



The Ferris State Torch

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Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of March 4, - 11, 2026

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ICE protests held in Big Rapids

Community members join together to protest the DHS



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Over 50 community members showed up on State St. to speak out against actions being carried out by the DHS and ICE.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Big Rapids community members joined together on Saturday, Feb. 28, to protest and raise awareness about the actions by the United States Department of Homeland Security and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

With many problems aris-

ing around the Department of Homeland Security, such as federal agents shooting Alex Pretti, Renne Nicole-Good and Julio Cesar Sosa-Celiain Minneapolis, citizens across the U.S. are expressing their First Amendment right to protest. Since September, DHS Immigration officers have shot 14 people, according to NBC News.

The rally was called "Legal

and Humane Immigration Enforcement" and was organized by Indivisible West Central Michigan, which gathered community members from Big Rapids and surrounding communities.

The crowd of protestors was a diverse group, spanning from a few Ferris students to Big Rapids community members, while people spanning from Canadian

Lakes to White Cloud came to protest.

Community member Jim Lyon spoke about why it is important for people to get out and protest.

"Young people need to come out and raise their voice," Lyon said. "We're not going to be here forever. I am almost 80 years old, and I am not going to live another 80 years. You need to let free-

dom ring, let people breathe, and have peace on Earth. Governments are for the people before themselves; you don't make laws for the people behind you; you make laws for the people who are coming, and the young people are the ones who are coming."

The protest started at noon, at the corner of State St and Perry Avenue, the pro-

testors all carrying their own signs, chanting and seated in their own lawn chairs.

Canadian Lakes community member Susan Malzahn spoke about why she believed it was important to her to be at this protest.

CONT. ON PG. 4

News

The RHA is hosting a clothing donations drive throughout the month of March. On March 19 the RHA will host a "Thrift for Free Event" using these donations. **PG. 2**

Culture

Feb. 26 the Ferris State Jazz Band collaborated with the West Shore Community Jazz Band as one of 77 events celebrating the 2026 Festival of the Arts. **PG. 5**

Opinions

The 2026 Winter Olympics saw both the men's and women's USA hockey teams bringing home gold, so why are the women the butt of the joke? **PG. 8**

Sports

Multiple Bulldogs teams are heading to their conference playoffs, see how the women's basketball team and hockey team matchup against their opponents in these series **PG. 10 - 11**

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News

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Michigan

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Detroit, Mich - The Detroit Lions traded veteran runningback David Montgomery to the Houston Texans on Monday morning. Montgomery, who has played three years for the Lions, has logged 2,506 rushing yards, averaging 4.5 yards per carry with the Lions, while adding 33 touchdowns. The Texans sent former second-round pick, offensive lineman Juice Scruggs, along with a 2026 fourth-round pick, and a 2026 seventh-round pick in return for Montgomery. Rumors had come out the prior weekend that the Montgomery had requested a trade out of Detroit, then Montgomery came out with a post on X that these rumors were false.

National

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Austin, Texas - Early Sunday morning, as bars were closing down along Austin's sixth street were closing down for the night. A man in an SUV rolled down his window and opened fire on the patrons of Buford's Backyard Beer Garden. Law enforcement has identified 53-year-old Ndiaga Diagne as the suspect. Diagne allegedly killed two people and wounded another 14 before he was subsequently shot and killed by police. According to the Associated Press, Diagne was originally from Senegal and arrived in the U.S. in 2006, eventually becoming a naturalized citizen. Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said at a news conference on Sunday morning that Diagne was driving a large SUV, circled the block several times before stopping, turned on the SUV's hazard lights, and began firing a handgun.

Global

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Tehran, Iran- On Saturday, the United States and Israel launched a series of military strikes against Iran, killing Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Ayatollah Khamenei's death came amid an extensive attack on Iran by the United States and Israel earlier in the day. President Donald Trump had been building U.S. military forces in the Middle East for weeks and threatening to hit Iran if it did not agree to his demands, which included ending its nuclear program and accepting restrictions on its ballistic missiles.

Spring cleaning into support for students

RHA clothing drive encourages students to donate unwanted items ahead of spring break



Photo courtesy of Nathan Kramer

Donation boxes decorated and ready to be distributed to resident halls.

Gannon Thomas
Freelance Contributor

The Resident Hall Association is turning spring cleaning into an opportunity for students to give back to those within their campus community.

The RHA is currently hosting a clothing drive to support students in Big Rapids who may be in need of essential clothing items. Donation boxes have been placed at the front desks of residence halls across campus to make contributing convenient for students. Students are encouraged to donate gently used items at their nearest drop-off box.

This initiative is part of the group's broader effort to increase the quality of life for all students on campus. The clothing drive was an idea of the group's recently instated philanthropy committee. This is an opportunity for students to get rid of extra clothes they don't want to take home for spring break.

RHA will host a "Thrift for Free Event" at the end of the clothing drive, scheduled for March 19 from noon to 2:30 p.m. in room 211 of the David L. Eisler Center. During the event, students can thrift all the donated clothes for items they want and need without

spending any money.

The timing of this drive aligns with students preparing to leave campus for spring break.

Construction management junior and President of RHA, Nathan Kramer, talked about where this idea came from and why it is being utilized.

"I feel that as we go into Spring Break, a lot of people go into cleaning mode and realize that they don't always need everything they have and start to purge, so we thought it would work out that they can donate the clothing instead," Kramer said.

As many students begin packing and reorganizing their dorms for spring break, they sort through their closets and often set aside unwanted clothes. Rather than discarding these clothes, the RHA is hoping that students will donate them so the clothes may have a chance at a second life.

"We just wanted to give residents a chance to be able to thrift for free, as we know quite a bit of people that like to go thrifting in general, why not try to do something like it on campus," Kramer said. "We will also be donating the clothes after the drive to the community."

Donation bins are accessible during normal residence

hall front desk hours. Participation is simple; all students must do is gather whatever clothing items they wish to donate, like hoodies, pants, coats and shirts then bring them to the bins located at the front desk of any resident hall. These bins are red and have a poster on them for the RHA clothing drive.

All donations must be clean and in good condition.

The RHA is a registered student organization open to any Ferris student. They seek to improve the quality of life for students across campus and they do this through various social events and programs. The RHA hopes to create a stronger community at Ferris.

Public Relations sophomore, Lily Stocking, and Director of Finance for the RHA spoke about why something like this aligns with their group's values.

"We wanted to get our RSO out there, but also wanted a way to help out and impact the residential community," Stocking said, "We have already had multiple bins filled in multiple buildings, so it is safe to say residence halls are responding well. My little tip is if you haven't worn it in at least a few months or years, it may be time to part ways."

After the event concludes,

the remaining clothing will be sorted and distributed to those in need within the Big Rapids community. RHA hopes that expanding their initiative off campus will help strengthen the relationship between the community and Ferris.

While the drive will help students get rid of unwanted clothes during their spring cleaning, it is also an opportunity to help support the community. Access to clothing and seasonal essentials can vary between students and initiatives like this are important because they provide a way to meet those needs.

With the "Thrift for Free Event" fast approaching, the RHA is encouraging all students to double-check their closets before heading home for spring break. A single donation can make a huge difference, whether it stays in the residence halls or reaches someone in the local community.

Students can make donations at their nearest residence hall front desk until March 7, and all will be welcome at the Thrift for Free Event later in March. What you no longer need could be invaluable to someone else.

Spring Career Success Expo

Students and employees connect in the Student Recreation Center



Photo by: Shaunti'ara Reynolds | Multimedia Editor

Student listing contact information for table advertising job positions open for school districts.

Bella Brazeau
Freelance Reporter

Ferris State University held its Spring Career Success Expo this past Thursday, Feb. 26.

It was a way for students to find possible careers or land possible internship opportunities, giving them the chance to meet with a variety of career professionals to try to obtain a position in a particular field.

The advice students were given is to dress for success and with that, it shows that students actually care and are committed to that chosen field of interest.

Career and Professional Success holds these career expos every semester, in the fall and the spring.

Some students were willing to weigh in on their thoughts as well as the women in charge of running the career expo.

Career Readiness Specialist and Employer Liaison, Michele Albright, shared more details about why the expo is hosted yearly.

"Career Success Expo is one of the few spaces where students can engage in meaningful career conversations, explore occupations, and meet hundreds

of recruiters in a single day," Albright said. "Many students don't otherwise have access to that kind of exposure. These networking events give students the chance to practice the employment skills that employers seek from all college graduates, including communication, professionalism, career & self-development, and teamwork."

Having the opportunity to see what professionals in the field are looking for gives students an advantage and puts them on the right track when looking for employment.

Albright shared how networking is a crucial component of the event that students can take advantage of.

"Students apply what they've learned about resumes, interviewing, online profiles and having confident career conversations in a real-world setting," Albright said. Most importantly, they build connections. Sustainable careers often start with relationships, not just applications."

Sophomore and in the design program, Kiann Schmotlach, shares more about how she thinks the career expo could help her land a position somewhere.

"I think it's just really good to talk to more profession-

als. I'm not exactly looking for anything. I'm just trying to talk to some people and see what's out there," Schmotlach said.

Junior in Computer Information Systems, Lucy Tran, has also shared her thoughts on the Career Expo.

"I can talk to them face to face, and I can hand them my resume, and then I can ask more about the career opportunities that I can find in their company, Tran said. "I think it's really helpful because they get to know more about me, not just online, where the AI can scan your resume and then just skip it."

Artificial intelligence plays a big role in our society nowadays. AI can be used to our advantage. It can be used as an insightful tool when beginning to develop a resume or start searching for jobs.

Albright mentioned some of these helpful uses of AI and how those looking for a career could be using it.

"It's a tool; when paired with career coaching, it can strengthen resumes, improve interview preparation, and enhance critical thinking and technology skills. The concern arises when students use AI without a strategy or personalization, weakening authenticity and Communi-

cation impact," Albright said. "More often, the issue isn't effort, it's approach. Students may apply to many roles but lack meaningful connections. Career fairs and employer events provide something online applications cannot: direct dialogue with recruiters.

Many individuals never have the chance to explore careers in depth or meet hiring professionals face-to-face. That human connection, supported by career resources, is what turns applications into opportunities."

The event encourages stu-

dents to walk and talk with potential employers and learn more about their respective fields. The next Career Success Expo will be held in the fall semester of 2026.

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Dept. of Social Work begins partnership with DHS

Opening doors to hands-on experience in child services

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

On Thursday, Jan. 29, the Department of Social Work joined a partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

This program includes a child welfare stipend, allowing social work students to receive upwards of \$5,000–\$15,000 per semester in stipends in exchange for a post-graduate commitment to work for MDHS serving under-resourced communities.

For students to qualify, they must meet the following requirements: Be a senior in the social work program pursuing a bachelor's degree, take two courses specific to the child welfare field, including Children's Services in Social Work, a three-credit-hour course and Legal Aspects of Social Work, also a three-credit-hour course. Students must also complete a 480-hour internship in their senior year at MDHS.

The program consists of students being taught and mentored by faculty who have experience in child welfare, alongside child welfare workers themselves, while completing their internship.

Students will gain hands-on experience and develop skills to cope with the tough realities and situations that come with being a social worker.

They will get a first-hand look at different roles and responsibilities within the child welfare system, such as training assessments, building bonds with children and families, and learning about laws, protocols and policy. Students will also take

a deep dive into the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics.

The program is designed to address the shortage of child welfare workers across the state of Michigan.

Social Work program director Carrie Thompson talked more about what this partnership is and how it began.

"It all got started seven years ago, that's how long it has taken to work out the details between the state and the University of Michigan."

Tompson said MDHS approached Michigan universities years ago, looking for ways to recruit and better train child welfare workers. Tompson explained that areas such as CPS, foster care, and adoption need more attention and that there is a shortage of workers. She also recognizes the struggle social workers face and the toll it can take on their mental health.

"The field of child welfare can be extremely difficult, working with children and families in challenging situations," Tompson said. "If a student or worker is not adequately trained for the position, the turnover rate in these positions can be extremely high, which is hard for the agency but, more importantly, for the children and families involved in the system."

This partnership is helping put this matter at the forefront. The goal is to increase discussions within the social work program early on to attract students who are interested in child welfare and provide them with the additional resources they need to be successful. Other goals



Photo courtesy of Carrie Thompson

Students in the Department of Social Work working on coping skills to help them in their careers

she has in mind include hosting events such as a book club and inviting guest speakers who specialize in specific aspects of child welfare.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, as of late 2025, more than 328,000 children are in the U.S. foster care system. About 18,500 youth age out annually without permanent families.

Roughly 7 in 1,000 children are confirmed victims of abuse and neglect, with 69% being age 10 or younger.

Child welfare significantly impacts children, with about 80% of abused children meeting criteria for at least one psychological disorder by age 21. Seventy-six percent of children with a history of neglect do not complete high

school.

These numbers shed light on just how many children are affected by abuse, neglect and unstable living situations every year.

They make it clear why having well-trained social workers in the field is so important.

As the program launches, the goal is to encourage

more students to pursue social work and serve under-resourced communities, helping bridge the statewide shortage of child welfare workers. Students interested in learning more can visit Ferris 360 for additional information.



Photo by: Blase Gapiński | Editor in Chief

Many protesters arrived with homemade signs to show their support for other communities.

ICE PROTESTS CONT.

"I'm here because I just cannot stand what is happening to our country," Malzahn said. "With ICE invading Minneapolis and all those poor people who are afraid to leave their homes or afraid to go to work. They are afraid to go out and do the legal things they are allowed to do here because ICE is coming out and grabbing them off the streets."

Some people opposed the protest, as there were a couple of counter-protestors, mostly along Perry Avenue. The majority of the opposition came from drivers along State St.

Opposition came in the form of drivers rolling down their windows, hurling obscenities and filming the protesters. There were points during the protest where vehicles would ride alongside the protesters, revving their engines and shouting profanity in opposition.

There was plenty of support for the protesters, with cars driving past honking their horns in approval and rolling down their windows to cheer and support the protesters.

Incoming medical freshman Rebecca Barwick expressed her frustrations with the current events.

"It's just barbaric what's happening right now," Barwick said. "Over the past year and a half, it is just not ending. So we have to really show people that, especially in an area like Big Rapids that is pretty conservative, that they are not alone. That it is ok to support being rational, and understanding that it's not ok to take people in the streets away from their families."

With the military strikes on Iran, and the assassination of the Iranian Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the protesters believe that America has lost its way and to take everything they see online with a grain of salt.

Culture

Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor | turnek29@ferris.edu

A jazzy collaboration

Ferris State Jazz Band performs along with West Shore Community College Jazz Band



Photo by: Tate Zellman | Culture Reporter

This year's concert was a collaboration between the Ferris State Jazz Band and the West Shore Community College Jazz Band.

Tate Zellman
Culture Reporter

To celebrate the Festival of the Arts, the Ferris State Jazz Band performed a variety of pieces, as well as the West Shore Community College Jazz Band.

The festival of the arts concert is one of 77 events celebrating the Festival of the Arts in February. This collaboration is the first time the Ferris State Jazz Band and the West Shore Community College Jazz Band have performed together in a concert. The concert took place on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the Williams Auditorium.

The Ferris State Jazz Band took the stage during the first half of the concert. They performed a total of six pieces. Those included songs from

classical performers such as Benny Carter and Pat Metheny.

The second half of the concert was for West Shore's band. They performed six different pieces. The performers from their pieces were Andy Farber, Sammy Nestico, Paul Baker and more.

West Shore Community College Jazz Band director Ted Malt emphasized the honor of working with his band members.

"People drive 60 miles one way to be a part of the groups," Malt said. "We're just trying to provide a fun environment on behalf of music. These groups rehearse once a week, that's it. Without them, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. We just keep this going every year, and it keeps perpetuating." Furthermore, Malt dis-

cussed the importance of the band performing a collaborative concert for the first time in a while.

"The last time we did a big collaboration was ten years ago," Malt said. "To do this with the university, it's kind of a new beginning. It really means a lot to me to bring our groups out and to let them hear what's going on here and for Ferris to hear what's going on with our groups."

The West Shore Community College Jazz Band consists of 25 members. Those members are high school students and community college students.

Jazz band director and music professor Micah Laird found that the pieces the jazz band played, particularly "Follow Me," embody the concept of the Festival of the

Arts.

"I think our piece, "Follow Me," shows growth, journey, and creativity," Laird said. "The way that tone fits and ends really fits what we've seen from the Festival of the Arts. It gets to the end, and it doesn't truly cadence the way that we think something is finalized. It ends like there's more to come."

Automotive engineering technology senior Kris Madhavan, who plays the alto saxophone, found it extraordinary to watch the West Shore Band perform.

"It's actually humbling," Madhavan said. "I just started getting into jazz and have started to show appreciation for it, and it's really humbled me as a player. There's a lot

I'm realizing I don't know, and watching them perform was even more humbling. Seeing some people who are still in high school, and perform as well as they did, it showed me that there's still a lot to learn."

CONT. ON PG. 7

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To read or not to read

Students share their feelings about reading for fun



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Reading has become a pastime for many students on campus, although some are reluctant.

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

This semester, many students have been constantly busy reading and they are not just burying themselves in textbooks.

Some students enjoy reading books for their personal enjoyment, but others are not so fond of reading as a hobby.

Business administration senior Lexi Buntley revealed that she enjoys reading, particularly thrillers and romance. Additionally, she reflected on how popular reading as a hobby is currently.

"It's probably not very popular, just because everyone's so busy, and sometimes it just slips your mind, or like a lot of times, you're reading

a lot for your classes, and so you're just tired of reading," Buntley said.

With new technologies, reading has changed so much as a hobby. Now, there are devices people can read books on, such as Kindles, and many apps that let people subscribe to access thousands of books. Many people even enjoy audiobooks.

Buntley reflected on how common reading is now compared to what it used to be.

"I feel like it's less [common] because of all of our class and stuff, but then also now we have all the electronics, so sometimes we want to go watch a movie or go watch TV," Buntley said.

With so much work to do and so little time to do it, many students find it difficult

to prioritize reading beyond the reading they already have to do for classes.

"There's a lot of other things to do, and then also you just want to do something else, like if your roommates or friends are around, you don't really want to go pick up a book. You want to go hang out with them," Buntley said.

Students enjoy a variety of different books and genres, with thrillers being very popular.

Third-year optometry student Erica Dann revealed her current favorite reads.

"I enjoy reading fiction books," Dann said. "I really like 'The Nightingale,' more of historical fiction. I like thrillers a lot too, though. I just read 'The Housemaid' and that one was really good."

Reading is enjoyable for many students, but they often struggle to find time amid their coursework, jobs, and other responsibilities.

Dann discussed what she believes prevents students from enjoying reading more, as well as what has been a struggle for her personally.

"Probably studying, especially in college-age students, because I know that's the case for me," Dann said. "I have to read textbooks all the time, so I'm already doing so much reading, so it's probably that I just get busy."

Despite struggling to find time to read, students have acknowledged the benefits of making time to read, reporting positive experiences when they do.

For Dann, reading offers

several benefits that keep her coming back to books whenever she gets the chance.

"[The benefits include] probably just relaxing, getting your mind out of your own mind and entering a new world if it's fiction or even with self-help books, just learning something new," Dann said.

However, not all students enjoy reading. After the constant studying and reading endless material for classes, some students just need a break.

Manufacturing engineering freshman Kaden Curtis expressed a lack of interest in reading both in college and as a child.

"I think mainly it's the starting of reading a book that's just boring, and I can't

really bring myself to do it," Curtis said.

Curtis prefers entertainment from other media that is easier to engage with and less challenging to begin.

"I definitely would [say social media makes a difference] because it's a lot easier and a lot more engaging," Curtis said. "I'm more of a TV show guy. I like crime TV shows."

While reading can be a fun and exciting hobby for many students, some just prefer other forms of entertainment. However, reading remains a popular hobby on campus even in the digital age.



Photo by: Tate Zellman | Culture Reporter

JAZZ BAND CONT.

For many of the members of the West Shore Band, the concert was their first time performing in Williams Auditorium.

High school junior Cael Omness, who plays the tenor saxophone, really enjoyed the opportunity to play in a new environment.

"It was really exciting for me as a high schooler," Omness said. "The community and chemistry, getting to come here to a real university as opposed to some dinky high school auditorium is really nice, and it was a great opportunity."

The jazz band has quite a few more concerts remaining in the spring 2026 semester. They have a spring concert on Thursday, April 16, and more to come.

Contact the faculty and staff at the Music Center for more information about the jazz band and their upcoming concerts.

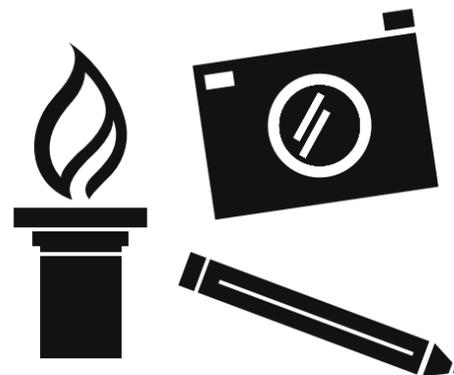
The Festival of The Arts jazz concert brought over 100 people to Williams Auditorium.

Why work for the Torch?

The Ferris State Torch is an entirely student-run publication created by students and for students. We publish 27 Wednesdays throughout the academic year and serve as a platform for student voices. From covering campus news to community stories, our mission is to inform, engage and represent the Ferris community while giving students hands-on experience in journalism and media. We pride ourselves on welcoming any student who is interested in working for the Torch, regardless of prior experience in writing or media. Whether you are an experienced writer or someone looking to try something new, the Torch provides an inclusive learning environment where students can grow their skills at their own pace. Our staff members gain real-world experience in reporting, interviewing, editing and photography while learning the core values of journalism, including accuracy and integrity. Reporters for the Torch have the freedom to choose what they want to cover, from campus news and Ferris athletics to student organizations, events and issues that matter to the community. Working for the Torch is an opportunity to build your portfolio, develop professional skills and actively contribute to campus life while being part of a collaborative, student-led team.

Positions we have open include:

- Copy Editors
- Photographers
- Reporters (Freelance and full-time)
- Section Editors (News and Managing Copy Editor)



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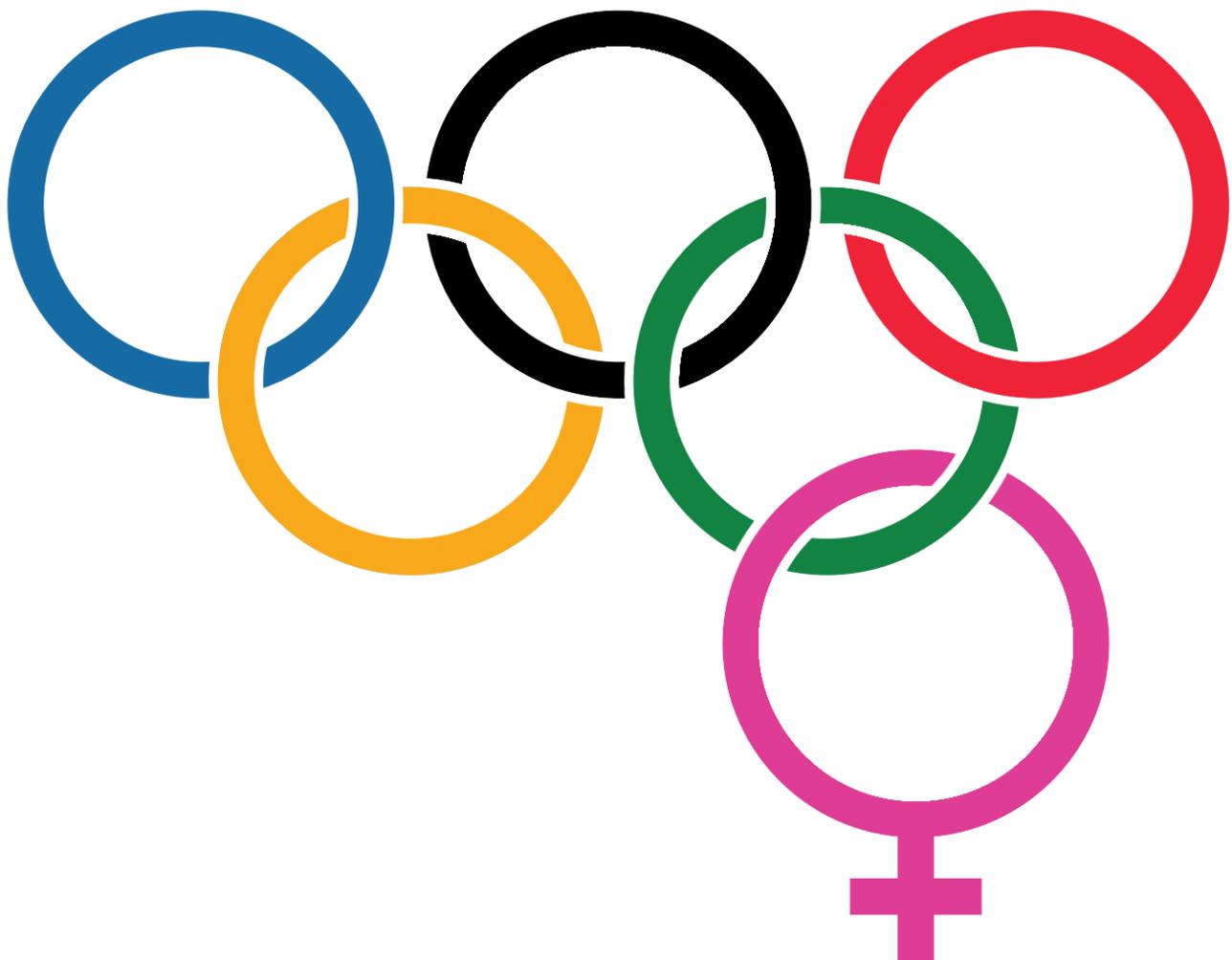
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EDITOR'S COLUMN: Who runs the world?

What makes the Olympic Games so special



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

People always talk about how sports are a way to bring people together but there is no event that proves that more than the Olympic Games.

The Olympics bring together the most talented athletes from around the world in one place. It doesn't matter their race, age or gender, all of these athletes have an equal shot to represent their country and take home the gold.

It is not like viewers are limited to one sport or a single day to watch the competition. With this year's Winter Olympic Games being hosted over 17 days, it acted as the perfect time to start enjoying a sport or event that you might not watch on a regular basis.

I felt like this was the common discourse I heard while the Olympics were taking place this year. Some of my friends talked about how they had been watching the vari-

ous events like curling, hockey and even bobsledding. Some made it a point that they were starting to watch more women's competitions than men's.

This is something I personally enjoy about the Olympic Games. It is an opportunity where women are able to display their athleticism and show that they are just as worthy to perform on that large a stage with their male counterparts.

One of the main reasons I enjoy watching the women's competitions over the men's is because of their history of bringing Team USA more medals home. It was reported by Yahoo Sports that Team USA's women have out-medaled the men at three consecutive Winter Olympics.

The men's team was also out-medaled in four consecutive Summer Olympics.

This year, the women were able to bring home six gold medals and 17 medals overall for the United States, while the men brought home

four gold and only 12 medals overall.

During the current U.S. President, Donald Trump's State of the Union address, he had the men's U.S. hockey team in attendance. After they received their standing ovation, Trump mentioned how the women's team would soon be coming to the White House, even though they already declined his backhanded invitation.

While inviting the U.S. men's team to the address over the phone, the President stated, "I must tell you, were going to have to bring the women's team, you do know that. I do believe I would probably be impeached."

This statement made it seem like he was inviting the U.S. women's team because he had no choice but to do so unless he wanted to be removed from power.

What upsets me most about this is that our President's statement completely undermines the hard work and effort the women's team

put in during the Olympics. Both hockey teams, men's and women's, went undefeated and brought home gold medals. The women's team let in two goals in the entire tournament and scored 33. The men scored 25 and let in nine.

It's not like either of the U.S. teams had an easy exit to the gold, as both teams went up against great Canadian teams that had PWHL and NHL stars backing their core. Anyone who watched these match-ups would be able to tell you how physical the level of play for all teams involved was and how stressful overtime was.

The women had to put in just as much work as the men did to bring home a gold medal for the U.S. but our President can't seem to acknowledge that and completely discredits the team because they are women.

The Olympic Games are the one time when women are represented at the same level as men in the world of

athletics. The International Olympic Committee even reported that this was the most gender-balanced Olympic Winter Games in history, with a record 47% female participation.

We need to acknowledge all athletes for their skills and accomplishments, regardless of things like race or gender. For a country that supposedly stands for equality for all, the people who live within and run this nation sure seem to have a lot to say when women are successful. Almost like they have to undermine women as a way to establish some weird power dynamic.

As a society, we can't let this happen and need to highlight women whenever they succeed. For the sole reason that they are succeeding in a society that has established parameters set to keep them from reaching that level of success.

Textbooks cost too much

Everyone's favorite part of a new semester



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Gannon Thomas seen basking in a pile of textbooks, wondering if he will be able to afford more.

Gannon Thomas
Freelance Contributor

Every student knows the feeling, being two weeks into a semester, enjoying your new classes then suddenly you can't do an assignment

because you forgot to pay \$180 for a textbook.

It happens every semester, there are new classes, new schedules and my personal favorite, new textbooks.

Textbooks are one of the biggest add on costs

to college. Materials that are required to successfully complete your courses are locked behind a paywall. Every semester, hundreds of dollars go to books that you won't read after four months. It's a constant cycle of buying

new books and just forgetting the old.

The problem is that they aren't just expensive, they are required. When a professor lists a course material as "required," it means students must either buy it or risk fail-

ing their class.

In classes that use a digital access code for the majority of homework and assignment your entire grade is dependent on you paying extra for a class you're already paying for.

The majority of these access code courses are owned by a small group of major publishers like Pearson, McGraw Hill and Cengage. They have the market cornered and they show it by releasing new editions of textbooks with minor changes to the old. This means textbooks are constantly being labeled as outdated and students are always forced to the newest, most expensive edition.

There are drawbacks to both buying paper and electronic versions of your textbooks; both are costly and useless after the semester is over. Physical books can often be resold at a fraction of what you purchased it for but there is no way to get your money back from e-books. It's weird to spend hundreds of dollars on things you use so little.

The weight in the cost of textbooks is felt unevenly among students. For some students, selling out an extra few hundred is just an inconvenience; for others, it is a serious obstacle in their education.

Your entire academic career could be in jeopardy because you can't pay more than what you were already told you needed to.

Textbooks have become negotiable. Students wait to see if the required materials are really required before actually purchasing the book.

College demands a lot from students time, focus, effort and financial commitment. Adding other unpredict-

able expenses like textbooks only increases stress and financial strain on students.

Unlike tuition costs which are clearly outlined, textbook costs vary and often feel like added hidden fees that only appear after schedules are finalized.

Education is designed to level the playing field, but when students must measure their academic success against their bank account, that design falls apart.

Colleges can't claim they care about creating opportunities for students while ignoring the financial barriers that extend beyond tuition.

Transparency about textbook costs could help students plan more accurately for the semester ahead. Encouraging departments to consider price when selecting course materials can also help lessen the financial burden on students. Small policy shifts could mean the difference between someone failing and passing a course.

The issue is not just the prices of textbooks, it's the priority of them. When required materials are treated like non-essential add-ons that should be purchased out of a student's pocket, the message to students is clear: figure it out yourself.

Education should be challenging to students intellectually, not financially. The purpose of college is to push students to think critically, problem solve and grow, not drain their bank account.

If institutions want to make education truly accessible, colleges should help students confront the full cost of attendance, otherwise education is only for those who can afford it.

Medal worthy performance



Comic by: Blake Flanery | Cartoonist

Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

One final go

Senior forward talks about final season and overcoming adversity



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Mykel Bingham goes up for a layup against Roosevelt on Feb. 9

Tate Zellman
Culture Reporter

With his sixth and final season coming to an end, senior forward Mykel Bingham highlighted memorable moments in his career and looks forward to the next chapter of his life.

Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Mich, Bingham looked up to his family and they helped him develop a love for basketball. His

older brother Marcus, who played collegiate basketball at Michigan State from 2018 to 2022, was one of his influences who started his passion for the game.

Bingham played high school basketball at Grand Rapids Central High School. During his senior year, he led his team to a 19-3 overall record and earned Grand Rapids Press Dream Team accolades. He averaged 12 points, 10 rebounds, and two

blocked shots per game and helped the Cougars reach their fourth consecutive league championship and a berth in the Class B District Championship game.

Bingham talked about how he got into basketball.

"I'd say I really gained a passion for it probably at the beginning of high school," Bingham said. "My mom played in the past, and my brother took it seriously. With me being as tall as I am, I

just stuck with it and made something out of it."

Bingham was recruited by former head coach Andy Bronkema, who ended up leaving Ferris after Bingham's fifth year to coach at Central Michigan, and was replaced by interim head coach Alex Fodness. Bingham was on his way to an AAU tournament when Bronkema called him and gave him an offer.

While Bingham did receive offers from other GLIAC schools like Saginaw Valley and Davenport, he chose Ferris so he could stay close to home.

During the 2023-24 season, Bingham missed the entirety of the season with a stress fracture in his left foot.

Bingham talked about what that season taught him.

"The season I missed made me learn," Bingham said. "It hurt watching everybody playing, and I just had to sit on the sideline. That's not a good feeling. But then again, when you're in that situation, you just have to learn from it and pick up tools you'd never think to be using in the future. That kind of helped me where I am

now and helped me become a leader for this team. I've stepped into that role that was hard for me in the past."

Recovering from his injury, Bingham has done all that he could to step up as a player. This season, he is averaging 32 minutes per game and 13 points per game, which are both career highs. He's also leading the GLIAC in rebounding with 8.7 rebounds per game.

Fodness talked about what it's been like to coach a player who has improved and contributed so much on both ends of the floor.

"He's really turned himself into a complete player," Fodness said. "I think some of that development has to come from this year just being asked to do a little bit more than he's maybe been asked to do in previous years. It's been great seeing him develop. He's become a really important player for us, and it's been pretty cool to see him now in his sixth year grow into the player that he's become."

In addition to his points and rebounds, in conference play, Bingham is averaging a block and a steal per game.

On Monday, Feb. 23, he was rewarded the GLIAC defensive player of the week.

Bingham's younger brother, Mahki Barner, talked about what it's been like for him to watch his older brother play basketball and develop a passion for it.

"It's meant everything," Barner said. "I look up to Mykel. That's my older brother. Every time I see him go out there, see him play, and see him do what he loves to do, it makes me happy."

Barner has really enjoyed seeing his older brother thrive on both ends of the floor and become a leader for the team.

"He's healthy now," Barner said. "He's also bigger and stronger. He has always been a leader. Everybody always looks up to Mykel. He has a lot of heart, and so for him to be a team leader means a lot to him."

After the conclusion of his sixth and final season with the Bulldogs, Bingham hopes to play overseas. He not only wants to continue playing the sport he loves but he also wants to see the world.

Women's basketball prepares for playoffs

Ferris women's basketball to face Wisconsin Parkside in GLIAC Quarterfinal

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After finishing the final 10 games of the season with a 9-1 record, the Ferris State women's basketball team looks ahead to the GLIAC Tournament.

Ferris State finished their final week of the 2025-26 regular season with a 70-44 loss to No.2-ranked Grand Valley State and then a 71-62 victory over Davenport.

Senior forward Mya Hiram spoke about the season and is looking forward to the playoffs.

"I am very proud of the way our team played in the regular season," Hiram said. "We had another winning season and positioned ourselves to be in a good spot for the conference tournament and the national tournament. We are all excited and ready to fight for a tournament trophy. We have got some great competition to play and I am just ready to compete with my girls again."

The reigning national

champion Grand Valley has been a tough opponent for the Bulldogs this season, serving the Bulldogs two 25-plus point losses this season. In the 70-44 loss, senior guard Mia Riley recorded a 16-point, 10-rebound double-double. The Bulldogs struggled with the Lakers' solid defense, shooting 13-56 from the field and 3-27 from beyond the three-point line.

The Bulldogs bounced back in the game against Davenport, playing a stifling defense of their own, holding Davenport to a 25-65 night of shooting, while holding them to 2-22 from the three-point line.

Riley recorded another double-double, shooting 6-17 for 18 points, while securing 13 rebounds on the night. Senior guard Emma Schierbeek had an efficient night of her own, shooting 7-13 for 18 points and eight rebounds.

The No.13-ranked Bulldogs (24-5, 17-3 in GLIAC) will look to take on the Wis-

consin Parkside Rangers (14-14, 9-11 in GLIAC) in the GLIAC Tournament Quarterfinal.

The Bulldogs have had success over the Rangers in the last seven matchups, holding a 6-1 record in those games. The Bulldogs are riding a five-game winning streak over the Rangers, spanning back to 2024.

This season, Ferris has defeated Wisconsin Parkside by scores of 82-69 on Feb. 9 and 96-90 on Jan. 5.

Ferris State is led in scoring by senior guard Kady Blanchard, who is averaging 16.6 points per game on 45.1% shooting. She is averaging 5.9 rebounds per game and 2.3 steals per game which is good for sixth in the GLIAC.

The Bulldogs' solidified three-point shooter is Schierbeek, who is averaging 38.8% from beyond the arc, which is good for fifth in the division.

Wisconsin Parkside is led on offense by sophomore Katie Hamill and senior Cassidy Arni. Arni leads the team

in scoring, averaging 13.6 points per game on 45.3% shooting, while averaging 1.6 steals per game. Hamill is averaging 13.4 points per game on 41.2% shooting, with 5.3 rebounds per game and 1.8 steals per game.

With the regular season over, even mounting a 9-1 record in the final 10 games of the season, this was not enough to secure the regular season GLIAC championship, with Grand Valley securing the title.

Blanchard spoke about the end of the regular season and how the team wanted to secure that title.

"Well, obviously, there are always things we want to be better at, and goals we want to accomplish," Blanchard said. "Winning the GLIAC is a great goal that we came up short for, but we'd rather win it all when it's important than to grab that one. We are all hungry for the next one."

The Ferris State Bulldogs women's basketball team will take on the Wisconsin Parkside Rangers on



Photo by: Clark Vance | Torch Photographer

Kady Blanchard drives up the court against a Northern Michigan defender on Feb. 21

Wednesday, March 4, at 6 p.m. at Jim Wink Arena. If the Bulldogs win this game, they move onto the semi-finals to take on either Grand Valley

or Lake Superior on Saturday. With the GLIAC Tournament championship coming on Sunday.

Bulldogs head to Mankato for first round

Ferris plays Minnesota State in Mason Cup Quarterfinal



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Junior defenseman Trevor Taulien handles the puck against Augustana in 2025.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

The No. 8-seeded Ferris State Bulldogs will travel to the No. 1-seeded Minnesota State Mavericks in the best-of-three quarterfinal round of the CCHA Mason Cup.

These two teams played each other four times in the regular season, with Minnesota State winning the season series three games to one. Ferris beat the Mavericks 4-1 on Dec. 6 at Minnesota State.

First-year head coach Brett Riley knows this will be a difficult matchup for the Bulldogs, but he has a lot of confidence in his team.

"This will be a tough test, but we need to be ready from the start and continue the strong play we've had here down the stretch," Riley said. "Our group is confident and excited for the opportunity to keep this season going. That has to show up in how we play, desperate, fast, aggressive and connected for 60 minutes."

Ferris State (7-25-2, 6-18-2 in CCHA) ended the season 3-1-2 in February, with its loss being at Bemidji State and tying with Northern Michigan and Lake Superior State in the final game of

the regular season. Senior forward Gavin Best leads the Bulldogs in points with 25 (12-13-25), with senior forward Josh Zary leading the team with 13 goals and sophomore defenseman Chris Lie leading with 15 assists.

Sophomore goaltender Martin Lundberg has started 17 of the 20 games he's played in, logging over 1,000 minutes in net. Lundberg has let in 49 goals for a goals against average of 2.79 and has 428 saves for a .879 save percentage.

Graduate defenseman Nic Belpedio is looking forward to this playoff series.

"I'm super excited to play this team," Belpedio said. "Ultimately, the playoffs is a new season and a different type of hockey compared to the regular season. Our team has been playing well and has come together down the stretch over the course of the last few weeks. We have a lot of confidence in our game right now and have had positive results since playing them last. Obviously, Mankato is a really good team, and I think it will set up for a good series. We had two good games against over the course of the regular season despite the series results

saying otherwise. Hopefully, we will be able to build off those games and the past few weeks of progress."

Minnesota State (18-9-7, 14-7-5 in CCHA) is led by senior forward Tristan Lemyre, who leads the team in points with 27 (13-14-27). Senior forward Jack Smith leads the Mavericks with nine goals. While junior forward and former Ferris Bulldog, Luigi Benincasa, leads the team with 17 assists.

Senior goaltender Alex Tracy started all 33 games he played, logging in just over 2,000 minutes between the pipes. Tracy has allowed 63 goals on the year for a 1.89 goals against average and has 790 saves for a .926 save percentage.

Around the rest of the CCHA, the 7-seeded Lake Superior State Lakers will travel to the 2-seeded St. Thomas Tommies, the 6-seeded Bemidji State Beavers will travel to the 3-seeded Augustana Vikings, and the 5-seeded Bowling Green Falcons will travel to play the 4-seeded Michigan Tech Huskies.

Senior forward Tyler Schleppe spoke about the matchups against Minnesota State from past seasons, as well as this year, ahead of the playoff series this week-

end.

"Minnesota State has a long-running history against us," Schleppe said. "My freshman year, they ended our season in the second round, so it's only fitting that we get a crack at them in my senior season. They won

the season series against us this year as well, but that's behind us, and we are really happy with the way we are playing. We are looking forward to this upcoming weekend and know that we are playing to prolong our season, so were going to give

it everything that we have."

The first game will be on Friday, March 6, with puck drop slated for 8:07 p.m., and the second on Saturday, March 7, with the puck drop scheduled for 7:07 p.m. If necessary, game three will be on Sunday, March 8.

A-1

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