



The Ferris State Torch

95 YEARS OF ILLUMINATING THE TRUTH

Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of April 15, - 22, 2026

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From reflection to research

Students bridge classroom learning and lived history



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Students engage with the exhibits and the docent as she provides background information on each of the items displayed.

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

April 10 and 11 marked two major events for historical endeavors on campus, as the Shoah Committee and the historical honors society Phi Alpha Theta each provided an opportunity for students to learn and engage in discussion.

On Friday, April 10, 10 students across different majors signed up to attend the Shoah Committee's annual trip to the Zekelman Holocaust Center. Saturday, April 11, Phi

Alpha Theta hosted a Regional Conference at the FLITE Library, where students were able to present the work they have created throughout the semester.

During the visit to the Zekelman Holocaust Center, students had the opportunity to explore exhibits that detailed personal stories of Holocaust survivors, offering a more personal understanding of the events discussed in class. For many attendees, the experience was both educational and deeply moving.

One student, junior in the

history program, Kayla Wittkop, was able to attend the trip to the museum and also presented her paper at the Regional Conference. Her topic was centered around the brutal reality that Jewish women in the Holocaust faced, and she chose this topic to shed more light on it, as it isn't researched enough.

Wittkop talked about how the trip to the Zekelman Holocaust Center essentially reaffirmed everything she had been writing about in her paper. One of the things that really stuck out to her was

how many people assume the Holocaust started when World War II began, when in reality, it started in 1933.

"My paper was about Jewish women in the Holocaust and what they did in order to survive and what happened to them during said time," Wittkop said. "I still say the Holocaust is my favorite topic to research. While everybody else says that it's a little bit heavier, I think so too. It is heavy, but you have to look at it as people are telling this, so it doesn't get repeated, or people don't have the same

mindset."

Wittkop contrasted traditional classroom learning with the immersive experience of the museum visit. She explained how the interactive nature of the trip made the material feel much more impactful than a typical lecture setting.

"I personally like to learn hands-on. I like reading through things and researching things, but if we're wandering around, looking at things, talking about things, that helps me get a little bit more understanding and I

can recall it better."

While students like Wittkop experienced the conference firsthand, the event itself was made possible through the efforts of student leadership in Phi Alpha Theta.

Junior in the history program, Jaden Harris, and acting president of Phi Alpha Theta, played a key role in organizing the Regional Conference held at FLITE Library.

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News

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Michigan

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Orion Township- An elderly couple has died after a head-on collision in Orion Township, the Oakland County Sheriff's Office announced Monday. Alfred Henry Young, 86, and his wife, Florence Anna Young, 86, died from injuries suffered in the crash near Lapeer Road and Greenshield Road. The crash happened at 1:11 p.m. on Saturday according to a news release from the sheriff's office. Police said that a 63-year-old Hazel Park man was driving a Ford Fiesta northbound on Lapeer Road when the vehicle left the road and crossed the median, the vehicle entered the southbound lane of Lapeer Road, striking a Lincoln MKX head-on.

National

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Augusta, GA- For the second year in a row, Rory McIlroy has won the Masters again. This is the first time anyone has won the masters in back-to-back years since Tiger Woods in 2001 and 2002. McIlroy had a six-shot lead going into the third round, and ended up falling two shots behind Cameron Young and Justin Rose. In an electric final round, he delivered two big birdies to give himself the lead. Only one year ago, McIlroy won his first Masters, becoming the sixth player with the career Grand Slam, which is winning the four major men's championships, the Masters, PGA Championship, U.S. Open, and The Open Championship, in a single year.

Global

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Iran- The U.S. military has imposed a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz and Iranian Ports, this took effect at 10 a.m. EDT. This came after a post on Truth Social from President Donald Trump that he had instructed the Navy to "seek and interdict every vessel in International Waters that has paid a toll to Iran," and that the U.S. would begin "destroying the mines the Iranians laid in the Straits. Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!" The threat from President Trump sparked condemnation from Iran and other world leaders. Iran's Revolutionary Guard said the strait remained under Iran's "full control" and was open for non-military vessels, but military ones would get a "forceful response."

Ferris announces Dr. Lancaster as new provost Dr. Fleischman to return to College of Business as professor



Photo courtesy of Ferris State University

Dr. Sean Lancaster starts his new role as Provost at Ferris State on June 1.

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

Last week, it was announced that Dr. Sean Lancaster, a current administrator at Grand Valley State University, will be taking over the role of provost.

Previously held by Dr. Robert Fleischman, the role of provost is to oversee all academics and faculty affairs.

The search for a new provost began late last year and went through multiple rounds of candidates, all from varying backgrounds and experiences. It wasn't until around three weeks ago that the decision made its way back to Dr. Lancaster.

Dr. Lancaster mentioned that it wasn't until he set foot on campus that he felt connected with the university.

"When I came to campus and had my visit, I was just blown away by how much people cared about students and helping them succeed. I had a session with an awesome group of students who shared their hopes and dreams. I just felt connected with them and it made me feel included," Lancaster said. "There was a strong sense of purpose at Ferris

and a focus on applied learning that prepares students for what comes next. That combination is exciting and something I'm eager to be a part of."

The transition process will start on June 1, and will continue throughout the month until Dr. Fleischman's last day, June 30.

The hope is that having this transition period will allow for a better adjustment. During the month-long transition, both Dr. Lancaster and Dr. Fleischman will work together to allow Dr. Lancaster to become more acquainted with the campus, students and faculty.

Although Dr. Fleischman is stepping away from his role as provost at Ferris, he will still remain on campus as a professor in the College of Business.

"I have mixed emotions, because when I first got into higher education after my career in law and as a former high school teacher, I never went into it to become an administrator. I went into it to teach and affect young people. So having the opportunity to do that again is something I'm really looking forward to," Fleischman said.

During his time here at Ferris, Dr. Fleischman has looked back at what he has been able to accomplish within his role.

He stressed the importance of leading the university through COVID-19 and still allowing face-to-face classes and experiences. He also mentioned that helping drive enrollment has been a challenge.

"It's been great getting to know people and being able to spend time investing in people's futures. It has been a very rewarding experience to work together with students, my colleagues and others," Fleischman said.

The search committee for the new provost candidates was put together by Dr. Pilgrim and Dr. Kim Hancock, from pharmacy. The committee included several people across campus, faculty and students.

President Dr. Bill Pink explained more about the applications finalist process.

"The committee whittled it down to five candidates and they all came to campus and went through one or two days' worth of interviews with different groups, and then I met with them myself for

lunch," Pink said.

After long conversations about leadership and aspects of the provost position, the interview feedback was sent back to Dr. Pink for the final review and selection.

"I came to a decision and chose Dr. Lancaster. I know people will laugh because he's been at Grand Valley State University for the last two decades. What stood out to me about him was mostly how much he was truly invested in Ferris State. He knew so much about us. It was a hard choice; we had four other candidates. I think it is a great compliment to our university that we have that quality of people who want to be here," Pink said.

Dr. Pink concluded his thoughts by welcoming Dr. Lancaster to his new chapter at the university and thanking Dr. Fleischman for all he has given to this university.

With the transition period happening over the summer, students can expect to see Dr. Lancaster on campus working this upcoming fall semester, while Dr. Fleischman expects to be back on campus for the fall of 2027 in the College of Business.

Astras Aquatics and Exotics marks two years serving Big Rapids

Local pet store stands out for exotic animals and rescue efforts



Photo courtesy of Jasmine Poulias

A closer look into one of the tortoise enclosures at Astras Aquatics and Exotics.

Gannon Thomas
News Reporter

One unique small business in Big Rapids is getting ready to celebrate a major milestone.

Since opening its doors, Astras Aquatics and Exotics has carved its role in Big Rapids by offering a wide variety of aquatic life, reptiles and exotic animals not typically found in larger chain pet stores. From colorful fish to reptiles in need of care, Astras has something for every pet owner who wants more than a traditional cat or dog.

They are soon to celebrate two years of officially being open. In those years, the store has built a reputation for offering unique pets while prioritizing rescue and responsible animal care.

Owner and operator of Astras Aquatics Exotics, Jasmine Poulias, describes what makes her store different from others.

"We try to be very ethical about things," Poulias said. "We want to give out the correct information, correct housing, making sure we are not cohabitating in the store, and that the cages are kept clean."

What truly sets the store apart from others is its commitment to rescues. Rather

than focusing solely on sales, Astras Aquatics and Exotics often takes in animals that need to be rehomed, rehabilitated, or given a second chance.

"We also take in a lot of rescues," Poulias said. "We do one record on all of them to make sure they eat and are acting and looking healthy. We also have an emergency fund that's funded by tips for any animal that has to go to the vet."

This approach represents the store's broader mission centered on education, ethical pet ownership and the well-being of animals.

The store has become a resource in the community, both rescuing animals in need and properly informing pet owners about how to best care for their beloved companions. Smaller, independently owned shops often provide a level of care and attention that larger chains cannot replicate.

Astra's has built a loyal customer base through its knowledge and personalized approach.

"I also love connecting with the community and finding people that I just vibe with," Poulias said, "They love that there's an ethical pet store in Big Rapids."

As the store approaches its

major two year milestone, its connection to the community continues to be a major part of their success.

"I want to do more outreach programs, I want to connect with all the schools and get proper setups," Poulias said.

The dedication and care Poulias shows for each of the animals in her store truly resembles that of a mother caring for her children. Poulias strongly prioritizes safety and health before sales.

One local independent animals rights activist, Tabby Dimock, explained her perspective on the store.

"I see a lot of potential in them being a good rescue. I see they genuinely care about their animals even with limited funds," Dimock said. "I hope that more people help them out."

Despite the store's tremendous care and effort towards animals it's still a small store and relies on community support.

"I know as of right now that they have got two tortoises that need to get to the vet, but they're short on funds and it would be great if people could help them out so they get more money," Dimock said.

Dimock also explained why small care-driven stores like

this are more ethical than larger chain stores.

"Looking at the rats in Pet-Co nearly broke me, they're nowhere near as well cared for as in Astras Exotics. Astras has a huge cage for their rats with lots of toys and hides," Dimock said.

That level of care is what

sets Astras apart. As the store moves into its third year, it will continue to focus on helping animals in need and educating the community. Astras prioritizes quality over quantity, ensuring the safety and health of all its pets.

The store's two-year anni-

versary will be on Nov. 1, and through its rescue efforts and commitment to ethical practices, the store continues to grow, not just as a business but as a trusted part of the local community.

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Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Phi Alpha Theta members and presenters from Ferris State coming together after the first round of panels wrap up.

FROM REFLECTION TO RESEARCH CONT.

Harris, along with sophomore in the history program, Caitlin Power, worked together to ensure things went smoothly and set up all of the collaborative efforts for the Regional Conference.

Harris described how the decision to host fell on them quickly and how she and Power really stepped up to the plate.

"Oakland University hosted the Regional Conference last year and we attended and knew we could do something great like they did," Harris

said. "Our original plan was to host in the spring of 2027. That would be my senior year and her [Power] senior year and it would have been under my full role as president, so it would be like a magnum opus, but there was kind of a scramble for who was going to host this year. Originally, Grand Valley was going to do it, but things didn't work on their end, so we decided to put it on."

With little time to prepare, Harris said the planning process was condensed into just a few months.

Power also explained how the short timeline served as

a challenge, especially when it came to collaborating with other schools.

"It was a lot of our work and our time that went into it, so it was a lot on us to get all of that together," Power said. "I emailed over 65 schools across three states, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. I heard from fewer than 20 and then only six of them were able to show."

Faculty advisers also played a role in supporting students throughout the planning process and the conference itself.

Dr. Tracy Busch, one of the faculty advisers for Phi Alpha

Theta, said the conference was a major undertaking for students. She mentioned how, when the students came to her and said they wanted to take on hosting the conference, she asked if they were sure they wanted to take on the responsibility.

She was nothing but proud of the work the students did in putting on such a professional-level event.

"We are a leading university in Michigan, because we are hosting this Michigan Regional Conference, so I'm really proud of our program, proud of our students, thankful to everybody who

chairs our panels, including our own history professors here," Busch said. "I am just really grateful for how good it makes our students look, how good it makes Ferris look and how well it's gone so far."

Beyond the logistics and planning, both events highlighted the importance of engaging with history in meaningful and personal ways.

Busch also emphasized the importance of the conference in giving students real-world academic experience.

"You can really see the camaraderie between students in the way they ask questions

and engage with each other's work. It's the nitty-gritty of history, really analyzing sources and interpretations and it creates a real community of historians, not just at Ferris, but across Michigan."

Together, the museum visit and the Regional Conference gave students opportunities to engage with history beyond the classroom through research, discussion and reflection. For many, the weekend highlighted not only the academic study of history, but its real-world significance and lasting impact.

ON THE RECORD

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

Malicious destruction of property

March 31 - A student reported that her vehicle tire was slashed after it blew out while driving. The damage appeared intentional, with a possible suspect identified. The incident remains under investigation, and the case is closed.

Stop the stealing

April 1 - A student reported a possible theft from her residence hall room. Officers were unable to identify any suspects, and the case is closed.

Stay sober or get pulled over

April 1, 9:25 p.m. - Ferris State University police officers arrested a driver following a traffic stop for speeding after signs of intoxication were observed and sobriety tests were refused. The individual was lodged at the jail, and charges are being sought pending lab results.

False alarm

April 2, 6:16 p.m. - Ferris State University police officers responded to a burglary alarm at a local pharmacy. Officers checked the building and found no signs of forced entry or unauthorized access. The alarm was determined to be caused by a malfunctioning door, and the scene was cleared.

Verbal dispute

April 3, 1:59 a.m. - Ferris State University police officers assisted with a reported disturbance in a parking lot near a local bar. Officers identified the involved individuals and determined that the incident was a verbal argument only. All parties were released without further action.

Culture

Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor | turnek29@ferris.edu

Destruction for a cause

Rage room event raises money for One Day for Dawgs fundraiser



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Davaria Pharr
News Reporter

Starting at midnight on April 8, the One Day for Dawgs fundraiser raised over \$500,000 for different student causes across campus.

Students also gathered outside the David L. Eisler Center for a rage room activity and an optional donation to the homecoming scholarship, which recognizes students who embody the university's spirit. Candidates are selected for their leadership and campus involvement.

Students are elected by the student body through a voting process held during fall festivities, and the winner is announced at the homecoming game.

The rage room event, put on by Entertainment Unlimited, featured various items students could choose from, such as glass cups, plates, TVs and other malleable

items.

The event gave students the opportunity to relieve stress and address personal matters amid exams on the horizon.

Business senior and vice president of Entertainment Unlimited, Cervonte' Plair, talked about what led them to choose this activity over other suggested activities.

"Creating the event, we wanted something that grabs students' attention, that they can still do for free. An event that was fun and thrilling, but hands-on and immersive at the same time," Plair said.

He explains that the funds aim to assist with things like the food pantry, other scholarships and resources to fix up dorms.

The event's purpose is also to improve students' on-campus experience, relieve stress and give students an outlet.

The mental health aspect also plays a key role in this

event. For some students, this may be their only way of self-expression.

"Just having that tool available is amazing because we have other resources like the personal counseling center or even sleeping pods. Letting that emotion go without having to talk to someone if students didn't want to, giving a different way to express those feelings," Plair said.

He says that with the majority of college students experiencing high stress due to academic pressures, time management and financial concerns, this event was just one step in the right direction for pulling someone out of a dark space.

Mathematics junior Kamari Hicks touches on the homecoming election process and how students are involved.

"To be able to vote on the homecoming ambassador and to have a say makes all the difference on campus. I

feel like it's just a good opportunity to feel included," Hicks said.

She explains that often it seems like she, along with other students, is only attending school and doesn't feel like she has a say in the decisions being made.

Hicks adds that donating to the cause is very important because some people cannot afford a meal plan. Having resources like a food pantry can be a lifeline for some students.

"A stress was lifted off my shoulders after being in the rage room with the challenges of everyday life. Normally, we want to break stuff, but we can't because you will have to pay for it. So this was just an outlet that was really needed," Hicks said.

She explains that these kinds of experiences show that they are paying attention to their students and care about what they may be going through.

Student engagement ad-

ministrators and advisor of Entertainment Unlimited, Ben Avery, concluded the event with his final thoughts.

"I think it's pretty evident in itself that the rage room is very popular, allowing students to blow off some steam during what is a very challenging time."

Going forward, he looks into doing another event like this and reaching an even further donation goal.

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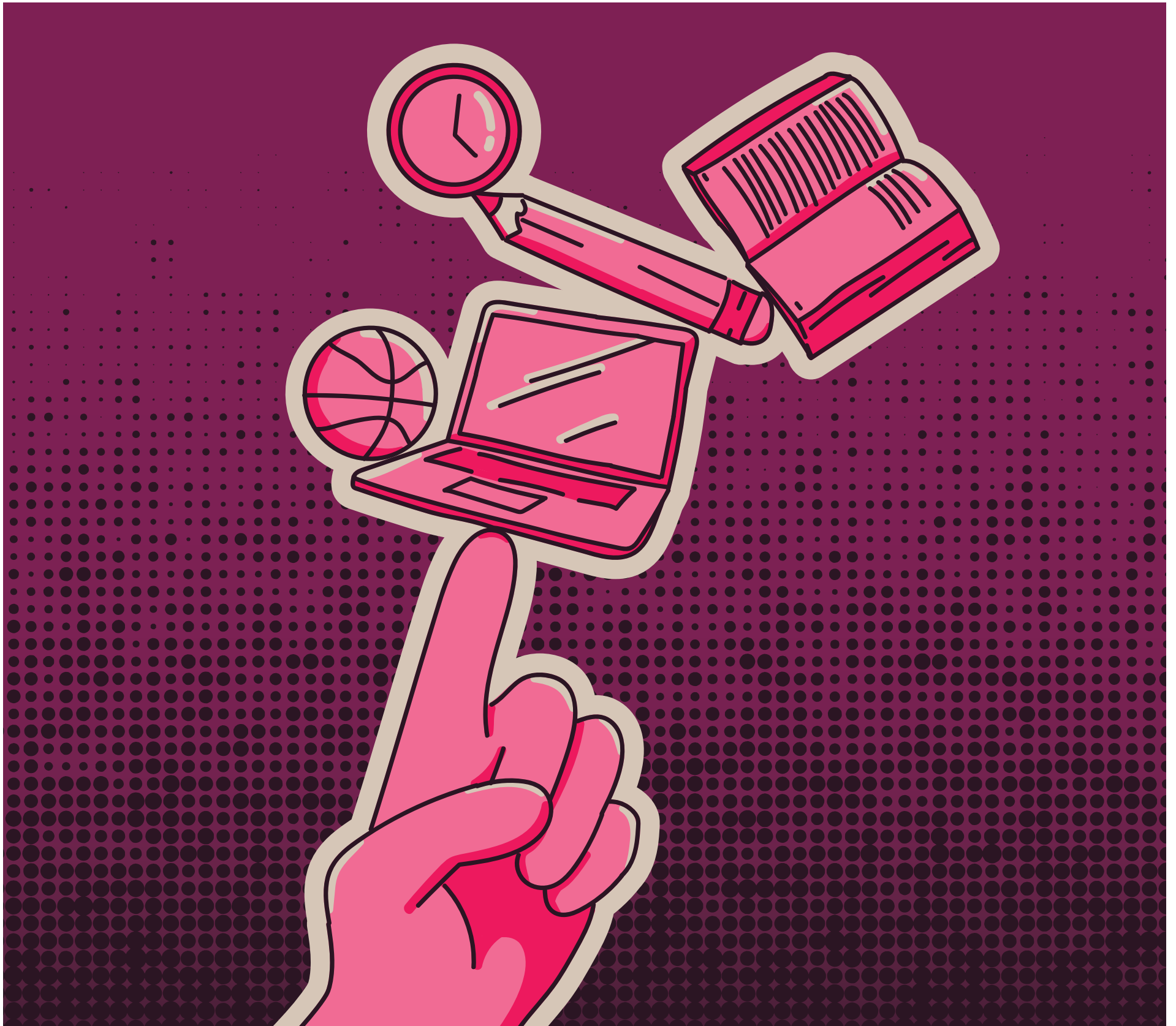
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Postponing the grind

Students discuss their decisions to not work while attending college



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

Many college students enthusiastically pursue their degrees in preparation for the workforce, but they aren't rushing to go to work just yet.

College students have a wide range of experiences as they pursue their education and prepare to enter the workforce. While some choose to work while attending school, others prefer to focus on other commitments for the time being.

Mathematics education junior Mason Brook reflected on his decision not to work while pursuing his degree.

"My reason for not working is actually because I'm very bad at managing my time," Brook said. "But also, it is, in

a sense, a safety net, so I can actually get things done. I do have a lot of other side commitments I like to do that are with friends, and also RSOs as well."

On top of class work, many students are also dedicating their time to student organizations, hobbies and making memories in college before they enter the workforce.

Brook also discussed how setting goals has helped him begin to balance college with other commitments.

"I'm not really a planner of minutia, but I do like to set goals, and actually taking time with those goals and going, 'okay, how does what I'm doing right now actually help with that?' And when I see that, it is actually very helpful and important," Brook said.

Additionally, Brooks contemplated what it actually means to have balance, noting the importance of acknowledging where each decision will lead.

"I think to have balance in your life means that the things that you do actually make sense for what you want to do in life, but also that what you're doing fits into your schedule," Brook said.

Like Brook, many other students have opted to focus on their studies and experiences rather than jump into the workforce immediately.

Construction management sophomore Dylan Wildfong explained why he has chosen not to work while attending college.

"Mostly because of the dif-

ferent RSOs I'm a part of; I'm part of three different RSOs," Wildfong said. "Plus with my program focusing mostly on academics and then extracurriculars is definitely something I've been focusing a lot of my mind on," Wildfong said.

Additionally, Wildfong described his system for balancing his college work with other commitments, describing a four-quadrant method he uses to make decisions.

"A lot of it comes down to sacrifice, especially with being part of so many RSOs," Wildfong said. "And I like to have a four-bracket system, as what is immediate and necessary, what is immediate but not necessary, what is necessary but not immediate and neither."

By using this system, Wildfong is able to prioritize what needs to be done and achieve balance in his life.

Other students choose not to work because they don't feel like their schedules are predictable enough.

Dental hygiene sophomore Brena Rondo chooses not to work for a more practical reason.

"I would like to work, but I go home so often, and then I also am full-time with classes, and then I also run a club softball," Rondo said.

Having a full class load makes many students feel they don't have time to commit to work, especially when combined with their extracurriculars.

Rondo also mentioned that students can keep their pri-

orities straight and maintain a good balance despite busy schedules.

"I guess beginning of the week, trying to prioritize what's important, getting that stuff done first, and then seeing if at the end of the week your not prioritized items can fit in your schedule," Rondo said.

Choosing not to work allows many students to fully enjoy their college experience and focus on their education before entering the workforce, and helps them to maintain a healthy balance with their various commitments.

Nearing the finish

Professors reflect on the importance of the few remaining weeks



Photo courtesy of Amela O'Gorman

Amela O'Gorman is one of many faculty members supporting students throughout their journey.

Tate Zellman
Culture Reporter

With now less than a month remaining in the semester, professors know that

helping students finish strong is what's most important.

The end of the semester can be just as stressful for professors as it is for students. Professors can

become stressed, but they want to ensure that students achieve academic success and cross the finish line.

Even though all aspects of the semester are important

to students and professors in their own way, many professors view the end as the most important.

Amela O'Gorman, an assistant professor in marketing,

emphasized the importance of these final few weeks.

"This is an important time for everyone, especially students," O'Gorman said. "Staying engaged and supportive right now can make a big difference in how students finish the semester. It's a great time to help them see how much they've learned and how close they are to reaching their goals."

As a Ferris alumna, O'Gorman has found her teaching career at Ferris to be very meaningful.

"I'm actually an alum of the same program I now teach in," O'Gorman said. "It's been a full-circle moment for me. Ferris has opened a lot of doors in my life, so coming back as a faculty member and having the opportunity to do the same for current students is really rewarding."

Professors reflect on the times when teaching was at its hardest, realizing that the rewards at the end are the most significant.

Elisabeth Spinner, an assistant professor in the English, literature and world languages department, talked about a time when the circumstances in which she taught posed significant challenges, but she also reflected on what these challenges taught her.

"One of the hardest times of my teaching career, and probably one many people can relate to, was the pandemic," Spinner said. "I was teaching, taking graduate classes and my own kids were starting school when COVID-19 first began to spread. I experienced teaching from many perspectives, and one thing that it taught me was the power of relationships and letting people know you care. It was an isolating time, and a simple email or phone call made a big difference. Teaching of-

fers a powerful place to build these connections, and I really value it."

Even in her first year teaching at Ferris, Spinner has found it to be a teaching experience she'll remember for the rest of her career.

"A teaching experience that sticks out to me has been an ongoing one," Spinner said. "I have been continually impressed and inspired by the class discussions students have. There have been multiple times I leave class inspired by the ideas students bring to the class and the conversations they have. It is such a rewarding part of teaching and such a privilege to work with students here."

What professors consistently observe is that a student's life consists of more than just school and can be unpredictable in what other hard things are going on in a student's life.

Sarah Lucas, an assistant professor of philosophy and religions, understands that reaching out to students when times are hard can give them a greater chance of succeeding.

"It can always be challenging when students are disengaged or are struggling with the material in my courses," Lucas said. "But in these difficult moments, I find it the most important to reach out to these students and see what I can do to better support them. Recognizing that there is more to a student's life than just the classroom is so important in helping students succeed."

Students always have the option to reach out to their professors in times of need and may even be surprised by how much their professors care. It can be the start of students realizing that receiving help can play a role in finishing strong.

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Opinions

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The Ferris State Torch is published on 27 Wednesdays throughout the academic year. This student-run newspaper is printed by The Pioneer Group.

Our Location:
Arts and Science Commons 1016
820 Campus Drive
Ferris State University
Big Rapids, MI 49307

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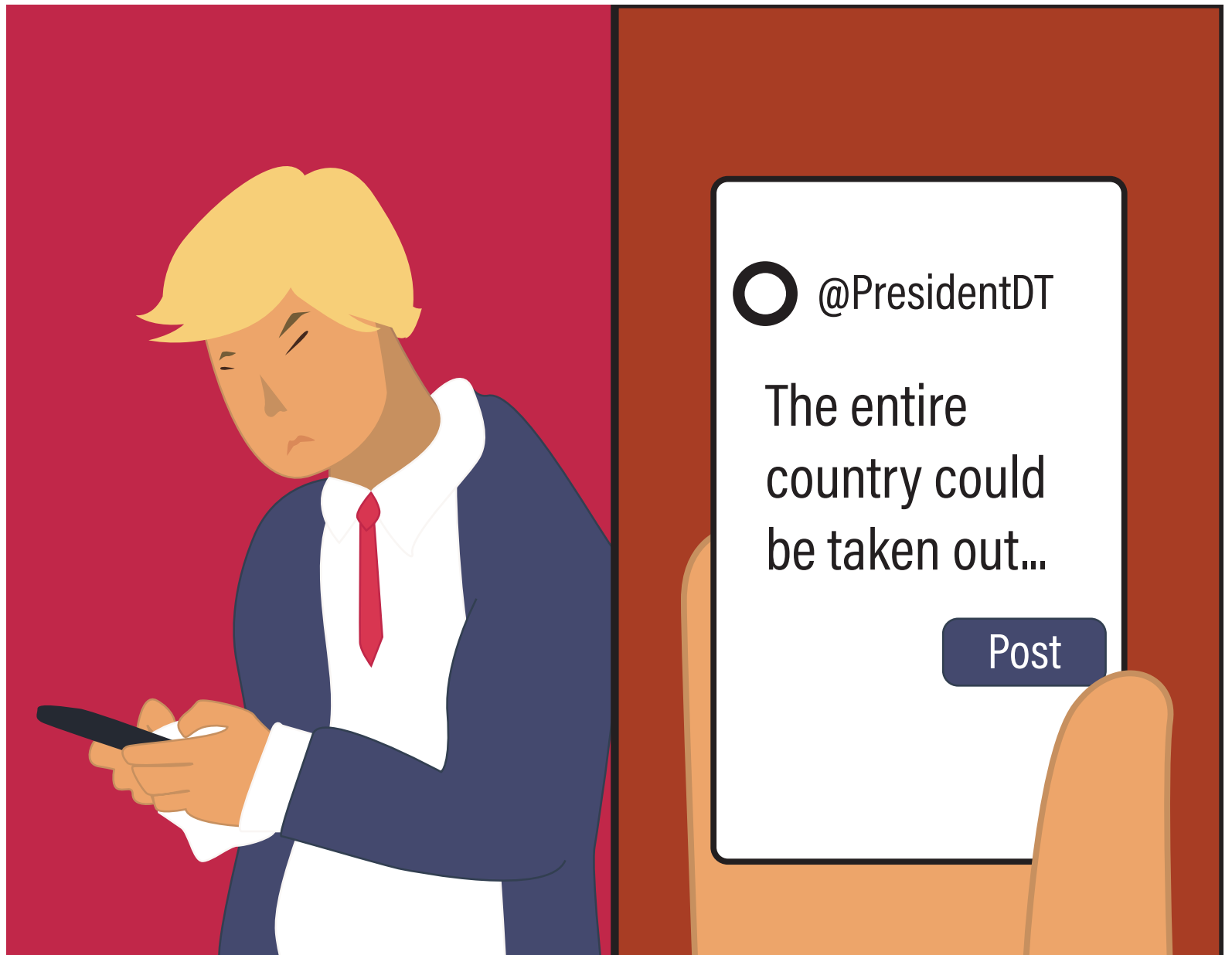
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EDITOR'S COLUMN: More than just words

When Presidential words risk global consequences



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

I never thought I would see the day when the President of the United States was able to fire off a string of harmful messages on social media, seemingly without consequence.

President Donald Trump has yet again taken the spotlight after an embarrassing attempt to threaten Iran, to force the country to open the Strait of Hormuz, which is where one-fifth of the world's petroleum supply comes from. For the past month, the Strait has remained closed due to the ongoing U.S. and Israeli conflict with Iran.

As a way to push back against the U.S. and Israel, Iran restricted access to the Strait, limiting the amount of traffic that has been flowing through the waters.

Last week, Trump shared a string of Truth Social posts, a platform he owns where the

Trump Media and Technology Group regulates all content posted to the site. It's worth noting that he started this platform after he was banned from Twitter, now X, and still uses it to this day, so that his posts aren't taken down, despite being reinstated to X in 2022.

His posts about the ongoing situation in Iran have received a ton of attention and criticism from people all over the world and I think it is for good reason.

He started by threatening the Iranian infrastructure due to the ongoing conflict his administration has escalated in the Middle East. On April 5, which was Easter Sunday, Trump shared this lovely message with the world.

"Tuesday will be Power Plant Day, and Bridge Day, all wrapped up in one, in Iran. There will be nothing like it!!! Open the F***in' Strait, you crazy bastards, or you'll be living in Hell - JUST WATCH!

Praise be to Allah," Trump said in his post.

I want to mention that if you think this is okay or deem these threats as necessary, then you're validating our President threatening literal war crimes. Threatening a civilization's infrastructure, especially when it is indispensable to the survival of civilians, is considered a war crime under international humanitarian law.

The threats didn't stop here, though, as Trump couldn't help but send off more threats against the nation. This time, threatening the entire population of Iran directly.

"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want this to happen, but it probably will," Trump posted on April 7, which was directly targeting Iran if they didn't reopen the Strait by his deadline of 8 p.m. the same day.

Just hours before his

self-imposed deadline, Trump appeared to walk back the immediate escalation, as reports emerged of a temporary ceasefire agreement between the U.S. and Iran. While the pause did prevent immediate military action, it felt like it really did little to erase the significance of the threats he made.

In my mind, this kind of leadership should concern everyone. The President of the U.S. is not just another voice on social media, as they are a representative of our country on a global stage.

They have the power to influence the idea of peace or push us closer to conflict. Choosing to post threats rather than pursuing measured diplomacy sends a message to people that escalation is acceptable and restraint is optional.

At a time when tensions are already high, engaging in what feels like a reckless and unnecessary conflict and

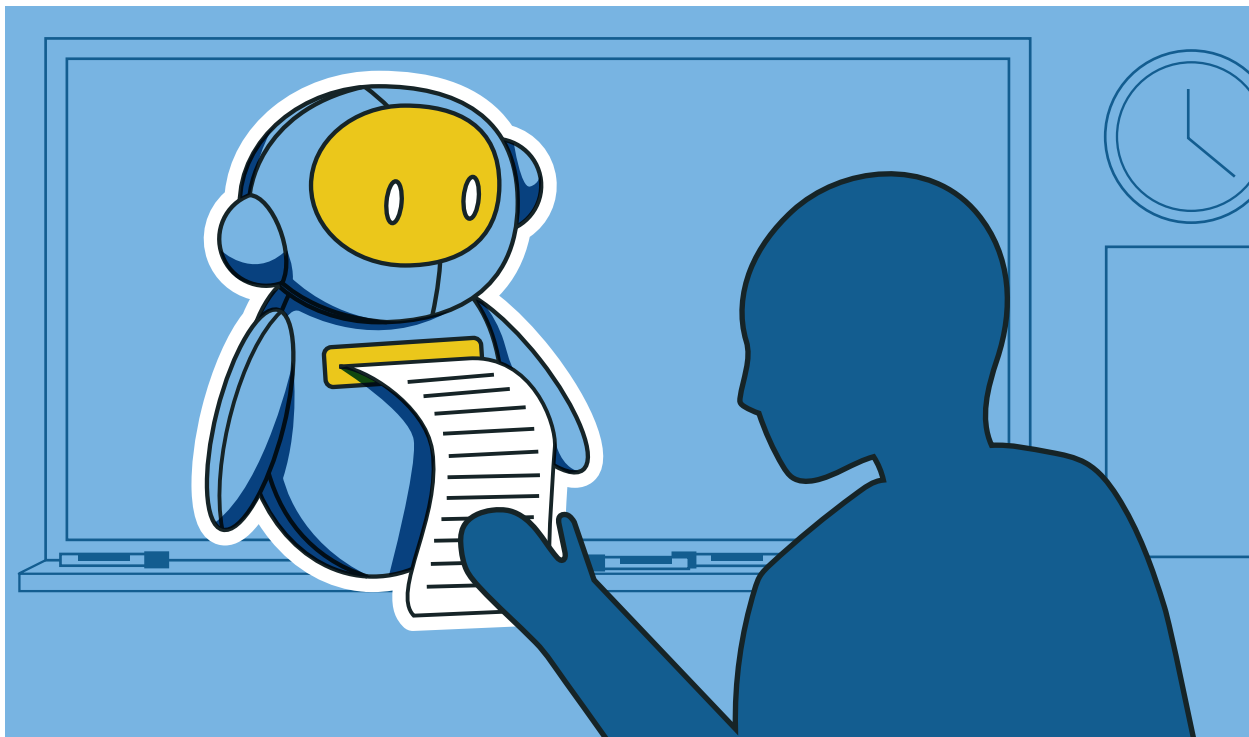
broadcasting those threats online for the world to see is not a strength. It's instability. And it raises a serious question: Is this really what presidential leadership is supposed to look like?

I am not by any means trying to convince anyone to pick a side on this matter. Everyone is entitled to their own beliefs, and oftentimes, some aren't ready to let go of those things. What I really want people to take away, regardless of politics, is that this kind of behavior is not what our leadership should look like.

The role of the President, especially someone like Trump, should be grounded in responsibility and restraint. They should also have a commitment to stability and ensuring conflicts are resolved, not public threats that risk pushing the world further toward chaos.

No AI usage

AI should not be used to create lesson plans



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Tate Zellman
Culture Reporter

As I strive to become an English teacher, I've learned that using Artificial Intelligence, or AI, to create lesson plans is something I will never do.

As we become more technologically advanced as a society, AI continues to play a significant role in the lives

of younger individuals, especially when in the educational field. Students can look at AI as a reliable tool because of the information it contains and can access.

Despite what students may think, it is the main source that students need to avoid if they want to achieve academic success.

There are many reasons why I don't plan to use AI

when I develop lesson plans.

First off, I would be setting a bad example if I used AI when creating something for my students. Teachers encourage students not to use AI when doing their essays and other schoolwork. So if students see me using AI, then they'll think it's okay to use. If I use AI to teach and they use AI to do their work, what is the point?

Secondly, everything I create for my future students, whether a lesson plan or assignment, needs to come directly from me. If I use AI to help me make something, it's not coming from me. It's coming from an unreliable source. Everything I make digitally should not involve AI usage.

A third reason is that using AI to help me with my job is not me doing my job. It's

called being lazy. With how important teaching is, I can't afford to use something unreliable to help my students succeed. Plus, as a teacher, I'm always supposed to be learning myself and AI will take that away from me.

If a teacher uses AI for lesson plans or anything school-related, then it shows they have a lack of care for their educational profession and their students. That is a bad look for teachers, considering how important it is to have good teachers.

It would be very dumb if I found out a teacher actually used AI to make a lesson plan. Lesson plans are for teachers to make on their own. It's up to them to decide how they want to teach their material throughout a singular day, a full week and so on. Not AI's. In fact, lesson plan topics are better developed and thought out by people in comparison to AI.

It's scary times we live in, with how much technology students are exposed to. AI has now become a thing that they see on a daily basis and it is becoming more advanced to the point where students find it believable and what they read and see is factual.

The more I've learned

about my future profession, the more I've learned about how unreliable AI truly is. It does not give out essential information. It tries to take the easy route, explaining things quickly and a person can explain things more in depth than AI.

These reasons should demonstrate why AI should not be included in the educational field. There could be teachers out there now who are using AI to make their jobs easier and students probably don't realize it. I don't want to become one of those teachers.

I have never cared more about a profession than I have since I started majoring in English Education. I want to do all I can to be a great teacher and positively impact the lives of the future generation, and I hope to do all of this without the use of AI.

When I become a teacher, I hope I can show my students why AI is not a reliable source.

I hope I can help them achieve greatness without AI. I hope they can realize the dangers surrounding AI and don't use it in order to succeed both academically and personally.

The magic of attending concerts

Going to a concert is about more than music



Photo courtesy of Bella Brazeau

Brazeau attending a Tate McRae concert in Detroit.

Bella Brazeau
Freelance Reporter

You may think that you are going to just a concert, you may not think about the whole concert experience.

You've bought your ticket, filled with excitement but what really is the point?

Part of why people are con-

cert goers is well beyond the music itself, as it's something more. Concerts aren't always just about music. It's the fans creating a culture with dressing up like the artist or creating an atmosphere that is unique and welcoming for others.

There's the idea of a changing culture around

concerts, and the acts of girlhood that come of it, too with taking pictures in front of the stage with your outfits and friends. Sometimes people sing the artist's songs together while in line to get into the venue or getting their merchandise.

The buildup of anticipation from aspects like the set with

intros, light shows and the opener are all part of what makes attending concerts so enjoyable. This is all before the show even really starts. This is what can make a concert experience so special, but there are a number of other things as well.

Moments that feel like there is a genuine connec-

tion between the artist and audience can make or break a concert. They are performers. Those that can truly bring the fans into the music, into the environment being created, are what make concerts special.

Watching a sea of fans hold up their hands and phones together during slower songs sends chills down my spine, and that feeling is what is so unique about concerts. The art can be brought to life in such beautiful ways. I can only describe it as a moment of awe.

The atmosphere that some performers are able to create around their concerts is so carefree, just a space for fans to sing along to some of their favorite songs. I believe that concerts can also be a great way to like escape from reality and life drama too, even if it's only for a few hours.

That's a few hours of fun and not stressing out and is just enough time to escape reality and focus on the moment, like singing and dancing the night away.

Concerts can make us feel many different emotions. If the singer is performing a slower song, it can just feel so amazing and so satisfying.

I've had so many moments of realization, like 'wow, I can't believe I'm seeing Tate McRae, I can't believe it'. It was such an incredible experience.

Even going to a concert alone can be rewarding, because it's an amazing opportunity to make friends and connections with people that you know you have at least one shared interest with. It sometimes starts off as simply as giving or receiving a compliment on your outfit, or asking for your picture to be taken. You'll always be able to find someone you can relate to.

These are just a few of the reasons why I believe that concerts are so worth attending. It's not just about going to a concert, it's the whole experience that goes into the show and the people you're surrounded by.

They definitely have the ability to be a core memory. You're not just going because you scored a ticket, but you are also looking forward for the memories you will be making that are almost impossible to forget.

Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

Tennis season begins to wrap up Bulldogs host Warriors ahead of GLIAC Tournament



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

Sophomore Yara Madi and freshman Ainzley Zulueta prepare for their match against Purdue Northwest on April 11.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

Ferris State tennis will host Wayne State on Saturday, April 18, as the Bulldogs welcome the Warriors to Big Rapids for the final matches of the regular season.

With the postseason right around the corner, the men's and women's teams look to focus on the match ahead and not worry about the playoffs just yet.

Head coach Mark Doren is looking ahead to the match against the Warriors.

"We are actually very excited for this weekend and not just because we can't look past this weekend and think about Wayne, but we are most likely playing outside, which will prepare us for the

Wayne match," Doren said. "Our match on Saturday is senior day for our six total seniors, so we need to stay very focused on such an important day for the team. Senior day can be emotional."

Women

Ferris State (10-6, 4-1 in GLIAC) enters the final week-end of the regular season with a 2-0 record in April, beating Michigan Tech 5-2 and Roosevelt 6-1. The Bulldogs' only conference loss was against Grand Valley State, where they fell 7-0.

In the last five years, Ferris State has been 2-3 in the final regular-season match before the playoffs, beating Michigan Tech in 2021 and Lake Superior State in 2023.

Junior Katherine Earnest loves the team chemistry the

women have coming into the match.

"It is really exciting," Earnest said. "Everyone has been playing very well and the energy is unmatched. The team chemistry is also amazing which helps a lot on the court. We are all super excited for this week and especially Saturday to celebrate our seniors."

The women have two seniors who will be celebrated on the team. Ana Sofia Hernandez Ferrer and her sister Maria Fernanda Hernandez Ferrer.

Wayne State (6-6, 3-1 in GLIAC) enters with a three-match win streak, including conference wins against Michigan Tech and Purdue Northwest. The Warriors beat the Huskies 7-0 and the

Pride 6-1. Before they play the Bulldogs, Wayne State heads to Allendale to face off with Grand Valley State.

Men

The Bulldogs (13-3, 4-0 in GLIAC) are on a four-match win streak, all against conference opponents. Ferris State beat Davenport and Roosevelt by a score of 7-0, Michigan Tech 6-1 and Grand Valley 5-2. Ferris is 2-0 in April after beating Michigan Tech and Roosevelt.

Dating back to the last five years, Ferris State is 3-2 in the last match before the playoffs begin, both times losing to Wayne State in 2022 and 2025.

Sophomore Adrian Catahan believes the team is on a roll heading into the final weekend, especially after

some big wins.

"I feel very confident in our guys," Catahan said. "Our team is very deep, and after beating GVSU and Davenport over the weekend makes us believe that we are a very strong team. We are really looking forward to our last month because I know, especially our seniors, are playing their last dual matches, so they are going to give it everything they've got, and so will the other players. The road to nationals and the GLIAC tournament starts here and everyone is ready to compete."

The men's team has three seniors this year in Felipe Iser, Erik Kovacs and Kacper Pasielak.

The Warriors (11-7, 3-0 in GLIAC) come into the weekend on a two-match win

streak and are 2-1 in the month of April, falling 4-2 against the University of Indianapolis before beating Michigan Tech 7-0 and Purdue Northwest 6-1. Same as the women, Wayne State will head to Allendale to play Grand Valley the day before they play Ferris on Friday, April 17.

Ferris State will host Wayne State on Saturday, April 18, at the Racquet and Fitness Center in Big Rapids. The women will play at 10 a.m. and the men will follow at 2 p.m. This is the last match of the regular season before the GLIAC Tournament starts on Thursday, April 23, in Midland.

Bigger leagues come calling

Multiple hockey players sign with ECHL and AHL



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

Forward Caden Brown fights for the puck with a Michigan Tech defender during on Dec. 12.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After a tough start to the new era of Bulldog hockey, the team looks ahead to the offseason as players begin to transfer and new players are being recruited.

Head coach Brett Riley spoke about his plan for the offseason and his plan for the 2026-27 season.

"We're really excited about this highly ranked freshman class and what these young men will bring to our program," Riley said. "While we will utilize the transfer portal to complement our roster, this build will start with our incoming freshmen and the natural development process within our program."

So far, the Bulldogs have lost nine different players to the ECHL and AHL. Here are the players who have signed so far.

Gavin Best - Wichita Thunder (ECHL)

The Michigan State transfer has had two strong seasons with the Bulldogs. In those seasons, the forward

had 22 goals and 23 assists, which was good for 26 total points. The best of his two years in the crimson and gold came in 2025-26, where Best had 12 goals, which was second on the team. He also recorded 14 assists and 26 total points, both of which led the Bulldogs. On March 13, it was announced that Best had signed with the Wichita Thunder

Tyler Schleppe - Kansas City Mavericks (ECHL)

After four years and 126 games as a Bulldog, forward Tyler Schleppe has accomplished a lot in his time with the Bulldogs. In his four years at Ferris, Schleppe had 27 goals, 32 assists and 59 total points. His best performances this season were during the games on Feb. 13 and 14 against Northern Michigan. Schleppe had two goals in each game. On March 12, it was announced that Schleppe had signed with the Kansas City Mavericks.

John Lundy - Iowa Hartlanders (ECHL)

After three years with the

American International Yellowjackets, forward John Lundy transferred to Ferris before the 2025-26 season. Lundy made an impact in his lone season as a Bulldog, having five goals, six assists and 11 points this past season. On April 7, it was announced that Lundy was signing with the Iowa Hartlanders.

Valtteri Piironen - Coachella Valley Firebirds (AHL)

The defenseman from Pyhäselkä, Finland, transferred to the Bulldogs after it was announced that his head coach at Long Island, Brett Riley, was hired as the coach at Ferris State. Piironen finished the 2025-26 season with one goal, seven assists and eight total points, with his strongest game coming in a 5-2 victory over Lake Superior State. In that game, he recorded four assists. Piironen signed with the Coachella Valley Firebirds on April 1.

Max Dukovac - Worcester Railers (ECHL)

With three years at Miami of Ohio under his belt,

forward Max Dukovac transferred to Ferris State before the 2025-26 season. In his one season in the crimson and gold, Dukovac had six goals, five assists and 11 total points. Dukovac was the first player announced to be signing with an ECHL squad. It was announced on March 12 that Dukovac was signing with the Worcester Railers.

Xavier Jean-Louis - Worcester Railers (ECHL)

The defenseman from Montreal played two seasons with the Bulldogs, transferring from Alaska-Fairbanks in 2024-25. Jean-Louis was a rotational player in his first

season with the Bulldogs in 2024-25. In the following season, Jean-Louis saw more opportunities, scoring five goals and 10 assists, while having 15 total points. It was announced on March 12 that Jean-Louis signed with the Worcester Railers, joining his Bulldog teammate Dukovac.

Caden Brown - Greensboro Gargoyles (ECHL)

After two years with the Wisconsin Badgers and another two with the Ohio State Buckeyes, forward Caden Brown transferred to Ferris State before the 2025-26 season. Brown had five goals, eight assists

and 13 total points with the Bulldogs. His most impactful series came against Northern Michigan on Feb. 13 and 14, where he had one goal and two assists. On April 10, it was announced that Brown was signing with the Greensboro Gargoyles.

Gavin Garland - Ferris State University

The Bulldogs have signed one player so far, this being forward Gavin Garland, being signed on April 1 from the Tri-City Americans of the WHL. In his two years and 122 games with the Americans, Garland had 37 goals, 52 assists and 89 total points.

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Bulldogs look to extend win streak

Ferris softball takes on Wayne State and Saginaw Valley



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

Junior outfielder Emma Gillard hits a fly ball against Roosevelt on April 3.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

After sweeping Grand Valley in two close games, the Ferris State softball team looks to extend their winning streak when they take on the Wayne State Warriors and Saginaw Valley State Cardinals.

The Bulldogs got their rematch against the Lakers, taking them down in game one by a score of 6-5. This

was thanks to a 3-4 and three RBI day at the plate from junior outfielder Emma Gillard, who had a solo home run and a two-run single.

While in game two, the Bulldogs bested the Lakers by a score of 7-5, where Gillard had another strong game. She went 2-4 with four RBIs. This included a three-run home run in the bottom of the sixth inning that gave the Bulldogs a 7-4 lead.

Freshman outfielder Ava

Gardner had a 2-4 day, including a solo home run herself. Earlier this week, the National Fastpitch Coaches Association named Gardner to the Division II Player of the Year Watch List. Gardner's hitting .374 on the year with 43 hits, 24 RBI's, nine doubles and six home runs.

Head coach Jake Schumann spoke about the production Gardner has had in her freshman season.

"Ava [Gardner] had al-

ready positioned herself as one of the best hitters in the league," Schumann said. "She carries herself like an upper-classman and thus has become a team leader. She is enjoying a good year and taking advantage of hitting behind Kozlowski and another freshman that is having a great year in Emma Herremans."

The Bulldogs (23-16, 9-5 in GLIAC) look to take on the Wayne State Warriors (14-

21, 6-9 in GLIAC).

Ferris looks to take advantage of the struggling Warriors pitching staff, as in their last five games the Bulldogs have averaged 8.2 runs per game. The Warriors, in their last five games, have allowed 7.4 runs per game.

Herremans spoke about the team's offensive breakout during these past games.

"I believe that getting back to our approach at the plate is one of the big reasons to

what led to our offensive explosion," Herremans said. "We plan to work hard at practice this week and dominate this weekend."

Herremans is one of the players who will look to make a statement against the Warriors' pitching staff. In 39 games, Herremans has a .324 average, a .419 slugging, six extra base hits, one home run and 20 RBIs while walking 28 times, which is second in the GLIAC and only striking out 13 times.

The Warriors' pitching staff has a combined 4.62 ERA, a 1.52 WHIP and a .298 average against, while allowing the most home runs in the GLIAC with 25.

Ferris will then travel north to take on the first-place Saginaw Valley State Cardinals (24-11, 13-2 in GLIAC).

The Cardinals come into the game 4-1 in their last five games, with the one loss coming against Wisconsin Parkside by a score of 1-0. In those five games, the Cardinals averaged 4.8 runs per game, while only allowing two runs in those games.

The Bulldogs pitching will look to stifle one of the better offenses in the GLIAC, with one of the standout pitchers for the Bulldogs being junior Cecelia Bell. Bell has started 16 games this year, pitching to a 3.36 ERA, a 1.43 WHIP, while having a team-leading 60 strikeouts.

The Ferris State Bulldogs softball team will travel to Detroit to take on the Wayne State Warriors on April 18, at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Before heading north the following day to take on the Saginaw Valley State Cardinals at noon and again at 2 p.m.

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