who is not the most sociable of people, is to take whatever opportunity that stands in front of you, grab it and run. It might make you uncertain or uncomfortable. You may even feel lost when you start, but that's just how you learn.

Starting something new and experiencing things outside of my comfort zone was the change I needed to learn more about myself and the things going on around me. I was scared to put myself out there. I mean, I was practically dragged into AMA by my friend and it still took me two years. Now, it's one of my favorite things to put my time and energy into.

The little steps towards a new goal can feel like miles, but it's progress. Getting involved on campus or even just in your classes may open up a whole new world of experiences.

Time and opportunities will always be available; you might as well make the most of them.



Photo courtesy of Carly Judge | Copy Editor

The American Marketing Association collaborate with the women's volleyball team during their 2024 season.

Sports

Connor Grypma | Sports Editor | grypma@ferris.edu

Bulldogs' goaltending brotherhood

A freshman's ascent and a senior's final stand



Photo by: Abe Kraus | Torch Photographer

Graduate Noah West has played in 27 of Ferris' 28 games.

Jasmine Baar
Videographer

Different roads, same ice.

Freshman goaltender Martin Lundberg, a recruit from Norway, is embracing every opportunity to learn from his teammates, determined to sharpen his skills and compete for the starting role.

Over the ocean, graduate goaltender Noah West sits alongside him, snatched from the University of Mich-

igan this past offseason, turned starting netminder. West is focused on staying healthy and finishing his final season strong, hoping to parlay his experience into a pro deal on the East Coast.

Though at contrasting stages of their careers, Lundberg and West push each other to be better, strengthening Ferris State's goaltending. One is eager to prove himself, the other is looking to leave his mark before mov-

ing on.

"I have to show that I want to be here, on the ice, I have to do the work," Lundberg said. The freshman goalie from Norway, has had to adapt to a faster, more physical style of play.

Lundberg has appeared in two games for the Bulldogs this season, making a combined 47 saves in nearly 100 minutes of action between the pipes.

Back home, Lundberg was

used to the wider ice rink, where the game relied more on technical skill and tactical movement. Now, on the smaller rink, everything happens quicker—shots come faster, players crash the net harder, and the physicality is relentless.

The reduced space leaves less time to react, forcing Lundberg to sharpen his positioning and decision-making under pressure. While the transition hasn't been easy, he's embracing the challenge and learning to match the intensity of his teammates and opponents.

"The speed is the biggest difference to me," Lundberg said. "But the boys on the team take really good care of us, like Noah will give me advice."

It's not always easy to hear criticism, but knowing it comes from a place of support makes all the difference. Whether you take it or leave it, is up to the player.

It's never just about what happens on the ice, being a good teammate goes beyond honing skills and making saves.

Whether it's offering advice on positioning in the net, giving a teammate a ride to the store, or being there to talk through the ups and downs of the season, West wants to assist however he can.

"Sometimes it's right, sometimes it's wrong, but they'll figure it out," West

said.

West has been a workhorse for the Bulldogs this season, starting 26 games while sporting a 3.1 goals-against average and a .906 save percentage.

The mentality extends across the locker room, where small acts of support, helping a teammate study for an exam, grabbing an extra tape roll before practice, or just checking in after a tough game, build the foundation of a strong team. In a sport as demanding as hockey, individual success depends on collective strength.

"We took them under our wing and showed them the ropes," West said. "It's been a cool experience forming the relationship we have."

West takes pride in being part of that collective strength, knowing that his impact extends beyond the crease. He wants to leave Ferris State's goaltending in good hands, helping his successors grow into the best versions of themselves, both as athletes and as people.

This includes freshman goalie Connor McDonough, who entered the Bulldog locker room aside Lundberg this offseason.

However, as much as West focuses on helping others, he also understands that his own success this season hasn't come by chance. Staying healthy has been key to maintaining his high level of play.

Years of experience has taught West that talent alone isn't enough, you have to put in the work off the ice, fuel your body and stay disciplined so you can go all in.

"I know I'm not getting any younger," West said.

As his final season winds down, West isn't just chasing wins; he's making sure that when he steps away, he's left behind a culture of hard work and resilience. Looking forward to watching his teammates succeed in their athletic careers.

As the season progresses, the relationship between Lundberg and West continues to highlight the unique bond that forms between teammates, especially in a position as demanding as goaltending.

For Lundberg, having a veteran like West to learn from is an invaluable opportunity as he works toward his goal of becoming the team's next starting goalie.

For West, passing on his knowledge while finishing his own collegiate career on a high note is just as rewarding.

Beyond the competition, their connection represents something bigger. The privilege of playing alongside international teammates and forming friendships that transcend borders.

Athletics has a way of bringing people together who might never have crossed paths otherwise.

Tennis season ramps up

Bulldogs aim for GLIAC Championships

Devin Wardrop
Freelance Reporter

Ferris State's men's and women's tennis teams put two matches under their belts this weekend as they strive toward another successful year ahead.

Both squads kicked off their season on Saturday, Feb. 1, at the University of Indianapolis, followed by a match against the Drury Panthers on Sunday, Feb. 2. While the games initiated their regular season, both sides have a bigger goal in mind.

Men's tennis

The men's team is coming off back-to-back GLIAC championship wins. Tennis head coach Mark Doren, now in his seventh season with the teams, expects the men to pick up right where they left off.

"We want to keep the success going," Doren said. "Our first goal is to capture another GLIAC championship."

The men's group graduated four of their top six players from last year and ushered in a whole new group this season with six new athletes, five of them being freshmen.

One of the newcomers, Adrian Catahan, a freshman hailing from North Bay,

Ontario, is confident in the camaraderie the freshmen have with the transition to college life and tennis.

"The bonds I have created with other freshmen on the tennis team that are going through the same experience has been so supportive and has really helped me perform better as a tennis player," Catahan said. "The team dynamic is something I have not experienced before. We encourage each other, we motivate each other and we have fun together which helps me with the pressure of wanting to play better every time I step on the court."

CONT. ON PG. 11



Archive photo by: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer

Junior Erik Kovacs reappears after an injury left him unable to play.

Mia Riley embraces leadership role

Junior guard steps up for women's basketball



Photo by: Abe Kraus | Torch Photographer

Junior guard Mia Riley averages 24 points per game this season.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Reporter

Following a historic 2023-24 season that saw the Bulldogs women's basketball make a run to the NCAA DII Final Four, the Bulldogs hoped that the 2024-25 season would be more of the same. However, the team was hit with a big injury.

Star senior guard Kadyn Blanchard, the GLIAC scoring leader with 17.8 points per game, went down for the season with a torn ACL after the 83-61 loss to rival Grand Valley. The Bulldogs needed someone to step into the number one scoring role. Junior guard Mia Riley has taken over the role, averaging 16.2 points per game, 4.2

rebounds, four assists and 2.7 steals in the six games since Blanchard went down.

Despite being ruled out for the season, Riley had high praise for Blanchard.

"Kadyn is very optimistic and she has such a great outlook on life," Riley said. "She is such a hard worker and plays with so much heart. She inspires our team

to work hard and play with heart every chance we get. We really miss her on the court, but she still has such a big influence with her voice on the sideline."

Riley knows she took a big jump in her career between last season and this season and is thankful for her teammate's confidence.

"I am thankful that I was

able to get this opportunity," Riley said. "It was a big jump going from not playing at all last season to taking on a larger role for the team this season, I worked so hard to get to where I am at this point in my career, I am just so thankful to have some of the best teammate's who have so much confidence in me."

Riley hails from Fowler, Mich. in a family who all played basketball, including her two older brothers and her sister Emma, who plays for Saginaw Valley. Riley herself started playing basketball early on in her life in fourth grade, this was when she started becoming interested in basketball and her parents allowed her to join an AAU team.

Riley's time at Fowler High School was highly decorated, being a three-time First Team All-Conference, a three-time First-Team All-County, two-time All-State and earning 2021 Player of the Year. She also helped lead her team to a 2021 D4 State Championship with 18 points, while her sister Emma posted 16 points.

From the 2023-24 season to the 2024-25 season, Riley has improved her game, jumping from averaging 3.5 points per game to 14 points per game this season. Riley credits the opportunity that head coach Kurt Westendorp has given her this season for her improved play.

"I would say its opportunity, I just had to keep working hard and being patient until I got the opportunity that I have been given this year," Riley said. "Even in the beginning of this year I was

not a starter until one of our girls couldn't play in the first game of the season. I found out that I was starting that morning right before the game, I took advantage of that opportunity and have been in the starting lineup ever since."

Riley shot 46% from the field alongside 36% from the three-point stripe, increasing her percentage by nearly 20 compared to last season.

Junior guard Emma Schierbeek spoke on how Riley has helped out the team.

"Mia has been a huge asset for our team with Kadyn being injured," Schierbeek said. "She has stepped up in every aspect of the game, she is scoring well for our team and is a great defender and has become a great role player."

Riley's teammate, junior forward Mya Hiram, has also stepped up in a big way since Blanchard's injury, averaging 12 points per game alongside 5.5 rebounds per game.

Hiram gave Riley high praise, describing her as the embodiment of a leader.

"Mia is the perfect example of what every coach and teammate looks for in a player," Hiram said. "She has embodied the role she is in now, being a leader on the court and a true example of what it means to be a Bulldog. Watching her show up every day and give her all on the court while also being disciplined in the classroom is inspiring to watch."

The Bulldogs aim to build off Riley's contributions and continue their winning ways with eight games remaining.

TENNIS CONT.

Meanwhile, the Bulldogs are returning junior Erik Kovacs, who the team lost at the beginning of the season last year due to an ankle injury. The men's team is led by senior captain Alessandro Santangelo, who plays second singles for the team, alongside forming a tandem with junior Kacper Pasielak for doubles games.

The men finished with losses in both of their opening matchups last weekend, earning two points against Indianapolis and one against Drury. The Bulldogs will make their home court debut on Saturday, Feb. 8, against the Tiffin Dragons.

Women's tennis

Last year, the women's team finished second in the GLIAC behind No. 5 Wayne State, and the team grad-

uated two top players, who Doren believes are "two of the top five players to ever play at Ferris." One of which is Morgan Waller, the only tennis athlete to ever be selected for the Dean Davenport Ferris Women's Athlete of the Year award.

Similar to the men's team, the women enter the season with a reinvented roster. Doren knows that women are built for the challenge.

"Four of nine ladies on the team are brand new to the team," Doren said. "But this year the ladies are stepping up and taking on the challenge to carry on where we left off."

The women are led by senior captain Kennedy Dumas. The Holland, Mich. native has been in and out of the lineup with some big wins, sporting another straight-set win at two singles in the Bulldogs' 4-1 victory over Indianapolis.

Dumas believes passion is the key to building up the incoming freshmen and the team, especially after taking on the Western Michigan Broncos in the exhibition.

"It's extremely important to have determination on and off the court," Dumas said. "Even though we were clear underdogs facing Division I teams, we should still fight for every point and every ball. It was so evident that everyone bought into that, even the new players. We battled hard and showed that we can compete with the big-time teams."

The women captured wins in both regular season matchups last weekend, propelling them to a 2-0 start heading into home match play. The team will begin play against Tiffin at 10 a.m. at the FSU Racquet and Fitness Center.

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Bulldogs' route to first

Ferris basketball puts themselves in position to win GLIAC



Photo by: Abe Kraus | Torch Photographer

Senior Deng Reng has scored over 111 points throughout his five seasons at Ferris.

Caden Hofmann
Special Editions Editor

Sitting at 18-4 and 8-3 in the GLIAC, the Ferris State men's basketball team controls their destiny to clinch at least a share of the con-

ference with nine games left. Over a week ago, the Bulldogs held sole possession of first place in the GLIAC. With back-to-back losses for the first time this season to Michigan Tech and Lake Superior State, Ferris has fallen

down to third place. However, there is still time for the Bulldogs to make their way to the top of the conference and clinch a share of first place. The most simple avenue would be for Ferris to win the

rest of their remaining nine games. Due to them still having a game versus first-place Michigan Tech, winning out would mean a share of first place at the very minimum in the conference.

All three of the recent Bulldog losses have been close and competitive games due to the nature of the GLIAC, according to senior forward Reece Hazelton.

"We have had a couple of losses recently, those sting but the GLIAC is always tough no matter who you play," Hazelton said. "We have nine games to make sure we are ready for the postseason, playing in close games is going to help."

A key contributor to the recent skid for Ferris has been the three-point battle. The Bulldogs lead the GLIAC in both three-point percentage and opponent three-point percentage, but they have been out-shot from behind the arc in each loss.

Junior guard Tyler Hamilton isn't worried about the lack of three-point production from his team.

"We are too good of a shooting team to lose the three point battle many more times," Hamilton said. "We trust our shot, we are just go-

ing to have to stay confident and keep working hard in the gym. The shots will start to fall."

Coming up, the Bulldogs have six games on the road and three games at home. Ferris has posted a 12-1 record on their home court, while sporting a 5-3 record on the road.

With a four-game road stretch upcoming this week for the Bulldogs. They will need to grind out tough wins in the extremely close GLIAC.

According to Hamilton, the biggest key to putting together wins is the defense and rebounding.

"We haven't been defending well so that has been a major focus for us in practice and film," Hamilton said. "Rebounding is also a large focus, we need to get back to closing possessions how we were earlier in the year."

Coming into this season, head coach Andy Bronkema stated that his team's biggest strength was their depth. Ferris is a team that typically likes to reach deep in their bench and consistently run a 10-man rotation but has been riddled with injuries on the bench.

Senior transfer center Kenny Turner has missed

the last four games, and junior transfer wing Donovan Brown-Boyd has missed the past six. These two combine for 14 points per game off the bench for Ferris. Their absences have led the Bulldogs to run a slimmer rotation than normal.

However, one of the key bench pieces for Ferris, senior forward Mykel Bingham, is not worried about the injuries for the team.

"They do play a role for sure," Bingham said. "But those guys are going to be back soon and we have been taking our recovery and treatment very seriously to make sure we can prevent those injuries from taking a toll on us."

This week, the Bulldogs will continue conference play with two opponents they have beaten once already this season. Ferris took down Davenport 74-68 in their first matchup and Grand Valley State 77-63 earlier in the season. The Bulldogs face Davenport on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 7:30 p.m. and Grand Valley State at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8.

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