



Ferris mourns death of Dylan Marek

Loss felt across community



Photo courtesy of Tribute Archive

Accounting and computer science freshman Dylan Marek died on Oct. 1, 2025, with a service later held on Oct. 10.

Emma Walters
News Editor

Accounting and computer science freshman Dylan Marek died on Wednesday, Oct. 1, after his car crashed into a tree just south of 12 Mile Rd.

Marek, 17, had just grad-

uated from Morley Stanwood High School in May of 2025, where he served as secretary for his class.

In a press release from the high school, Principal Roger Cole addressed the community following Marek's passing.

"It is with deep sympathy

that I write this letter informing all of you that a former student, a recent graduate, was killed today in a car accident," Cole said. "Letters like this are always difficult to write and receive. We ask for your prayers for both the family and for the students and staff tomorrow as we

navigate such a tragic loss."

The high school also offered the gymnasium as a location for the family to hold the funeral and visitation services, citing a lack of facilities capable of accommodating the number of people expected to attend the service.

Students were dismissed

early on Oct. 10 for the funeral of the former student.

Local business Fatbelly Deli and Creamery invited locals to dine at the business on Saturday, Oct. 4, where all profits were donated to Marek's family.

"Dylan was someone who always had a smile, was al-

ways willing to help another person, and was an amazing young man with unlimited potential. A shining example of kindness and heart, he touched everyone around him. We invite you to come out, share a meal, and stand with us as we honor Dylan's memory and help lift up the people he loved most."

Marek previously worked at the business from July 2022 to Feb 2025.

Following the event, the business created another post thanking the community for the outpouring of love and support for Marek's family.

"To every person who waited, donated, shared a story, or simply showed up, thank you. You reminded us that this town takes care of its own. Dylan was someone who always had a smile and a helping hand for others, and seeing that same spirit reflected back through all of you was deeply moving."

The comments in response to the post

President Bill Pink issued a statement to the university following the announcement of Marek's death, urging students and staff to care for one another and utilize campus resources if needed.

"Our hearts go out to Dylan's family, friends, classmates and faculty during this incredibly difficult time. The loss of someone so young and full of promise is a tragedy that touches us all," Pink said. "As a community, we grieve together. In the coming days, I urge you to care for yourselves and each other. As I often say - Bulldogs take care of Bulldogs. If you or someone you know is struggling with this loss, please don't hesitate to reach out."

The Torch will continue to cover Marek's life and story as more details are released in the coming weeks.

The Personal Counseling Center and the 24/7 support hotline are available for students in need of these resources amid this tragic event.

News

Government shutdown news may trickle its way into your feed, but do you really know how it impacts your life as a student? Learn more about how you could be affected **PG. 2**

Culture

Numerous pizza places surround campus, but which is the Bulldogs' favorite? Check out students' preferred pizza places! **PG. 5**

Opinions

With Donald Trump declaring a ceasefire in Gaza, what are the Palestinians left to return to, and will it last? **PG. 9**

Sports

Men's and women's basketball returns for a brand new season, learn about what happened in the offseason and what's to come in the 2025-26 season **PG. 10**



Michigan

Emma Walters
News Editor

Rochester, MI – Oakland University is investigating an incident involving a student who allegedly threatened a GOP candidate.

The student allegedly created a social media post featuring a photo of Mike Steger and an unidentified man wearing a Trump sweatshirt with the caption “can we execute these two things” and arrows drawn towards Steger and the other man.

Oakland County GOP Chair Vance Patrick called for an expulsion of the student from the university for “political violence and intimidation”.

National

Emma Walters
News Editor

South Carolina, USA – 150 schoolchildren are under a 21-day quarantine following exposure to measles. The children are reported to be unvaccinated for the disease.

This outbreak arrived two months after the massive measles outbreak in Texas was officially declared over. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the U.S. has 1,563 confirmed cases of the disease this year, which is the highest annual number in the past 30 years.

Outbreaks are beginning to grow along the border of Arizona and Utah, with a small surge occurring in Minnesota.

Global

Emma Walters
News Editor

Gaza, Palestine – Palestinians are celebrating the release of hostages from Israel in the Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank territories.

The release involved 250 prisoners accused of crimes against Israelis and 1,700 detainees from Gaza that had been held without charge.

The exchange of prisoners and hostages is phase one of Donald Trump’s peace plan to end the war that began on Oct. 7, 2023.

A ceasefire took hold on Oct. 10, with negotiations under way as the Trump administration progresses through the peace plan.

The damage and loss of life in the conflict have been catastrophic, with over 70,000 people killed and billions of dollars of damage to infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

Government shutdown

Potential effects it may have on students



Photo by: Caden Hofmann | Torch Alumni

The Michigan State Capitol building remains quiet during the shutdown.

Marc Stoufer III
Freelance Reporter

On Sept. 30, the United States federal government shut down. Representatives in Congress had been attempting to renegotiate the budget ahead of the current fiscal year ending, but were unable to come to an agreement.

The government has shut down 10 times in total, and protocol requires most federal services to be suspended, while others continue without wages for workers.

Since the beginning of this shutdown, everything from air travel to health research to national parks and museums has ceased operating, while medical services and ICE programs have continued.

Keros Bennett, a Ferris student and former veteran, said he’s worried about the situation.

“It makes you think (about) how easy it is for this to go away,” he said. Bennett was also concerned about the federal employees who are forced to work without pay and are having their jobs threatened.

The effects extend to non-federal organizations as well. At Ferris State University, the impacts of the shutdown can vary.

According to political sciences professor David Takitaki, the shutdown will likely complicate any federally funded research projects currently in progress.

Additionally, it may be harder for students to begin the process of receiving new financial aid, since the Department of Education has

given its employees temporary leave of absence and discontinuation of pay for the remainder of the shutdown.

Other than these areas, most students won’t be affected in a major way while on campus.

“The shutdown will not impact students’ study or their access to their already distributed financial aid,” Takitaki said.

Unless it continues for more than a month, that is when consequences may expand towards students.

The last time the government shut down was in 2018 and lasted for 35 days. Takitaki said that the shutdown caused a “brief moment of concern,” though mostly since it occurred between the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019. The government reopened before classes started in Jan. 2019.

“I think it’ll get wrapped up soon,” Bennett said of this shutdown, adding that the government shut down five times while he was in service, but that this time it “does feel different.”

The original disagreement in Congress was over healthcare budgeting. Specifically, Republican-proposed cuts to Medicaid and Medicare that Democrats opposed. When Republicans tried to extend the negotiation period with the cuts embedded in it— a “continuing resolution”— Democrats refused, and the government shut down. It will not reopen until either Democrats agree to the continuing resolution or Republicans agree to alter it.

Multiple funding bills designed to reopen the govern-

ment have failed to pass the Senate.

Bennet said that he believes both Democrats and Republicans are to blame, and that he hopes they’ll learn to work together as a result of the shutdown.

To end the shutdown, Republicans would need eight additional votes to pass the House’s version of the budget, which would reopen the government with the proposed budget cuts.

“As of today, there are likely three who would go along with the existing budget in order to unfreeze the government,” Takitaki said, leaving Republicans to find an additional five to join them.

For Democrats, the path forward is to convince Republicans to remove the cuts from the budget, when they would then agree to pass it.

“I think that you will see some of those moderate Democrats cave before you would see Republican senators change their mind broadly and risk the wrath of President Trump,” Takitaki said.

Republicans face greater public pressure, though, as their healthcare cuts are generally unpopular, within both parties.

As a result, Takitaki believes that the outcome of the shutdown may lie in the hands of the public, a possible explanation for the varied messaging about it.

He believes Republicans’ strategy relies on placing the blame on Congressional Democrats, claiming they refused to pass the continuing resolution after Republicans cut healthcare funding for illegal immigrants, a claim

that’s been mostly successful, though inaccurate. Democrats, meanwhile, haven’t been able to find a successful message, leaving the American people between two agendas.

“My hope is that this type of shutdown elevates this very important issue to a broader matter of public consciousness,” Takitaki said.

He added that many major issues get ignored due to the political conversation around it, but the higher stakes of a full shutdown may “prevent crisis by having engagement.”

Takitaki also believes people need to engage in “broader conversations” around the matter, but that those won’t happen unless “we are tuned in and taking it seriously.”

His students often have a wide array of understanding regarding government. He said some students see politics as “ugly and nasty, and they want no part of it,” especially if they feel powerless to affect anything.

“We have to be a little empathic to those who want to stay out of it,” Takitaki said.

Others may be uninformed and don’t know how to get involved. For them, Takitaki suggests looking for news made by outside sources like BBC and Al Jazeera to see “how the world is looking at us,” to take classes that help inform them and to “seek out reasonable perspectives online,” while keeping in mind that even independent sources are biased and need verification.

He also expressed that students are more capable of making an impact than they may think they are.

“I bet I could get 500 Ferris students in a room and they could come to a compromise. That compromise would look a lot better than what’s coming out of Congress,” Takitaki said.

The distance between those students and members of Congress, he said, is “not light years, it’s steps. Steps that they could cross.”

Some of his students see the ongoing conflict and believe they could do better job at preventing them. Takitaki agrees.

“You could do better. Maybe we need folks to step up and do exactly that,” Takitaki said.

As for the current situation, members of Congress from both sides of the political aisle continue to push forward until a resolution can be agreed upon.

Campus security updates

Cameras and extra security measures to be put in place



Photo by: Emma Walters | News Editor

Buildings across campus like academic environments will eventually require card swipe access, similar to the system within residence halls.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Following a project that started in March of this year, Ferris' Big Rapids campus now has brand new cameras watching over students.

Between the Kendall School of Arts and Design in Grand Rapids and the Big Rapids campus, Ferris has roughly 600 new exterior cameras and 275 interior cameras.

This was just one part of a multi-phase project focusing on campus-wide security efforts. Phase one focused on campus residences, including residence halls, as well as West Campus apartments and East Campus suites. The cameras will be installed in these residence parking lots, as well as inside residence hall hallways.

While the cameras are significant to the campus, junior Biology Education Josh Smith believes there are still some strides that need to be taken to enhance safety on campus.

"I don't know if safer would be the right word to use," Smith said. "I would say I feel more secure if something were to happen to me or someone else on campus, that they would be able to accurately and effectively find out what happened in that situation, or who did it."

Phase one also included

adding cameras to high-volume traffic areas for students, such as the David L. Eisler Center, the FLITE building, Birkam Health Center, the Student Rec Center and the Timme building.

The cameras will also be installed in populated outdoor areas around campus, including the North Quad and South Quad.

Another component to phase one is brand-new cabling being installed. These new cables will help run the communications lines for phones and card swipe access.

Phase two of the project entails academic buildings such as the IRC and Starr building, and phase three will focus on sports facilities such as Top Taggard Field and the Sports Complex. Phase four will be all administrative buildings across campus, such as the Prakken Building.

Associate Vice President of Facilities Joe Haupt spoke about a new card swipe system that will eventually be put in place.

"If you have lived anywhere on campus, you've swiped a card to get into a residence hall," Haupt said. "We're putting more of those access control doors across campus, and they won't just be on residence halls. When the project is 100% complete, we will have the ability to lock campus down in the event of an

unfortunate situation, just by the push of a button at DPS."

Another part of this project includes an upgrade to dispatch in the emergency operations center. Dispatch will be receiving brand new video walls. These walls will be compatible with the brand new cameras across campus and this project is just about finished.

The emergency operations center is the central command in the event of an emergency that occurs on campus. This is where leadership will go to help diffuse whatever is taking place on campus at that point.

Assistant professor of humanities, Dr. Evan Watts, believes this is a great thing for the campus.

"I am all for making sure students feel secure on campus," Watts said. "If these new cameras and security systems around campus will make students feel safer walking around, that's great. Having additional security measures in place is great, because people should feel safe on campus."

While the cameras on

campus are up and running, the whole project is far from done. The hope is that the entire security project will be finished by October of 2026, for the Grand Rapids and Big Rapids campuses.

BIG RAPIDS' BEST BUDS

STUDENTS GET A FREE GIFT, WEEKLY!

120 S. MICHIGAN AVE SUITE B
DOWNTOWN BIG RAPIDS

OPEN 7 DAYS 9-9 | +231-629-8048
IGLOOCANNABIS.COM

AVAILABLE ON:
weedmaps dutchie

IGLOO CANNABIS STORE

DELIVERY & PICK-UP AVAILABLE

Ferris enrollment on decline

Enrollment down following year of increase



Photo courtesy of the Torch Archives

Enrollment at Ferris has been on a slow decline, with this year reaching the lowest it has been in almost five years.

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

Ferris State University's enrollment rate has declined compared to last year. According to Ferris State's website, 9,959 undergraduate students were enrolled in the fall of the 2024 semester, 9,877 students enrolled for the fall 2025 semester, a 882 decrease in headcount. The lowest in nearly five years. The last decrease of this scale was 804 students during the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Students feel that alternatives like trade schools are a reason why students are not returning to campus. Dental hygiene sophomore Rihanna Mackey talked about how avenues that

require less time and financial stress seem to be more optimal for those searching for a career. "There are quite a few jobs now that require less schooling," Mackey said. "I think that offering more scholarships and financial aid could bring students back. The high cost is what I think drives people away." Mackey further explained that many jobs offer the same level of pay as those that require a college education. With the economy on the decline, skipping college and going straight into trade school could save them a few bucks. Other students feel that the lack of activities and campus events could be a reason.

Mathematics education junior Grace Westonfeld described how, compared to other places, there just isn't a lot going on. "There's not a ton to do in Big Rapids," Westonfeld said. "I would say sometimes, especially on days like today, there aren't a lot of people around." Westonfeld explained that the area lacks options for students seeking a "city lifestyle." Finances may also put students in a rough spot, while some endure the pressures of supporting themselves through school. "I do pay for some of it myself, and my parents help out," Westonfeld said. "But I don't want to put that stress on them. The only reason I went to college was because

I was able to get scholarships and financial aid." Automotive professor Jeremy Sam has noticed faculty dropping in numbers as well, with certain departments faring worse than others. "I feel like the auto service has probably been hit the hardest, which leaves holes in the auto service field," Sam said. "Part of the reason we have lower enrollment is that in the fleet industry, they do an hourly wage, which is less stressful compared to earning a flat rate." Sam considered that salary and pay could be contributing factors, as earning a flat rate can require a person in the industry to work extensively to make ends meet. Sam finds that many students change their major and that there aren't many

graduating from the program. He explained that students come into the auto service program and, for some reason, lack the motivation to continue the program. Students have either moved on to the engineering degree or the management degree. Automotive professor Patrick English weighed in on the program's funding. "We're spending the same amount of money we had before COVID, and in many cases it doesn't even go half as far," English said. "Everything is more expensive and the value of money isn't the same as it once was. Part of that also has to do with the university doesn't really promote our program." English explains the challenges the department is

facing regarding the hiring process. He also added how low salaries influence how certain jobs are offered to applicants. "The salaries that we're able to offer are monetarily low," English said. "You have to let the candidate know the benefits of the job beyond money and in today's world, a lot of people can make so much more money in the education side of things." Factors including financial aid, salaries and student life shy students away from coming back. At the heart of this issue, the university's moral and momentum remain strong. As Ferris continues to recover from enrollment decline, the university is finding new ways to support students both academically and financially.

Charlie Kirk statue rejected

President Bill Pink thanked county for the proposal, but respectfully rejected

Emma Walters
News Editor

President Bill Pink has declined Mecosta County's request to have a bronze statue of the late Charlie Kirk

installed on campus. In the statement released by the university, Pink cited the university's long-standing tradition of featuring statues on campus of individuals pivotal to the university's history.

"At present, the only statue on our grounds is of our founder, Woodbridge N. Ferris, whose vision and leadership made the University possible," Pink said. "For these reasons, Ferris State

must respectfully decline the proposal to add a statue of Mr. Kirk. We remain grateful for the County's partnership in many other areas and welcome continued collaboration on initiatives that sup-

port our shared community." The proposal, which was approved at the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners meeting, came a week after Kirk was shot and killed while speaking at an event

on the campus of Utah Valley University.

Culture

Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor | turnek29@ferris.edu

Joys of pizza

Students reveal their favorite pizza spots



Photo by: Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor

Hungry Howie's is commonly referred to by students across campus and local throughout the community.

Tate Zellman
Freelance Reporter

With various pizza places being close to campus, students have various avenues in which to treat themselves to good pizza within the community.

Regardless of what places they like the best, most students say that they like to eat pizza. Despite the university dining halls offering pizza, students can still choose to go out to pizza places, as they provide various pizza types and something for everyone to enjoy.

Students enjoy the pizza with friends, family or on their own. They can also take the opportunity to get pizza for themselves and their friends when watching sports, watching movies, or engaging in other activities.

PGA golf management freshman Mitchell England stated that his favorite pizza place is Hungry Howie's. He finds satisfaction in going there since he's been there a handful of times.

"It's the comfort of the place itself," England said. "Every time I go there, I know what I'm going to get and I'm

going to like it. There's definitely some extra satisfaction with the safety of it. From a community standpoint, like how me and my friends get pizza from there all the time, I'm sure there's other people that do, and that helps create a community around Hungry Howie's."

Furthermore, England had just discovered that there's a Hungry Howie's in Big Rapids, and he was delighted to discover that his favorite pizza is so close to campus.

"That's very nice to know that a Hungry Howie's is around here," England said. "I have not ordered out pizza since I've gotten here, and I know that I probably will. It might become a dangerous spending habit."

Students' pizza preferences are based on the taste, how often they go and how convenient they find the distance and service of the place.

Sports communications senior Jonathen Hart's favorite pizza place is Crusted Creations. He considers it to be his favorite because he has been searching for a place where he could enjoy to the fullest while getting

some good pizza.

"I've worked at Domino's and Hungry Howie's, and for me making the food and everything, the taste kind of goes away," Hart said. "So I wanted to find a new avenue for enjoying pizza. I checked out Crusted Creations one day, and I tried an all-meat specialty. This one in particular is so good, being able to take a bite out of this pizza and get everything you need all at once. It was like a way to re-fall in love with pizza."

Hart also said that he makes special trips to get pizza as a reward for doing well in school.

"I like to treat myself a little bit," Hart said. "It's normally two or three times a semester. After a tough exam, if I did good on it, I'll go get a pizza. It helps me restart for a little bit. Like, restart my mind and my mentality for the day, and just get some pizza along the way."

Some students choose their favorite pizza places based on the cost of the pizza, as they vary depending on the specific place.

Business freshman Jayden Robinson stated that his favorite pizza place is Lit-

tle Caesars, and he finds the short distance from campus to be convenient when he wants to get pizza.

"It feels very convenient because I can go whenever I want," Robinson said. "When

I was at home, the closest one was about fifteen minutes away, so it's longer to get to compared to here. It's nice having one just down the road."

Since pizza places are so

close to campus, all students can select a place and grab a pizza whenever they please.

As such, there is no shortage of pizza for students to take a break from assignments, or eat with friends.



Advertise Your Business Here!

Contact Me: Maurice Riddle
maurice.riddle@hearst.com

START TODAY!

TORCH EDITORIAL BOARD: Future of the Torch

Special editions changes to look out for this year

Upcoming special editions

Tire Fire and Anchor Bone

Last print of Oct.

Black History Month

All throughout Feb.

Women's History Month

All throughout March

Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

Many changes are happening to the Torch's special editions section, and this column will guide readers through what exactly will be changing, how the issues will look different and what is to come from the Torch staff.

This year, instead of devoting four extra pages to our special editions, we will be trying something new and shifting towards a more sustainable way of producing these issues. Rather than

printing 16 pages, we will instead be moving some of our sections so that we are only printing the same 12 pages as normal and can still produce the stories for those special issues, which we all take pride in.

Although these changes are new to the Torch, we are currently planning to run special editions mostly throughout the months besides our Oct. special editions. For our final print in October, the Torch will be highlighting both the classic Grand Valley vs. Ferris State rivalry and

our satirical Halloween tire fire edition.

The Torch realizes more than ever how important it is to speak up on Black History Month, Women's History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month. This is why we will be focusing on celebrating all month long with special stories, features, graphics and important information. Together, we can stay informed and help support our bulldog family.

This ensures the Torch is taking a step to become a more sustainable business

and it also takes pressure off the staff, as we are currently lacking the funds to hire additional employees. The Torch has also taken the time to consider the importance of being flexible and adaptable, especially while in the workplace.

Although these changes to the Torch's financial situation drastically change what the future of the paper will look like, we as a staff are and have been working as hard as we can to put forth the best product possible and we hope the community can

recognize that.

One thing we have always loved about our special editions is the opportunity to open our pages to new voices. As we move forward with this reimagined format, we want to extend a heartfelt invitation to anyone in the Ferris community who is interested in contributing to our special editions. Whether you're a student, faculty, alumni or staff, if you have a story to share or a perspective to amplify, especially during Black History Month, Women's History Month and

LGBTQ+ History Month, we want to hear from you.

These issues are for everyone and we are committed to making sure they reflect the rich diversity of our campus. By including more voices, we are not only strengthening our publication, we are also uplifting the community and the voices we aim to represent.

That is how the Torch will continue to support, inform and celebrate every part of our Bulldog community, one story at a time.

Media minute

“Eavesdropping” is a timely reinvention of the rom-com

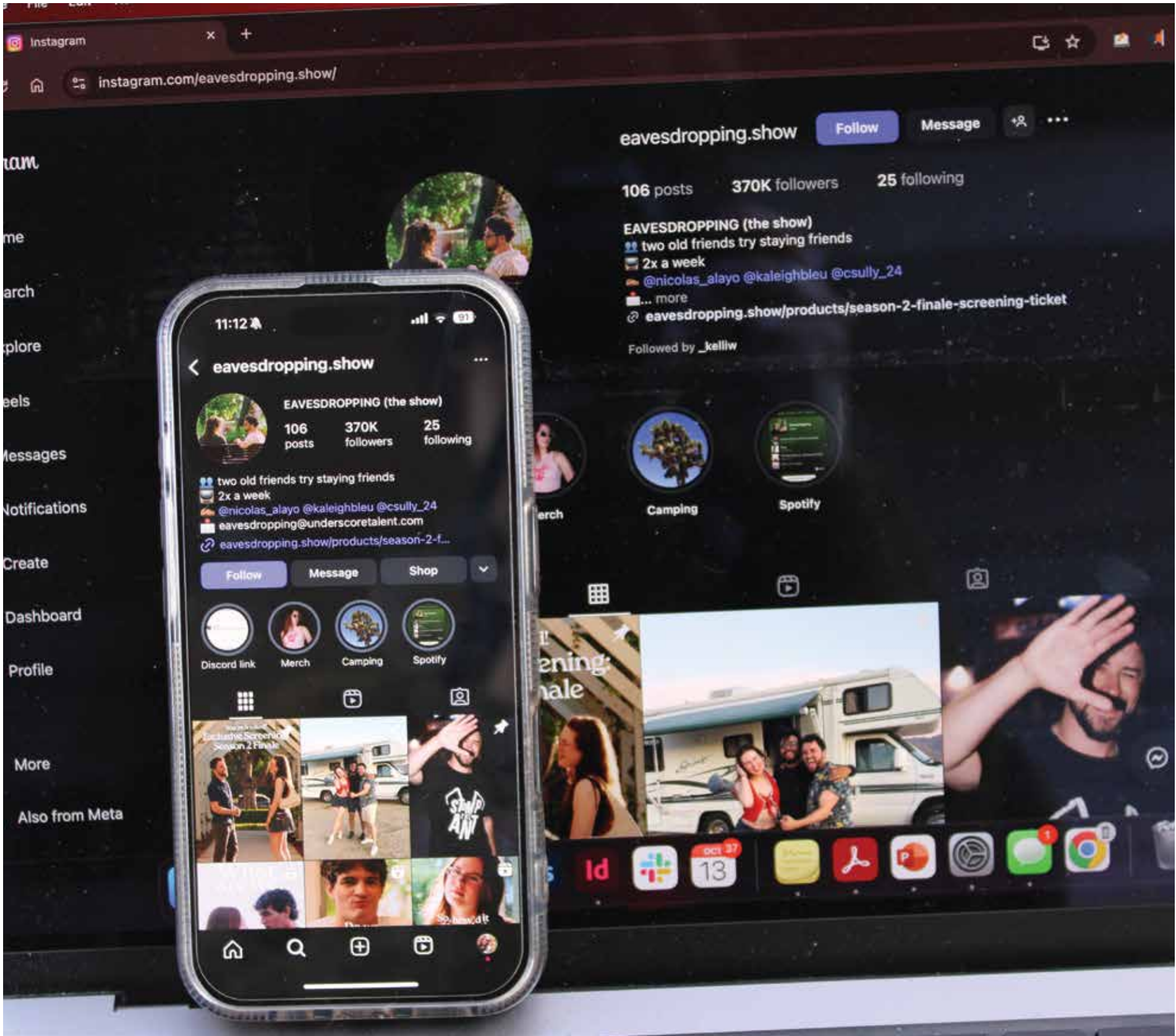


Photo by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Eavesdropping’s Instagram account is where all episodes that have been released can be found.

Marc Stoufer III
Freelance Reporter

In “Eavesdropping,” two friends from high school reconnect and have to navigate their burgeoning friendship/ probably more/maybe not, without messing anything up. The twist? This entire story is told exclusively through Instagram, and episodes are 3 minutes or less.

Each episode of this show is written to be both an installment in the overall story and a standalone reel on Instagram’s explore page— how many fans discovered the show. In stark contrast to many pillars of the genre, the show’s plotlines feel authentic and the dialogue sounds like how people actually talk.

Cameron and Bea, the two

main characters, both feel refreshingly human. That’s a weird thing to say about characters that... are, but many rom-coms reduce their leads to “Half of Couple” and “Other Half of Couple.” Here, though, they each have depth and interesting points of view that extend beyond their relationship to each other. Similarly, when Ethan arrives as an obstacle to this potential romance, he never comes off as evil or manipulative— he’s just very irritating. (Also, he should probably go to therapy.) It’s easy to see why Bea likes him, though, and the audience routinely expresses concern that they might, too.

“Eavesdropping” also makes the important decision to give even its side characters unique experi-

ences and personality. What a concept. Cameron’s former roommate Rique, arguably the fan-favorite character, only appears in a handful of episodes and rarely contributes to the plot in any significant way. Despite that, he has a realistic and identifiable connection with Cameron that makes audiences root for him, and his subplot with his girlfriend is interesting in its own right. Similarly, Bea’s roommate, Yaz, has an organic and dynamic relationship with Bea that’s a little messy at times, but always true to both of their personalities.

By building out these side characters, the creative team can take the time to develop the main arc with proper pacing, since the audience also

looks forward to episodes that only feature less important characters.

“Eavesdropping” is written by Nicolas Alayo, Kaleigh Howland and Christian Sullivan, who play Rique, Bea and Cameron, respectively. The show being written exclusively by people that also star in it means that each character tracks remarkably well through each episode. The comments section is always filled with praise and criticism (often, both at the same time) for a character’s actions, but never at the writing— everyone agrees that it’s captivating.

Much has been said about the agony of The Slow Burn, and “Eavesdropping” is a show all about it. It avoids the pitfalls of the format,

though, by filling each scene with reasons to keep watching anyway— it isn’t just about hoping that Cameron and Bea end up together, it’s about watching them grow as friends and as individual people, too. Each character has a full and messy arc that propels them to interesting places, and each episode feels like... well, eavesdropping on a real conversation that’s interesting in its own right.

By leaning into the restrictions of Instagram, the team behind “Eavesdropping” managed to avoid the stale clichés of the genre and instead tell a story about people that just so happens to have a great romance plot at the center of it. With their twice-weekly release schedule and short episodes, the

show never feels like it’s overstaying its welcome or stretching to fit a time slot. It feels like moments that are really happening and that just happen to be filmed, something that’s especially important in this genre.

The rom-com as a concept is formulaic enough that unoriginal and half-baked stories have largely become the norm. “Eavesdropping” changes that by creating engaging characters first, and then adding a romance slow-burn to everything else the show says about them. As the show wraps up its second season, it brings to the table a unique and genuine array of plotlines that stands out in a landscape where media with a soul is increasingly hard to find.

Opinions

Jackie Moglia | Opinions Editor | mogliaj@ferris.edu

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

The Ferris State Torch welcomes comments on topics of interest to the general readership. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and The Torch reserves the right to edit for length. Letters will not be edited for grammar, punctuation or spelling. The Torch will not print letters deemed to be libelous or obscene. All letters must be signed by their authors and include his or her phone number.

Unsigned editorials appearing on this page are the opinion of The Torch and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the university's administration, faculty or staff. Signed columns represent the opinion of the writer. Inquiries regarding editorial content should be directed to the Editor in Chief at (231) 591-5978. To advertise with the Torch, contact Danette Doyle at the Pioneer Group at (231) 592-8359 or Danette.Doyle@hearst.com.

Student media retain the same rights, responsibilities, privileges and protections afforded by the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and under applicable state laws.

The Torch and fsutorch.com, the student newspaper and its accompanying online version focused on Ferris State University, are public forums for student expression. Student editors have the authority and responsibility to make all content decisions without censorship or advanced approval for both the print and online editions of the student newspapers.

Torch Staff

Editor in Chief Blase Gapinski gapinsb@ferris.edu	Copy Editors Carly Judge Jack Jamerino
Production Manager Harmony Goodman	Podcast Manager Liz Brown
Production Assistant Hailey Nye	Videographer -
News Editor Emma Walters	Cartoonist Blake Flanery
Culture Editor Grace Heethuis	News Reporters Davarria Pharr
Special Editions Editor -	Freelance News Reporters Marc Stoufer III
Sports Editor Nolan Matthews	Culture Reporters -
Opinions Editor Jackie Moglia	Freelance Culture Reporters Tate Zellman
Multimedia Editor Abe Kraus	Sports Reporters Devin Wardrop
Web Editor Lucas Gill	Freelance Sports Reporters -
Managing Copy Editor Connor Fuller	Photographers Shaunti'ara Reynolds Clark Vance Delaney Stewart

Advisor
Scott Kowalewski
ScottKowalewski@ferris.edu

EDITOR'S COLUMN: Ceasefire in the Gaza Strip

Is it too late already?



Photo courtesy of Wiki Commons

Although talks of peace have been negotiated, the Gaza Strip has already faced destruction beyond recognition.

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

With President Donald Trump's first phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement taking effect, I feel like people are finally starting to realize how much damage was truly done to Palestine and its people. The proposed ceasefire calls for an immediate halt to hostilities between Israel and Hamas, tied to a phased release of hostages and partial Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. It also includes the start of a demilitarization process and the introduction of an international force to oversee security and reconstruction. But what breaks my heart the most is how quickly Israeli forces are starting to withdraw from the areas Trump designated in the ceasefire, as if the damage they have caused is done and they can simply walk away without paying for the destruction. Meanwhile, the people of Gaza are returning to nothing but piles of rubble and shattered memories. I don't have much hope

that this ceasefire will last long. It doesn't feel like it was that long ago, but this same conversation was being had in January. Even though there were talks of peace being negotiated between the United States, Qatar and Egypt, many people realized it was too unsafe for them to remain in Gaza due to the constant barrage of attacks. With Israel beginning to act on the terms of this new ceasefire, it is estimated that more than 500,000 people have now returned to Gaza, but I can't help but wonder what they're even returning to. At the end of January, it was reported that nearly 70% of all structures in the strip have been destroyed or damaged, and an estimated 92% of all housing units are gone. It's hard to imagine coming home to nothing but concrete dust and collapsed buildings. And yet, this is their home. No one asked for it to be destroyed. The people of Gaza didn't choose this war, but they're the ones left to survive its aftermath. This leaves me with a few questions that I fear will be left unanswered for some

time. For one, who is going to pay to rebuild everything Israel destroyed in the Gaza Strip? Gaza's economy has been crushed, its infrastructure leveled and its people displaced. Promises of international aid are already being made, but we've heard those promises before, and the funding rarely matches the scale of devastation. Second, how can we trust both sides to honor these vague, loosely worded terms? Especially with Hamas and Israel returning hostages on such a tight and sensitive deadline? This phased release of hostages, both living and deceased, hinges on coordination and cooperation. The ceasefire agreement might look good on paper, but in reality, it's built on unstable ground. And finally, what does any of this mean for Palestinians in the West Bank? Gaza has been in the headlines, but Israeli forces have occupied the West Bank for more than 50 years. There is no sign that this ceasefire addresses the deep-rooted systemic injus-

tices and violence happening there every day. If the ceasefire is only a pause in one part of Palestine while occupation continues in another, is that really even peace? And maybe what hurts the most is knowing that Israel will likely walk away from all of this without ever facing real consequences. Because, let's be honest, what's happened over the last two years isn't just a "conflict." It's not a complicated disagreement or a tragic misunderstanding. It is a genocide, and there's no dancing around that. The mass killing of civilians, the deliberate destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and entire neighborhoods, the forced displacement of over a million people. It's not accidental. It's systematic. And yet, the world is still treating Israel like a misunderstood neighbor instead of an occupying power responsible for unspeakable violence. What's even more infuriating is how our government refuses to say it plainly. Leaders on both sides of the political spectrum, democrats and

republicans alike, won't even call this what it is. Even our president is out here repeating that both Israel and Palestine are tired of the constant conflict on both sides, as if this war has ever been balanced, as if Hamas had tanks, fighter jets or the power to starve an entire population. It hasn't. This war has been one-sided from the beginning, and the U.S. has helped fund it. This is only phase one of the ceasefire, and maybe it will mark a turning point with the hostage returns going smoothly as intended. But no matter how this unfolds, justice can't begin with silence. Accountability matters. Recognition matters. And so does telling the truth about what's happened because Gaza deserves more than just a pause in violence. This genocide must end. Not just because the world is watching, but because no people should ever have to beg for the right to live, to exist or to go home.

The great outdoors

How being outdoors can make you a happier person



Photo by: Jack Jamerino | Copy Editor

Over fall break, Jack spent time in White Cloud, Mich. hunting with his uncle.

Jack Jamerino
Copy Editor

In this modern world where life has become so busy, it is easy to forget how much stepping outdoors can make your day.

The act of being outdoors, whether it be hiking, hunting, fishing or even just going for a walk, has an ability to calm us, improve our moods and reconnect us with something

essential to our roots. The fact of the matter is, nature has been our home, and spending time in it is essential to our well-being.

This is not just an old wives' tale; this has been studied and is a well-researched fact. Studies show that spending time outdoors can reduce cortisol levels, lower blood pressure and increase brain chemicals responsible for happiness,

like endorphins and serotonin. Even five minutes of being outdoors can improve self-esteem and mood. The evidence all points to nature, fresh air and sunlight are a great cure for anxiety and depression.

Don't get me wrong, technology has helped us in many different ways; however, technology has affected our mental health more than most of us think. Countless

notifications, social media and emails have caused our attention span to drop to an all-time low. Being out in nature gives us the perfect opportunity to unplug from the rush of everyday life and become more present with ourselves and the people in our lives.

Whenever you step outdoors, you start to subconsciously notice different senses and phenomena

around you. You feel the sun on your face, you smell the flowers around you and hear the birds chirping. These small moments can remind us to stay present in the moment, which allows us to think clearly and more slowly. Slower and calmer thinking allows us to be more focused and cool-headed once we return to work.

Being outdoors has its physical benefits, but it also has emotional and social benefits. Going on a hike, a bike ride or a camping trip with friends or family can create lifelong memories and connections. My girlfriend and I try to go hiking quite often, as it is a way for us to destress and reconnect with each other after a long week.

Going outdoors also puts my life into perspective. I took a trip out to the Grand Canyon a few years ago, and just seeing the vastness of the Grand Canyon reminded me that I am a part of something bigger. When I become stressed out, I remind myself of the Grand Canyon, and it makes me feel like my personal problems are a lot smaller and more manageable.

To me, nature has a humbling effect. Constantly reminding me that my problems are just one small part of a bigger picture.

Physical activity plays a major role in how being outdoors affects your happiness. Whenever you perform physical activity outdoors, whether it be playing sports or even just walking, your body releases endorphins, which are the same brain chemicals that produce that "runner's high" feeling.

To me, working out outdoors is a lot more enjoyable. The scenery keeps me motivated to keep going. I joined a summer lacrosse league, and it was always in the evening, and the scenery was always beautiful. It reminded me of how blessed I am to run outdoors with such beautiful scenery all around me.

In a way, the scenery kept me outdoors longer than I often planned to be. It became not only wanting to play the game of lacrosse but also being outdoors, enjoying the warm sun and air around me.

Being outdoors is a necessity and is essential to our mood, our health and minds. Being in nature reduces stress and lifts our spirits. In a time when it is easy to feel stressed or sad, the easiest way to feel better might be to step outside and surround yourself with the beauty of nature.

Why I play devil's advocate

An elevation of the mind

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

Recently, I've realized that I have a peculiar habit. Whenever I read or hear something, I play devil's advocate. Even if it is something I agree with, my mind always tends to explore the other side as well.

At first, I wondered if I only do this because I'm argumentative. When I started to think about it, I realized that it stems from a long-held belief: It is important to know why you believe what you believe.

That's where playing devil's advocate comes in. You have to know the reasons behind your beliefs, or your advice is essentially meaningless. If you can't defend your beliefs, then they are of little use.

When you play devil's advocate, you're choosing to be considerate and critical of the beliefs of those who are different from you. I believe that is an important skill.

Luckily, there's almost always an opportunity to do so. With every social media post you come across and every argument you overhear, you can choose to play devil's

advocate with it. You can get as crazy and creative as you want with it.

Doing this serves different benefits. First of all, it helps to foster empathy for those holding different beliefs. I think if we made more attempts in this manner, we would see a lot less fighting and a lot more strategic problem-solving.

Second, it helps to further develop critical thinking skills and creativity. Playing devil's advocate, especially when you see something you initially agree with, helps you see things from another angle. A lot of times, people have trouble seeing validity in opposing arguments.

It helps you recognize the experiences which has shaped the worldview of others, and recognize that many other people live much differently than you. They come from all different backgrounds, cultures, experiences and different levels of education.

People form beliefs about the world from what they know and have experienced. This is important to remem-

ber when we consider what someone believes. Sometimes, it really takes putting yourself in someone else's shoes to understand their beliefs.

Playing devil's advocate doesn't necessarily mean that you have to change your mind about your initial belief, although my perspective often shifts when I do so. It doesn't require a change of your morals either.

It simply helps you have a deeper thought process when forming opinions. I believe that this is especially important when it comes to political issues.

When it comes to politics, it is important that policies are formed that will best serve as many people as possible, rather than just a minority.

While you might hold a certain belief, it is important to recognize that the general population, filled with people who disagree with you, is not forced to live a lifestyle that caters to your beliefs.

Sure, you might believe that homosexuality is morally wrong. That doesn't mean



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

that we should outlaw gay marriage so that people who don't believe that way are stripped of their marriage rights. That's not what would best serve the general population.

My point is, attempting to look at the point of view and experiences of others is beneficial. It provides an opportunity to examine your

own beliefs and adjust them accordingly, as well as develop a deeper understanding of others and cultivate empathy for them.

When we play devil's advocate, even just in our own minds, everyone benefits, including you. Even if your views don't really change much, you develop a deeper understanding of and argu-

ment for why you believe the way you do, which is important.

If you've never tried this, I'd like to encourage you to try it when you hear something controversial. You might be surprised at how much you can learn just by taking your thinking a step further.

Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

Basketball season previews

Basketball season previews



Photo courtesy of the Torch Archives

Former Bulldog guard Jaxon Whitaker shoots a three pointer against Wisconsin-Parkside.

Blase Gapinski
Editor in chief

Men's basketball

The Ferris State Men's Basketball team enters the 2025-26 season with more questions than answers after a turbulent offseason. The Bulldogs lost three players to the transfer portal. Senior transfer wing Jorden Brooks, junior transfer center Nathan Claerbaut, sophomore transfer guard Dono Thames and freshman transfer guard Jaxon Whitaker have left key spots open on the Ferris State roster, but they've reloaded with nine new faces who are expected to fill these roles right away. With such a large roster shift, chemistry and identity will be a focal point early in the season. Adding to the ambiguity, head coach Bobby Pietrack resigned less than a month before the season opener, and his first season with the Bulldogs, due to a serious personal health issue. In his place, interim coach Alex Fodness takes the reins. Fodness brings a

strong coaching background, serving as the top assistant coach for three seasons at Bemidji State University. However, reshaping an entire team dynamic on such short notice will be a key challenge. With the returning players and new additions brought to the roster and a fresh, young voice leading the program, the Bulldogs' season could go in several directions. Still, there's optimism that this new-looking squad will find its identity and grow stronger as the season progresses.

Women's basketball

The Ferris State Women's Basketball team enters the 2025-26 season with most of its core players returning. Many crucial leaders are making their return this year. Senior guard Kadyr Blanchard is making her return after coming off an ACL tear. She is looking to make the most of her last year of college eligibility, prioritizing her health in the offseason. With Blanchard being deemed out for the rest of the year in early January, senior guard Mia Riley had a

breakout season, averaging 14.7 points a game, a major increase from the 2023-24 season, where she averaged 3.5 points a game from the bench. Riley also poses as a defensive threat for the Bulldogs. She had 95 steals and 132 defensive rebounds recorded last season. With her return, the Bulldogs will likely continue to implement her in their defensive scheme. Another returning role player is sophomore guard Mara Mitchell. Mitchell showed promise last season, shooting 60% on the court. She is a player to keep an eye on this season, as she continues to develop into the Bulldogs' game plan. With a solid mix of veteran leadership and emerging young talent, the Bulldogs are ready to take the next step and establish themselves as one of the GLIAC's top contenders. Their depth, chemistry and defensive identity could set them apart in a highly competitive field this season.

This article will be updated via the Torch's website.



Photo courtesy of the Torch Archives

Sophomore forward Claire Erickson goes up for a layup.

Bulldogs look to continue streak

Ferris football looks to keep their winning streak intact against Michigan Tech



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Sophomore quarterback Chase Carter avoids a tackle.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After their third straight game with 50+ points, Ferris State will be traveling to Marquette to face off against the Michigan Tech Huskies.

The No. 1-ranked Bulldogs (6-0, 2-0 in the GLIAC) look to continue their dominance against the Huskies (5-1, 2-0 in the GLIAC), who are tied for second place in the conference.

The Huskies are off to another season where they started the season 5-1, which they did last season, but they only finished the season 7-4 and finished third in the GLIAC.

Ferris State and Michigan Tech have a long and storied history, stretching all the way back to their first matchup in 1947, where the Bulldogs won by a score of 2-0. Since then, the Bulldogs have a 24-23 game lead on the Huskies, while also having a 12-game winning streak, which goes back to 2012.

Michigan Tech has one of the better quarterback and wide receiver duo in the GLIAC. Being led by redshirt sophomore Alex Bueno, who has 1,154 yards through the air and a GLIAC-leading 12 touchdowns, while running for 385 yards and three touchdowns. With his main target being redshirt sophomore Nic Nora, having 385 yards and five touchdowns,

which is the most in the GLIAC.

As the Bulldogs look to continue their winning streak against the Huskies, senior linebacker Isaiah Byars.

“We have to keep practicing hard,” Byars said. “No matter who we are playing we have to play hard and focus on our mistakes from this past week and the week goes on, we have to keep playing physical.”

The Huskies’ only loss this season came to Upper Iowa University, which took down Michigan Tech 21-14. The key in this game will be to keep the Huskies’ passing attack under wraps.

In the only two games that were close games, which were the loss to Upper Iowa and last week’s 16-14 victory against Davenport, the Huskies’ passing attack was held to less than 110 passing yards. While the Bulldogs only allow 179 yards per game through the air, they hold opponents to an average of 48% completion so far this season.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Wyatt Bower spoke about what it means to have the defense playing at such a high level.

“Our offense has been playing great this year,” Bower said. “But the defense has been playing lights out for us. We wouldn’t have the success that we have been having without them, they have

been playing their butts off.”

While this past week Ferris showed out once again in their third straight shutout against Wayne State, something the Bulldogs have not done since 1970, when they shut out Wisconsin-Milwaukee, North Park and Illinois-Chicago.

In the shutout against Wayne State, the Bulldogs defeated the Warriors 59-0. The Bulldogs were led by sophomore quarterback Chase Carter, who was put in during the second quarter. Carter went 7-10 with 112 yards and a touchdown, while adding 11 rushes for 114 yards and two touchdowns.

This victory has set a new school record for 20 consecutive wins, surpassing the previous mark of 19 set between the 2021 and 2022 seasons. Head coach Tony Annese spoke about the new school record and what it means to his team.

“I told them after the game that is 20 wins in a row, which is a school record,” Annese said. “I think this school has existed for a long time, so when your making that kind of mark with school records that’s a moment of pride for them, and I’m proud of them.”

The Bulldogs will take on the Huskies this week in Marquette at Kearly Stadium for a 12 p.m. gametime.

Join us at The Torch

Now Hiring

Looking for:

- Culture Reporters
- News Reporters

Contact The Torch Editor-in-chief Blase Gapinski for questions and more.

Gapinsb@ferris.edu

SKELETON SKURRY

5k Run/Walk/Roll

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25
8:00 A.M.

Lace up your sneakers, wear your favorite costume, grab your friends, and head over to Big Rapids City Hall for a spooktacular time.

Timing to be provided by: Epic Race Timing Co.
Prizes will be awarded for the TOP THREE FINISHERS and BEST COSTUME.

Race begins at Big Rapids City Hall & ends at the old JCPenney building

Register at:
<https://skeletonskurry.eventbrite.com>
or scan the QR code

sponsored by: **PIONEER**

to benefit: **ANGELS of Action**
Fighting Childhood Hunger

Ferris heads to USA Hockey Arena

Bulldogs play Simon Fraser and USNTDP U-18 teams



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Junior forward Holden Doell dribbles the puck down the ice against the Western Michigan Broncos on Friday, Oct. 10.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

A week removed from their series split against Western Michigan, the Ferris State Bulldogs will travel to Plymouth, Michigan to play the Simon Fraser University Red Leafs, followed by the United States National Team Development Program Under-18 (USNTDP U-18) on Friday, Oct. 17, and Saturday, Oct. 18.

Ferris State (1-3-0, 0-0-0 in CCHA) will start the week-end by playing Simon Fraser (2-4-1, 0-0-0 in BCJHL), a team hailing from British Columbia, Canada.

Through the first four games, the Bulldogs are led in scoring by senior forward

Josh Zary (3-1-4). Five Bulldogs are in a tie for second in scoring, each with 3 points. One of those players being senior forward Gavin Best (3-0-3). Sophomore goaltender Martin Lundberg leads the goalies with a 1.000 save percentage after playing only one period. Junior goaltender Hobie Hedquist (1-1-0) has the best record among the goalies, as well as leading with 117 minutes played and with 72 saves on the year.

Best talks about the bounce back the team will need to have after the rocky start to the season.

“I mean, all throughout the year, especially this point of the year, it’s just about getting better each game,”

Best said. “So obviously, we just played a really talented team, and we feel that we can play right with them. We’ll see two more talented teams next weekend, and we’ll look to do the same. We just need to clean up the areas that we need to clean up, the areas that we need to continue doing better in.”

The Red Leafs are led in scoring by forward Grege Rampton (1-4-5), who has one goal this year. There are two players tied for second with four points, including Zachary Maxwell (2-2-4) with two goals on the season. Simon Fraser has played three goalies so far this season. Steven Bacovsky (1-0-0) leads the net-minders with a 2.23 goals against average

and a .949 save percentage while logging in just under 54 minutes played. Jesse Makaj (1-1-0) leads with 130 minutes on the ice, as well as leading the goalies in saves with 64 so far on the year.

Redshirt freshman defenseman Brian Morse is looking forward to the weekend ahead.

“I think this weekend coming up is huge for us,” Morse said. “This past weekend, we proved that we can beat any team in the country when we play our best brand of hockey. The goal now is to consistently play with that type of selflessness and heart. We play two good teams and will have to bring our A game. Having a good weekend will set the stage for us to

bring some momentum into league play, so we are looking forward to it.”

The USNTDP (4-13-0) are led in scoring by University of Minnesota Duluth commit, forward Victor Plante (3-4-7), with forward and Notre Dame commit Sammy Nelson (2-4-6) right behind him. Goaltender Brady Knowing leads the goalies with 276 minutes played and 130 saves for a save percentage of .890. Knowing is 1-2-1 on the year.

Head coach Brett Riley talked about matching up against the two programs.

“We got to keep taking steps forward every weekend,” Riley said. “Miami (OH) was a good foundation for us. This weekend, we proved

we can compete on the biggest stage. Next weekend, we’re treating it like a playoff series where, at this league, if you want to win your series, you got to win two games. So, we’re going to go out there and focus on Friday. It’s [Simon Fraser] a program I’ve got some familiarity coaching against, and they’ll compete, so that will be a fun one. And then, obviously, anytime you get a chance to play the US program, it should be a really good test as well.”

Ferris State plays Simon Fraser University on Friday, Oct. 17, at 3 p.m. and the US National Team Development Program on Saturday, Oct. 18, at 7 p.m. Both games will be played at the USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth, Michigan.