

“Wild About Ferris” homecoming show

Comedy acts bring laughter to Ferris



Photo courtesy of Entertainment Unlimited

Members of Entertainment Unlimited seen with the “Wild ‘n Out” crew before the show.

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

The “Wild About Ferris” comedy show took place on Sept. 18, 2025 to kick off homecoming weekend.

The event was held in the Williams Auditorium and featured comedians Conceited, Justina Valentine and Radio Big Mack from the hit tv show “Wild ‘n Out”, produced by Nick Cannon.

Students participated in various comedy games throughout the show.

Games included pick up and kill it and family reunion, which are each segments regularly featured on the show.

Students also had the opportunity to take part in a rap battle contest against one another while also getting the

chance to team up with other students.

Students were also asked to showcase their moves in a dance contest, which featured a cash prize of one hundred dollars.

Entertainment Unlimited, a student-led programming board that organizes and plans events with diverse artists for Ferris hosted the show.

Music business and entertainment major Megan Bargo explained the process for planning an event like the comedy show.

“The preparation for the live show begins months in advance,” Bargo said. “We get a roster of who we would like, thinking about what could be a good fit for the Ferris demographic. Then we

work on planning the day of the event and giving tasks to all out students involved.”

Bargo serves as the president of EU.

Bargo further commented that the biggest challenge the organization faces is making sure that things run smoothly, with everyone arriving on time and knowing what they are doing.

Conceited and Justina Valentine began their careers as a battle rapper, before being cast on MTV and hosting various shows on the program.

The rapper urged students to follow their passions and put in the hard work.

“You really have to get there by cutting your teeth and grinding,” Conceited said. “It’s not easy, but if it’s your dream and your pas-

sion, if you’re down to put 100% into it, then you go for it. Doubt has killed way more dreams than failure will.”

Another sentiment Conceited reminded students of is that we all only live once and life can be whatever they make of it.

Radiology sophomore Marissa Leone worked backstage for the comedy show and explained that the backstage environment is exciting, but nerve-wracking.

“I was really excited and nervous at the same time because it’s famous people,” Leone said. “My responsibilities include making sure they have anything they need like water or tissues, assisting if they need to reach people in the auditorium and making sure their microphones work

correctly.”

Both artists have gone by pseudonyms throughout their careers, Conceited known as “Mr. Cut The Beat” and Valentina known as “The Wild Style Queen”.

Valentina explained what life was like as an artist before getting on Wild ‘n out, where she began working with Conceited.

“I had a song on the radio with my brother Fetty Wap,” Valentina said. “Conceited was so good that he actually had to retire once he got on tv. He started doing so many other things including hosting, MTV and we did a movie together. We never pursued comedy, comedy pursued us.”

The comedy show is a hallmark event of the homecom-

ing season at Ferris State.

Every year EU partners with different comedians to bring some sort of comedy event to campus to kick off the homecoming festivities.

Sonography sophomore Natalie Adams stated that it was really exciting to be a participant in the show.

“I had no idea what I was getting myself into,” Adams said. “I was just raising my hand in line and they gave me a volunteer pass!”

The next event planned by EU will be the Spring concert, hosted in the Williams Auditorium. It has not yet been announced who will be performing for the concert.

News

After 65 years, the Ferris speech and debate team is experiencing significant changes on the team
PG. 2

Culture

Are energy drinks all that they’re cracked up to be? Read about what preferences students have, and what they think about the drinks!
PG. 5

Opinions

What does the removal of Jimmy Kimmel mean for the future of the First Amendment? **PG. 8**

Sports

Multiple former Bulldogs have moved onto higher levels of their respective sport, learn what they are up to so far in their careers
PG. 12

News

Emma Walters | News Editor | walters8@ferris.edu

Michigan

Emma Walters
News Editor

A partial state government shutdown may be approaching, as Democrats and Republicans continue to disagree on passing a budget in Lansing.

The 2026 fiscal year is set to begin on Oct. 1, leaving state representatives in a time crunch to pass a new spending budget.

Much of the disagreement on the new budget has come from members of opposite parties blaming each other for blocking a spending budget agreement.

National

Emma Walters
News Editor

A man has been arrested and charged for opening fire in a New Hampshire country club on Sept. 20.

One person died and two people were wounded, according to local authorities.

The suspect was identified as 23-year-old Hunter Nadeau, who has been charged with one count of second-degree murder and may receive other charges.

Investigators are continuing to work on determining Nadeau's motive.

Global

Emma Walters
News Editor

Thousands have evacuated their homes in the Philippines after a super typhoon made landfall over Panuitan Island.

It was reported that the severity of the super typhoon had slightly weakened by the time the storm hit the islands.

Schools and government facilities in the path of the typhoon have shut in preparation. The typhoon is expected to continue west across the islands towards southern China.

Officials have warned of widespread infrastructure damage and flooding that may result from the storm.

The future of debate

What is next for the Ferris debate team?



Photo courtesy of Jonathen Hart

Members of the Debate team posing with awards.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

For 65 years, the Ferris speech and debate team has been a mainstay on campus, winning many awards and producing many champions for the team.

This past year has been a very different year for the team, having one of their most successful seasons that Ferris has ever seen. The team had two members who were ranked in the top 25 in the nation, with over 140 awards won by the team throughout the year.

Then the team found out that their coach, Aimee Miller, would be leaving Ferris and the team. Miller had been the coach for three years, but Ferris allegedly offered her low compensation for her work.

So, after years of negotiating with the dean, and little progress with receiving a larger budget for the team, Miller resigned. It came down to her and the administration not being able to negotiate a contract, and ultimately, Miller and Ferris parted ways.

Senior Jonathen Hart, who

is studying sports communications and is the former president of the speech and debate team, spoke about the situation with Miller.

"It was a weird time to find out that Miller was leaving," Hart said. "We had just come off one of our most successful years that Ferris had ever seen, and so when we found out, I went and spoke with her about her decision to leave. Ultimately, it boiled down to her and the administration not being able to agree on what her contract would look like going forward."

The whole year for the team has been a weird one; they had their department chair retire and a new one step in. As well as the humanities department being moved from Johnson Hall, it has been a big year of transition for the debate team.

Since then, Dr. Kristi Scholten, a professor of communications, has volunteered her time to be the coach for the team, and she spoke about why she volunteered to do so.

"I coached debate here at Ferris about seven or eight years ago. I think 2018 was

my last semester," Scholten said. "You know, just in many organizations, you always have a bit of turnover. It just so happened this year that we had a vacancy, so I volunteered to step up into that role."

Scholten also commented on the negative effects a gap year would have on the debate team's motivation.

"I did not want a gap year for this team, as even with just a single gap year, I did not want us to be forgotten," Scholten said. "As anyone who has ever played sports before, when you have a gap year like that, you can lose a lot of momentum and lose a lot of membership."

Scholten has many years of coaching debates under her belt; not only did she once coach Ferris, but she was a competitor during high school and throughout her undergraduate years. Additionally coaching through her masters and PhD, she has a total of around 20 years of experience.

Nonetheless, the team is still looking for a new permanent coach and plan to begin

interviewing candidates in the spring to hopefully fill the position.

Current speech and debate President, senior Seth Brott who is studying information security and intelligence, is confident in the future of his team.

"We should have a fully dedicated and permanent coach by next year," Brott said. "With Dr. Scholten, she is an amazing coach, and she has coached national champions. I am very confident that we can find another good permanent coach. The team is extremely dedicated and has been putting in that extra effort to grow our team."

Even with all of the commotion, the team is still competing. They have multiple virtual tournaments planned, with an upcoming tournament planned for Sept. 27. They will also be traveling to Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, this November.

Jonathen Hart was previously employed by the Ferris State Torch.

Faculty spotlight

New English professor brings a fresh take

Blase Gapinski
Editor in chief

K.M. Begian-Lewis is the newest addition to Ferris State University's Department of English, Literature and World Languages, bringing a fresh perspective to the area of developmental English.

Begian-Lewis, who uses they/them pronouns, is the latest assistant professor of English at Ferris. They have been in Big Rapids for just over a month, giving them enough time to settle into their new role and begin shaping their contributions to the department.

Having recently completed a PhD in Rhetoric and Writing Studies at Wayne State University, Begian-Lewis now teaches developmental English at Ferris, which is known as English 074. In this class, Begian-Lewis has made it their goal to focus on time management, confidence-building and student-centered learning.

English 074 at Ferris is a foundational course aimed at preparing students for the challenges of college-level writing. Typically taken by students who may not place directly into English 150, the class emphasizes grammar, sentence structure and the writing process.

Their approach to teaching is rooted in personal experience. As someone who faced being homeless while growing up and often received discouraging feedback on their writing, Begian-Lewis understands how academic criticism can affect a student's confidence. They used these experiences to develop their teaching philosophy and drive their commitment to creating

a more supportive classroom environment.

"So when I decided to go back to school to teach English, the one thing I wanted was to be the kind of teacher who acknowledges that some people don't have time to work on stuff the same way as other people, who was flexible and who didn't look at writing the same way that I felt like my instructors had kind of looked at it early on," Begian-Lewis said. "This is why I kind of focus on making sure people understand the concepts and that they're engaging with the material instead of focusing too much on things like contractions."

Their journey through the rigorous demands of earning a PhD while balancing work, personal challenges and time constraints gives them a unique ability to truly relate to students. They understand firsthand what it means to persevere through overwhelming circumstances.

Rather than expecting perfection, they focus on growth, effort and the importance of meeting students where they are.

"Instead of focusing on content like spelling, grammar and things like that it's mainly just making sure you take enough time to write and you're pushing through to write, even though you maybe have writer's block," Begian-Lewis said.

Begian-Lewis holds four degrees from Wayne State University including their most recent PhD in Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Before joining Ferris, they taught developmental English for students at Wayne State where many of them spoke Spanish as a first language.

One of the key reasons Be-



Photo courtesy of K.M. Begian-Lewis

K.M. Begian-Lewis has recently started their new journey at Ferris State University.

gian-Lewis chose Ferris was for the community. Coming from a low-income background and being a first-generation college student, they were drawn to Ferris's population of first-generation and working-class students.

"I'm looking forward to the smaller community and hopefully engaging students with the community," Begian-Lewis said. "I like doing community service and I like connecting with students doing refocus, because I could have used it at Wayne State and I don't think they had anything like that so I think the community is the thing that drew me here the most."

Reflecting on their own experiences with discouraging feedback, Begian-Lewis understands just how deeply words from a professor can impact a student's path. It's that awareness that drives their approach to teaching and mentoring today.

"The part that makes me really sad... is that for everyone who hears that and goes, 'I've got a fire lit, here I go,' there are so many people who don't have the self-push

to get through the negative feedback," Begian-Lewis said.

With empathy, resilience and a student-first mindset, Begian-Lewis is excited to bring a more supportive future for developmental English at Ferris.

News Brief

Admissions deactivated

Emma Walters
News Editor

On Sept. 17 it was announced that Ferris Admissions would be closing its social media accounts on Oct. 1.

In the post, it was stated that students can follow the main Ferris State accounts for admissions info going forward.

This includes @ferrisstateu on Instagram, Ferris State University on Facebook, ferrisstateofficial on TikTok and @FerrisState on X.

At this time, the reason behind closing the admissions social media account remains unknown.

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Student flu clinic

Flu shots available to students

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ‘FluView’ Surveillance Report:

Week 36, September 31st through September 6th, 36,735 specimens were tested for influenza.

142 specimens tested positive.

125
specimens
tested positive
for Influenza A

Influenza A is the respiratory virus that most people are familiar with when they think about the flu.
Influenza A typically peaks earlier in the flu season, around the fall and winter.

Based on last year’s reports, the number of specimens testing positive are expected to increase dramatically over the next few weeks.

17
specimens
tested positive
for Influenza B

This strain peaks later in the flu season, typically during the spring.
Influenza B is considered a milder strain, lacking the usual intense symptoms experienced with an Influenza A infection.

Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Emma Walters
News Editor

Students wishing to get ahead of the curve and protect themselves from the flu will have the opportunity to visit the free flu shot clinic hosted by the student chapter of the American Pharmacists Association.
The event will take place in the David L. Eisler Center in the first week of October.
Details will be released soon for a specific date and time.
Students are asked to wear clothing that allows access to the upper arm and to bring a copy of their insurance card.
The event provides pharmacy students with the opportunity to practice giving shots to patients.

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THE FIRE PIT

A FERRIS STATE TORCH PODCAST

ON THE RECORD

Emma Walters
News Editor

I can’t find my scooter!

Sept. 16, 6:51 p.m. - Ferris State police responded to a report of a stolen electric vehicle located outside the Rock Cafe. Review of the security footage showed a suspect stealing the scooter and riding toward Travis Hall. Officers successfully located the individual and the scooter in Travis Hall, detained them and returned the scooter to the owner. An appearance ticket for larceny was issued.

Vehicle markings

Sept. 15, 12:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m. - Officers responded to Lot 6G for reported vandalism on a vehicle with hate-related markings. The markings appeared in dirt on the car overnight. Suspects were not identified, and no damage occurred to the car. The case has been closed pending further information.

You can’t walk there

Sept. 13, 7:46 p.m. - Officers arrested an individual at Top Taggart field during the football game. The individual had previously trespassed from the campus and had an active warrant. The individual was taken into custody without incident and lodged at the Mecosta County Jail.

Culture

Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor | turnek29@ferris.edu

Energy frenzy

Student opinions on energy drinks



Photo courtesy of WikiMedia commons

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends consuming no more than 400 milligrams (mg) of caffeine per day.

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

On campuses across the United States, energy drinks have become increasingly popular, receiving criticism from people who question their effects on health. Despite this criticism, many students enjoy consuming energy drinks on a daily basis. However, many students remain wary of them. Across campus, students are seen holding energy drinks of various flavors and brands as they work on their assignments. Sonography sophomore Aubree Lincoln is one student who enjoys energy drinks from time to time. “I usually drink Red Bull,” Lincoln said. “I wasn’t a big

energy drinker before I started drinking Biggby Red Bull drinks, so they started making me like it.” Although Lincoln enjoys drinking Biggby’s Red Bull mocktails, she admits that she doesn’t really experience any benefits from them. “I don’t feel like it actually gives you as much energy as people think, but I feel like it does harm you,” Lincoln said. “Like a lot of people drink more than you are supposed to in a day, and it can affect your heart.” Other students consume energy drinks on occasion as well, but don’t claim to be regular consumers of energy drinks. Information security and intelligence freshman Jack DeBode talked about his experience with energy drinks.

“I have had them before when they were gifts,” DeBode said. “I did drink some when I was camp counseling this summer, just because I was sick and tired at the same time, so I needed something.” For DeBode, energy drinks are nothing more than an occasional aid that can be useful in desperate times to save him from exhaustion. Although DeBode has used energy drinks when given to him by camp co-workers, he mentioned that he believes they can also be harmful. “I think they harm you just because caffeine in general quickens your heart rate and mind as well,” DeBode said. “One of my friends has a reliance on them, so without energy drinks, you can often

tell there’s a difference in his mood.” Automotive engineering technology junior Noah Gordon talked about his beliefs regarding energy drinks, including a more practical reason for largely avoiding them. “It costs a lot more than water, and it’s not healthy,” Gordon said. “I usually don’t drink them, but I have had them in the past, usually whatever is cheap, or if I’m feeling tired, I’ll buy one, but it’s a rare occasion.” The potential adverse health effects and savings resulting from not buying energy drinks are enough to deter Gordon from being a regular consumer of energy drinks. Some students on campus are regularly seen consuming energy drinks, but that

doesn’t mean they don’t believe the drinks may be causing harm. Accounting sophomore Carinne Tarkowski is an occasional consumer of energy drinks, but likes to avoid them mostly because of her belief in their adverse health effects. “I will drink them occasionally, like once a month, but not very often. If I’m going to drink one, it’ll be a Red Bull,” Tarkowski said. “[I don’t often drink them] mostly because of the sugar and health effects, and I feel like I already have a lot of energy.” Tarkowski also talked about the effects she sees on the people around her as a result of consuming energy drinks. “I know people that have caffeine addictions and rely

on energy drinks for social situations, especially when they’re going to be somewhere with a lot of people,” Tarkowski said. “They’re like, ‘oh let me pound this energy drink so I can be sociable,’ and I’m like, ‘oh, okay, maybe go get eight hours of sleep.’” Almost all students have had experiences with friends and other students being addicted to energy drinks, and some even see the drinks taking a toll on those around them. Still, it is common to spot students with energy drinks all over campus, despite the knowledge of their detrimental effects on health being largely recognized.

Torch tunes

Bulldog fall feels



Scan the
spotify code to
start listening



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Emma Walters
News Editor

With the semester under way and the season’s change upon us, students are beginning to transition their music tastes for the colder weather.

Torch tunes is back to celebrate the beginning of fall and get you in the right mood for the autumn leaves. This moody and emotional playlist will hit you right in the fall feels.

“All Too Well (10 Minute Version) (Taylor’s Version)” - Taylor Swift, Starting with a bit of a heartbreak vibe, “All Too Well” brings us the somber side of fall. Even if you aren’t a Swiftie, this song will have you feeling the moodier side of this season.

“Little Lies” - Fleetwood Mac, Keeping with the moody trend, “Little Lies” brings a 70s dive bar vibe with a resentful center to revolve around. This song will be sure to get stuck in your head with its catchy chords and smooth progressions.

“There She Goes” - The Las, If you’re looking for something a bit more upbeat and with a less intense attitude, “There She Goes” will satisfy your craving. Showcased in the popular TV show “Gilmore Girls,” this song will turn the fall colors even more

vibrant with its hint of early 2000s nostalgia.

“Lover, You Should’ve Come Over” - Jeff Buckley, Calling all yearners, Jeff Buckley has hit the playlist. If you agree that fall is the best time to fall in love, this song will scratch that itch and have you romanticizing everything. This song is best enjoyed on a cool evening walk along the river. Just remember: it’s never over.

“Moon Song” - Phoebe Bridgers, I know you’ve been waiting for this one. While not a huge fan of Bridgers myself, I cannot deny that she knows how to emulate that fall vibe. This one is for those long, late-night study sessions.

“Better in the Dark” - Jordana and TV Girl, In case you’re tired of the fall blues, here’s another upbeat song that makes you want to dance in the leaf piles. As the season progresses and the night arrives earlier, Jordana and TV Girl break up the flow with their unique audio clips and creative beat.

“American Teenager” - Ethel Cain, Off her 2022 Album “Preacher’s Daughter,” this song feels like the last kiss of summer, giving way to the chill of the fall. Filled with the nostalgia of high school rebellion, the power of being self-assured and a hint of

doubt about the future, this one is sure to hit the spot for those scenic fall drives.

“Witchy Woman – 2013 Remaster” - Eagles, Going back to the 70s, the Eagles hit us with punchy guitar chords and gritty vocals in this classic rock track. If you’re looking to feel like the baddest witch around town, put this song on and get to spell casting.

“Maple Syrup” - The Backseat Lovers, For those going through a recent heartbreak, this song offers a cathartic release, with its soft guitar and deep-hitting lyrics. For crash-out core at its finest, put this one on and stomp around your room to release that old summer tension and move into the season of change feeling fresh.

“For Emma” - Bon Iver, One of my favorite songs of all time, though I have to admit that I might be a little biased. Heartbreaking acoustic guitar and ballad-like lyrics, Bon Iver captures the feeling of watching summer die off for another year and the birth of fall at daybreak. Just wait until that trumpet kicks in at the end.

Get out and enjoy the season before winter sets in, Bulldogs!



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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: Free speech isn't free

The future of the First Amendment



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Blase Gapinski Editor in Chief

For a long time, I have had the idea that only free speech being allowed in this country is speech that others agree with.

It's crazy to me that we are living in times where people can't even voice their opinion anymore if it goes against the current administration's ideologies.

About a week ago, Jimmy Kimmel, the host of "Jimmy Kimmel Live!", was suspended by ABC indefinitely for comments he made about Charlie Kirk's killer. Kimmel alleged that the killer was a supporter of the Make America Great Again movement, which, in my opinion, continues to plague the political atmosphere.

Kimmel's exact comments on the air, which had him removed a day later, were: "The MAGA Gang desperately trying to characterize this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one

of them and doing everything they can to score political points from it."

Seriously? This is where we draw the line when it comes to things that can and can't be said on a show built entirely off of political satire?

I have never been the biggest fan of Kimmel. His comedy doesn't always hit the mark, but I won't lie, this situation has been making me laugh and not for good reasons.

The Federal Communications Commission chairman Brendan Carr spoke after the announcement was made, saying that consequences were needed because Kimmel was airing "misleading content."

If that's true, why have the countless opinionists at Fox News saying the 2020 election was "stolen" not lost their jobs? Is lying and making things up about the results of a presidential election not misleading content?

The fact that the FCC played a role in this makes

it clear: this wasn't just a network decision but it was rather government-influenced censorship. The First Amendment was written precisely to prevent this kind of overreach. The government should protect our right to speak, not control it because it doesn't fit the current administration's views.

The FCC allowing something like this to happen is literal proof that government censorship can happen anywhere, anytime and it makes me fearful for what could happen to smaller voices.

President Donald Trump has come out and said that Kimmel was only taken off the air due to "poor ratings."

This is comical to me because our president can't even tell the truth about why such a large-scale comedian like Kimmel was taken off the air. He has to come up with a narrative about why this person was bad and needed to have their voice silenced.

If the poor ratings narrative were true, why did the an-

nouncement follow the "controversial" comments made by Kimmel and why did Carr say that he needed to face consequences?

It is almost like they are proud of it. The fact is that Trump is saying that all of this is "great news for America," when, in reality, that couldn't be any further from the truth.

Whether or not you agree with Jimmy Kimmel's views, or if you even like his comedy, is irrelevant. What matters is that a major media figure was effectively silenced for expressing a political opinion.

This isn't just about late-night television. If the government or politically aligned corporations can pull the plug on someone with millions of viewers, what does that mean for student journalists, indie podcasters or campus protestors?

As a student journalist, this strikes especially close to home. If a massive media network won't stand up to political pressure, how can we expect our college paper

to survive if we publish something critical of local officials or controversial national figures?

The chilling effect is real. Self-censorship seems to have become a survival tactic for many of these late-night hosts and comedians out of fear of being next.

I really appreciate the people coming out on their platforms saying that they stand with Kimmel and are hoping for his return.

We can't sit back and let this become the norm. Whether you consider yourself a democrat, republican or something in between, the right to speak freely is what makes democracy work. Losing it even a little is a loss for all of us.

Speak up. Push back and really try to protect the voices that power our conversations, on national TV and in college newspapers alike.

Understanding mental health

Self-diagnosing is not a cry for attention

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

Last week, during my therapy appointment, I was given news that I struggle with something called depersonalization.

It wasn't the first time I had heard of depersonalization. I've been a fan of singer-songwriter Dodie Clark since 2016, and seven years ago, she posted a video talking about her struggles with depersonalization and derealization.

I realized while watching her video that the feelings she was talking about felt similar to experiences I've had before. Growing up with an anxiety disorder, I felt that I wasn't allowed to have other mental health issues. It wasn't until I got on medication my freshman year at Ferris that I was given a proper anxiety disorder diagnosis. I was also given a mild depression diagnosis.

I remember that when I had been told that I was also struggling with depression, I didn't really believe it. I would never invalidate someone for having multiple mental health diagnoses or even self-diagnosing.

Personally, I felt like it was too much to have both. Eventually, after starting therapy, I came around and I started recognizing my depressive behavior, allowing myself to manage it better.

Since then, Clark's video sharing her experiences has stuck in my mind but I was too scared to bring it up. The only reason I finally got a diagnosis was because my therapist noticed the signs that I was just passing off as

anxiety symptoms.

According to the Columbia University Irving Medical Center, depersonalization is described as an "out of body" experience. It's where a person's perception of the world, their feelings and themselves is distorted. Oftentimes, this feeling is compared to a dreamlike state that also affects memory. When my therapist worded the reasoning behind my depersonalization, she actually helped me put the way that I was feeling into words.

To explain, I go through both anxiety and social anxiety. Basically, the mess of my mind can get so overwhelming sometimes that my mind cannot physically be in the moment.

This constant thinking causes my brain and body to start feeling like I am not physically present. I also struggle with remembering transitions, from one place to another. Like most, I have my good days and my bad days.

That was the explanation I've been needing for so long. I struggle with explaining and making sense of the way I feel, but when I used this explanation to talk to other people about it, those who were listening understood it a little bit better. I finally felt seen and not like I was crazy.

There's no cure-all for anxiety or depersonalization. Just like most mental health issues, you can only manage it. But having that diagnosis and having someone to talk to can help you get better at managing the symptoms.

At least now I have a name for the feeling. I can become more aware of how to manage these feelings and minimize the amount of time living in a haze. A feeling that I have been struggling with for years is real. This is common when we see struggles that are invisible to others around us.

When someone is sick, we see physical signs. These physical signs tell those around them that they are not well. When people can't see an illness because it affects the mind, it's hard to understand and believe.

Self-diagnosis is important; nobody knows you better than you. If you don't know what to look for, then how will you know when to ask for help? A diagnosis is, of course, a very helpful step and I encourage those who are seeing familiarity in their symptoms to consult a professional.

I've seen this trend of others calling people out for self-diagnosing, calling it a "cry for attention." However, I question this stance because, if you ask me, it's just hypocritical.

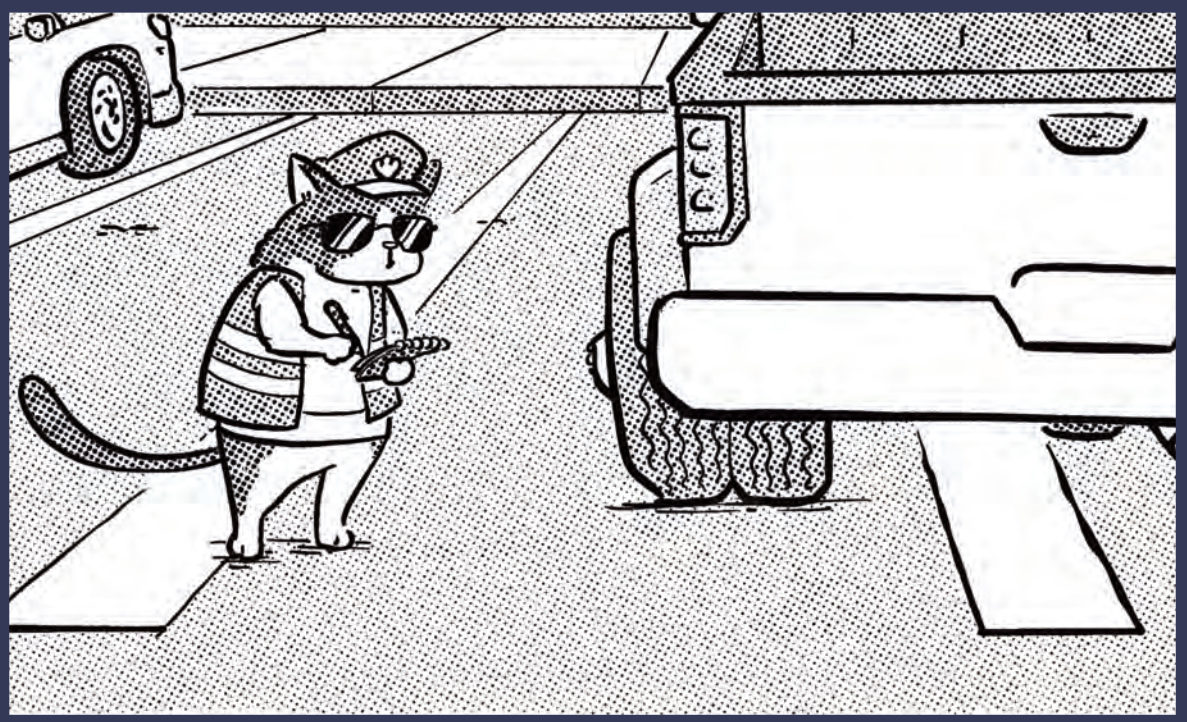
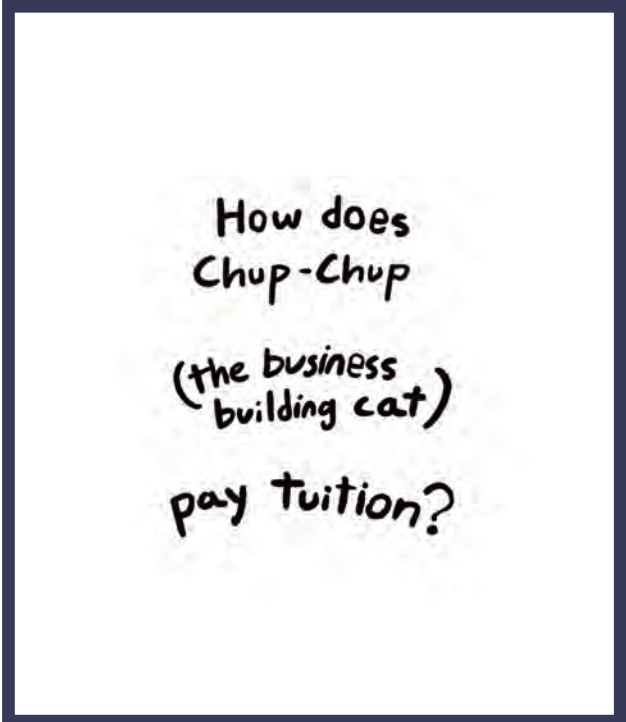
At one point, all mental health issues were "a cry for attention." If you're someone who supports mental health awareness, then you of all people should be the one speaking up for those who had to self-diagnose to get an actual diagnosis.

I write this article to stand up for those who have been silenced over and over. An invisible disability does not mean you should suffer in silence. If you're someone who's struggling, no matter what the issue, I see you. I see you and I believe in you.



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Local celebrity's side gig



Comic by: Blake Flanery | Cartoonist

Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

Piazza party

Sophomore outside hitter talks about new role



Photo by: Clark Vance | Photographer

Nine games into the 2025 Season, Gabby Piazza has 131 kills.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

Coming off a year winning GLIAC Freshman of the Year and being a key part of the volleyball team's Elite Eight run, sophomore Gabby Piazza looks forward to her second collegiate year. Growing up in Shorewood, Illinois, Piazza was in a lot of sports. Before finding volleyball in 6th grade, Piazza did dance, soccer, basketball and softball. Her mom signed her up for a volleyball camp in that 6th-grade year, which Piazza enjoyed and continued as a student at Joliet West High School, where she was an all-conference and all-region player. Piazza talked about the

recruitment process leading her to Ferris State. "I wanted to go Division 2 and I wanted to be in a successful, competitive program," Piazza said. "Ferris State was the first school I sent an email to, and I didn't get back until both my coach and I emailed schools. I then had a call with Ferris' coaches, and after the tour I knew I wanted to be here." In her freshman year, Piazza ended the season with 218 kills, which was good for 5th on the team. She also recorded 2.29 kills per set, which was second last season behind Olivia Henneman-Dallape's 4.22 kills per set. Piazza ended up winning GLIAC Freshman of the Year during the 2024

season, an award that was a surprise to her. Piazza is happy that her team puts her in a position to let her shine and that everyone puts in the work. Graduate outside hitter Tatum Outlaw had nothing but good things to say about her teammate. "Gabby is such a joy to play with," Outlaw said. "She brings so much energy and love for the game to the court and will never fail to make you feel good when you're playing around her. She's a girl with a lot of passion and dedication to the things that she is passionate about. She is willing and isn't afraid to make mistakes and be put in uncomfortable situations to not only help her skills

grow, but for the benefit of the team. She is such a loyal friend and teammate and will be your biggest cheerleader." Through the first ten games of the 2025 season, Piazza has recorded 123 kills for a 4.10 kills per set percentage, both of which lead the team. In the four matches played in the Texas-Tyler Invitational, Piazza had only one match with fewer than ten kills. In the first match vs Texas-Tyler, Piazza recorded 19 kills, which is currently her highest in a single match. In the four matches in Denver, Colorado, for the Colorado Premier Challenge, Piazza recorded 10 or more kills, including 15 kills against both West Florida University

and MSU Denver. After her performance in both Invitationals, Piazza was named to both All-Tournament teams, an honor that she says is nice, but isn't the main goal she had in mind. Head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm loves having Piazza on her team. "Gabby's just such a competitor," Brandel-Wilhelm said. "She's just a feisty player, a super great teammate, and someone that you just want on your team. If you're playing, you're going to want to pick her to be on your team every time." Piazza talked about her favorite parts of being in Big Rapids and being a part of Ferris State. "I love the community,"

Piazza said. "I love the volleyball team and my teammates. I also love how people are interested in the success of the athletes here. Every day, I have people wishing me good luck. We've been far from home to start the season, but it's really awesome to know that people are supporting me and want the best from me." With the invitationals ended and GLIAC play starting, Piazza has a lot of personal goals for her sophomore season, one of which is to work on being one of the best teams in November and December.

Volleyball starts GLIAC play

What to watch for weekend slate of games



Photo by: Abraham Kraus | Multimedia Editor

Emma Bleacher screaming after getting a kill against Northern Michigan.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Following a weekend sweep for the first two games of GLIAC play, the Ferris volleyball team has a weekend slate of GLIAC rivals in the Grand Valley State Lakers and the Wayne State Warriors.

The Bulldogs (7-3, 2-0 in GLIAC) faced off against the Michigan Tech Huskies (3-6, 0-2 in GLIAC) and took them down by a score of 3-1 on Friday, Sept. 19.

With the Bulldogs being led by sophomore outside hitter Gabby Piazza, who is taking on the role of 2024 AVCA NCAA Division II Player of the Year, Olivia Henneman-Dallape. Piazza had 13 kills on 51 total at-

tempts, but had a season high 11 errors, while sophomore outside hitter Emily May had 12 kills on 31 total attempts.

Head coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm spoke about how she thought her team performed that night.

"I don't think our offense was what we wanted it to be," Brandel-Wilhelm said. "For sure, tonight we just had some parts that weren't quite there. I was really happy with the way the team adapted and the players adapted, you know, they did a few different things on offense, so we're really happy with that."

Then on Saturday, Ferris went to battle against the Northern Michigan Wildcats (1-9, 0-2 in GLIAC) and took

them down by a score of 3-0. Senior outside hitter Emma Bleacher led the team with 11 kills on 31 total attempts, and sophomore setter Hayley Wegener had three kills of her own while having 31 assists.

The Bulldogs' next matchup will be on Friday against the Grand Valley State Lakers (7-2, 2-0 in GLIAC), who currently are tied for first place in the GLIAC along with Ferris, Parkside, and Wayne State. The Lakers are led by redshirt junior middle blocker Brianna Stawski, who has 89 kills on the season (3.65 per set) with 113 total points, which is good for eighth in the GLIAC.

Ferris has had the Lakers' number the last 10 years, since 2015. The Bulldogs

have a record of 19-1 against Grand Valley, with that only loss coming in 2023, when the Bulldogs lost in Allendale by a score of 3-1.

Graduate outside hitter Tatum Outlaw knows this is anyone's game going into the matchup against Grand Valley, and they just have to be prepared.

"We always have the mentality of respecting all and fearing none," Outlaw said. "Regardless of the team we're facing, because volleyball is such a competitive sport, and it can be anyone's game regardless of what their record shows, we just have to prepare as much as we can."

The second of two matchups this weekend comes on Saturday against the Wayne

State Warriors (8-1, 2-0 in GLIAC). This season, the Warriors are off to their best start since 2021, when they began the season 8-2.

The Warriors are led by one of the best players in the GLIAC thus far this season in senior middle blocker Kayla Giroux. Giroux has 32 kills, which is good for third in the GLIAC, with 30 total blocks, which is ninth in the GLIAC, while sitting at third in the division for points with 139.5.

Senior outside hitter Emma Bleacher believes the GLIAC is tough, but she thinks her team will compete and come out on top in the division.

"I think the GLIAC is tough every year, just in different ways," Bleacher said. "It has always been a very strong

conference with great players and great coaches, and everyone is always adjusting and finding new ways to compete with new game plans. With our personnel and our willingness, I believe that we're going to come out on top in the GLIAC. There's going to be some very good games, and we have to finish strong in tough moments, it's going to be lots of fun."

The Bulldogs will take on their GLIAC foes at Ewigleben Sport Arena, with Grand Valley State Lakers on Friday, Sept. 26, at 6 p.m., and the Wayne State Warriors the next day on Saturday at 3 p.m.

Bulldogs in the wild

What are former Ferris athletes up to?



Photo courtesy of the Torch Archives
Chambliss scrambles during the 2024 DII National Championship.

Trinidad Chambliss

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Less than a year after helping Ferris bring home its third national championship in four years, Trinidad Chambliss has found his way into the starting quarterback position for the Ole Miss Rebels after transferring during the offseason. Chambliss became the Bulldogs' starting quarterback after the starter, Carson Gulker, went down with an injury early in the 2024 season. During

the 2024 season, Chambliss threw for 2,925 yards and 26 touchdowns, while adding 1,019 yards on the ground and 25 touchdowns, securing DII First Team All-American and becoming a finalist for the Harlon Hill Trophy. Chambliss has taken the starting job for Ole Miss similarly to how he took it for the Bulldogs, after sophomore starting quarterback Austin Simmons went down with an ankle injury during week two against Kentucky. During his first start against Arkansas,

Chambliss went 21-29 passing, with 353 yards and one touchdown, while rushing 15 times for 62 yards and two touchdowns, helping defeat Arkansas 41-35. Then, in his second start, he performed just as well, going 17-27 with 307 yards and two touchdowns, while rushing 14 times for 112 yards. It looks to be Chambliss's job to lose, as head coach Lane Kiffin's offense has been firing on all cylinders with Chambliss.



Photo courtesy of the Torch Archives
Saipaia goes for a sack on Wayne State quarterback Champion Edwards.

Sefa Saipaia

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Another player from the 2024 Bulldogs national championship team, linebacker Sefa Saipaia Jr, has secured the starting linebacker job for the Western Michigan Broncos. During his 2024 season for the Bulldogs, Saipaia Jr had 93 total tackles, eight tackles for

loss, two sacks, one forced fumble, an interception and a touchdown. The three-time national champion was also named to the All-GLIAC First Team and received the 2024 GLIAC Commissioners Award, which honors student-athletes who excel both academically and athletically. During the 2024 offseason, Saipaia Jr decided to enter the transfer portal and orig-

inally committed to Bowling Green before decommitting in April and recommitting to Western Michigan. During his time at Western, he has 21 total tackles, which is good for second on the team, with 12 of those 21 being solo tackles, while adding two tackles for loss, with his only sack coming in week one against Michigan State.



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics
Bernhardt (left) during his time with Ferris State.

Jared Bernhardt

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Jared Bernhardt has had an interesting career, starting at Maryland, where he was a five-year starter for the Lacrosse team. As a freshman, he was a starting midfielder for their 2017 National Championship. After his senior season was cancelled after six games due to COVID-19, he returned for a fifth season and won the Tewaaron Award, which is the award for the nation's best Lacrosse player. When

he left Maryland, he was the school's leader in goals with 202 as well as in points with 209. Then he enrolled at Ferris in 2021 to play football, and he was able to do this due to the NCAA's "five to play four" rule, which allows athletes one year of eligibility in another sport after they have exhausted eligibility in their primary sport. In 2021, he was named the Bulldogs' starting quarterback, where he threw for 1,322 yards and 11 touchdowns while rushing for 1,421 yards and 26 touchdowns and was

named the GLIAC Player of the Year and eventually helped lead Ferris to its first national championship. Then, in 2025, after two years of coaching lacrosse at Maryland, he signed with the Denver Outlaws of the Premier Lacrosse League. During the 2025 season, he had 22 points, 18 goals, and four assists while helping lead the Outlaws to the US Bank Championship, where they lost to the New York Atlas by a score of 14-13.