



Compensation changes

Board of Trustees grants President Pink \$60,000 bonus

Emma Walters
News Editor

The Board of Trustees held a special meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 3, at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

The meeting was announced at the last minute on Sept. 2, with less than 24 hours' notice.

In the agenda released for the meeting, it was noted that an informal closed session would be followed by a discussion on the President's Compensation and Benefits.

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the university, responsible for overseeing institutional expenditures.

Members of the board serve designated eight-year terms, appointed by the Governor and with the consent of the State Senate.

The President of the university sits on the board alongside the members, but does not have the right to vote.

Current members of the board are Kent A. Hofman, Michael B. Fisher, Vivian TerMaat, Ronald E. Snead, Matthew M. Evans, George K. Heartwell, Michael D. Ryan and Lashanda R. Thomas.

All members of the board were present for the meeting.

Following the call to order and roll call, the board allowed a hearing from the public, but there were no issues brought to the table.

The board then entered an informal closed session to address a "personnel issue."

Members of the board were engaged in the informal session for about 10 minutes, after which discussion began regarding President Bill Pink's compensation.

Vice Chair Michael B. Fisherman provided the motion for the discussion, stating that the board's evaluation of Pink's performance proved satisfactory.

"The board has evaluated Dr. Pink's performance with reference to President Pink's goals and found his perfor-



Photo courtesy of Ferris State University

During the Board of Trustees meeting it was decided to give President Pink a bonus for his dedication to the university's future.

mance to be exemplary," Fisherman said. "Therefore, I would move that the Board of Trustees amend President Pink's compensation and benefits by granting a discretionary bonus in the amount of \$60,000."

The motion was supported by George G. Heartwell.

All members of the board voted yes on the compensation advancement for President Pink.

The bonus comes shortly after President Pink's third anniversary with Ferris State.

Over the past three years, Pink has made significant

efforts to update university infrastructure and buildings, expand the university's name and reputation and campus involvement.

Despite Pink's efforts, Ferris has continued to face several infrastructure challenges, including a water main break and a water pipe bursting in FLITE at the beginning of 2025.

Second-year optometry student Morgan Eiseler expressed indifference regarding the President receiving the sudden bonus.

"I've personally never met him, but I also never met

President Eisler," Eiseler said. "I guess I really don't notice a difference between the two."

Eiseler noted that Ferris has a lot to offer students besides engagement with the President, such as affordable in-state and out-of-state tuition costs.

Before Ferris State University, President Pink served as President of Grand Rapids Community College and vice president of academic affairs at the Oklahoma City campus of Oklahoma State University.

Pink is further involved with several West Michigan boards, serving on the boards

of Corewell Health West Michigan, Board Chair of the Heart of West Michigan United Way and board vice-chair for The Right Place.

Pink receives compensation through his positions on these boards in addition to his campus salary, which board member Ronald Snead inquired about during the meeting.

English junior Natalie Timmerman praised President Pink for his positivity but questioned the dollar value of the bonus.

"I think he's a really optimistic president, he really

seems to care about the students here," Timmerman said. "It is a lot of money. I think everybody deserves a bonus, but that definitely is a lot."

Timmerman expressed a desire to see President Pink engage more with students in a personal way, rather than through giving speeches or making appearances.

Meeting minutes for the special Board of Trustees meeting are available on the board's page on the Ferris website.

News

Say goodbye to Johnson Hall. After years of plumbing and HVAC issues, the process to transition classes and offices out of the building is officially underway. **PG. 3**

Culture

From sweaters to an array of autumn colors. Learn what trends are on campus this fall as students take advantage of cool weather! **PG. 5**

Opinions

"I listen to anything except country" is a common phrase to hear, but country music deserves a chance to show that there is more to it than meets the eye. **PG. 9**

Sports

Kickers are people too! Read about three time champion kicker and punter Mitch Middleton and how he wants to bring another championship to Ferris. **PG. 10**



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Michigan

Emma Walters
News Editor

One woman died, and a man is in critical condition after a vehicle crashed into Avenue Grill on Gratiot Avenue on Sept. 6.

The woman’s vehicle struck the outside of the building around 2:30 a.m. The business is closed until further notice due to the damage sustained.

The Detroit Police Department Fatal Squad is currently investigating the incident. Information on the victims has not yet been released.

National

Emma Walters
News Editor

About 475 people have been detained in an immigration raid at a Hyundai manufacturing site in Savannah, Georgia.

Most of the people detained in the raid were from South Korea, according to Steven Schrank, the Special Agent in Charge for the Homeland Security Investigations.

According to South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lee Jaewoong, the detained workers were part of a “network of subcontractors” and worked for a variety of companies.

Details continue to be monitored regarding the detainment of the individuals.

Global

Emma Walters
News Editor

A French anesthetist is on trial in Besançon, France for allegedly poisoning 30 people, 12 of whom died.

Allegations against Frédéric Péchier began in 2017, after it was revealed that a woman he treated suffered complications during her surgery. In the investigation of the incident, it was discovered that the woman had 100 times the expected dose of potassium in her system.

Investigators involved in the trial are looking at events as far back as 2008. The trial is expected to last three months, with over 150 civil parties representing the 30 alleged victims.

If found guilty, Péchier will face life in prison.

Classes concluded in Johnson Hall

Departments set to move out of Johnson Hall by December



Photo by: Shaunti'ara Reynolds | Photographer
Empty 102 Johnson Hall classroom.

Emma Walters
News Editor

Classes will be transitioned out of Johnson Hall beginning this upcoming Spring semester.

Johnson Hall was built in 1959 originally as a dormitory building, with a small bookstore on the lower level.

The building now houses classrooms and offices used by the Arts, Sciences, and Education department and the Engineering Technology department.

Professors were informed last spring that they would be receiving assignments to new offices located in the Arts and Sciences Commons, allowing them to begin moving their belongings throughout the fall semester.

Johnson Hall has had several issues throughout the

last few years, with several plumbing problems causing damage to the building.

According to documents obtained by the Torch via the Freedom of Information Act, the building has experienced frequent plumbing issues, with frequent reports of toilets clogging, overflowing, gushing water out of pipes and unpleasant smells coming from the restrooms.

Additional issues reported focus heavily on the HVAC system of the building.

Many maintenance reports received by the Torch comment on the building being either too hot or too cold, or requesting maintenance to address the lack of consistency with the ventilation of the building.

Dr. John Scott Gray has taught philosophy at Ferris for 20 years, occupying his

office within Johnson Hall for the duration of this stay.

According to Scott-Gray, Johnson Hall has had issues for most of the last 20 years.

“This building has been on the ‘needs to go’ list for quite a while,” Scott-Gray said. “I think it’s one of the oldest buildings on campus, at least the oldest that that hasn’t been refurbished in any major way.”

FOIA documents did not demonstrate any significant refurbishment of the building, just generalized maintenance.

Plumbing issues prevailed, with reported problems of flooding in the building going back to 2009.

Scott-Gray expressed frustration over the initial communication of the move out of Johnson Hall and the lack of details on the timeline of what will happen to the building.

“If I’m totally honest, when this first broke at the very end of last semester, I was very angry and very upset,” Scott-Gray said. “My understanding is that there’s no timeline for the dean’s office to relocate until they relocate. This is just going to be mostly a ghost town.”

Scott-Gray did note that while the initial news of the relocation was upsetting and communication surrounding the situation could have been improved, moving into a newer and more updated office is

something to look forward to.

In Jan. 2025, it was reported that there was water damage to ceiling tiles in the back of the dean’s office within the building. According to the report, the HVAC system ran just above the tiles that showed evidence of water damage.

Within the same month, another professor reported an electrical problem in which their extension cord to their computer monitor began to melt.

There was no follow-up information regarding the outcome of the electrical problem in the professor’s office provided in the documents.

Mechanical Engineering Technology junior Lily Guikema echoed issues with the HVAC system in the building, stating that she was aware of individuals that struggled with the ventilation in the building.

“The building is okay, but it’s a little bit old and could definitely use some updating,” Guikema said. “I know people who have complained about the building being hot and they were upset that the windows didn’t open.”

At the time of this article, it is planned for classes from Johnson Hall to be transitioned to the Starr Educational Building.

Professors with offices in Johnson Hall will officially be in their new offices at the beginning of January.

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September SGA updates

The latest from the Student Government Association



Photo from Torch archives

Jake McGaha (left) and former president Stephen Bender (right) leading an SGA meeting.

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

The Student Government Association held its weekly meeting on Sept. 2 to discuss new changes within the organization.

Among the decisions made during the meeting was the implementation of a Ferris feedback survey to be made available to the entire cam-

pus, allowing students to voice their opinions and concerns about college life.

The Student Government Association is a campus organization that hosts events for students and represents the general student body.

Student government engages in student representation through raising awareness of social issues, bringing attention to improv-

ing issues around campus and making the space safer and more inclusive for students.

SGA meets every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Founders' Room, located in the UC. A meeting typically involves voting on matters that directly affect the student body.

The process typically begins with the president announcing a proposal, followed

by board members seconding the motion.

The student government currently has plans to market the Ferris survey on their social media platforms and around campus.

The survey will provide students the opportunity to share what they believe currently works at Ferris, what they would like to have improved at the university and

what they would like to have SGA do regarding the issue.

President Jake McGaha expressed that the survey will be a great way to get student ideas to SGA, given that the organization is dedicated to catering to the needs of students.

The student government has additionally teamed up with the Birkham Health Center to host a mental health scavenger hunt. The Physical Health Committee has developed events such as a strength competition, a fitness challenge and a donation of \$1,000 to the occasion.

The organization has also planned to update its website in addition to revamping its social media platforms.

During the meeting, student members voted on a new SGA banner to be placed in the UC. All members voted yes.

Student members also voted on the committee chairs receiving a \$1,000 scholarship. All members voted yes.

The final item that members voted on was setting a new meeting time, effectively setting meetings to begin at 6:00 p.m. All members voted yes.

Many students and board members expressed satisfaction at the conclusion of the meeting and appeared excited for the future of SGA.

Director of SGA Student Operations Barbara Melvin expressed appreciation regarding hard work coming to fruition.

"I really like the plans discussed in the meeting and I have worked a lot over the summer alongside my colleagues in regard to the meeting," Melvin said. "I am really excited for this year."

The Student Government Association has seen sever-

al rounds of promotion over the last year, with McGaha advancing from Director of Operations to Vice President to President in just two semesters.

Barbara Melvin expressed hopes to be more involved in the organization this year and continue representing students at Ferris.

"I worry that I am not as involved as I should be, but then I am aware that I am involved," Melvin said. "I'm really trying this year to especially make sure I get to all of these meetings and divisions and making sure that everyone is on the same page within our committees, our general assembly and our cabinet."

Melvin also expressed the desire to further her public speaking leadership skills through her position with SGA.

Despite the extensive planning that took place over the summer, not everything for SGA has been finalized for the year.

Director of Philanthropy Ellie Holka stated that there is still a way to go before the organization has finalized details to put in place.

"We still have to get some things out there, get more marketing and things like that," Holka said. "I want to put on more events. We only did three last year, but I feel like they were very impactful."

Holka added that the position of SGA allows students to build connections and put themselves out there, furthering their professional endeavors.

Going forward, SGA will meet in the Founders' Room at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays. All students are welcome to attend the meetings.

ON THE RECORD

Emma Walters
News Editor

Driving not permitted

Sept. 7, 8:54 p.m. - Ferris police officers stopped a vehicle at Knollview Drive and State Street following an observed traffic violation. The driver was a student operating on a temporary permit without the needed supervision. The driver was cited for license and traffic violations.

Stuck in customs?

Sept. 6 - Ferris officers responded to a reported claim of fraud that occurred between Aug. 15 and Sept. 2. The student reported losing approximately \$3,700 after being tricked into sending payments through Venmo and PayPal to release a purchase "stuck in customs". The case currently remains under investigation.

VAWA offense

Sept. 4 - Ferris Officers received a complaint from a student who was concerned that her ex-partner was keeping tabs on her via a third party. The student expressed discomfort at the possibility of being monitored, though no direct threats were reported. The event was documented, and resources were offered to the student. The driver was cited for license and traffic violations.

The return of sweater weather

Students reveal their fall fashion lineups



Photo by: Clark Vance | Photographer

Students begin dressing for colder weather as the Big Rapids temperatures start to drop.

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

Cooler temperatures have brought back pumpkin spice and everything nice—including Bulldog fashion trends. Sweater season has made its return once again. With the weather cooling down, fashion trends on campus are shifting from crop tops and shorts to a more cozy sense of style. Students are slowly retiring their summer wardrobe and exchanging it for their favorite fall attire. Across campus, students can be spotted in full fall fashion mode, with many donning similar outfits. Music business entertainment junior Cervonte Plair is the president of the Student Fashion Alliance on campus. Fashion has always been an important part of who Plair is. He revealed what is in his fall fashion lineup this year.

“My fall fashion is more cozy, comfortable,” Plair said. “I like big clothing, sweatpants, a jogging suit, anything like a beige or brown color, really.” For Plair, fashion goes deeper than putting together outfits that are in style. It is a form of self-expression that shows careful observers something important about a person. Many students on campus pay close attention to the way that their fashion choices impact others’ perceptions of them, as they believe in the power of fashion to reveal who they are. “It’s been a big part of me my whole life,” Plair said. “It’s something I get to express myself, no matter what mood I am, happy or sad.” For many students, fashion is a way to show others around them who they are or who they aspire to be. Each part of an outfit is an inten-

tional choice by the wearer that says something about them. Victoria Vega, an elementary education junior, described her fall fashion similarly to Plair and several others on campus. “I would say [my fall wardrobe] is very comfy, like a lot of browns and whites, and a lot of sweaters for sure,” Vega said. Students’ fall fashion boasts an array of fall colors, featuring a lot of brown, cream and green pieces. Sweaters, leggings, sweatpants and vests are particularly popular this fall. Vega also spoke on why she believes fashion can be impactful to a person’s self-esteem. “If you’re wearing something that you like or something different, it makes you feel more confident,” Vega said. “It makes you feel more comfortable.”

Students have been frequently describing their fall fashion as being comfortable. They are not only going for self-expression, but also prioritizing how clothing makes them feel physically. Many students have happily shared the details of their fall fashion sense, listing some of their favorite brands that they plan on wearing this fall. Radiology freshman Alyssa Boone shared a little bit about what she typically wears when the cooler weather arrives, and why fashion is important to her. “I think it makes you feel more like yourself [when you have a style],” Boone said. “I really like Hollister, especially.” When walking around campus, it is common to see many students, especially women, wearing similar footwear. Trends are going strong on campus as the

weather gets cooler. Vega shared her footwear choices for this fall and why they are her top pick. “For fall, [my favorite is] definitely my Uggs,” Vega said. “I feel like they match with everything.” For a few years now, Ugg boots have been making a comeback, particularly when fall arrives. While they have been around for a very

long time, they have largely returned in the 2020s. Fall fashion is in full swing at Ferris with the first week of cooler weather. For students, it is not only a way to be trendy but a crucial form of self-expression. As winter approaches, more and more students will likely begin to showcase their cold-weather picks.



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New city logo awaits

Big Rapids hosts logo design competition for the community

Tate Zellman
Freelance Reporter

The City of Big Rapids is hosting a New Logo Design Competition, allowing community members to create a new secondary logo for the city.

On Aug. 19, the city opened the competition in hopes of seeing unique logos submitted. The goal of the new logo is to help promote marketing and tourism, and to represent the community of Big Rapids. The city is looking for artwork that reflects the spirit, identity and uniqueness of Big Rapids.

A prize of \$500 will be awarded to the winner. Second place will earn \$200 for their efforts and third place

will earn \$100. The winning entries will not automatically become the secondary logo of the city. Instead, they will serve as inspiration and property of the city of Big Rapids after the competition has concluded.

Not only is the competition open to natives of the Big Rapids community, but also to Ferris students and those in the Ferris community. Michelle Stenger, the director of community development, finds it important for Ferris students to participate, noting that they could bring unique artwork to the competition.

"I think that Ferris students bring a unique perspective to the community that maybe some long-standing commu-

nity members don't have," Stenger said. "And since Ferris students have fresh eyes on the community, they can see what they like about it or find out what they see as important. Also, they're young, so they have some fresher ideas than others. And part of the draw is that we hope that Ferris students become engaged with things going on in the city, and maybe some will hope or choose to stay after graduation and become a part of the community they've grown to love."

With how intertwined the Ferris and Big Rapids communities are, this competition exists as an opportunity for the communities to come together and achieve the common goal of developing

a new, strong logo.

Mark Gifford, the city manager of Big Rapids, described what the staff at the city of Big Rapids wants the new logo to represent, and that this was the right time to be able to put the competition together.

"What we want is to represent the community," Gifford said. "We want it to resonate with people, and when they see it, they think about Big Rapids, and this is something that we've struggled with for a while. If you look around the community in terms of signage and branding and so forth, we have a myriad of different ways, styles, fonts, colors and things when you

see it, whether it be signs or other things. We want to bring some sort of cohesion to how we demonstrate or market the city."

Gifford also said that good characteristics for a new logo include something clear, concise, easy to read and easy to digest.

Megan Eppley, the grant coordinator of community development, believes that finding something that both the staff and the community want to represent the city sparked the motivation to put this competition together.

"I think the commission just wanted to see what the community thinks of when they think of Big Rapids,"

Eppley said. "We, as a staff, have an idea of what we think represents Big Rapids. We always hope it aligns with what the community wants and we do our best to make that happen, but maybe by engaging the community in this process that helps us to get a better idea of what the people of Big Rapids want, is what drove us to make this competition happen."

Full participation and creative art designs by members of the Ferris and Big Rapids communities are encouraged. All logo designs are due by Sept. 19 at 4 p.m. The announcement date of the winners is still to be determined.



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant



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Media minute

Zach Top releases his anticipated sophomore album “Ain’t in It for My Health”



Photo courtesy of Wikki Commons

Zach Top’s newest album cover.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After becoming a country music phenomenon with the 2024 release of “Cold Beer and Country Music,” Zach Top has returned with his second album, “Ain’t in It for My Health.” Top hails from the most out-of-place area you would assume a country musician is from, being from Sunnyside, Washington, but that does not make this album any less impressive. Top is the leading figure in the neo-traditional revival in country music, and this album blends the sound of ‘90s honky-tonk with the

‘70s soft-sounding country style of artists like Jimmy Buffett. Like his first album, Top wrote every song, drawing heavily on the sound of country legends such as Keith Whitley, Tracy Lawrence and Randy Travis, while incorporating elements of bluegrass. That is very evident with the first track, “Guitar.” “Guitar,” which is the first of 15 songs, will be on its way to being a classic in honky-tonks, with lots of guitar being in the forefront. It is all played by Top himself, who is a classically trained bluegrass guitarist. He showcases this ability with multiple blazing guitar solos, which

had not been seen previously from Top. After the first track, the album slows down, leading to the song “When You See Me,” which, upon listening, makes it quite evident that one of Top’s biggest influences is Travis. This song is a throwback to the heartbreak songs of the ‘80s and ‘90s, being about a man whose wife left him, paving the path to his becoming an alcoholic. His alcoholism had become so bad that his ex-wife would not even recognize him if they passed on the street, like he was just a stranger. The slow songs continue with the next two tracks, “Splitsville” and “Between

The Ditches,” but then immediately turn on a dime with the song “Flip-Flop.” The song is a clear homage to the tropical country genre of Jimmy Buffett and Kenny Chesney, and it has some great wordplay throughout. The song is about a man who bought a one-way ticket to the Gulf and fell in love. Then fast forward a week later, he is broke and she is gone, and now he doesn’t give a flip-flop if he ever sees another beach again. The next track, “Tightrope,” continues the upbeat vibe, but then the album slows back down with “I Know A Place.” The next song that really stood out is the single

from this album, “South Of Sanity.” “South Of Sanity” may become one of Top’s biggest tracks. Top wrote this song when he was new to Nashville and playing a show with the Red Clay Strays. He got a call from his wife while he was waiting to go on stage, telling him that they were ending the marriage. You can tell this song comes right from Top’s broken heart, as this might be the best piece of songwriting in his catalogue. After this track, the album finishes with the final four songs transitioning back to being upbeat, ending on “Honky Tonk Till It Hurts.”

Many people did not know if Top could put out another great album after his first, but Top may have one-upped his first with this album. Top showed everyone that he’s not just a one-trick pony; he truly proved that he can write slower, more melancholic songs rather than just being “Mr. Honky Tonk.” His songwriting ability was really at the forefront in this album, and I believe Top just established himself to be a country music mainstay for decades to come with “Ain’t in It for My Health.”

Opinions

Jackie Moglia | Opinions Editor | mogliaj@ferris.edu

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EDITOR'S COLUMN: Appreciating the game

Why football season is so meaningful



Photo courtesy of Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Blase Gapinski (right) and his brother Harrison (left) during a Detroit Lions and Cincinnati Bengals matchup in 2017.

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

I have spent more Sundays than I can count watching the Cincinnati Bengals lose, but it feels like, as the season goes on, those losses always become easier to cope with.

The start of the football season is always cherished by fans everywhere, even if they follow a team that is perpetually bad. It provides mental clarity and is almost like an escape from the problems of daily life.

While my team might not always win, I feel that I get the most value from simply watching the game, and I believe this is due to the relaxation it brings me and the flow state I enter.

The main reason I love the football season so much is that it provides more of a break from life's daily pressures than I realized.

I find myself making sure I get all of my tasks done early throughout the week so I can catch at least one of the games that are on between

Thursday and Sunday. I usually end up watching more than that, but if I can at least watch one football game, preferably the Michigan State Spartans or Bengals, I am happy.

As much as I recognize how nice it is to kick back and just watch the game, with no other worries, I usually end up completing tasks on my laptop during timeouts and other commercial breaks. There is something comforting about having the game on in the background, knowing that once you are done with your work, you can put your full attention on it.

As a fan of a perpetually bad team, it's hard to get caught up in a regular-season loss. Especially when there is so much football that starts at the beginning of August and lasts until February.

It's not like we fans are limited to one time of the day or one team as well.

Across the NFL, there are 32 teams, and the NCAA has 136 FBS teams. That pretty much makes for a football

game every day of the week. There are so many different time slots available that fans of the game pretty much get no break from football, which is never a bad thing.

This shows how many opportunities there are to enjoy. Every season, I feel like I learn so much more about the game just through watching it, even if it isn't my favorite team.

I try to watch as many games as I can because when you see the best players compete at the highest level possible, you can never really know what to expect. There are always so many big moments that you could witness that you would otherwise miss because you expect it to be the same as always.

I have talked about it enough times in this paper, but during the 2021 Bengals playoff run, I never expected them to make the Super Bowl but kept watching those games just being glad my team got to keep going.

Another game I almost

missed due to poor faith as a fan was the Michigan Wolverines taking on the Michigan State Spartans in East Lansing during the 2021 season. I wasn't even sure I wanted to watch the game because I was expecting the Spartans to lose, but I had some friends convince me to watch it in the North Hall study room with the rest of the hall.

I consider that to be one of the most electric football games I have ever experienced, not only because the team I was rooting for was winning, but because of how back and forth the game was. It was so intense and so close, but Kenneth Walker III got it done for Michigan State and put together some of the greatest moments I have seen on tape.

The best part about it all is that it is just a silly game. Even if the Bengals or the Spartans go another year missing the playoffs, the world keeps turning, and it is as simple as that. I try not to get too caught up in how the

team does, but rather ensure I am making the most of my season. A great way to do this is to go out and enjoy the game with others.

Having all of these different teams, games, divisions and time slots to choose from makes it hard not to get together with friends. There is no doubt either that it brings out the extrovert in the most introverted people.

The evidence here is any heading into any local bar or restaurant during a gameday. Undoubtedly, you will find fans of teams playing and of the game alike cheering during the biggest moments.

I can speak from experience when I say that football is an escape.

Sure, watching your favorite team lose all the time sucks but it's more than football. It's about being able to get caught up in something that brings people together, brings out the competitive side of them and taking a moment to digest in something that isn't work-related.

Country isn't what it seems to be

My lifelong experience with country music

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Often in my life, when I have asked someone what kind of music they like, they usually say all music, except country music.

I have always wondered why this was the case. It's likely because people my age who grew up during the 2010s, which was the dreaded "bro country" era. Whenever you ask people what's wrong with country music, you get the response, "Because country music is all the same, it's all about drinking beer, driving trucks and picking up women."

That is the textbook definition of "bro country," but, as someone who grew up with country music, I can tell you that this definition could be no further from the truth.

Country music started off when English, Scottish and Celtic immigrants immigrated to the Appalachian Mountain region, and blended with African American blues and gospel music. Over time, country music has evolved into hundreds of subgenres, such as outlaw, progressive and bluegrass. The most recent subgenre popping up is "pop country," with artists such as Morgan Wallen, Post Malone and Kelsea Ballerini.

Country music is much more than just beer, trucks and women; it's a genre that a lot of Americans can relate to, with songs about depression, alcoholism and struggling to make ends meet.

Dive into my favorite era of country music, the 1970s, and you can see that. You'll see the legends of the time, such as Willie Nelson writing songs about faded love, or Kris Kristofferson writing songs about drug addiction and depression.

On the other hand, you have the more upbeat artists,



Photo by: Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor

Clint Black at the Dow Event Center in Saginaw, MI performing his hit song "Like The Rain."

such as Dolly Parton, writing songs about her "coat of many colors" or Loretta Lynn singing about growing up in Kentucky as a "coal miner's daughter."

I have always said that people don't hate country music; you just haven't been put on to the right kind of country music. Even when you look at modern country music, past the mainstream artists, you have the people who fly under the radar, such

as Tyler Childers.

Childers, who hails from Kentucky, blends bluegrass and folk music with a modern twist. Childers released an album in 2020 called "Long Violent History," which is a protest album centralized around the title track against racism during the Black Lives Matter movement during 2020.

I can very well understand why many people do not like the genre, as most people my

age had grown up with their knowledge of country music of that era in the 2010s. With the artists of Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, Blake Shelton and Florida Georgia Line.

Even if you look at the popular artists of today like Zach Bryan and Luke Combs you will see a significant difference between the popular songs of the 2010s to the popular songs of the 2020s, with Bryan writing songs about love and childhood and

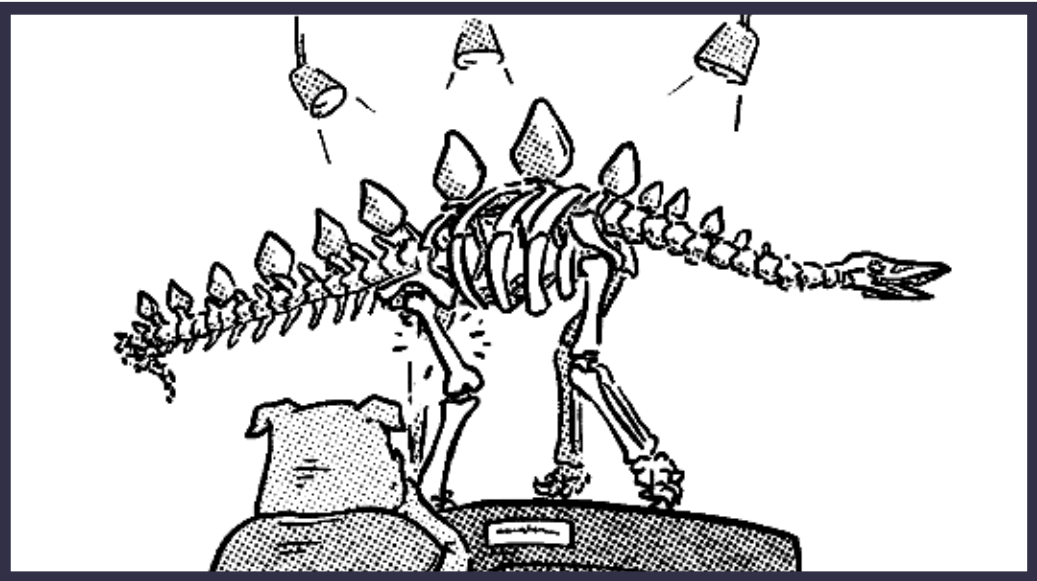
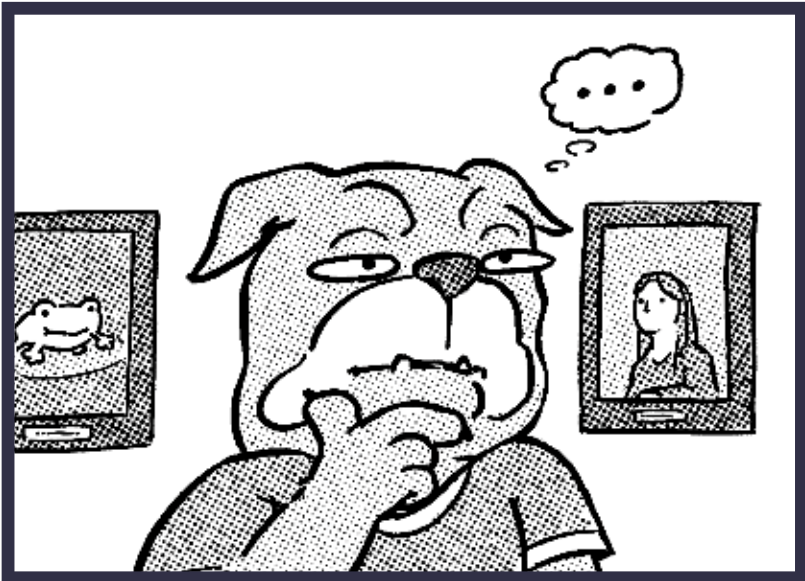
Combs writing songs about becoming a father.

If you want to dive even deeper into great writers of today, you can find artists like Sturgill Simpson who has become an artist who has created a sound that is all his own. Combining the sound of 70s country with the jam rock sound of bands like The Grateful Dead, creating the subgenre of progressive country.

In this day in age, country

music has become incredibly trendy. Many artists from different genres coming over to the genre, like Post Malone, Beyonce and Jellyroll. With country music being as popular as it is, and as accessible as it has ever been, I hope people give country music a chance, because I can promise you, if you don't like it, it's just because you haven't given it a chance.

A true connoisseur



Comic by: Blake Flanery | Cartoonist

Sports

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Final kick

Middleton looks ahead to final collegiate year



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics
Mitch Middleton kicking off against Lake Erie.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

As someone who has been a part of all three national championships Ferris State has won, senior kicker/punter Mitch Middleton is excited for his last year of college.

Born an hour south of Big Rapids in Middleville, Middleton got his start, similar to most kickers, by playing soccer. Middleton also wrestled until his freshman year of high school, when he found kicking, while also playing linebacker.

Middleton found he was good at kicking when he attended one of Ferris State's special teams coordinators, Jack Schugars' kicking camps, which he attended all four years of high school at Thornapple-Kellogg High School.

Schugars is very impressed with the type of leader Middleton is for his teammates.

"Mitch Middleton is one of our top team leaders for Ferris Football as he inspires, motivates, and cares about

the successes of his teammates," Schugars said. "Day in and day out, Mitch's leadership makes us a championship special team unit and team."

Middleton talked about his team in high school.

"My team in high school always had a winning season," Middleton said. "We made it into the playoffs a couple of times and made it to the district finals my senior year, but lost."

In high school, Middleton earned All-State multiple times and was a three-time All-Barry County First Team honoree. He also competed in the 2020 Kohl's National Scholarship Camp, which is a premier, invite-only event for high school kickers, punters and long snappers to showcase their skills for college football coaches. Middleton has the Thornapple-Kellogg High School record with a 52-yard field goal.

Middleton performed well in the camps put on by Schugars, and the two kept in touch. During Middleton's senior year of high school,

head coach Tony Annese reached out for a phone call, and the kicker was on a visit to Ferris State.

Middleton talked about his decision to attend Ferris State for college.

"I really liked the campus when I visited in early 2021, and then I committed soon after," Middleton said. "As far as academics, I knew I wanted to do something with engineering, and I had heard good things about Ferris' engineering program. That, as well as hearing how good Tony (Annese) had been and the quality of teams and guys he's been around, guided me to make the decision to commit to Ferris State."

Middleton redshirted his first year during the 2021 national championship-winning season, which allowed him to be around the guys and develop lifelong friendships.

One of those friendships is with junior kicker Eddie Jewett, who is excited to have Middleton on the team to push Jewett to be better.

"Mitch being a part of the special teams group is great," Jewett said. "He's a great leader, not just for the specialists, but for the whole team. Competing with Mitch day in and day out definitely pushes me to be the best I can be as he has continuously been one of the top kickers and punters in the country. I'm really excited to have him back for another season."

Middleton also commented on the common statement that kicking is easy and that anyone can do it since "all they have to do is kick it straight," saying that kicking isn't something that someone can learn in one day.

Middleton talked about Pat McAfee on College Gameday, proving that kicking isn't easy by having random college students kick a field goal for money.

With his last year of college eligibility, Middleton is trying to carry the momentum from last season into this season and bring the Bulldogs back to McKinney, Texas to win another national championship.

Saturday storylines

What to watch heading into Bulldogs week two against the Tiffin Dragons

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After putting up 625 yards of offense against the Lake Erie Storm on Saturday, Sept. 6, the No.1-ranked Bulldogs look to keep the momentum rolling this week against the Tiffin Dragons.

The Bulldogs (2-0, 0-0 in GLIAC) return to Top Taggart Field to face off against the Dragons (1-0, 0-0 in G-MAC) after taking down Lake Erie by a score of 63-6.

There are plenty of storylines heading into this game, and here are just a few of the important ones.

Wyatt Bower looks to be locking down the starting job

Before the season started, junior Carson Gulker was thought to be retaking the starting quarterback job after suffering a season-ending injury in week one of the 2024 season. Then, during week zero against Pittsburg State, redshirt freshman Wyatt Bower took almost all of the reps at quarterback.

During week one against the Storm, Bower showed

off his arm, completing many tough passes, which included two touchdown passes to sophomore receiver Tae Boyd. Bower went 11-20 with 220 yards and three touchdowns while running 12 times for 107 yards. Even with Bower taking over the starting job, this does not mean Gulker is not a crucial part of the offense, as he caught a 63-yard touchdown early in the second quarter.

Can the Bulldogs take down a strengthening opponent?

The Tiffin Dragons have become a rising program in Division II, and while the Bulldogs are 6-0 all-time against the Dragons, this is not the same program from when Ferris last faced them in 2017. In the six matchups that the Bulldogs faced the Dragons from 2009-2011, 2014-2015 and once again in 2017, Tiffin had a combined record of 17-49.

During those matchups, the Bulldogs outscored the Dragons 271 to 99, but Ferris has not faced Tiffin since their last matchup in 2017,

where the Bulldogs won 13-3. In 2018, the Dragons hired Cris Reisert, who turned the program around, since 2018 the Dragons have a 57-17 record with three G-MAC championships and two appearances in the NCAA Division II playoffs.

Sophomore quarterback Chase Carter knows Tiffin is a tough opponent, but he believes they will be able to take down this tough opponent.

"We'll all get together and watch the film," Carter said. "Both on our game as to make some corrections from last game and on Tiffin to see what we like. As usual though we will need to dominate physically, play fast, and execute. We know if we play to the best of our ability, then the sky is the limit for this offense."

Filling in the gaps

With all of the losses from the transfer portal during the off-season, one question heading into the preseason was whether head coach Tony Annese could fill those gaps in the roster. With run-

ning back Kannon Katzer departing to West Virginia, junior Zak Ahern has taken the starting job at running back. So far in the season, he has run 13 times for 63 yards (4.8 yards per carry) and three touchdowns.

At linebacker, the Bulldogs lost All-American Sefa Saipaia to Western Michigan, and so far senior Isaiah Byars has taken that role. So far this season, Byars has 10 total tackles, including a tackle for loss.

At defensive back, the Bulldogs lost cornerback Jacarvis Alexandre to Jacksonville State, and sophomore Ahlston Ware has stepped up into his role. Ware has eight tackles on the season, including a 35-yard interception in week one against Lake Erie.

The Bulldogs take on the Tiffin Dragons at Top Taggart Field on Saturday, Sept. 13, at 6 p.m.



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics
Wyatt Bower celebrating after scoring.

Check out Ferris tennis back on the court Featured online @fsutorch.com

Presented by Entertainment Unlimited
& Residence Hall Association

Big Radio
Big Mack
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Wild About Ferris

HOMECOMING 2025
September 18
Williams Auditorium
7PM DOORS / Free to All
FSU Students Priority Entry
WITH CURRENT STUDENT ID



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HOMECOMING 2025

SEP 15	Homecoming Week Kickoff Stop by our kickoff event on the Robinson Quad, where you can pickup your pre-ordered Homecoming shirt or grab free Bulldog Swag! In the evening, join us for Field Day - Competitive Simon Says, Relays, Tug of War, and more!
SEP 16	Escape Rooms and Trivia Night 15-minute Escape Rooms you can do alone or with friends all day in the David L Eisler Center! Join us later that night for team trivia and compete for bragging rights and prizes!
SEP 17	Movie on the Quad/Banner Making Relax with a movie and crafts on the Robinson Quad! Parade Entries can pick up supplies and start working on their banners for the parade!
SEP 18	“Wild About Ferris” Variety Show From Wild 'N Out freestyles to laugh-out-loud moments, Justina Valentine, Conceited, and Radio Big Mack are bringing the energy, the jokes and the unforgettable vibes to FSU!
SEP 19	Pep Rally Bonfire Music and Dancing, Food Trucks, Yard Games, and Bonfire near the South Athletic Fields
SEP 20	Parade 10:30am start on Michigan Ave Sign up to walk in the parade TODAY! RSOs, Campus Departments, Club and Varsity Sport Teams all showcase their members and celebrate Ferris and the Big Rapids community

FOR MORE DETAILS,
CHECK OUT THE “EVENTS” TAB
ON ENTERTAINMENT UNLIMITED’S
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