



# The Ferris State Torch

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Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of Feb. 19 - 26, 2025

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## 2025

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Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

### News

Title IX has seen some changes since the beginning of the year. How will these changes impact the Ferris community? **PG. 2**

### Culture

Eighty-six-year-old Ella Villa plays in three orchestras, dedicating 52 years to music and inspiring others through passion and mentorship. **PG. 5**

### Opinions

Ferris hasn't had a baseball team since 1994 and it's time for a change. **PG. 9**

### Sports

Standout sophomore Alexis Kozlowski tells her story of joining the Bulldog softball team. **PG. 11**

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# News

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

## Michigan

Ember St. Amour  
News Editor

Trials have begun for some of Michigan's abortion laws after they were questioned for being constitutional.

The specifics that were challenged dealt with the state level of the constitutional amendment from November 2022 allowing abortions according to The Detroit News.

The three specific laws are getting counseling and reading information from the state, a mandatory 24-hour waiting period before an abortion can happen as well as nurses and physicians' assistants being unable to perform them.

## National

Ember St. Amour  
News Editor

Kentucky has been facing floods over the past few days once rain started on Friday.

According to the New York Times, at least 11 people are dead and hundreds more have been displaced due to the storm.

It is believed by researchers that due to the thinness of the soil, it is more prone to flooding, as the soil cannot take in enough water which results in flooding of the bodies of water in the area.

## Global

Ember St. Amour  
News Editor

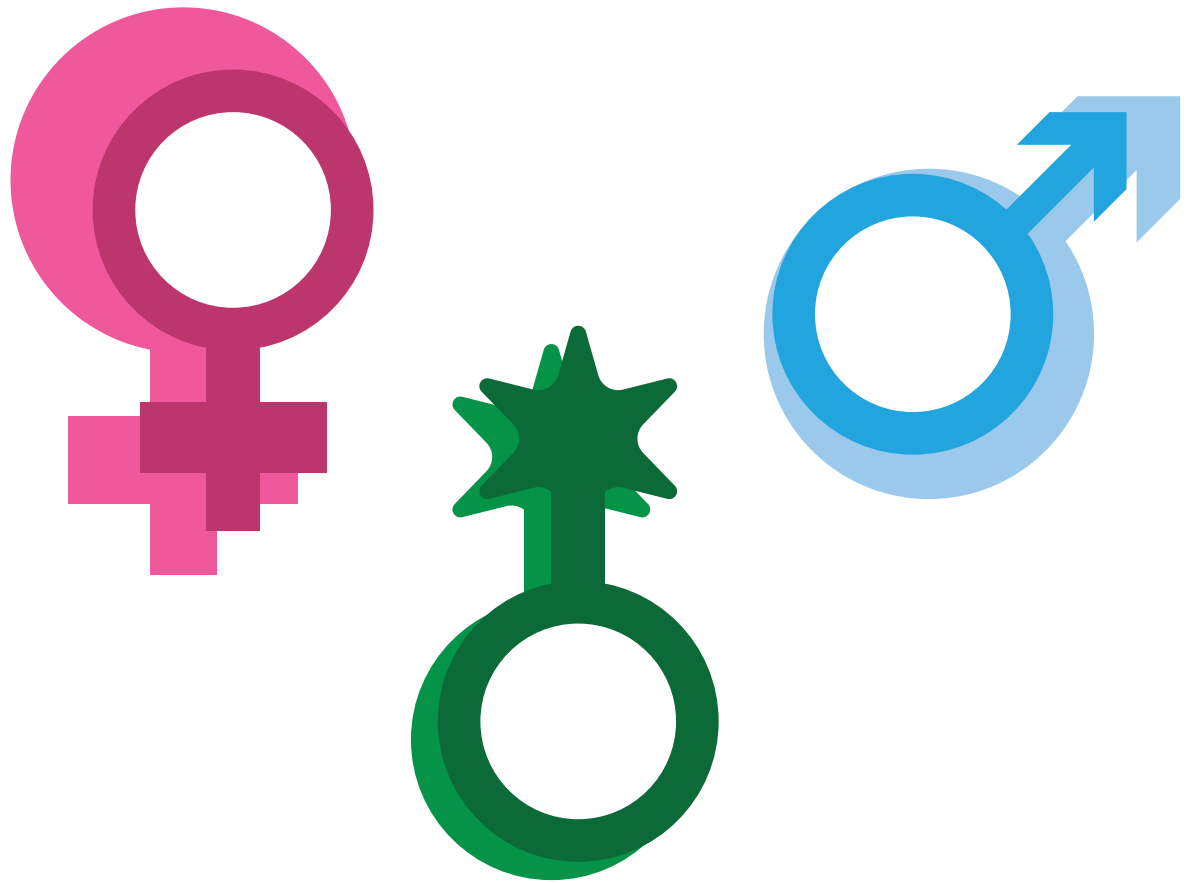
A plane crashed while landing in Ontario, Canada.

There were 80 people on board, all of which were evacuated according to BBC News. There were up to eight people injured according to local sources.

The US Federal Aviation Authority said that the Transportation Safety Board of Canada is doing a full investigation of what happened.

# Title IX changes

## How new updates to policy effect students



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Kate Babel  
News Reporter

Title IX, under the current Trump administration, aims to make changes to the policies made in 2020.

While Ferris' Title IX regulations have remained unchanged since 2020, Title IX underwent changes from the current Trump administration on the national level.

Changes include a narrow definition of sex discrimination, limited protections against sexual harassment and a narrow definition of hostile environment harassment.

Vice President of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance and pre-optometry senior Jamie Kocks gave her reaction to the recent changes.

"[Donald] Trump's executive order only wants to recognize two sexes, male and female, which there's not, there's not just two genders," Kocks said. "It's extremely discriminatory, especially for people who don't identify under those two and that's extremely alarming, because now with the changes in policy like Title IX, they don't have protections."

One of the executive orders

signed by the Trump administration involved the government only recognizing male and female genders.

The recent Title IX changes in definitions involve only sex assigned at birth, not including gender identity or sexual orientation. As for hostile environment harassment, unwelcome conduct is determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the university's education program or activity.

Title IX Coordinator Jessica Ettell Irvine elaborated on the topic of hostile environment harassment.

"We are trying to understand if something is severe, pervasive and objectively offensive, and how many times even after the first time someone said 'I'm not interested' did they persist?" Ettell Irvine said. "So we always have to ask those questions. We always have had to ask those questions even before 2020 to understand if whether or not the behaviors violating our policies under Title IX or if it's violating other campus policies."

Ettell Irvine explained why Ferris' Title IX has remained

unchanged is due to last summer in 2024 when the Biden administration released the new regulations. Multiple lawsuits started across the country, with different organizations taking issue with the new regulations and certain states. Certain institutions were called out for being enjoined, including Ferris, meaning that they could not implement these new policies.

Ferris' Title IX has not changed aside from minor modifications on who to contact for certain things. Despite that, problems still arise on a national scale as a result of the Title IX changes. An issue that has been raised is the prohibition of transgender students from playing in school sports.

Ettell Irvine later discussed the in-depth reason why the administration is doing this.

"There's this like push and pull around participation in certain athletics, because it's a matter of what identities are protected under Title IX," Ettell Irvine said. "So right now, the Trump administration is saying essentially that they'll only recognize an identity based on what was assigned at birth. So with that they're not recognizing

folks that identify as transgender. Therefore you have to participate in the athletics that you would be associated with based on what was assigned to you at birth."

The goal of Title IX is to protect people from being discriminated against based on their sex, gender identity and sexuality. With the Trump administration limiting this definition to just sex, it creates a problem for minority groups. Title IX does not just apply to males and females, it applies to everyone.

President of the FMLA and psychology senior Rayona Snowden expressed her concerns over what may result from these changes.

"As quickly as these gender rights, sex rights and women's rights are getting removed and having control and like all these minorities, it all goes into play," Snowden said. "Because if this can happen, what else can happen? Like how far back can we go? How much change can be reversed?"

As changes go into effect from the new administration that affects campus, the Torch will continue to report on them.

# Puck drop for heart health

## Annual Red Out's hockey weekend sets tone

Jasmine Baar  
Videographer

For its 13th year, this year's Red Out was longer than ever and spanned two weekends rather than one.

The fundraiser kicked off with the hockey game this past weekend and will continue this weekend at the men's and women's basketball games. The annual Red Out hockey game brought fans together for a night of sports and fundraising, all in support of women's heart health.

The Red Out fundraiser is a tradition dedicated to raising awareness and funds for life-saving cardiac rehabilitation.

All proceeds from the event will benefit the Big Rapids Corewell Health cardiac unit, helping support local patients and heart health initiatives.

Organized by sports communication students and volunteers in the Sports Professionals Association registered student organization, the event highlights how sports can bring people together to raise awareness and make a difference.

Behind the success of Red Out was the dedication and hard work of students who took on key roles in organizing and promoting the event.

This was SPA Treasurer and sports communication senior Ryan Pilon's fourth year helping the initiative.

"My first year I was the guy that stood around waiting to be told what to do," Pilon said. "I can't believe I'm in the position I'm in now."

Taking on co-assistant athletic director on the project, Pilon has worked his way up the ladder of Ferris athletics.

From doing play-by-play and intermission interviews for hockey and color commentary for volleyball. Pilon's journey from a freshman getting his feet wet to a key leader in the event reflects the dedication and growth of the students involved in Red Out.

His experience is just one example of how this fundraiser has provided students with hands-on learning opportunities.

Red Out was the creation of communication professor Sandy Alspach, who not only founded the event but expanded it into the successful fundraiser it is today.

As she prepares for her final year leading the Red Out, Alspach speaks highly of the students who have stepped up to carry the tradition forward.

"What does a teacher take away at the end of a 50-plus year career in education?" Alspach said. "The names. I can drop the names of my successful students. And that's my legacy."

That legacy is evident in this year's sports communication fundraising efforts, from securing sponsorships to coordinating with athletic events.

Students have applied their classroom knowledge in real-world settings, all while supporting women's heart health.

"The connection between hands-on learning, a Ferris trademark, we promote that students graduate ready to go, with direct experience for the jobs they want," Alspach said.

From media outreach to sponsor coordination, she played a vital role in bringing Red Out to life. Co-assistant

Athletic Director and sports communication senior Jessica Miller was at the forefront of these efforts, handling key aspects of media communication.

She worked alongside Associate Athletics Director Rob Bentley to design promotional flyers, collaborated with Corewell Health to assemble heart kits and helped organize the check presentation for donations collected during the first Red Out event.

"The community showed up in a big way," Miller said.

The total amount of the first check presented to Corewell Health was \$1,572.

The Ferris community was able to raise almost half of the total proceeds from last year's Red Out, in a single night.

Sports communication senior Michael Towns helped with the fundraiser.

"So far, we've had way more bids than I expected, and people aren't just raising by a dollar," Towns said. "We're making significant jumps."

A key moment of the night occurred during the auction for one-of-a-kind signed Ferris sports gear, specifically a hockey stick signed by the team.

What started as friendly bidding quickly escalated into a competitive showdown between a Ferris student and a Big Rapids community member, both determined to take home the prize and give to a cause.

Vice President of the Dawg Pound RSO and chemistry senior Decklin Neal committed to the bidding war.

Already in possession of a signed Noah Giesbrecht puck from last year's event and in



Photo by: Abe Kraus | Torch Photographer

### Chemistry senior Decklin Neal spent over \$200 in the silent auction.

the process of completing his signed Ferris jersey from all current players, Neal felt obligated to add to his Bulldog hockey memorabilia.

"I went out to the course to check my bid and his wife came up to me and handed me \$20," Neal said. "She said she didn't want her husband to get the stick, keep outbidding him."

After several bids and quality fundraising tactics done by the sports commu-

nication students, the signed stick was ultimately awarded to Neal, who was pleased to secure it without hitting his ceiling.

With Red Out expanding to two weekends this year, the fundraiser is far from over.

Fans will have another opportunity to show their support for women's heart health at the men's and women's basketball games this weekend in the form of donations. These donations

can be made throughout the week via a QR code on fliers posted across campus and throughout the Big Rapids community.

What began as one professor's vision has grown into a lasting tradition, bringing students, fans and local supporters together for a shared cause.

## Ferris State Torch

### Corrections

In the Feb. 12 edition of the Torch, the article "Not so Super Bowl" includes a sub-headline that contains a typo. It should read "Why I missed the big game" not "Why I am missed the big game".

Corrections can be submitted through email at [Torch@ferris.edu](mailto:Torch@ferris.edu)

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# Almost no menstrual products

## Most menstrual product machines empty across campus



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Multimedia Editor

While there are feminine toiletry dispensers throughout campus in the women's restrooms, most do not have supplies stocked. Small baskets are instead filled with supplies for students to use.

**Ember St. Amour**  
News Editor

Across most of the campus, the women's bathrooms include machines for menstrual products, however, for the last few years, most have been empty.

Traditionally, the machines are filled with sanitary napkins and tampons that can be purchased for a quarter, but most of the machines on campus haven't been filled in several years.

While in some bathrooms, there is occasionally a small basket filled with these products, they are not in every bathroom and are not provided by Ferris, but by faculty and students on campus.

Manager of Custodial Services and Facilities Jeff Warner explained why the machines were empty.

"Facilities does not provide feminine hygiene products within the restrooms on campus as they are not required as part of project managements standards of use," Warner said.

The machines are located in various bathrooms across campus including the Arts and Science Commons, the David Eisler Center, Starr and the Rock Cafe.

Survey engineering sophomore Vivian Cash shared her thoughts on the empty machines.

"I think it's incredibly disappointing, especially be-

cause tampons and pads, to me, are a necessity. Having those not be accessible, even for pay, kind of sucks," Cash said. "I've noticed that even girls in the bathroom have made their own little areas to get your free tampons and pads. And I feel like we should have more resources like that on campus that isn't just student-run."

These products are occasionally available at the food pantry when they are donated, however, they are not everyday products there, which means that students can purchase the products at the Market or Ferris Outfitters, which could leave them stranded without one when the machines are empty.

Cash had one of these experiences where the machine was empty, but she needed one.

"I asked the woman in the stall next to me, 'Do you have any tampons or a pad?'" Cash said. "And she said, 'No,' so I had to use one-ply toilet paper."

According to a study by the National Library of Health in 2021, those with menstrual cycles were found to have more irregular menstrual cycles under the age of 23, meaning that the need for one of these products is more frequent.

The Torch was unable to get in contact with anyone else in facilities at the time of this article.

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## ON THE RECORD

Ember St. Amour  
News Editor

### Parking lot warrant

Feb. 12, time unknown - Officers had a warrant for a student at North Hall. They found him in his vehicle in the parking lot, and he was arrested.

### Pickell pickpocket

Feb. 12, time unknown - Officers had a warrant for a student from a shoplifting case at Ferris Outfitters from September. They found her in Pickell Hall, and she was arrested.

### Pay the fine or do the time

Feb. 12, time unknown - A traffic ticket issued back in September was not taken care of, so an arrest warrant was issued. An arrest was made at Cardinal Court.

# Culture

Blase Gapinski | Culture Editor | gapinsb@ferris.edu

## Legacy of music

The story of Ferris orchestra's longest-tenured member



Photo courtesy of Ferris State University Arts and Sciences Department

Music classes were offered as early as 1895 from the Ferris Institute, while the orchestra was officially organized in 1907. The orchestra will be celebrating its 140th anniversary this upcoming April. Shown above is the 125th anniversary celebration held in the Williams Auditorium.

**Nolan Matthews**  
Sports Reporter

Playing in three orchestras simultaneously is unprecedented, but playing in the same orchestra for 52 years and being in two other orchestras is unheard of.

For 86-year-old Ella Villa, it's more than playing music; it's for socialization and to keep herself mentally and physically active. Since 1972, Villa has played in Ferris' orchestra as a violinist, but she is also a part of the Alma College orchestra and the Midland Community Orchestra.

Growing up in a family of music, Villa remembers how she got into music at a young age.

"My interest in music came because of how our mother was very interested in music," Villa said. "We're Latinos and we were raised in Corktown, and our mother belonged to a Mexican mariachi band. She had always had a love of music, so when we came along she decided

that she wanted us to go to the Detroit Conservatory of Music to learn piano and dancing. But I did not learn violin until I was 16 in high school."

After graduating from high school, she studied musical education at the University of Michigan and graduated in 1960. She held orchestral jobs for over 60 years in her musical career, such as being the director of the orchestra at the Chippewa Hills school district, a job she held from 1972 until her retirement in 1998, as well as teaching private lessons across Michigan. Villa recalls how she got the job at Chippewa Hills.

"I was teaching in Detroit as an emergency substitute in a regular position, I was a teacher without a contract," Villa said. "And at the end of the school year, they give everyone a pink slip, and then they rehire them in July. I did not know that, so my friend Mildred Bachelor, who was the director at Chippewa Hills, was retiring, so I came

up to talk to her. She asked me to pass the word onto Detroit that we're looking for a new director and I thought I'm not passing the word. So I interviewed for the job, and I got the job."

Music is Villa's way of keeping her mind sound and hand-eye coordination intact. For her mind, she gets to read the music and put the notes together. It benefits her hand-eye coordination by reading the notes and putting her fingers in the correct place. You have to make sure you are playing in tune and then coordinate your right hand with your left hand to use your bow in time.

She shows up every Tuesday at 7 p.m. with her sister Irene, who has accompanied her for 40 years to rehearsals and concerts. Irene herself studied business here at Ferris, graduating in 1957, as well as being in the original Crimson and Gold Chorus.

For Ferris State band director Daniel Atwood, Villa is a huge help to him and the rest of the orchestra.

"She is invaluable," Atwood said. "Her depth of knowledge just in terms of string playing, I mean she is fantastic, and herself being a former orchestra director, she understands the educational aspects of what we do. I mean we have students here that are participating that are non-musical majors, so she understands the whole dynamic of working with the students that are around her, it's really like having two directors."

Even though Irene and Villa both grew up in Corktown, Ferris and Big Rapids

has always been home to the sisters.

"Back in the 50s there were no real dorms," Irene said. "And at the time Ferris was big, but not big at the same time, and all there then was the married people apartments up on Ives Hill where I stayed, and every winter people would sled down the hills."

Music to Villa is her life; it always has been and always will be. You sometimes see older people do yoga to keep their mind and body sound. Villa uses music; she plays violin because she loves it,

and she'll be the first to admit that she is not as good as before and doesn't know how much longer she'll be able to do it.

She has done it because it is her life's work, educating children on the wonders and joys of music. For the foreseeable future, if you attend a Ferris orchestral concert and look in the violin section, you will see Villa playing her heart out for everyone to hear.

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# Perseverance through fiber art

“Insoluble Fibers” explores healing through art and community

**Tate Zellman**  
Freelance Reporter

Detroit-based fiber artist Cat Washington presents “Insoluble Fibers” in hopes of inspiring the community through her story and overcoming her struggles through fiber art.

“Insoluble Fibers” is Washington’s solo exhibition and is a testament to the transformative power of art as a means of self-discovery and healing. In front of 29 members of the community, she presented at the Fine Art Gallery on Thursday, Feb. 13, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Since embarking on her artistic journey in 2023, she has made significant strides in the art world, participating in 13 exhibitions, two artist residencies and being featured in Fiber Art Now, a prestigious fiber art magazine publication.

Presenting to a public university, Washington wanted to bring her art so that students could reflect on their personal lives and struggles.

“A lot of my art is finding self-trust through each piece,” Washington said. “And it has me thinking about the

students here, and I’m hoping they’re able to find trust in themselves. And I hope my work speaks to that, and that they can reflect on that while they’re here because I think that is very important.”

In creating her art, Washington established four pillars of value that are part of her show. One is disordered, which are pieces that speak to her eating disorder experience. Another is mediation on self, which includes her self-portraits. Another was Fiber Bizarre, where Washington has fun using different fibers. And then there was community.

Washington expressed the symbolism behind “Insoluble Fibers.”

“It represents a journey, recovery, perspective and the ability to be able to look back. I tie in that meaning towards my eating disorder and addiction in a way, because it never goes away,” Washington said. “The frequency of what it means to engage in the harmful behavior changes over time. It used to be very devastating when I would have episodes and now they’re signs that I was missing something in my life.

It represents that process of me being able to look back on all that and being mentally understood as to what my recovery has meant so far.”

Washington touched on loneliness being a trigger for her, and she stated that she needed to lean more on the community. In addition, she was why “community” was one of the four pillars of value of her show.

Fine Arts Gallery and Museum Director Carrie Weis found Washington’s story and art important for the Ferris community to hear about.

“[Washington] has a background in research and public health, she came to art as a way to recover from her eating disorder,” Weis said. “Through her art and her personal story, we can encourage conversation and dialogue about many topics such as how art can be used to explore personal issues and how it can provide an avenue for healing. We hope the gallery offers a space for reflection, understanding and growth while looking at difficult topics.”

Weis also said that sharing stories through art is important because it allows people

to express and communicate complex emotions, ideas and experiences in ways that words sometimes can’t capture.

Multicultural Student Services Director Chris Sanders enjoyed Washington’s story since he had dealt with challenges during his life.

“I’ve also been through some challenges with self-image and other personal things,” Sanders said. “I found my own ways to overcome those challenges. It was inspiring to hear how she’s got out of those challenges and kept herself out of the personal challenges that she had through art form. It was really cool hearing what she had to say.”

Washington is also the founder of the Black, Indigenous, People of Color Fiber Artist Meetup. Through that, she’s able to foster community within her fiber art.

“Insoluble Fibers” will remain in the Fine Art Gallery until March 28. Ferris students and community members can view the artwork during the gallery’s open hours. The gallery is open every weekday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Photo by: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer  
Cat Washington’s art pieces are comprised of colorful single-stitch crochet patterns.

## A Valentine’s night of music

Big Rapids’ Festival of the Arts highlights barbershop tunes



Photo by: Max Sorek | Freelance Reporter

The quartet drew crowds of people from the community to listen.

**Max Sorek**  
Freelance Reporter

Big Rapids’ Festival of the Arts offers multiple artistic shows and workshops throughout February and local artists such as painters, photographers and musicians gather together to showcase their talents.

Valentine’s Day was as

unique as any other day. On the night of Feb. 14, Immanuel Lutheran Church was filled not with worship music but barbershop harmony. Three groups were hosted by Big Rapids’ Festival of the Arts. The 8 Man Vocal Band was a non-traditional octet, while Cruise Control and Vintage Blend sang in traditional quartets.

The church was full, and the performers received multiple standing ovations. From Roger Miller’s “King of the Road” to “Evermore” from Disney’s live-action “Beauty and the Beast,” all three groups chose a crowd-pleasing mix of classic and modern songs.

Cruise Control has an interesting conception story. Lead

singer Catie Carey reflected on how the group originally came to be.

“Our bass singer, Cole Carey was competing in a district competition where he was singing in three quartets, and he was singing tenor, lead and baritone,” Carey said. “In a barbershop quartet, the melody is almost always sung by the leader or second tenor. The first tenor harmonizes above the melody, the bass sings the lowest harmonizing notes, and the baritone finishes off the chord. He is not a bass, but he thought it would be fun for us to compete in all four parts. So he called us ‘Cruise Control.’”

Before they knew it, Cruise Control was Pioneer District’s 2024 Collegiate Quartet Champions.

Barbershop harmony has been around since the 1800s. It is rooted in southern Black culture and was even an inspiration for jazz music. Barbershop style is a type of unaccompanied vocal music or a-cappella music, that uses four-part chords for every melody note.

Barbershop is also known for scat singing, just like jazz music. Scat singing or “scatting” involves singing impro-

vised vowels, syllables or no words. It is used to fill in the gap left by the genre’s lack of musical instruments, as a cappella music means the forgoing of all musical instruments in favor of your voice. A master scatter can bring excellent harmony and timing to a barbershop group.

Not to be overshadowed, Vintage Blend was Pioneer District’s 2024 senior quartet champion. Their expressiveness on stage had the crowd laughing and tapping their toes. Their arrangement of “Evermore” from “Beauty and the Beast” brought the crowd to their feet.

Vintage Blend bass singer James Masalskis led the song in a powerful voice and knew that it would be a hit at this performance.

“There are certain things that we know work, you know, you have to end with something big that everyone likes,” Masalskis said.

Every group has its personality. The 8 Man Vocal Band advertises themselves as eight men with over 200 years of singing experience between them. Their traditional roots and friendly bond with each other even inspired a cassette tape called “Just

Among Friends.”

As a surprise, once the concert was finished, all three groups came together and performed two songs as a chorus. The arrangements of Ricky Nelson’s “Hello Mary Lou” and The Turtles’ “Happy Together” were a strong finish to an already stacked concert.

The 8 Man Vocal Band lead singer Bill Woodbeck described why it is important to uphold camaraderie with other groups.

“Some of those songs are ones that several groups from around the state know. So we knew we could sing them with others,” Woodbeck said. “Having songs in common isn’t seen as competition but rather a chance to grow and sing with other groups. In a genre that places the highest importance on harmony, this is an excellent practice to uphold.”

The Festival of the Arts offers such a wide selection of art, like these three groups. The sheer variety showcased by this month-long event is a must-see festival. It’s important that the Big Rapids community has a way to connect and work together with Ferris.

# Current campus tunes

Ferris students reveal their current favorite songs



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Scan to listen on Spotify



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

**Grace Heethuis**  
Freelance Reporter

According to many students across campus, music is an integral part of culture, with students' tastes in music displaying a great deal of diversity.

At Ferris, music serves as a vital form of expression, bridging cultural divides and offering students a way to unwind and connect. Whether it's the soothing melodies of R&B or the upbeat rhythms of pop, music plays an important role in the lives of students, not only as a source of entertainment but also as a tool for emotional support.

R&B and pop are two of the most listened-to genres among students, but other top genres include K-pop, country, rap and hip-hop.

Many cited music as a way to improve their mood and help them when they are struggling.

Business administration junior Melanie Wolf talked about her favorite song and the role music plays in her personal life.

"[My favorite song is] Lookin Exotic by Future. I

would say music is my motivation and a great way to keep going," Wolf said.

Music has the power to shape our emotions, connect us across cultures and offer a glimpse into the spirit of different times. For many students at Ferris, music is a vital part of their routines, whether for relaxation or for a deeper cultural connection.

Finance senior Connor Lamerson shared his current musical favorite.

"My favorite song right now I'd say is Twenties by Giveon," Lamerson said.

Music, however, isn't just about personal enjoyment for everyone. Many university students find solace in music's ability to ease anxiety and provide mental clarity. For computer information systems junior Mohammed Farooqi, it holds a therapeutic quality.

"Music has a good role in my life because I listen to music whenever I feel stressed and overwhelmed and it just calms me," Farooqi said.

This emotional release isn't unique to Farooqi. Beyond its personal impact, music plays a profound role

in the cultural landscape.

Dental hygiene junior Hannah Elmore reflected on how music can have societal significance.

"I think music brings everyone together, so within different cultures it is a part of everyone coming together," Elmore said.

Elmore shared what she is currently listening to.

"[My favorite is] called The Sunshine by Infinity Song. I discovered it randomly on Apple Music," Elmore said.

Fourth-year nursing major Elizabeth McDougall spoke about her current favorite song.

"One of my favorites would have to be by Stray Kids. It's 'Lose my Breath,'" McDougall said.

McDougall expressed the ways in which music helps her, and the role that it plays in her life.

"I listen to it every day, and it's just a way for me to relax and kind of get out of my head. So yeah, it plays a really big part in my life," McDougall said.

A few students talked about how difficult it is to choose just one song as their

favorite, saying their favorite song often depends on their mood or what they need at the moment.

Education freshman Reese Walski was one student who had trouble deciding on a favorite.

"It depends on the day or the mood. Probably my favorite is 'All My Friends' by Snakehips," Walski said.

Besides the love of R&B on Ferris' campus, there are several students who said they enjoy listening to country and pop music.

Class of 2023 elementary education graduate Haley Clifford enjoys listening to country artist Kelsea Ballerini.

"I've been listening to Penthouse by Kelsea Ballerini. I love listening to music. I feel like any chance I get I'm playing music, whether it's for myself or for my students. It kind of calms me down, but hypes me up at the same time," Clifford said.

For the students of Ferris, it is much more than just a backdrop to daily life. It's a reflection of who they are, where they come from and what they aspire to be.

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# Opinions

Jackie Moglia | Opinions Editor | [mogliaj@ferris.edu](mailto:mogliaj@ferris.edu)

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## EDITOR'S COLUMN:

# Rooting for the home team

Recognizing an undersung part of Detroit's sports resurgence



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

**Dylan Rider**  
*Editor in Chief*

My allegiances when it comes to sports aren't exactly normal.

How does someone born and raised in Michigan begin to support the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Chicago Cubs? I promise that it actually makes sense with proper context, but that's not my point here. None of my main teams hail from the great state of Michigan.

Now, this doesn't mean I don't like the Detroit Lions, Tigers or Red Wings. All the teams have been fun to watch as of late. I'd argue that they all have outperformed my favorite teams mentioned above in the past year or two. It's just who I got attached to when I got into sports. I've got nothing

against Detroit.

Notice how I haven't mentioned any NBA teams. It's because it's the exception. I love the Detroit Pistons. They're the only team I find myself sitting down and watching consistently. However, compared to the other Detroit franchises, they're a bit behind.

The Lions recently had back-to-back years of playoff berths and a franchise-best regular season record. The Tigers defied all odds last season, made the playoffs and made the ALDS. The Red Wings had a hard push to the playoffs and came up short last year, but a New Year revitalization under new head coach Todd McLellan has them 15-5-1 since his hiring this past December.

The Pistons, though? A tad different. The 2023-24 season for the team was

grueling, to say the least. A 28-game losing streak, tied for the longest NBA losing streak, pushed the Pistons to a league-worst 14-68 record. On top of this, the Pistons' draft lottery luck dried up, as they received the worst pick they could've received, fifth overall, despite having some of the best odds for the first overall.

It was brutal. I was at the team's 25th consecutive loss in December of 2023. Chants of "sell the team" broke out. There was only anger within the long string of defeats.

This team is by no means perfect. They're barely treading a .500 record. But the momentum is there. They're fun, and as long as they're not on another 28-game losing streak, you can't take this from me.

A massive reformation in the offseason now has this

team in a much better place. The Pistons' 2023-24 win total has almost doubled in the 2024-25 season, and we're just past the season's halfway point.

I've never been a big basketball fan. It's one of the sports I've never been able to fully grasp. I couldn't give you more than surface-level information on the sport, but perhaps that's enough.

My other teams' underperforming and mediocrity have killed my enjoyment of sports here and there. This year's Pistons are a refreshing dose of fun for me. There's no expectation for a championship or some magical run. In the best way possible, the bar has been set low.

The Lions have been in the Super Bowl conversation for the better of two years. The Tigers now have playoff expectations heading into this

year, as do the Red Wings in their current state.

The Pistons' situation is something that needs to be enjoyed. They're in a perfect window of no expectations. What happens at the end of this season sets the expectations for next year. This team is floating in a free state of excitement.

If you told me I'd be hollering in my living room after a deep three-point shot from Malik Beasley after last season, I would have given you the most deprecated answer imaginable.

But now, we're here. I've got a new love for basketball that I don't think I've ever had. My Pistons are buzzing. They're exciting. That's more than I can say about my teams not from our state.



# Struggling with stress

## Is college worth the stress?

**Hailey Nye**  
Production Assistant

What unifies college students across the globe is the fact that college is stressful.

After graduating high school, before our frontal lobes have had the chance to develop, we must face the stressful decision of whether or not it is worth it to put ourselves into mountains of debt for education, and the promised chance of a better future.

I am currently a junior design student, which means I have had plenty of time to experience all the struggles and mental breakdowns that students can encounter during their college experience.

I have seen the number of classmates in my program dwindle over the years. We have gone from a room full of eager students to a measly five students in the junior design program.

I cannot blame them for leaving, I understand. This makes me wonder if this is all even worth it. Are the physical and mental tolls worth it?

The largest stressor I am currently facing is getting a summer internship. If I don't get an internship before the end of the semester, then my graduation will be delayed,

and I'll be behind by a whole year. Not only would this delay my graduation, but it would also affect my finances and standing in life. I will be behind on the goals I've set.

As you can imagine, getting an internship weighs heavily on my thoughts. It haunts me as I go through my day, and I can't even escape this dreadful feeling when I sleep. Because internships have been on my mind, I've started dreaming about them.

I am sure we have all had that one assignment that has taken us so long to complete. You may have pulled a couple of all-nighters and maybe a couple of hairs out, but once you have finally clicked the submit button, there is no better feeling than that weight lifted off your shoulders.

This is how I view college: one big assignment. I am sure none of us like homework, but it sure is good once it is over.

Last semester was the toughest I have had so far, and my professors knew. I felt like I couldn't breathe because of all the assignments that kept piling up.

My professor told me after it was all over that if I could persevere with such a large workload, I could easily face

anything the rest of my college experience has to offer.

Hearing this from my professor brings me comfort in tough times and late-night projects. I'm tougher than I think.

So, college is stressful. What is my point? My point is that even when I look back at the late nights and tears, I wouldn't change anything. Going to college was my choice. I wanted to learn more and be better because I love the profession I am pursuing.

Knowing that at the end of the graduation stage is a future where I can live with a career that I look forward to makes it all worth it.

To finish, is college worth it? For me, yes. For you, it all depends on your perspective and your perseverance to get to the finish line.

College is just a stepping stone in the garden of life, and once it is complete, there is a whole adventure waiting. Granted, the adventure of reality and life won't be easy, but if you have faced college and come out on the other side or are in the process of doing so, I hope that gives you the determination to keep going.



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

# Bringing baseball back

## Why Ferris needs a baseball team

**Nolan Matthews**  
Sports Reporter

Eleven GLIAC titles in 20 seasons sounds like a successful program that would likely still be around today, right?

Wrong. Ferris has not had a baseball team since the summer of 1994 when it was disbanded for numerous reasons, such as a lack of funding and Title IX. The program sent multiple players to the MLB, including International Softball Congress Hall of Fame Todd Schultz.

Ferris was also not scared of a challenge, as they scheduled to play many DI teams, not once a year, but often twice. Playing Michigan State, University of Michigan and Notre Dame. Ferris Hall of Famer and longtime head coach Judd Folske recalls how Ferris played these teams.

"When I had the job we scheduled real hard back then," Folske said. "DI schools were looking to play us quite often, each season we played quite a few DI teams and it always seemed to be on the road, I mean Notre Dame always invited us, and playing such great oppo-

nents was great for the men, we had some great games against those teams while also winning quite a few of those games."

The program ended in the summer of 1994 after the team won yet another GLIAC title. This is when Folske was informed that the program was being dissolved for numerous reasons.

I have played baseball almost my whole life while also being a massive fan of the sport, and when I got to Ferris and found out that a school of its size did not have a team, I knew I had to find out why.

Out of the 11 members of the GLIAC, only four schools do not have a baseball team, with Ferris being the largest school without one. But why?

Having a baseball team at Ferris would open opportunities to many athletes from West Michigan from smaller schools who weren't scouted for by the bigger schools, lending them the chance to further their athletic career, and an opportunity for impoverished athletes to obtain a scholarship and get a college education. Additionally, it would give students the chance to play the sport at

a higher level that they have sunk so many hours of their lives into.

There is still massive support for bringing a team back to Ferris, including an alumni golf outing over the summer of 2024 that saw many former alumni, as well as Ferris President Dr. Bill Pink.

Seeing the amount of support that the alumni still have for bringing the program back is amazing for me to see. To see how much the team meant to everyone and how they all still keep in touch and cherish their time on the team speaks volumes. I know I'd love to see the team come back.

While there may be a ton of support to bring the team back to Ferris, there are still obstacles that stand in the way. One reason is money, and while it does not cost that much to run a baseball program, the startup costs to bring the program back to life are the key. Designing and ordering new jerseys, finding a field and bringing it up to NCAA standards, buying new equipment and much, much more.

The second reason is the NCAA's equal opportunity through Title IX, which en-



Photo courtesy of University Archives

### The Ferris Institute baseball team of 1919 with Woodbridge N. Ferris.

sures that both men and women collegiate athletes receive equal access to athletic participation, scholarships, coaches and facilities.

If Ferris brought back baseball, they would have to add another women's sport to equal the number of scholarships baseball would give. That means more funding for another program, which

would make it more difficult. While adding two more sports and opportunities would be amazing, it's not something realistic for the university yet.

Bringing a baseball team back to Ferris would benefit so many potential players from around the country to further their education and their athletic careers. Going to a Ferris baseball game

sounds amazing. Bringing a team back would mean the world to former players and coaches, and I really believe it would do nothing but benefit Ferris.

# Sports

Connor Grypma | Sports Editor | grypma@ferris.edu

## Hockey heads north for last road series

Bulldogs make final push before CCHA playoffs



Photo by: Ciara Brooks | Torch Photographer

Ferris hockey split last weekend's series against Lake Superior State, winning in overtime on Friday and losing on Saturday.

**Devin Wardrop**  
Freelance Reporter

With four games remaining in the regular season, Bulldog hockey aims to finish strong, starting with a weekend slate against the Michigan Tech Huskies.

Ferris (11-17-2, 10-12 in CCHA) will head to the Upper Peninsula to play the Huskies (15-12-3, 11-8-3 in CCHA). Earlier this season, Michigan Tech swept the Bulldogs in two different games.

Ferris is coming off a series split against the Lake Superior State Lakers at home. Michigan Tech is coming off a one-point weekend at Augustana where they lost the first game and won the second in a shootout, registering a tie in the standings.

The Bulldogs suffered their loss to Lake Superior in the second half of the series, following the theme for a majority of their matchups this season. Ferris is 3-10-1 on Saturday games compared to a 7-6-1 ledger in the Friday opening games.

However, the Bulldogs have won five of their last seven games, making a push for home-ice advantage in the upcoming CCHA playoffs. While the opportunity of taking a top-four seed is unlikely, Ferris is still rising in the standings as the season concludes.

Redshirt sophomore forward Cole Burtch highlighted the forwards and how they've

been playing the last seven games.

"It starts up and down the lineup," Burtch said. "It starts from [Noah] West to the defense to the forwards. Our forward core has been doing a lot more up and down and we've been checking well which has created for our offense lately."

The Bulldogs are led in scoring by Burtch (7-15-22), with junior forward and Hobey Baker nominee Caiden Gault (11-7-18) right behind him. Senior forward Kaleb Ergang (5-11-16) rounds out the top three in scoring and games played, with 30 for Burtch and Gault and 29 for Ergang.

Graduate goaltender Noah West continues to anchor the Bulldog defense in the crease. The Pittsboro, Ind. native and Michigan transfer has started 28 of the 29 games he's played. West has logged almost 1,700 minutes played, bringing a 3.12 goals-against average and a .906 save percentage into the contest.

West credited the defense in front of him for the play he's had.

"They've been good the last three weeks," West said. "They've been solid, so we just got to keep putting 60-minute games together and keep this rolling. We've been playing hard the last month, and that's awesome to see as a goalie because it makes life easy when guys

are in front of you."

The Huskies are led in scoring by junior forward Stiven Sardarian (10-22-32), with sophomore forwards Isaac Gordon (5-17-22) and Max Koskipirtti (6-15-21) rounding out the Huskies' top three in points. Tech will likely have senior goaltender Derek Mullahy between the pipes. Mullahy started 17 of the 19 games he's played and has just under 1,000 minutes played. He brings a 2.59 goals-against average and a .904 save percentage into the game.

Head coach Bob Daniels is confident that his team will be able to bounce back following the loss and have a good week of practice going into the Michigan Tech series.

"I don't think it'll be hard to come back and work really hard," Daniels said. "Just given the fact that the guys know we're playing good hockey right now, and we feel it. So we've got momentum. We can move upward in the standings so I don't think there's gonna be any issue."

Ferris State will play Michigan Tech on Friday, Feb. 21 at 7:07 p.m. and again on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 6:07 p.m. in Daniels' last road series in the regular season before returning home on Feb. 28 and March 1 for his final home series, as the Bulldogs take on Northern Michigan.



Photo by: Abe Kraus | Torch Photographer

The Bulldogs have two series remaining before the CCHA playoffs begin in March.

# Sophomore standout

## Softball slugger Alexis Kozlowski builds off strong freshman campaign

**Nolan Matthews**  
Sports Reporter

Following a historic rookie year, sophomore first baseman Alexis Kozlowski has her eyes on the prize as the Bulldogs kick off the new season.

Hailing from Gaylord, where she was a multi-sport varsity athlete, she chose softball as the sport to chase. In her senior season, she was awarded First Team All-Conference, First Team All-Region and First Team All-State.

Kozlowski's success has not been without challenges, but thanks to good coaching, she overcame these obstacles.

"The biggest obstacle I have had to overcome in my career is being able to take constructive criticism," Kozlowski said. "From a young age, I was lucky to have had a coach who always believed in me even when I didn't, but that came with a lot of tough love. In the end, I had to realize that it was all for a good purpose and it would all pay off in the end."

Kozlowski has played softball all of her life. She started playing in little leagues because her parents told her she could try any sport she could imagine. That ended up being softball. She played in little leagues and travel ball leagues every summer while growing up.

After her high school tenure, she decided to further her softball career and play at a higher level. Recruiting was a tough step for Kozlowski, but it ended up being worth it in the long run.

"Recruitment was a long process," Kozlowski said. "I had to email coaches every day, going to camps and waiting until coaches could find the time to reach out to me, but when Coach Schumann got the job at Ferris, he contacted me. After that, Ferris was immediately on my radar."

When she got to Ferris, she was immediately thrust into a starting role. In her first game against Lincoln

Memorial, she went up to the plate in the top of the fifth inning and hit a three-run home run. However, she wasn't finished. In her next at-bat, she smacked a two-run double and ended the day 2-for-4 and five RBIs.

This was just the beginning of her award-winning freshman season, as she became one of the best players in the GLIAC. Sitting top ten in every major offensive statistic, hitting for a .357 average, 16 extra-base hits, six home runs, 38 RBIs, a 1.048 OPS and a .645 slugging percentage.

As a teammate, junior infielder Jady Joseph loves her as a teammate and wants nothing but the best for the team.

"Alexis has a very competitive spirit," Joseph said. "She always wants the team to succeed, no matter what."

To build off her freshman season, Kozlowski reiterated that she is going to work as hard as she can this year.

"From last season to this season I haven't really made any changes," Kozlowski said. "Except for putting in even more work than I did last season, even this year's team has put in more time and effort than last year's team. I feel so fortunate to be around girls that all want to make you a better player, but then again we are only looking forward at what's to come, not the past."

With a very young team, Kozlowski will need to keep her production up from last season to compete with a talented GLIAC for a division championship. Kozlowski is off to a hot start, already hitting for a .333 average, three extra-base hits and five RBIs in just six games.

Head coach Jake Schumann knows Kozlowski will be one of the best players Ferris softball has ever seen when her career is finished.

"Alexis along with Emma Gillard were the first players I contacted when I got the call that I was hired to take over this team," Schumann said. "Alexis is a catalyst and



Photo courtesy of Alexis Kozlowski

Through six games, elementary education sophomore Alexis Kozlowski has earned six hits, ranking second on the team.

an All-American type player that will forever be etched in the history books of this program when she is done here. Not only for her personal achievements, but the fact that she and her class turned a program back around."

Kozlowski will continue her standout season as the Bulldogs enter conference play

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# Basketball begins final homestand

Ferris looks to sweep Pride and split season series with Rangers



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics/Kevin McDermott

Senior Deng Reng averages just 1.1 turnover a game despite contributing 19 minutes to the Bulldogs lineup.

**Caden Hofmann**  
Special Editions Editor

The Ferris State men's basketball team will host two GLIAC opponents this weekend, Purdue Northwest and Wisconsin-Parkside.

After a 16-1 start to the

season, the Bulldogs (21-6, 11-5 in GLIAC) have split their last 10 games, going 5-5 in that span.

They will look to turn things around with just four games left before the conference tournament starts on Wednesday, March 5. Fer-

ris will play the Pride (6-18, 3-13 in GLIAC) on Thursday, Feb. 20.

In their first matchup, Ferris beat Purdue Northwest by a score of 93-83.

The Bulldogs will continue to play at home on Saturday, Feb. 22, and look for revenge

against the Rangers (14-10, 11-5 in GLIAC). Wisconsin-Parkside handed Ferris their first GLIAC loss on the road earlier this season with a 78-66 win over the Bulldogs.

In their first matchup versus the Pride, Ferris had a lot of success between their two big men, senior forward Reece Hazelton and junior center Nathan Claerbaut. The two combined for 38 points and 13 rebounds.

Claerbaut says establishing an inside presence will be key versus the Pride.

"It is always our goal to work inside out," Claerbaut said. "We want to get the ball into the paint early, establish our presence inside with our size to open up the floor for our team."

They were also able to dominate the glass as a team, grabbing 41 rebounds compared to Purdue Northwest's 28.

The Bulldogs will need to contain junior guard Collin Albert. In the first meeting, Albert scored 21 points efficiently and averaged 15.7 on the year.

The matchup versus Wisconsin-Parkside is a major one with large GLIAC tournament implications. Ferris and the Rangers hold the same

record in the conference and a loss for the Bulldogs would move them down in the standings. Both teams have already clinched a spot in the tournament, but seeding is still uncertain.

In the earlier meeting between the two teams, Ferris struggled with the intensity of Wisconsin-Parkside's defense and put up just 66 points.

The Bulldogs turned the ball over 15 times and shot 15 three-point shots even though their season average is 23.9.

The Rangers were able to suffocate the Ferris offense, and the Bulldogs will look to bounce back in this contest.

Taking care of the ball versus Wisconsin-Parkside is going to be a major point of emphasis for the Bulldogs, according to junior guard Tyler Hamilton.

"Turnovers are bound to happen but they killed us in that first game against them," Hamilton said. "We know we want to play fast and play our game but we have to cut down on them to close out our season."

The Rangers held a balanced attack against Ferris in the first game with five players scoring in double digits, but they are led by six

foot-five junior guard Jack Rose. Rose averages 16.9 points per game and has had seven straight games with 10 plus points.

Containing Rose and navigating the tough Ranger defense will play a large role in determining the game's outcome.

A major key to the Bulldogs' potential success lies in senior guard Ethan Erickson. Erickson, the school's all-time three-pointers made leader, is averaging 16.9 points per game this season and is coming off of a season-high 31 points versus Northern Michigan last week.

Erickson is looking to build off that outburst and carry it into the last few games of the season.

"A game like that definitely gives me a ton of confidence and good momentum as we close out the season," Erickson said. "We also had such a good shooting game as a team, we are going to look to build off of that for sure."

Ferris has two home games and two away games as they close out the season in preparation for a NCAA tournament run.

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