



The Ferris State Torch

95 YEARS OF ILLUMINATING THE TRUTH

Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of Feb. 25, - March 4, 2026

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Freezing for a reason Annual fundraiser returns to Big Rapids



Photo courtesy of Law Enforcement Torch Run

2026 Polar Plunge participants from Law Enforcement Torch Run taking a dive into the chilly winter waters.

Gannon Thomas
Freelance Contributor

The Big Rapids Polar Plunge is returning Feb. 28, daring community members and students alike to brave the cold for a noble cause.

Volunteers will dive into icy cold waters this Saturday, Feb. 28, for the Law Enforcement Torch Run's 2026 Polar Plunge. Plungers will brave the cold in support of the Special Olympics Michigan and raise funds for the teams. Costumes are encouraged.

The event will kick off with a costume parade and then the plunge itself, and after which a lunch will be offered, free for those who jumped into the icy water but will be \$5 for anyone else.

Those brave enough can register online at the Polar Plunge Michigan website. If you're not brave enough or don't have the ability to take the plunge, you can still show

your support and donate on the website.

This event is being hosted by The Law Enforcement Torch Run, which is an international organization that holds a plethora of fundraisers for the Special Olympics. The organization, which has existed since 1981, consists of a variety of different law enforcement agents and offices across the U.S.

Law Enforcement Torch Run Coordinator Stephanie Graham talked about why this event is so meaningful for the broader community.

"The Polar Plunge is the biggest fundraiser for Special Olympics Michigan. All funds raised by Plungers help Special Olympics Michigan provide year-round training and services to over 23,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities across the state."

The Polar Plunge is just one of the organization's twenty-seven statewide fundraising events. All the

proceeds of which go to funding the Special Olympics Michigan.

This is an opportunity for anyone to help out and raise funds for a good cause. The Polar Plunge is the biggest fundraiser for Special Olympics Michigan and has already raised over \$500,000 this year alone.

Graham described this year's goal and how they try to increase the amount raised every year.

"Our goal for the 2026 Big Rapids Polar Plunge is \$20,000 for our athletes. We are about halfway there and climbing daily."

Community involvement is essential, so if you're the type of person who likes to volunteer or just wants to do something that gets the blood pumping for a good cause, the Polar Plunge is your opportunity to help out.

Jennifer Knowles, Director of Special Olympics West Michigan Region, talked

about the impact that these events have on the Special Olympics athletes. She also mentioned how important it is for people to get out and volunteer when they can for the opportunity.

"These fundraisers are fun opportunities to not only raise money, but awareness for our athletes and their accomplishments," Knowles said. "It brings communities together and groups like Law Enforcement Torch Run to unite and celebrate the wins."

Students are encouraged to volunteer or just come and have a good time to show support for the local athletes.

"Young adults are so important for the future of Special Olympics everywhere, because just like the athletes, the volunteers age out, too," Knowles said. "Unfortunately, people like our coaches and I aren't young forever, and we need young people to step in and learn and love this organization as much as we do."

Funds raised by the Plunge go directly to supporting athletic training and the competitions of athletes across Michigan. These fundraising events help offset travel equipment and travel and training costs. Events like this are necessary for the continuance of the Special Olympics program.

"These donations go directly to supporting year-round expenses for our year-round sports program," Knowles said. "Things such as van rentals, gas, lodging, food, equipment, uniforms and yes, medals."

Anybody can get involved and help raise funds and support the Special Olympics of Michigan. You can sign up by yourself or with a group, all are welcome and encouraged to participate however they can.

Among other groups and community members, one local fraternity, Ferris' own, Phi Sigma Kappa, has put

together a team to help take part in the event.

Automotive technology freshman Alan Trela talked about the reason for his support of the Polar Plunge.

"We do the Polar Plunge to raise money for Area Five Special Olympics, which is a charity that helps kids with special needs get involved in sports," Trela said. "It shows that our organization stands for making a real impact beyond campus events."

Any Student or group interested in donating or taking the plunge can find out at www.plungemi.org or by calling (989)-429-7295. The Polar Plunge is sponsored by many local businesses and will be hosted at the Elks Lodge at 203 E. Pine street Big Rapids. All proceeds go directly to funding the Special Olympics of Michigan.

News

FLITE will soon be introducing a new checkout service for students and faculty featuring household items, tools and even jumper cables as a part of their library of things. **PG. 4**

Culture

What is it like to be the president of a university's daughter? Take a glance into the life of Lydia Pink. **PG. 5**

Opinions

In an age where the "golden rule" has seemingly been forgotten, empathy and the ability to remember there are real people on the other side of the screen is becoming increasingly important. **PG. 9**

Sports

The 2025-26 Ferris hockey regular season winds to a close as they travel to face off against Lake Superior State, read about how the match up against the Lakers **PG. 10 - 11**

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News

Blase Gapinski | News Editor | gapinsb@ferris.edu

Michigan

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Delta County- Two people have been rescued over the weekend after their snowmobiles fell through the Lake Michigan ice on Sunday. Around 10:30 a.m. on Sunday near Round Island on Big Bay De Noc in Delta County, police said. The island is about three miles from shore and farther from the nearest launch site. The Delta County Sheriff's office responded to the scene with an airboat and then a second airboat coming from Mason Township. Two subjects had been on snowmobiles, and both snowmobiles had gone through the ice, but only one person went into the water. Both subjects were treated by medical personnel and released on scene.

National

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Washington D.C.- On Friday, Feb. 20, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that President Donald Trump violated federal law when he unilaterally imposed sweeping tariffs across the globe. The decision is seen as the biggest loss the second Trump administration has seen, as the conservative Supreme Court, which last year repeatedly sided with the president in a series of emergency rulings on immigration. Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion, and the court agreed in a 6-3 vote that the tariffs exceeded the law. The court, however, did not say what should happen to the more than \$130 billion in tariffs that have already been collected.

Global

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Mexico City, Mexico - The Jalisco New Generation Cartel has unleashed a wave of violence across Mexico, setting vehicles ablaze, blocking roads, and turning the state capital of Jalisco into a ghost town after the Mexican army killed its powerful leader known as "El Mencho." El Mencho was the nickname of Nemesio Rubén Oseguera Cervantes, who was the Mexican government's biggest prize yet to show the Trump administration in its efforts to crack down on the cartels. His death was met with a forceful reaction by his Jalisco New Generation Cartel. Cars were set on fire and roads are blocked by cartel members in nearly 20 Mexican states across the country. Mexican authorities announced that they had cleared most of the more than 250 cartel roadblocks across 20 states.

Ready For Life receives grant

The Ferris chapter of Ready For Life receives grant



Photo courtesy of Ready For Life

Recent student graduates from the Ready For Life

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

For many people with developmental disabilities, going to college seems like it might just be out of the picture. Ready For Life makes sure that is not the case.

Ready For Life is a nonprofit based out of Grand Rapids that provides enrichment and educational programming for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as autism spectrum disorders.

They partner with colleges and universities to develop an inclusive post-secondary transition program for students who have the desire to go to college and also have intellectual or developmental disabilities or autism spectrum disorders.

Ready For Life started partnering with Ferris State in 2021, after being delayed by COVID-19 and they started out with only 10 students. From there, they have grown exponentially to become a robust program within Ferris State's campus.

One of the program's goals for its students is to help prepare them for paid employment and independent living. They also aim for interaction and involvement, a lifelong

learning model based on student goals. One way they do this is with volunteer job opportunities, on campus and in the community.

Ready For Life's learning plan describes that each student begins their program by building a student-centered learning plan to develop realistic learning objectives and identify areas of natural talent to be further developed.

The executive director of

Ready For Life, Toni Falk, spoke about the grant they received.

"It was because Ferris agreed to partner on writing the grant that we were able to secure it," Falk said. "The tips and grant meant to help inclusive post-secondary education programs help transition to a sustainable program within the university. We are solely a tuition-based program to provide services for

these students; the tips and grant alongside it will open the door for limited FAFSA funding, which is huge for our students."

Currently, Ready For Life is sitting around 13 students, and the program has goals to increase capacity to 20 within the next two years.

CONT ON PG. 3



Photo courtesy of Ready for Life

Ready For Life students pose for picture with President Dr. Bill Pink.

READY FOR LIFE RECEIVES GRANT CONT.

In the fall semester, they have secured six new students but their goal is to reach 20 and being able to maintain and sustain the program at 20 students.

Falk spoke about Ferris and how inclusive the school is for Ready For Life.

"We are very proud to be partnered with Ferris," Falk said. "They are a very inclusive school that believes that learning is for everyone, and that aligns with our mission. So it has been a very natural partnership, one that's been very appreciated and really has become what I believe to be the model for inclusive education on college campuses."

Outside of the grant, Ready For Life participates in One Day for Dawgs, which is the crowdfunding day for organizations and programs across Ferris. Those funds are earmarked to promote inclusive activities across campus for Ferris students to interact and connect with other Ferris students in the Ready For Life Academy. Department chair of Interdisciplinary Studies and associate professor, Kristin Conley spoke about the importance of the Ready For Life program.

"I think that it is such a wonderful program for the students to be able to live on campus, and really integrate right into the campus life," Conley said. "Such as working, taking courses, joining clubs, and participating in campus life right alongside other students. It is such a wonderful opportunity, and it really supports their life after college."

The Ferris State One Day for Dawgs is set to be on April 8, and the Ready For Life Academy will be one of the programs looking to raise funds.



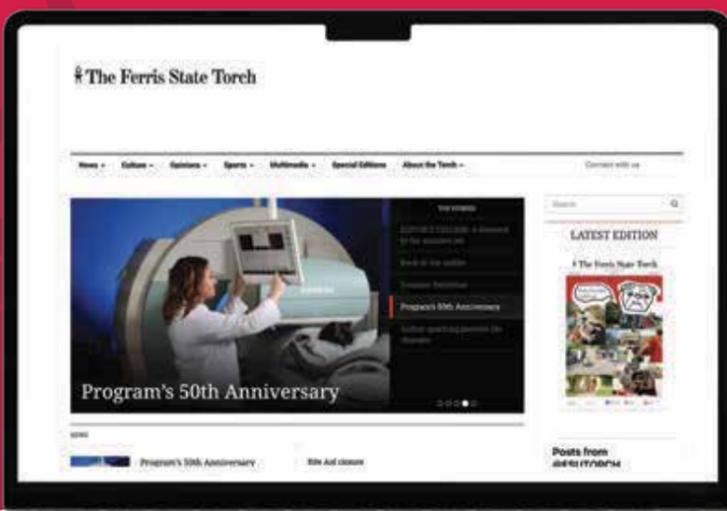
Photo courtesy of Ready For Life

Ready For Life students share one last selfie with their friend, and recent ready for life graduate at The Quad.

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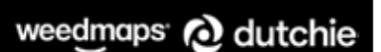
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Library of things being added to FLITE

Household items and tools will be available for checkout



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

An overview of the different household and kitchen equipment that can be rented out at FLITE.

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

Students at Ferris State University will soon be able to check out more than books from FLITE, including air fryers, jumper cables and even cornhole sets.

Starting after spring break, the library will initially offer a variety of kitchen and cooking items, featuring an air fryer, crock pots, pots and pans, frying pans, sauce pans and even a mixer. Practical items will also be included, like jumper cables, an iron, and an ironing board, along with tools like screw driver sets, wrenches and socket sets.

Students will be able to check out items at the FLITE circulation desk in the same way they would borrow books

or laptop loaners. Before taking an item, borrowers will be required to sign a waiver agreeing to use the equipment properly and return it in good condition. Most items will circulate for one week at no cost. Fees will only apply if an item is returned damaged, excessively dirty or not returned at all.

This collection is meant for students and faculty on campus and is meant to encourage community borrowing, lending and sustainability within the campus community.

Student engagement librarian at FLITE, Lauren Vogt, was one of the people involved with the creation of this new project. Since this is the first phase of the project, the initial collection will

act as a way to gauge what is actually being borrowed. Vogt mentioned how this idea was meant to coincide with the Bulldog Food Pantry on campus.

"We had thought in terms of, of places the Bulldog Food Pantry opening up and being a food resourcing place on campus, and that food insecurity is pretty high at Ferris, and we thought what could the library help to do to continue alleviating that," Vogt said. "You may be able to go to the food pantry and pull out food, but do you have the means to cook it? If you want to try a viral recipe, you may not have \$80 to drop on an air fryer, so this gives you the option to check it out here for a week and try that."

Each item will be inspect-

ed upon return by student employees to ensure it is in working order before being checked out again.

One of the things Vogt mentioned was that this is technically year zero for the project, so the collection of items they have in circulation is only going to expand over the next couple of years.

Outreach and user engagement librarian at FLITE, David Scott, also worked on the creation of this project and he talked about how the idea for the new checkout service began as a way to give students access to items they may not use more than once or be able to purchase themselves. He also mentioned how libraries of things are becoming more popularized across the U.S. and how they

wanted to focus on a niche that was relevant to the community.

"These are becoming more common in libraries now, especially in public libraries now," Scott said. "A lot of times it's stuff for your kids and things like that so we're kind of expanding on that, making it a little more serious."

Vogt and Scott each said the project was originally tied to a merit grant proposal that would have provided funding to launch the collection on a larger scale. The grant would have supported a one-year rollout but after the proposal was not selected, FLITE moved forward by scaling the idea into a smaller pilot program to keep the idea alive.

Rather than abandoning

the idea after the grant was not fulfilled, FLITE staff chose to start small and build from there. As the pilot launches after spring break, the collection will continue to grow based on student demand.

"This is a collection for the students," Vogt said. "We tried to collect some student interviews around the library of what they would like to see and what they thought might be good for a library of things."

Scott shared a similar sentiment stating that once the project is up and running, they plan on finding a way to incorporate student donations and recommendations.

"Eventually, in the plan, we hope to have a place for suggestions and eventually, we also hope to solicit donations for things," Scott said. "Let's say you get an extra something for Christmas. Give it to us, we will take it. When you're moving out and you don't want your frying pan anymore, or your basketball, or something like that, as long as it's in good shape, we'll take it and put it in the collection."

FLITE staff hope the library of things will grow into a resource shaped by student needs and interests, giving them access to tools and kitchen gadgets they might not otherwise have. As the pilot gets underway, Vogt and Scott say student feedback, suggestions and donations will guide what the collection looks like in the years to come.

ON THE RECORD

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

Walmart shenanigans

Feb. 13, 9:36 p.m. - Mecosta Co Deputies responded to Walmart after employees reported a disorderly individual refusing to leave the store and shouting obscenities. Ferris State University police officers assisted on scene and made contact with the individual. At the store's request, the person was issued a trespass warning and escorted off the property without further incident.

Alcohol law violation

Feb. 15, 9:15 a.m. - Housing staff conducting routine rounds detected the odor of marijuana and a loud noise coming from an apartment. Upon making contact, residents initially denied violations but later admitted that one resident was under 21 and in possession of alcohol in the common area. The alcohol was removed and disposed of and housing staff addressed the policy violations with the residents. No arrests were made.

Agency assist, Assault and Battery

Feb. 15, 12:16 a.m. - Ferris State University police assisted city officers with a traffic stop involving individuals suspected of an assault at an off-campus apartment. Two suspects were taken into custody without incident. Officers also assisted with documenting the victim's injuries. The case was handled by the Big Rapids City police department.

Don't hit my line!

Feb. 18, 4:37 p.m. - A student reported receiving harassing messages through social media from another student, including messages that referenced personal information and caused concern. Both parties were advised to cease contact and block each other on social media. The incident was documented and referred for administrative follow-up. No arrests were made.

Culture

Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor | turnek29@ferris.edu

Student spotlight

Lydia Pink on sharing a campus with her father



Photo courtesy of Lydia Pink

Lydia Pink (middle) seen with her father, Bill and mother, Lori, after the 2024 D2 National Championship football game in McKinney, Texas.

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

It's not every day that students spend a lot of time with their parents during college, but for Lydia Pink, college has been a unique experience filled with quality time with her dad.

Fifth-year sonography major Lydia Pink is the daughter of the university's president, Bill Pink. Previously, she attended Grand Rapids Community College, where her father served as president from 2017 to 2022.

Pink was born in Oklahoma, where she spent 12 years before moving to Michigan to be closer to her grandparents. She enjoys spending time with her family, doing puzzles and playing tennis and pickleball.

Currently, Pink is intern-

ing at a hospital in Indiana, where she performs ultrasounds to gain experience in her field.

Pink reflected on what inspired her to choose her major, stating that she always knew she wanted to go into the medical field.

"I actually got an ultrasound done on myself on my gallbladder," Pink said. "She was showing me all of these things, all of these structures, and I was like, 'I don't know what you're looking at, that kind of intrigues me.'"

Being the daughter of the university's president is a unique position for a college student, and Pink reflected on her experiences in this position at both Ferris and GRCC.

"It has been a different experience here than it was at GRCC when he was the

president there, and I went there for a year," said Pink. "I think it's because when I transferred here, that was his first year here too, and so it was very widely publicized. I think that made it a lot more interesting."

Additionally, Pink reported that she never thought much about her dad stepping into his current role because she was only in eighth grade when he started his job as the president of GRCC.

"I kind of never thought about it because I was kind of young, but I guess I never thought he would be at a D2 school, and, you know, a school that's super successful, so I guess that was the part that I didn't realize," Pink said.

Many of Pink's experiences have been positive, and she is grateful for the oppor-

tunities she has had throughout her time at Ferris.

"[I've had] a lot of cool opportunities, like just last month it was Ferris night at the Pistons game, and they were interviewing my dad on the court, and so we got to go courtside for a while and kind of see what that was like. So yeah, it's come with a lot of cool experiences," said Pink.

However, even with all of the good opportunities come a unique set of challenges as a result of Pink's position as the president's daughter.

"I think when people hear who I am or know who I am, they automatically assume things of me, and I think that kind of has always bothered me," Pink said. "Not like them holding it over my head, but they assume that I have everything I want. They

assume very big things of me that are not true most of the time."

Despite some challenges Pink has faced, she reported that she has had an overall positive experience in her position at Ferris.

"I don't think there's a lot of bad, I would say, probably just the assumption that people have, like I get everything I want, you know, I can do whatever I want at Ferris because of who my dad is," Pink said.

Pink revealed her favorite part of being the university's president's daughter, emphasizing the importance of time with her family.

"When I was on campus, for sure, just having lunch in his office and being able to hang out with my dad during the school day," Pink said. "Having that little break and

my parents living close and doing all these activities with them, I think that's what I love about it because I'm such a family-oriented person."

While Pink has been presented with many unique opportunities she has enjoyed, she is ultimately grateful for the extra time she gets to spend with her family, as it is not an experience all students get to have during college.

Pink is not exactly sure about what she wants to do after graduation, but she would like to work in a hospital somewhere, and has considered doing so near Grand Rapids.

All fun and games

Zap Zone night provides stress-free environment



Photo by: Shaunti'ara Reynolds | Multimedia Editor

Students having a dance off while playing DanceDance Revolution X2 during the Zap Zone night.

Tate Zellman
Culture Reporter

Students had the opportunity to have fun and compete with their friends at the first-ever Zap Zone Night.

Put together by Entertainment Unlimited, Zap Zone Night was hosted in the DEC Ballrooms on Thursday, Feb. 19, from 5 to 9 p.m. It featured various arcade games, glow golf and laser tag. Over a hundred students came through and participated in the games and activities.

Music business entertainment senior and entertainment unlimited vice president of programming, Cervonte' Plair, wanted to bring this event together to give students a time to have fun and forget about the stress of college.

"Just to get out there," Plair said. "Students are always busy with classes and work. This is a stress-free moment for four hours and you don't have to worry about the next responsibility you have to do next. Students can play the games with their friends and

everyone can create fond memories and have fun together."

Making this event possible, Plair described the process as selecting the right games that students would enjoy most.

"The process was really just looking at the games," Plair said. "We wanted to figure out what games were going to interest students the most so they could stay for the majority of the event and play the games throughout. I know DanceDance Revolution brought a lot of hype to some students. I wanted to bring that essence, that history and that sense of nostalgia to this event."

Many of the arcade games brought a sense of nostalgia as students played them. They either reminded them of childhood memories or times when they played the games in their hometowns.

Dental hygiene senior Edgar Perez was reminded of his childhood when he played the game Roll 'N' Up.

"Roll 'N' Up reminds me a lot of my childhood," Perez

said. "I remember going to Chuck E. Cheese pretty often. I would go to my birthday and school events. Whenever I play it, it's not me that plays it right now, it's my inner child."

Other games that were featured were PAC-MAN, Bounce A Ball, air hockey, basketball, NASCAR, DanceDance Revolution X2, Connect 4 and The Vault.

Attending this event was important for Perez because of the stress and busyness of college.

"All I'm doing right now is school," Perez said. "It's a rare thing for me to go out and have fun. This is like an escape for me and gives my brain a break. Especially with where I'm at right now, studying and getting ready to graduate, it can be a little too much on your mental health, and you can forget how to have fun again."

While many students played arcade games and glow golf, others were more intrigued by laser tag and very excited to try it.

Radiography freshman Alyse Erickson said laser tag

was the main reason she showed up for the event.

"The laser tag was a primary reason I showed up tonight," Erickson said. "But also just to get out and be social. The fun events are what I always look forward to."

Along with signing up for laser tag, students could either make up their own team or join an existing one. Two teams of about 7 to 10 con-

testants each battled each other per round.

Having the opportunity to play laser tag reminded Erickson of a time from her childhood.

"Playing laser tag totally reminded me of watching my brothers do airsoft growing up," Erickson said. "So I'm gonna have to let them know that I did some laser tag, and they'd probably be proud to

know that our team won."

Even with all the schoolwork at hand, students have the opportunity to participate in fun events on campus that are designed to help them stay engaged on campus. These events can serve as distractions when studying becomes stressful and overwhelming.



Black history through spoken-word

Ferris hosts annual march celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy



Photo courtesy of Ferris State University

Despite setbacks in early January due to weather, the annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration took place on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

On Wednesday, Feb. 18, Ferris held a spoken word event in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work and Black History Month. The event was hosted by the Office of Multicultural Student Services (OMSS) at the Rankin Fireplace in the David L. Eisler Center to celebrate King's contributions to dismantling racial segregation. King played a key role in shaping the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, helping create a more equal and cohesive environment for people of all colors. Assassinated in 1968 for challenging systemic racism embedded in the U.S. government, his work and legacy will never be forgotten. Many students and community members attended the event, and many took advantage of the opportunity to showcase their spoken-word

pieces. Massiel Calderon, Assistant Director of OMSS, explained the rationale for creating an event where students could share their work with others. "We wanted to set up a space for students to express themselves," Calderon said. "Listening to others who have similar life experiences can help relieve stress. We just wanted students to know that your community and representation are still here." Calderon explained how important it is for minorities to have a safe space while attending a predominantly white institution. Sometimes, students may feel isolated or alone, and she hopes this event amplifies King's message of community. "With so much tension in society regarding minorities, it's important for students to know that despite the challenges they may face, Ferris is a safe space for everyone," Calderon said.

The celebration featured poets from The Diatribe performing original and deeply personal poems, spreading an uplifting message to students. A featured poet, Caleb Rainey, who goes by the name The Negro Artist, said, "It's meaningful to be here because the more we hold MLK's memory, the more we move forward. If we forget it, we lose it. We fall back." He explained how exciting it is to see young Black people showing up and asserting their existence in this space. "Being at a PWI is hard. I know that from my own experience. To celebrate events like this and honor those who paved the way for me is very meaningful," Rainey said. Rainey also left students with advice to carry King's legacy forward. "Don't stop talking. Use your voice," Rainey said. "One of the biggest things people remember about King is his voice, both the sound of it

and the way he used it. He's a great model to remind young people that their voice has the same kind of power." Emotions ran deep for some students as they personally connected to the messages being shared in various ways. Business Administration senior Jala Irvine described how listening to the performers impacted her and made her feel seen. "It made me feel empowered," Irvine said. "The per-

formers were excellent at what they did. They instilled a lot of hope and faith in me. Sometimes, you need a little reminder that others face the same struggles on campus." Irvine explained that being at a PWI can be draining due to the political and racial issues that plague society. "Sometimes, people need to realize we are all in this together," Irvine said. Finally, Irvine reflected on King's legacy and how she believes his work has impact-

ed her life today, as well as what the events of the night meant to her. "When I think of him, I think of kindness and community," Irvine said. "Honestly, I wouldn't even be here if it weren't for him. I'm a biracial woman, and I appreciate King and his sacrifices. If I had to sum up today in one word, it'd be 'empowering,'" Irvine said. More Black History Month events on campus are soon to follow and can be found on the Ferris event calendar.

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Opinions

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EDITOR'S COLUMN: No care for consumers

Corporations seem to value earnings above all else



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

One thing I always think about is that companies seem to care only about maximizing profit, rather than improving the customer experience or taking any of their feedback into account.

When I think about this, a few questions always come to my mind. Why wouldn't these large corporations listen to the people who are actively supplying them with their money? Wouldn't improving the consumer experience and listening to their feedback increase profit margins all around?

The uncomfortable truth is that many large corporations aren't designed to serve consumers first. They are designed to grow, even if it means doing so constantly and aggressively. When growth is their primary goal,

it can become pretty clear to us as consumers that we are secondary to whatever drives the next earnings bump.

Even if we are the people who are driving those earnings bumps, our needs or wants are not being prioritized. Whatever sells the most is going to be the option that these companies go with ultimately because it puts them in a better position to be on top.

That mindset becomes easier to spot when you look at specific releases. Take NBA 2K26's season five roll-out. The update brought new purchasable content from their season pass, along with the release of tons of additional player variants into the MyTeam experience.

Yet even with all of this new content frustration amongst the playerbase hasn't faded. In the case of NBA 2K26, many of the same issues that the players have wanted fixed

since launch still linger.

Inconsistent shooting mechanics, unreliable dunk animations and prolonged matchmaking times despite thousands of users online remain unresolved. Meanwhile, widespread complaints about unchecked cheating continue to circulate within the community.

For long time players, the contrast is hard to ignore. While the in-game store expands, core gameplay concerns persist. This has been an ongoing discussion about the 2k franchise for years as players like myself noticed a shift from quality basketball games to a constant pump and dump of microtransactions.

They do a great job with marketing these releases too. I will admit that the most recent season has appealed to me more than any other due to this seasons addition

of college players and teams being implemented within the MyTeam experience.

MyTeam is one of my favorite modes to play when I am in the mood for casual gaming, so I felt inclined to get the pass to add the college expansion pack.

I am obviously not the only one who falls victim to these microtransactions. If it wasn't such a successful or efficient model, then the tons of gaming companies who use the same season pass model wouldn't be using it year in and out with every new release.

As a longtime player, it's frustrating to feel like fans are being ignored. Every new release feels less like an update and more like a cash grab, making each patch or season rollout feel like a slap in the face.

Season five, with its new college-level content, only

highlights that feeling, especially knowing that EA plans to release its own college basketball game in the coming years. 2K, of course, will keep churning out annual releases, repackaging much of the same content while fans' repeated requests for real improvements continue to go unanswered.

As consumers, our money is our power. Spending our money on products we don't fully support only signals profit to the corporations making them, it does not showcase our dissatisfaction. Companies see the rising revenue, not our frustration and treat it as a success.

Until we hold companies accountable and stop supporting the groups that only care about making the most amount of money, real improvements to gameplay, service or user experience will remain out of reach.

The importance of common unity



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Dr. Bill Pink
Guest Writer

As I reflect on the recognition of Black History Month every February, I am reminded of two things that have both historical and present-day relevance to our university. First, our university's founder, Woodbridge N. Ferris along with his wife Helen, built our institution on the premise that anyone could attend. ANYONE! Regardless of background, ethnicity, gender, or anything else, Woodbridge and Helen made the Ferris education possible, providing a dedicated and specialized workforce for the state of Michigan.

Now, 140 years later, our university continues in that same spirit. Our student body is made up of a diverse group of learners that want to prepare themselves for the world of work and have entrusted our university to that task. Black History Month reminds me of our founder's vision for the institution that carries his name, and I come to work every day with his example of higher education leadership as a north star.

Secondly, the conversation that I started last month centered around community,

or a common unity, is reflective of the inclusive and educational nature of Black History Month. Our bulldog community here on campus is a vibrant community, and I fully hope that each of you will engage with this community. That includes meeting new people, joining an RSO geared towards a new interest, and spending time learning from peers who come from a totally different background than you. This is what the college experience is for!

As you embrace your commonality, you learn from the not-so-common to strive for understanding. I urge you to invest the time needed to truly understand each other. I genuinely believe that doing so will help all of us achieve a deeper level of common unity. I know our campus will be better off for the efforts.

I firmly believe that our founder wanted this institution to emulate a CommUNITY that reflected not only the best of its students and employees, but the depth and breadth of its students and employees. Together, let us commit to moving our great university in that direction.

Common Unity...CommUNITY!
Go Dawgs!

Rejecting the death of empathy

Daring to understand and be patient with others

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

Empathy is a concept that grade schoolers have had drilled into their heads since day one. So why is it that those who are deemed more emotionally mature than a grade schooler struggle so much with the concept?

It's simple for children to understand. They grow up surrounded by stories of heroes and villains, and the comparison between good and evil is snuck into pretty much any media they consume.

It's so easy for them to know that they want to be the hero and be the good one. Why wouldn't they? Being good and kind to others makes people feel good; it makes us feel good.

Yet, when I walk around campus or check customers out at my summer job, I'm met with a harsh reality that people can be mean.

I'm not just talking about a "Karen" at a grocery store situation; it's worse than that. I've watched my peers put down one another, and I've even seen professors bully their own coworkers and students.

When I see these things, I tend to get frustrated. I'm not sure I will ever understand why someone would feel the

need to be cruel to others. I think about it a lot, especially with everything going on around the world right now.

Every time I open Instagram comments, I feel an overwhelming sense of doom. Don't even get me started on Facebook. I'm convinced Facebook users actually lose the traits that make them human when they hit post.

On the topic of social media, I blame it for this new wave of lack of empathy in the world. Shocker, I know. However, I'm not here to blame this all on social media, because at the end of the day, we should be holding ourselves accountable. I bring up social media because it's true. I've been reading "You Will Get Through This Night" by Daniel Howell and agree with his social media argument. In the book, Howell connects the lack of empathy in the digital age to the anonymous features of social media.

The truth is, when you allow someone to be anonymous online, it doesn't always bring out the best in society. We seem to have this idea that the online world is a different place from the real world, but with how big a presence social media plays in our lives, I beg to differ.

The existence of social media, and the toll we know

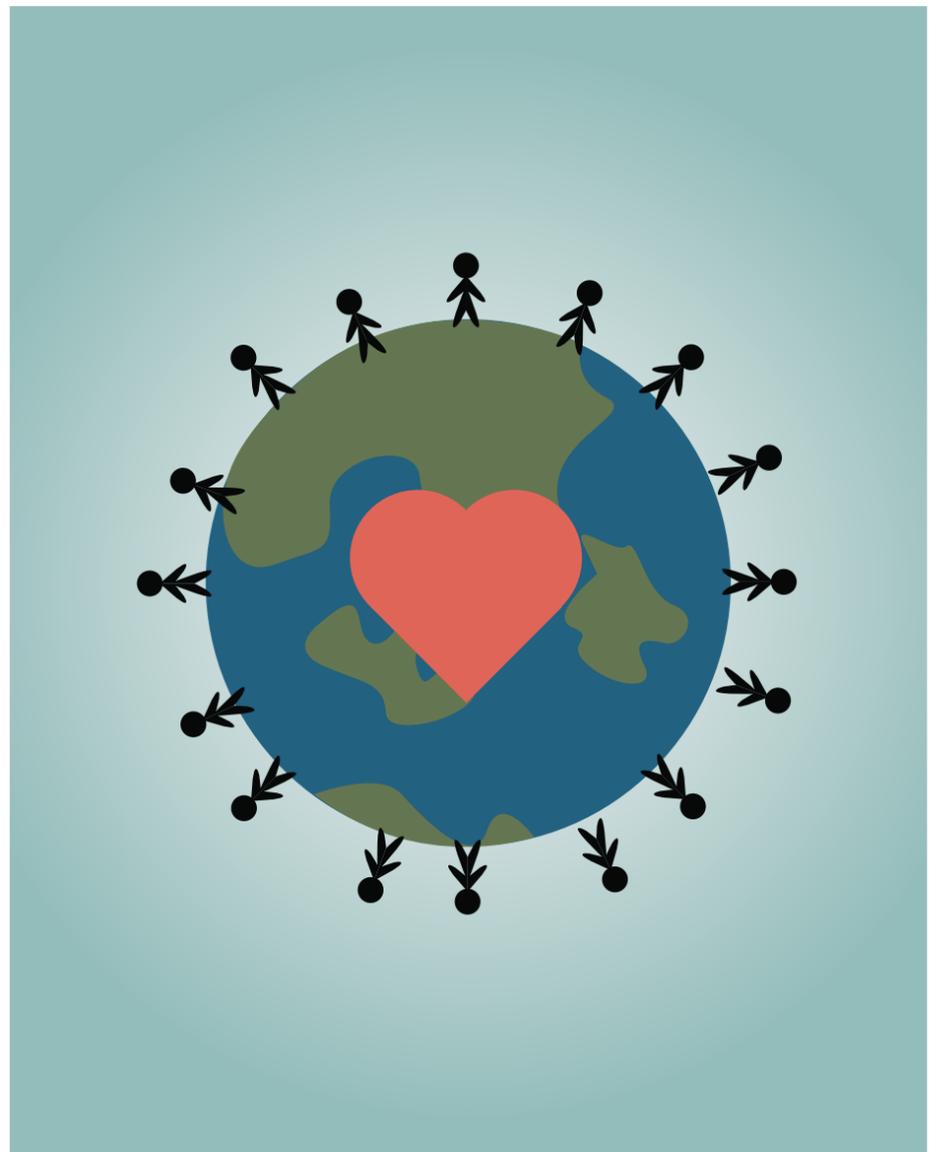
it takes on all of our mental health is even more of a reason to be kind.

Reality is, our brains were never ready for social media. Call me sensitive if you want, I don't take that as an insult anymore. I would rather be sensitive than cruel. Our bodies and minds were built to hunt for food and keep us safe. We were never supposed to compare ourselves to others or handle the constant presence of the online world and cyberbullies.

Maybe the problem all along isn't those who are sensitive; maybe the problem is we just don't have empathy anymore. We're all on our own paths and fighting different battles. You don't know the impact of your harsh words, but I'm sure you've picked up on the fact that when we say nice things to each other, we share more smiles, more joy.

I wonder just how much brighter the world could be if we were all just a little more understanding of one another. Why bother wasting so much energy on bringing each other down when it takes half the amount of energy to be kind and lift each other up?

Forgive me if I want the world to be as beautiful and loving as I know it can be.



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

Bulldog basketball season ends away

Bulldogs play Lakers and Panthers to end season



Photo by: Clark Vance | Torch Photographer

Senior forward Mya Hiram battles against Northern Michigan defenders on Feb. 21.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

As their respective regular seasons come to an end, Ferris State men's and women's basketball teams close out their seasons on the road against Grand Valley State and Davenport.

The women's team looks to continue its season-long momentum, while the men's team tries to fight for a play-

off spot.

Women

Ferris State (21-4, 14-2 in GLIAC) is on an eight-game win streak after its home loss to Grand Valley. The Bulldogs are averaging 79.8 points per game, as well as 39.6 rebounds and 18.8 assists per game. Four Bulldogs average ten points or more, with senior guard Mia Riley leading the team with 16.7% per game. Senior for-

ward Mya Hiram leads the team in both rebounds per game with 6.8 and field goal percentage with 51.1% from the field. Senior guard Emma Schierbeek leads the team in 3-point percentage with 40.0% from behind the arc.

Schierbeek knows these will be tough matchups at this point in the year.

"I think that these final two games of the regular season are going to be very import-

ant," Schierbeek said. "Obviously, Grand Valley is going to be a huge game for us, and to come out with a win would be exactly what we need going into March. It is going to be a tough matchup for us, especially since they will be playing on their home court, but I know we have what it takes to get the win. Davenport will be another competitive game, but I know we can come up with a win there as well. We have been playing great basketball lately, but I think we are going to be even better once we start tournaments."

Riley and senior guard Kady Blanchard are one and two in the GLIAC in scoring, averaging 16.7 and 16.4 per game, respectively.

Grand Valley (24-1, 16-1) is the third-best team in the nation, with its only loss being at Wayne State 78-77. The Lakers average 79.8 points per game, as well as 42.4 rebounds and 16.9 assists per game. Grand Valley has two players in double figures, with redshirt senior wing Paige VanStee leading the team with 15.7 points per game on 49.8% shooting.

VanStee also leads the Lakers in rebounds with 6.4 a game. Sophomore forward MacKenzie Bisballe leads both the Lakers and the GLIAC in field goal percentage with 53.7% from the field and blocked shots with 1.4 a game.

Davenport (7-18, 5-12 in GLIAC) is 1-4 in the month of February, with their one win in the month being 55-46 at Purdue Northwest. The Panthers are averaging 59.6 points per game, as well as 34.4 rebounds and 10.5 assists per game. Davenport has three players averaging ten points or more, with sophomore guard Maddie Gears and redshirt junior point guard Nevaeh Williams both averaging 11.8 points per game.

Grand Valley and Ferris State are first and second in the conference, respectively, and have both clinched a GLIAC tournament birth and home court advantage. Davenport is eighth in the conference and has yet to clinch either.

Men

The Bulldogs (10-13, 7-9 in GLIAC) are 1-4 in February, beating Saginaw Valley 75-69 in that span. Ferris State is averaging 77.3 points per game and is led in scoring by senior Mykel Bingham, who's averaging 13.1 points per game, as well as 8.7 rebounds per game and in three-point percentage with 37.0% from deep. Bingham's 8.7 rebounds a game lead the GLIAC.

Sophomore Tae Boyd knows these final games can make or break their season.

"These final games are extremely important and crucial for how we continue our

season," Boyd said.

Grand Valley (20-5, 13-4 in GLIAC) comes into the matchup with a 3-2 record in February. The Lakers average 77.8 points per game, 39.3 rebounds, and 11.4 assists per game. Grand Valley has four players averaging 10 points or more, being led in scoring by graduate forward Ethan Alderink's 13.7 points per game.

The Panthers (13-12, 7-10 in GLIAC) beat Roosevelt 81-59 to be 1-4 in February. Davenport averages 74.4 points per game, 36.5 rebounds, and 15.0 assists per game. Davenport has three players averaging 10 points or more. The Panthers are led in scoring by junior guard Ken Walker, whose 21.6 points per game led the GLIAC.

Grand Valley is third in the conference and has clinched both a GLIAC tournament birth and home court advantage. Ferris State and Davenport are seventh and eighth in the conference, respectively, and have yet to clinch a GLIAC tournament birth.

On Thursday, Feb. 26, Ferris State will play Grand Valley in Allendale, with the women playing at 5:30 p.m. and the men at 7:30 p.m. Then, on Saturday, Feb. 28, the Bulldogs will head to Davenport, where the women will play at 1 p.m. and the men at 3 p.m.

Ferris hockey looks to finish off regular season

Hockey travels to Lake Superior to finish regular season

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After securing eight points in their final two home games of the regular season against Northern Michigan, the Ferris State hockey team looks ahead to the last two games of the regular season against the Lake Superior State Lakers.

Ferris State looks to have firmly secured a spot in the CCHA playoffs after picking up eight points thanks to a shootout victory and a regulation victory over Northern Michigan in the final two home games of the regular season.

In the 4-4 shootout victory, the Bulldogs were led by a two-goal night by senior forward Tyler Schleppe, with

goaltender Martin Lundberg picking up 30 saves.

Then, in the 6-0 victory, Schleppe picked up another two goals, while redshirt junior forward Carter Rappalje picked up two goals for himself. With Lundberg in the crease again for this game, going a perfect 25-25 on saves and picking up his fourth win on the season and second shutout.

Head coach Brett Riley spoke about the season to this point.

"I could not be more proud of our team's resolve and ability to fight through adversity and play our best hockey down the stretch," Riley said. "We've grown in all areas, and the group has stayed together and taken major strides as the season

has progressed. Early on, there were areas we needed to clean up, but that's part of the growth process when you have new players, a new staff, and a lot of change within a program."

The Bulldogs (6-25-1, 5-18-1 in CCHA) will travel to Sault. Ste Marie to take on the Lakers (11-19-2, 8-15-1 in CCHA).

Ferris has a 1-1 record against the Lakers this season, with both games being decided by one goal. The Bulldogs lost the first matchup 2-1, then won the second 4-3.

The Bulldogs and the Lakers have a long and storied rivalry, spanning back to when Ferris State first joined the CCHA in 1978. The Bulldogs have a record

of 67-89-15 record against the Lakers and have a 7-13 record against them since the 2021-22 season.

Junior forward Holden Doell spoke about the matchup against Lake Superior.

"I think we have been gaining momentum over the past couple of weeks with our play," Doell said. "We are finally stringing together some points, so continuing to improve our play, especially coming off a bye week, will be really important."

CONT. ON PG. 11



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Senior forward Max Dukovac skates down the ice against Lake Superior on Nov 21, 2025.

HOCKEY CONT.

Ferris State's offensive attack is bolstered by the senior duo of Gavin Best and Max Itagaki. Best has 12 goals, which leads the Bulldogs, while having 11 assists, which is good for a team-leading 23 points. Itagaki has six goals on the season, while having 12 as-

sists, which is second on the Bulldogs and 18 total points.

At goaltender, the Bulldogs are headed by Martin Lundberg, who so far this season has been in the net for four of the Bulldogs' six wins while logging two shutouts this season. Lundberg spoke about his second season as a Bulldog.

"I want to give a lot of

credit to my teammates and coaches for my development this season," Lundberg said. "The team has worked hard in front of me every game, and the coaching staff has helped me improve different parts of my game throughout the year. Their support and trust have meant a lot and helped me take important steps forward."

The Lakers' offense is led by the forward duo of freshman Cale Mangone and William Ahlrik. Mangone has 11 goals, which leads the Lakers and 14 assists, which is good for a team-leading 25 points. Ahlrik himself has 10 goals, 14 assists which is good for 24 total points.

In the crease for the Lakers, they are led by sopho-

more Rorke Applebee. Applebee has started 26 games for the Lakers this season, while logging 1,598 minutes, averaging 2.82 goals per game, which is ninth in the CCHA. He is currently sitting at a .917 save percentage.

Ferris State hockey will travel to Sault. Ste Marie to take on the Lake Superior State Lakers at Taffy Abel

Arena for the final two games of the 2025-26 regular season. With the first game being on Thursday, Feb 26, with puck drop slated for 7:07 p.m. and the second game coming on Friday, with puck drop scheduled for 7:07 p.m.

Bulldogs head to Bearcat Classic

Ferris softball stays in Illinois for Bearcat Classic

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After sweeping their way through the Dome Invitational, the Ferris softball team looks to keep that momentum rolling into their next invitational, this time staying in Illinois for the Bearcat Classic.

During the Dome Invitational, the Bulldogs outscored their opponents 33 runs to 13, with the largest margin of victory coming against the Quincy Eagles, which the Bulldogs won 13-3.

Head coach Jake Schumann spoke about his team's offensive breakout.

"I have said from day one in the fall that our lineup will be difficult for opposing pitchers to navigate," Schumann said. "We are deep offensively, with many options coming off the bench as well. I attribute the girl's work ethic, communication with each other, and the buy-in to a quality at-bat approach to pass the bat and to trust their teammates."

A player who stood out during the invitational was junior first baseman Alexis Kozlowski. During the four-game stretch, she went 6-12 in her at-bats for a .500 average, with 1 double, four RBI's and a home run.

For the first day of the Bearcat Classic, the Bulldogs (7-5, 0-0 in GLIAC) will take on the Kentucky Wesleyan Panthers (3-7, 0-0 in G-MAC).

The Bulldogs have played the Panthers three times in the past. Ferris currently holds a 2-1 record over the Panthers, with the most recent matchups coming in the 2023 season, where the Bulldogs played them twice.

A standout player for Kentucky Wesleyan is senior outfielder Chloe Apple. This season, she has 10 hits in 24 at-bats for a .417 average, three doubles, seven RBI's, five walks while not striking out once this season.

Ferris' second matchup of the day comes against the No.22-ranked Indianapolis Greyhounds (10-0, 0-0 in GLVC).

The Greyhounds are coming off a 42-23 season, where they made a run to the NCAA Midwest Super Regional but fell in three games to

Saginaw Valley State.

The Bulldogs have struggled in the past against the Greyhounds, holding a 5-10 all-time record against them. The Greyhounds are holding a nine-game winning streak coming into their matchup, spanning back to 2010.

On Saturday, the first game of the day comes against the Missouri-St. Louis Tritons (4-9, 0-0 in GLVC).

The Tritons come into this matchup on a six-game losing streak, only a week removed from a 23-0 loss against Pittsburg State. Red-shirt freshman southpaw starter Jayla Plotz pitched two innings, giving up eight hits and 10 earned runs.

The Bulldogs look to take advantage of the Tritons' struggling pitching, with their offensive breakout during the teams five game winning streak. With junior outfielder Emma Gillard being a key player on offense this season, having 14 hits in 37 at bats for a team-leading .378 average. She currently has two doubles, one triple, two home runs, 13 RBI's while adding four stolen bases.

The second matchup on Saturday comes against the host of the invitational, the McKendree Bearcats (8-2, 0-0 in GLVC).

The Bearcats come into the matchup riding a four-game winning streak, with two of those wins coming against the No.7-ranked Missouri-Southern.

McKendree is led on the mound by a duo of pitchers, those being senior Ellie Vetter and senior southpaw Sami Huck. Vetter has been the more difficult of the two pitchers to face, pitching 31 innings to a 1.81 ERA a 1.00 WHIP, while striking out 36 batters and only allowing 11 walks. Huck has pitched 30 innings to a 4.43 ERA and a 1.37 WHIP, while striking out 30 batters and allowing nine free passes.

The final game of the Bearcat Classic for the Bulldogs comes on Sunday, against the Lincoln Tigers (2-0, 0-0 in GLVC).

These past couple of seasons have been difficult for the Tigers, as in the last five, the team has gone a combined 54-178. Last season was the best record in five years for the Tigers, with the



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Junior pitcher Cecelia Bell pitches against Wayne State during the 2025 season.

team going 16-32 and finishing second-to-last in the GLVC.

Junior outfielder Ella McDonald is positive for the rest of the season, and knows the team is deep and can make a run the rest of the season.

"I feel very confident about the rest of the season," McDonald said. "Our team has a lot of depth and every single one of our girls could be in the starting lineup. We also have pitchers who can hit their spots and spin the ball well. I think we have greatly improved from last season."

The Ferris State softball team will take on the Kentucky Wesleyan Panthers and Indianapolis Greyhounds on Friday, Feb 27. Then they take on the Missouri-St. Louis Tritons and McKendree Bearcats on Saturday, before finishing off the invitational against the Lincoln Tigers on Sunday.

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