



# The Ferris State Torch

95 YEARS OF ILLUMINATING THE TRUTH

Big Rapids, Michigan

Week of April 22, - 29, 2026

www.fsutorch.com

## Giving back, one yard at a time

### Students assist members of the Big Rapids community as part of The Big Event



Photo courtesy of Alpha Psi Omega

Members of Alpha Psi Omega volunteer to help clean up yards in Big Rapids on Saturday, April 18.

**Gannon Thomas**  
News Reporter

On April 18, more than 100 Ferris Students spread out across Big Rapids, helping clean yards for those around the community who needed a little extra assistance.

The Big Event is an annual student-led community service initiative organized by the Ferris Student Government Association. Volunteers from various groups came together to assist residents of Big Rapids with their spring lawn cleanup.

55 houses in the community received these cleanup efforts, which ranged from tasks such as raking and general yard cleanup to washing

windows.

Director of Philanthropy for the Student Government Association, Ellie Holka, highlighted the wide range of volunteers involved in the event.

"The groups involved this year are the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, Real Life, Delta Zeta, Pre-Dental Association, Kappa Psi, Dawg Pound, You Beautiful Black Women, Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honor Society, Sigma Lambda Gamma, Outdoor Club and AWS." Holka Said.

Honors groups and RSOs weren't the only ones helping out, as there were a number of SGA and individual volunteers.

These volunteers worked together throughout the day

to complete projects for residents who might not otherwise have been able to do so. For many homeowners, this little bit of help goes a long way, especially when preparing their yard for the spring and summer seasons.

This event was an opportunity for many Ferris students to give back to the community they temporarily call home.

President of APO at Ferris State, Branden Tippy, explained his organization's role in the event and why student involvement is so important in events like this.

"I think students should get more involved in events like this," Tippy said. "Sometimes people want to help each other out, but it's hard

to know where to start. Organized events like this make it easy to do something nice for others."

Events like this are integral in growing the bond between the Big Rapids community and the students of Ferris.

"It's a nice opportunity for RSOs to come together and do something nice for Big Rapids," Tippy said.

For many participants, The Big Event is more than just a few hours of hard work, and it's a chance for students to get to know and to help out the people who make up the Big Rapids community.

By working on homes in the community, students can see firsthand the impact they have made by volunteering.

One volunteer, Outdoor Club President and engineering technology sophomore Shane Walton, shared his insight on why he thinks volunteering is important for students.

"Everyone has a responsibility to help those around them and their local community," Walton said. "I think that if a student has the time and is able to help, they definitely should."

The variety of groups' involvement was crucial to the event's success. Without the volunteers from many different groups and backgrounds, the event wouldn't have been able to help so many in need homeowners from around the community.

Students not only completed regular yard tasks but also made connections and bonds with local residents.

Another volunteer APO member and criminal justice senior, Savanna Jones, talked about her interactions with local community members during The Big Event.

"It made me feel like the community has some really nice and friendly people," Jones said. "We cleaned four houses and everyone at each house was super nice and friendly, some even provided us with water or snacks, and one house even helped us as we cleaned, while making pleasant conversation as we did so."

This event helped bridge the gap between students and residents.

"We were even able to learn some information about some of the residents who live at the houses we visited, about some of their lives and experiences," Jones said.

As The Big Event continues each year, its goal remains the same by bringing students and the Big Rapids community together through service.

Holka explains the SGA's future plans for The Big Event.

"Our goal is to continue growing this event each year. Student Government has brought this event back not too long ago, and we want to expand our numbers and be as successful as we can with each year we continue on with the event," Holka said. "As well as reaching more residents who could benefit from assistance. This event really depends on the students here at Ferris."

The Big Event was more than just a chance for students to get out and help the community, as it offered a chance to display the connection and the lasting impact of a community coming together.

## News

Heart-to-Heart returns to Ferris for its twentieth year. Read more about the Sport Communications fundraiser on **PG. 2**

## Culture

Bradley Lardie has just been elected as the new student body president. Visit culture to read about his upcoming plans. **PG. 6**

## Opinions

Ferris State Torch Editor in Chief and Opinions Editor say farewell to the Torch and their sections. **PG. 8 - 9**

## Sports

New men's basketball head coach Brooks Miller is introduced to Ferris, read about what he brings to the table for the Bulldogs **PG. 10**



# News

Harmony Goodman | Interim News Editor | goodmah2@ferris.edu

## Michigan

Nolan Matthews  
Sports Editor

Hamtramck- A gas station clerk helped save a 16-year-old Detroit girl who entered his store and mouthed the word “help” after a man kidnapped the girl at gunpoint on her way to school last week. Wayne County Prosecutor’s office on Thursday charged the suspect, Donald James Joseph Arthur Fields, a 48-year-old man from Hamtramck. He was charged with two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, one count of kidnapping, one count of possession of a firearm by a prohibited person, and one count of felonious assault, Chief Hussein Farhat of the Hamtramck Police Department said during a news conference.

## National

Nolan Matthews  
Sports Editor

Iowa City, Iowa- A shooting has occurred during a fight in a nightlife district near the University of Iowa campus, which wounded five people early Sunday, including three students, police and university officials said. The victims were transported to hospitals for gunshot wounds; one person was in critical condition, while the other four are stable, Iowa City Police said. While no arrests have been made as of yet, police released photos of groups of people who were identified as persons of interest.

## Global

Nolan Matthews  
Sports Editor

Officials in Japan have warned of an increased risk of a “huge” earthquake in the next week after a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck off the north-east coast. This triggered an evacuation order and warnings of 10-foot tsunami waves. Thousands of people were told to leave coastal areas for higher ground after the quake in the waters off Iwate Prefecture, which is 330 miles north of Tokyo. The biggest waves measured 2.5 feet, but the meteorological agency in earthquake-prone Japan warned that quakes “causing even stronger shaking” could occur in the next week.

## Heart to Heart returns to Ferris

Sports communications students host twentieth annual basketball game



Photo courtesy of Abe Kraus

Students gather to cheer on Area Five Special Olympics players.

Nolan Matthews  
Sports Editor

For the twentieth year in a row, the Heart to Heart basketball game and fundraiser returned to Ferris State, in an effort to raise money for the Area Five Special Olympics.

The event is put on every year by sport communications students, where the game gives the Area Five Special Olympics players a chance to play with players from the men’s and women’s basketball teams.

Coordinator of sports communication, Dr. Jen Coburn, who helped put the event together, spoke about what the event did differently for this year’s event.

“Well, it’s just a phenomenal experience,” Coburn said. “What’s different about this year is our students really worked closely with the Special Olympics, and they helped to open the conversa-

tion for the organization. Our students stepped up and got the cheer team here to cheer on the players, and got the band here to play.”

The game saw various Ferris State basketball players who competed, such as sophomore Alyssa Wirth, sophomore Grace Lyons, junior Owen Hardy, senior Donovan Brown-Boyd, among many others. While the teams were coached by women’s basketball head coach Kurt Westendorp and former Bulldog guard Kadyn Blanchard.

Westendorp spoke about what it means to coach this event year after year.

“It’s amazing, seeing the joy on all the athletes’ faces, and not just the Special Olympics, but also the Bulldogs,” Westendorp said. “You know this is my fifth year doing this, and you see a lot of the same people year after year, and we all look forward to it. While seeing the support coming

from the community that our teams see every winter and to give the same support to the Special Olympians. It just shows what a special community we live in, that we all show up to support each other.”

The game was an offensive shootout, with Westendorp’s team taking a commanding lead for most of the first half, but Blanchard’s squad kept it close before going into halftime. During halftime, Ferris STUNT performed just before the game started back up, with Blanchard’s team taking the lead.

The second half was a back-and-forth affair, with Blanchard’s team down three going into the final seconds of the game. That’s when Wirth hit a game-tying three-point shot at the buzzer to send the game into its first overtime ever. Westendorp’s squad ended up winning in overtime, by a score of 70-67.

Director of Area Five Special Olympics Jennifer Knowles spoke about what the event means to the community and about possible future events.

“It is just a fun way to bring Ferris athletes and our athletes, along with the community, all together,” Knowles said. “It is just a lot of energy, and a great little fundraiser, it helps bring awareness to our athletes. I saw some girls around here shooting volleyballs around, so that could be a possibility in the future, but I would love to get more involvement with Ferris.”

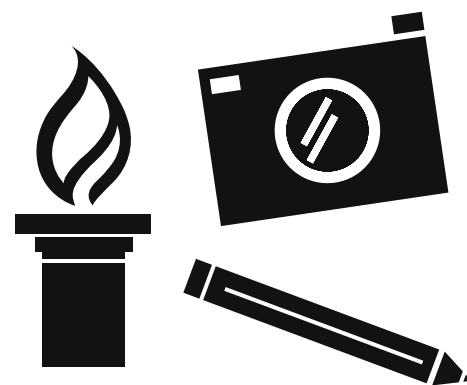
At the end of the game, students of the 489 sports communication class presented Knowles with a check for Area Five Special Olympics, which helped raise a total of \$2,388.90 for the group.

# 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)



**For more information and inquiries, reach out to  
Blase Gapinski @gapinsb@ferris.edu**

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A smartphone screen showing the Ferris State Torch social media profile on X (Twitter). The profile has 595 posts and 820 followers. The bio reads: "Ferris State Torch Newspaper Published by students, for students since 1930". Below the bio are buttons for "Following", "Message", and "Email". The phone's home screen is visible at the bottom, showing various app icons.

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# Turning donations into opportunities

AAUW book sale raises money for non-traditional student scholarships



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Community members and students pick through the AAUW used book sale.

Harmony Goodman  
Production Manager

The Big Rapids branch of the American Association of University Women hosted its annual used book sale on April 17 and 18 at the First United Methodist Church in Big Rapids.

At the sale, customers could choose from several different books of various genres from gardening, mystery, romance, maths, sciences and much more. The book sale focuses on gathering donations of used books to be sold at their annual sale. With the sales proceeds, the AAUW offers scholarships to non-traditional students for the 2027 spring semester.

AAUW defines non-traditional students as juniors and seniors who don't meet the

typical criteria for traditional students.

CO Vice President of AAUW membership and assistant professor of philosophy and religions, Dr. Sarah Lucas, expanded on what a non-traditional student is.

"A non-traditional student could be anyone who, for example, isn't the traditional college student age. It could mean they have kids, or even that they took a break from schooling to work," Lucas said.

Last year, they were able to give out three \$2,000 scholarships. While the annual fundraising amount fluctuates from year to year, the AAUW aims to offer three scholarships ranging from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

During the event last year, Lucas was on the chair of the

scholarship committee. This year, she focused more on getting volunteers to help set up and tear down the book sale.

"I help get the word out about the scholarship in the fall and collect applicants. I also helped send out the exciting news to our scholarship winners," Lucas said.

Following her role in helping organize the event last year, Lucas was nominated for an AAUW of Michigan award for 2026 Michigan Young Leader.

Lucas was nominated by one of the other members at AAUW, and she will attend a convention next weekend to receive the award.

Another member of the scholarship committee, Cathy Parker, reflected on the scholarship amounts and how

they have increased over the years.

"We used to give out \$1,000 years ago, but nowadays, with the cost of college, it didn't go far enough," Parker said. "At first, we went up to \$1,500, and last year we were able to offer up to \$2,000."

Outside of scholarships and its annual book sale event, AAUW hosts monthly meetings, as well as thematically planned events, such as hosting informational sessions for Domestic Violence Awareness Month with WISE in Oct.

President of AAUW, Leah Monger, went on to provide more details about the AAUW Big Rapids branch.

"The American Association of University Women is a national organization. There are

state affiliates and branch affiliates. This is our 80th year and this branch has been around for a good long time. We aren't the oldest branch in Michigan, but we are close," Monger said.

While the AAUW does host different events throughout the year, the used book sale is by far one of their highest attended events.

"We have thought about other fundraisers we might want to try, but we're just kind of afraid that it would be hard to make as much money in a two-day period as we do with this particular fundraiser," Monger said. "Plus, the community loves it. There are people who look forward to this every year. I've had people tell me it's the biggest book sale in town."

With the continuous suc-

cess of the annual book sale, the AAUW will continue to raise scholarship funds through this event in future years.

All of the events that AAUW hosts are geared towards being open to the public and anyone is welcome to stop by and participate. The AAUW also welcomes community members and students to join the branch.

Scholarships using this year's fundraised donations will be available after the start of the Fall 2026 semester. Scholarship funding is awarded via check from AAUW.

Students looking to join the Big Rapids AAUW branch can email Dr. Lucas at Sarah-Lucas@ferris.edu.

## ON THE RECORD

Blase Gapinski  
Editor in Chief

### If you see something, say something

April 16, 2:55 p.m. - A student reported to Ferris Public Safety an alleged domestic assault in a residence hall. A witness later corroborated a physical altercation, and the report was forwarded to the prosecutor for review of charges

### I shouldn't have drove, tell me how i'm getting home?

April 16, 2:46 a.m. - A driver was arrested for operating while intoxicated following a traffic stop for speeding. Ferris State Public Safety officers observed signs of impairment, and chemical testing confirmed intoxication.

### Keep your hands to yourself

April 18, 11:38 a.m. - A woman was arrested for domestic assault following a dispute at an off-campus location. Ferris State Public Safety officers assisted the Mecosta County Sheriff's Department at the scene.

# Culture

Grace Heethuis | Culture Editor | turnek29@ferris.edu

## Car show galore

Automotive management RSO hosts first-ever car show



Photo by Tate Zellman | Culture Reporter

Students and community members alike gather for the annual spring car show. This year, it was hosted by the Automotive Management students.

**Tate Zellman**  
Culture Reporter

On Saturday, April 18, the Automotive Management Student Organization hosted its first-ever car show, allowing students and local residents to showcase their cars and other vehicles to the community.

People from the Ferris and Big Rapids communities had the opportunity to explore numerous cars and watch various events featuring them. A total of 115 vehicles were presented at the car show, and it also included live music, sponsor booths and awards.

This was the first time the AMSO hosted a car show, as it was originally hosted by the Bulldog Motorsports Club.

Automotive management junior and president of the AMSO, Sean Janda, talked about the turnout, noting that it was the first year with them hosting.

"To have over 100 cars out here is fantastic," Janda said. "Also, to give recognition to the band. A bunch of sponsors are getting their name out there, and the rugby team is here for volunteer hours. It's not just helping out us. It's helping out a lot of clubs as well."

Janda also expressed the desire to host the car show again next year if given the opportunity.

"Next year, I hope we have better weather, honestly," Janda said. "We could change how we coordinate things or how our layout is, but I liked how we sponsored the car show through social media, so we could definitely do that again, but the main thing is just hopes for better weather."

Despite the cold temperatures, with people shivering and fighting the high wind speeds, the car show boasted a large turnout.

One of the events that

took place towards the end of the show was the awards ceremony. Awards included best of show, most rustiest, best import, best student build, best motorcycle, best offroad, best classic, best engine bay, best custom and best European.

Automotive engineering senior Kyle Gerstenberger, the travel planner for the AMSO, found the awards portion of the show to be his personal favorite.

"When we were doing awards, it was really cool to see everyone that was still around all gather together," Gerstenberger said. "I was looking around, and I was smiling to myself. The award ceremony was where it all hit me."

Gerstenberger also touched on the car show's importance to the Ferris community.

"It brings a lot of people together," Gerstenberger said. "It's a car show, so it's

geared towards car people, but you have family and friends that come out and spend time here. It brings people here, and hopefully, next year we can get some more people outside of Ferris, and hopefully we can spread the word about us and the event and have even more cars next year."

Another event at the show was a car bash, where anyone could take a hammer and smash a car.

Automotive engineering senior Sean Lamb was amongst many who participated in smashing a car. Lamb joined in the fun and has seen that college is more than just about achieving good grades.

"When I first was planning to go to college, I thought it was going to be a lot of education," Lamb said. "But what I've learned is that it's more about the connections with people. Getting an op-

portunity to smash a car is not something you see every day. It's really cool that Ferris is willing to do this and that there are a lot of people who are willing to bring their cars to the show."

The next event AMSO will host is a Test and Time event at the Mid Michigan Motorplex in Stanton. As of now, it is scheduled for Sunday, April 26. More information will be made available via the AMSO's Instagram.

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# Getting to know Bradley Lardie

## SGA president discusses future plans



Photo courtesy of Bradley Lardie

**Lardie looks forward to taking on a new role within the Student Government Association, and is hopeful for this next year.**

**Blase Gapinski**  
Editor in Chief

The Student Government Association at Ferris State announced that Bradley Lardie would take over as president for the 2026-27 academic year.

English Education junior Bradley Lardie has been a member of SGA for one year and plans to use this new position to serve as the voice between the student body and campus administrators.

**What do you hope to achieve throughout your presidency?**

Throughout my presidency, I want to make campus lively and fun again. I want to keep that feeling that you get when you come back to campus those first couple of weeks in the fall. I want to keep that and extend it throughout the school year, so I want to be able to host more events and get people connected to both student government, but also President Pink. While I was campaigning, I had a lot of people come up to me and they found out that student government is able to talk to

Dr. Pink and meet with him. What I gather is that a lot of the student body wants to meet with Dr. Pink, and they also want to have events that are at a timely time. I have had some people who are commuters be like, 'Oh yeah, these events are being hosted around like 7 or 8 p.m., and I am already home and live an hour away. I'm not going to come back for that.' So just maybe hosting those around more convenient times, but also some earlier ones, so that way we get a variety of people to make campus lively, and also just connect people with student government and Dr. Pink.

**Do you have any plans in mind already as you prepare for the next school year?**

Yeah, so again, just hosting a myriad of events. We started this tradition of sorts called the week of professionalism that we do around October time. We have a week where we do different events, like this year, we did an elevator pitch, where you pitch yourself to a panel of judges and they score you based on a certain criteria. People can win some prizes

from that, and we also did a professional bingo, and kind of bringing that back because it had a good reception. Obviously, pancakes with the president. People love that, and I know Dr. Pink loves that. This coming year, for The Big Event, I hope to crack 1000 volunteers again. That's something we haven't been able to do since before COVID,[the pandemic], so that is my goal to impact as much as the Big Rapids area as possible.

**What inspired you to run for this position?**

It was one of those things where not a lot of people were willing to step up for it. It came time for the presidential elections to start coming up, and no one was really stepping up for it, so Maddy Nunn, who is my vice president, we kind of looked at each other and thought we should just do it. We are both very passionate about the school, and we are both very involved in different clubs and on campus jobs, so we see everyday students day in and day out. I felt that we are best to see these kinds of students and help them

out. So what really kind of inspired me is just the feeling that this is something that I am passionate about and something I could be good at.

**Are there any challenges you anticipate facing while taking over this position?**

We have a lot of people graduating and stepping down, so just making sure that we're filling the cabinet with people who are passionate and as passionate as we are about this. It takes a lot of effort to do these events that we're putting on. Especially if we want to host The Big Event on the scale that I hope to. Making sure that all nine members are willing to put in as much as they can into it. Also, just filling back up the general assembly with people. We have a lot of general assembly members also graduating this year, so just getting students in. We're starting to talk to deans of different colleges across campus, hoping to get into their FSUS classes to try and get some freshmen involved with student government, so that they can be there for a couple of years, maybe even four full years.

**Do you have any plans for the current student government funds?**

So we're kind of on the down low right now. We just finished The Big Event, and that was one of our biggest things. The next thing we have planned is our final meeting, end-of-the-year banquet, and the inauguration. We also have SGA stoles, so that we could give away to our seniors and those who are walking during graduation. That is where our current money is going. In terms of next year, we're going to get roughly \$16,000. It all depends; every student pays \$1.50 into student government as a part of their tuition. So in the fall, we'll get roughly \$16,000 from that. That money is going to go towards those previous events I had mentioned, as well as the cabinet scholarships. Cabinet members do get scholarships because we put in a lot of work into these kinds of things, taking up time from our own time of the day to do this. Including this interview, this is the fourth hour I've already put into this day for student government stuff.

In terms of other things to do with the money, this year, we have talked about putting massage chairs into the DEC; however, we have been having a little bit of trouble finding ones that aren't going to totally break our bank. There used to be massage chairs in the DEC, just for context, and our advisors let us know that students used those things until they wore out, and we believe that it could be a purchase that students would like to use.

**How do you plan to get student government's name out there?**

Getting into those FSUS classes at every college possible will really help. I believe that we're building up a very diverse cabinet right now. We have people who are in dentistry, business, and even engineering, so these are like different colleges and schools that we're able to have somebody who knows those students go into those FSUS classes because there is that connection there. But then, we can also do a lot of tabling events. Tabling is a free resource, and so it would be asking cabinet members and general assembly members to take, like, an hour out of their day to do a table. That and also bringing back coffee with the cabinet on the first Monday of every month. We will buy students coffee at the local Starbucks in the DEC, and they can chat with us and ask questions about student government.

**What else do you want students, staff and administrators to know about you or SGA?**

I want them to know that student government is here for them. You know, I feel like people just don't really know that the student government exists or what they can do for you. While I was campaigning, I spent a night with my friends out on campus, and we covered campus in chalk. A lot of people were like, 'What's going on? What's that? What Student Government?' So, letting them know that it is a thing. We're here for clubs, we're here for individual students and we're here for everybody who needs help. And we're literally looking for things to support right now, so if you have an issue, come to us. We will help you out. I just want them to know that we are willing to go and do whatever it takes because we have people in student government willing to do whatever it takes to help solve their issue or point them in a direction to help you solve that issue.

For more information regarding SGA, please refer to their page on Ferris 360.

# An appreciation of excellence

Students share professors who have made a positive impact on them



Photo courtesy of Cami Sanderson

Students say Sanderson has gone above and beyond with support.



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Themm

Themm has shown lots of support to students this past year.



Photo courtesy of Dean Vanwormer

Vanwormer (far right), during a SEMA trip to Las Vegas with six students.



Photo courtesy of Teresa Harley

Harley encourages students by providing positive feedback and support.

**Grace Heethuis**  
Culture Editor

Educators are constantly presented with opportunities to make a profound impact on their students' lives.

While their impact is most often observed in the education sector, it extends beyond the classroom. Many bulldog students can name countless educators who have made a great impact on them and helped them have a better college experience.

Engineering technology senior Mohammed Shirzad talked at length about three professors who have been very influential on him during his time at Ferris. They are Patrick English, Jeremy Themm

and Dean Vanwormer.

"The first one, I will say, is Dr. English," Shirzad said. "I give heavy credit to him. He has stepped into his degree, and he's been trying to change it to be better for students."

Shirzad discussed plans to change the program, noting that many of the classes are becoming outdated with the rapid rise of new technology.

"We're trying to get into more software side, not more hands-on," Shirzad said. "Hey, let's do more designing. [We can] thanks to Professor Themm, who bought a 3D printer with a head flow system. Now we don't have to walk to Swan and wait a week to get our prints done."

Throughout his years at Ferris, Shirzad has had several notable professors whom he has expressed gratitude for.

The professors who teach and mentor students can make or break their college experiences, and many even attribute their opportunities to these professors.

"Then there will be Dean [Vanwormer]," Shirzad said. "He taught me a lot because of the knowledge he had, and I was able to intern for one of the big companies, General Motors."

Some students have not had to look far to find excellence in their professors. Sometimes, the most familiar people have been the most

influential professors.

Dental hygiene senior Teresa Harley talked about how impactful it was to have her own aunt, Teresa Harley, as one of her college professors.

"I feel like she's helped me a lot during clinic," Harley said. "She gives good feedback, like she's very open and honest, and a lot of our clinical instructors always say what you're doing wrong, but she always follows up with something positive, which I really appreciate."

For Harley, positive feedback was a helpful confidence booster, as some professors overlook the importance of encouragement alongside what students

should work on.

"She's very flexible," Harley said. "She builds your confidence, which is nice."

Other students recognize the genuine passion many professors have for their teaching, which creates a more positive and engaging learning environment.

Architecture sophomore Jack DeBoode commented on what he appreciated about his former professor, Cami Sanderson.

"Professor Sanderson was my communications teacher, and she really brought joy into the class," DeBoode said. "You can see that she enjoyed her job."

Additionally, DeBoode praised Sanderson's care

toward students and desire to see them be the best that they can be.

Sanderson's upbeat approach in the classroom has gained favor with many students across campus, who appreciate a professor who is passionate about their area of expertise.

"Just the fact that she actually cares about her students, but she's also going to challenge you, is really nice," DeBoode said.

Ferris is filled with many professors whom students continually express their appreciation for, as they have made a positive impact through their care and dedication to their students.

# Opinions

Jackie Moglia | Opinions Editor | mogliaj@ferris.edu

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

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## EDITOR'S COLUMN:

# Thank you, Ferris State Torch

Five years well spent at Ferris State



Photo courtesy of Sam Perry

Gapinski wearing his cap and gown as his chapter at Ferris State finally comes to a close.

**Blase Gapinski**  
*Editor in Chief*

It saddens me that this will be the last editor's column that I submit for the Ferris State Torch, and I truly can't believe the day is here.

I have told this story many times, but I will try to wrap it up quickly. I never applied to any other colleges than Ferris, and I always knew this was the place for me.

After being rescinded in my freshman year and then having to medically withdraw during my junior year, I never let that stop me from pursuing the college experience.

I technically didn't get additional time here because of those instances, but it has made my college journey feel longer, and I wouldn't change a thing if I could go back and do it again.

I started not knowing what I wanted to do here, and then after being admitted back into school after my first year, I switched into the journalism and technical communication program. In my introduction to journalism class, Dr. Garrett Stack referred me to the Ferris State Torch.

I was so nervous after he said I should apply, and I

spent the whole semester going back and forth, wondering if it would be the right fit for me.

I finally reached out to the current editor-in-chief at the time, Noah Kolenda, who offered me a freelance culture reporter position.

This is what started it all.

I didn't realize it at the time, but this was the place where I would feel most connected to people on campus. This is where I made so many friends, most of whom I can rely on for almost anything.

I fell in love with the job, the people and even started to love going to school again because I had this amazing opportunity.

Although I was worried at first, I knew I had made the right choice as soon as I turned in my first article. It felt so satisfying to see my work being displayed on a public platform, especially on our college campus.

I was receiving constructive criticism from Dr. Stack and the section editors, I was getting out and exploring different parts of campus I normally didn't reside in and was feeling a new sense of pride while working for the Torch. Things were definitely on the

up and up for me after spending my freshman year struggling to realize if college was the right place for me.

I eventually was offered a section editor position, something I had always kept in the back of my mind, but didn't really think I was too qualified for. Here I am now, having almost finished running the show on my own for an entire year.

It might sound like a cliché or super corny, but I strongly encourage anyone who is feeling like they don't belong at college to get out there and find a group of people who will take you in. I used to feel like that was silly, and there wasn't something like that for me on campus.

This is exactly what college is for. It is the perfect place and opportunity for everyone to get out there, find people in a similar age range as you who have similar interests and really discover who you are as a person. I have learned and grown so much since joining the Torch and coming to Ferris that I couldn't picture where my life would be without those things.

College and specifically the Torch have become such

intricate parts of my life that it is hard to imagine I am less than a month away from graduating, where I'm supposedly supposed to move on to bigger and better things.

I know it is probably just because of all the overwhelming emotions I feel while writing this, but I can't even imagine anything bigger or better than being right here, living the life that I have in Big Rapids.

I have become comfortable in my own skin and developed friendships that I know will last me a lifetime. You all know who you are, and you all have been there for me when times have gotten tough. Through stress, anxiety, heartbreak and even in times of laughter and joy, you were all there and stuck with me, even when it was hard.

I wouldn't be who I am today without the beautiful people I have in my life. Even the ones who aren't here anymore, I still carry pieces of them that helped me grow into who I am now.

Shout-out to all the friends I made at North Hall, my freshman year. You all helped me realize I have the potential to get through college. I know I would tell you all that I would be dropping out after

the first year, and none of you would see me again, but look at me now. I did it.

Shout-out to the Campus Creek G5 boys, Jack, Michael and Sam. This was our first apartment as adults living on our own, and if it wasn't for those late nights we would spend together, I probably would have gone insane. Sam and I have and will continue to hold down the fort until our lease is up in June.

A special shout-out to everyone I have met at the Torch, because you all have changed my life in more ways than I can count. You all taught me what it means to be a good person, a strong leader and most importantly, how to be a friend even when times are hard.

A personal shout-out to Dr. Scott Kowalewski and Dr. Mindy Myers. This year was one of the most challenging for me for several different reasons, and without your encouragement and support, there is no way I could have made it. You both have been there for me more times than I can count, for whatever it was I needed.

If you couldn't tell already, it is very safe to say that I am going to miss this campus and publication with all of my heart. Thank you all so much for everything. This newspaper would be nothing without the amazing students who sacrifice so much to put it together and the readers who pick up a copy or visit our website weekly.

Thank you to the city of Big Rapids for becoming my home, Ferris State for providing me with memories I will hold with me for the rest of my life and the Torch for becoming my family.

You all mean so much to me, and I owe all the credit to you for being the reason I walk across that stage on May 9.

To the next Torch staff, remember this. I believe in you all and know things haven't been easy, but look where we've gotten after all the obstacles we've faced this year. Personally, I just think it attests to something my former editor-in-chief and one of my closest friends, Dylan, told me. The Torch will always find a way to sustain itself.

Torchies for life.

# Passing the flame

## A farewell to three years at the Torch

Jackie Moglia  
Opinions Editor

I know that a farewell piece is typically reserved for the Editor in Chief, so just look at the other page if that's all you want to see.

I think it would be impossible for me to not write a goodbye piece for the section I've managed since the fall of 2023.

I felt wildly underqualified to work at the Torch, let alone starting as an editor. Working here has forced me to do work that I really felt I wasn't cut out for. I can't really say I considered myself to be a journalist- I didn't write my first news article until October of this year.

Aside from the confidence boost, or at least the ability to feel scared and continue on, I've made some of the most important friendships of my life. Dylan, our previous Editor in Chief, was my first friend here, and the reason I joined. If it weren't for him hitting me with a newspaper every Wednesday in our English class, I wouldn't be where I am now.

Without Blase, I don't think that I would have stayed for my final year here. Without our old news editor Emma, I wouldn't have such meaningful friendships. Without Lucas, I wouldn't have someone to talk to about my favorite shows. I think I could list just about every person on our staff, past and present, and attribute a part of my life to them.

I believe that I would be a fundamentally different person if it weren't for the Torch. Imagining a world where I never joined feels impossible.

Some of my closest and most valued friendships have come from this paper



Photo courtesy of Jackie Moglia

### Moglia's Torch memories throughout her three years with the newspaper.

and weekly meetings and outings. There's a definite bond that can only come from complaining about something related to the paper, borderline mental breakdowns, working together on last-minute changes and late-night editing.

I'd also like to thank the countless number of staff members throughout the years who have reminded me how important the Torch is. And for letting me complain about it during office

hours or after class. A special thank you to Professor Emily Fransted and Aaron Madziar for helping me so willingly with my first news article and with any other questions I ever had.

I've been given the gift of watching those around me grow for three years. Seeing each member of our staff improve and gain confidence has been such an incredible experience, and I couldn't be more grateful to witness it.

This year at the Torch has

been a bit more difficult than previous years as we've faced issues with our budget and being short-staffed. Every person on the staff has put in extra effort here and there to ensure that this paper survives and prints. Each member of our staff makes this paper what it is.

This year has continued to remind me how important journalism is, how important each section is. This newspaper is important. To have a student-run newspaper is

crucial to do what our mission is: to illuminate the truth. It's going to be weird, more than anything, to step back from the paper and give up something that has been so consistent in the past three years of my life.

I can't wait to watch the staff next year grow, to watch the staff I've known for almost my whole time at Ferris take on new roles and responsibilities and continue this work.

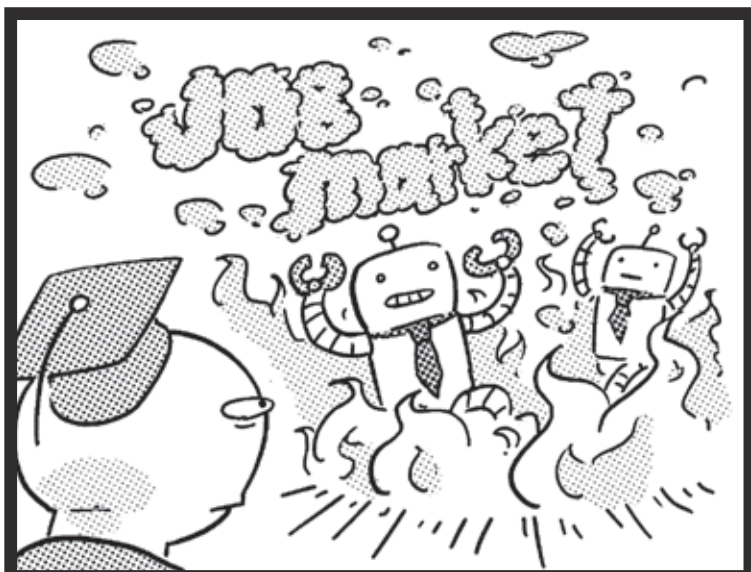
Graduation sounds terrify-

ing, but I know that my fellow graduating torchies feel the same, and I am so excited to see what next year brings for this paper and for some of my closest friends.

As I write this, I don't know who the next EIC will be, but I know that the Torch will be in the best hands possible. I know that my section will be in good hands as well.

You guys got this.

# Graduating in 2026



Comic by: Blake Flanery | Cartoonist

# Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

## New men's basketball head coach introduced

Brooks Miller press conference marks new era for Bulldog basketball



Photo by: Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor

Brooks Miller (middle) is introduced to Ferris State as the men's head by Steve Brockelbank (right), and President Bill Pink (left).

**Nolan Matthews**  
Sports Editor

Ferris State men's basketball officially introduced Brooks Miller as their 15th head coach in the program's history during a press conference on April 15.

Miller brings experience from all levels of college basketball, most recently being the associate head coach with Central Michigan under former Bulldogs head coach Andy Bronkema.

Prior to Central Michigan, Miller was the head coach for DIII Trine University. He spent 14 seasons with the Thunder, where he went 247-121, including a 142-73 record against MIAA opponents. He guided Trine to the 2024 national championship

and also secured the NCAA Division III National Coach of the Year in 2020-21 and 2023-24.

Miller was introduced by Athletic Director Steve Brockelbank, who spoke about why Ferris chose Miller.

"When we first had an opportunity to speak with Brooks, he mentioned a few things that really stuck with us as a hiring committee," Brockelbank said. "One of the things that Brooks mentioned was, as a young coach, he really took the time to suck in and learn from all the people he worked with. If you do not know much about Brooks' resume, he worked with Ed Douma at Hillsdale College, who won a national championship. Bobby Knight, who won three national

championships at Indiana, and Steve Green, who won three national championships with South Plains College."

Miller has plenty of ties to Ferris State, having coached under former Bulldog head coaches Bill Sall, Bronkema, and Ed Douma, who served as an assistant coach under Sall.

One of Miller's assistant coaches at Trine was former Bulldog All-American Drew Lehman. Lehman played from 2011-2015 with the Bulldogs, averaging 11 points a game, while helping the Bulldogs win a GLIAC title in 2014-15 and an appearance in the NCAA tournament.

Miller spoke about how he plans on tackling recruiting,

as well as the transfer portal.

"I think we're going to look at any availability or any possibility available to us to find the best players we can," Miller said. "Whether that's the transfer portal guys transferring down, if that's guys transferring up DII, guys looking for a place with a little more resources and a little more tradition in history, or just really like the way we play. We were able to get the Garland brothers that I talked about at Trine; they transferred in conference to us because, after playing against us for three or four years, they were so intrigued with how we did things that they wanted to be a part of it."

Miller brings 22 years of coaching experience to the

Bulldogs, with his first coaching job at Hillsdale College under Douma. In 2007, he became a graduate assistant coach for Naismith Hall of Famer Bobby Knight. In 2009, he became the assistant coach at South Plains College under Steve Green, who won three NJCAA National Championships.

President of Ferris State, Dr. Bill Pink, spoke about why he believes Miller will be successful with Ferris State.

"We had amazing candidates who wanted to be a part of this Bulldog family, but there was one that truly stood out," Pink said. "He truly stood out in a way that we said, this needs to be our next basketball coach. Not only because of the history that he brings to our commu-

nity, and not only because of being the quality coach and the quality leader that we have seen. History shows all of that, but also because of his desire to be a part of this Bulldog family, a desire that, in our conversation with him, he said, this is where I want to be."

In his short time with Ferris State, Miller has already signed multiple players, including David Williams from Birmingham Brother Rice. On April 18, it was announced that Merritt Alderink was transferring to the Bulldogs, where he played in 25 games last year with Eastern Michigan, and in the 2024-25 season, playing in 13 games with Indiana State.

# Bulldogs begin GLIAC Tournament

## Ferris tennis looks to win tournament title



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

**Adrian Catahan hugs Milo Leuenberger after winning the regular season GLIAC title.**

### Devin Wardrop Sports Reporter

With the regular season coming to a close after their matches against Wayne State, the Ferris State men's and women's tennis teams look to go deep in the GLIAC Tournament.

Head coach Mark Doren knows his team has what it takes to make a run.

"With both teams looking to be a top 2 seed, there will be high expectations to make a run to the championship match," Doren said. "Both teams have been practicing hard and are excited to finish the season strong."

#### Women

Ferris State (12-6, 6-1 in GLIAC) comes into the con-

ference tournament on a four-match win streak to end the season. The Bulldogs beat Michigan Tech 5-2, then took down Roosevelt and Purdue Northwest 6-1, before beating Wayne State 5-2 to end the regular season.

Ferris ends conference play with a 6-1 record, with its one loss being 7-0 against Grand Valley.

Grand Valley won the regular-season conference championship with a 7-0 conference record. The Bulldogs were in second with a 6-1 record, followed by Davenport in third at 5-2. In fourth place is Wayne State at 4-3, with Michigan Tech in fifth at 3-4, and in sixth is Saginaw Valley State at 2-5. At 1-6 and 0-7

respectively.

Freshman Ainzley Zulueta is incredibly excited for her first time in the conference tournament.

"I don't think any words from me can really describe the excitement going into this tournament," Zulueta said. "Just the chance to get a ring, gain redemption from previous losses, and prove our skills once again against teams we've faced before is so exciting. From what I know, this is one of the best seasons we've had so far in a while, so just being able to be a part of it means a lot. Earlier today, the seniors on the team were talking about how they didn't make it to the conference tournament their freshman year. Compare that

to now, where we're now fighting for the second seed for the tournament, which is so crazy. To put it short, I am extremely excited."

#### Men

The Bulldogs (15-3, 6-0 in GLIAC) ended the season on a six-match win streak, all against conference opponents. To close out March, Ferris State beat Davenport 7-0 and Grand Valley 5-2. They then went 5-0 in April, beating Michigan Tech and Purdue Northwest 6-1, Roosevelt 7-0 on senior night and then beating Wayne State 4-3 to secure the regular-season conference championship for the 22nd time in program history.

Sophomore Jose Perez is confident in both himself and

the team for the conference tournament.

"I can't wait for the conference tournament coming up soon," Perez said. "Our team has had really good results so far this season, and I'm confident that we can win the tournament based on how everyone is playing right now. It also means a lot for our seniors because of how good our chances are to win, and we want to make it a special last season for them. We'll make sure to bring a lot of energy, play as a team, and leave everything on the court so we can come home with a ring."

Ferris State won the conference with a 6-0 conference record, with Grand Valley in second with a 5-1

record. Wayne State is in third with a 4-2 record in the conference. Purdue Northwest is fourth with a 3-3 record, with Davenport in fifth with 2-4 and Roosevelt as the last team to make the playoffs with a 1-5 conference record.

The Ferris State men's and women's tennis teams will head to Midland to play in the GLIAC Tournament. The conference tournament will start on Thursday, April 23 and will continue on Friday, April 24, before the GLIAC Championship is played on Saturday, April 25. The times of the matches have yet to be determined.

# Softball takes on Rangers and Lakers

Ferris softball looks to keep momentum heading into final weeks of regular season



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

**Outfielder Emma Gillard rounds third after hitting a home run against Grand Valley on April 11.**

**Nolan Matthews**  
Sports Editor

With a series split against the Wayne State Warriors, the Bulldogs look to get back on track when the Wisconsin Parkside Rangers and Roosevelt Lakers come to Big Rapids.

With the series split against the Warriors, the first game saw the Bulldogs take down the Warriors by a score of 6-1. Junior outfielder Emma Gillard went 2-2 with three RBIs, coming from a

two-run home run and a sacrifice fly.

Freshman outfielder Ava Gardner and junior first baseman Alexis Kozlowski got in on the round trippers, with both hitting solo home runs in the first inning.

Junior pitcher Cecelia Bell pitched a seven-inning complete game, allowing seven hits, one run, two strikeouts and no walks.

Ferris fell in game two, by a score of 7-5. The Bulldogs got out to a 5-1 lead after the top of the second, then

the Warriors scored 6 unanswered runs. Freshman third baseman Emma Herremans was the standout from the day, going 2-3 with two RBIs and one walk.

Even after the loss, in the Bulldogs' last five games, the team has gone 4-1, scoring 7.8 runs per game, while allowing 4.2 runs.

Freshman Ava Gardner spoke about what has led to this stretch.

"We have been staying focused and putting in the work throughout the week,"

Gardner said. "Our practices have been very efficient, and we are prepared for any opponent that comes our way."

The Bulldogs (24-17, 10-6 in GLIAC) will take on Wisconsin Parkside (18-22, 9-9 in GLIAC) in the first matchup of the weekend.

The Rangers come into the game riding a five-game winning streak, including a 1-0 win against the first-place Saginaw Valley State. While also handily taking down Wayne State twice, by scores of 15-3 and 6-2. Then, taking down Purdue Northwest, winning the first game 8-2, before winning the second game 6-5 from a walk-off home run.

Wisconsin Parkside is led by arguably the toughest player in the GLIAC, that being senior catcher Mia Johnson. Johnson leads the GLIAC in all major categories, including batting average with a .464, OPS with a 1.588, doubles with 18, and

home runs with 12.

The Bulldogs' pitching staff will look to stifle Johnson, and one pitcher who will look to do this is freshman Katie Shuboy. Shuboy in 73 innings has pitched to a 3.55 ERA, a 1.58 WHIP, 47 strikeouts to 33 walks, while having eight complete games.

Senior catcher Paige Antcliff spoke about how the Bulldogs will game plan against the Rangers.

"We just have to stay disciplined at the plate and sticking to our approach," Antcliff said. "They have good rise-ball pitchers but we have to stay in the zone and stick to our plan."

For the second matchup of the week, the struggling Roosevelt Lakers (10-30, 4-16 in GLIAC) take on the Bulldogs in Big Rapids.

The Bulldogs will look to take advantage of a Roosevelt pitching staff that has allowed 7.4 runs in their last five games. While their

offense has only scored 3.6 runs in their last five games, a combination of these has led to a 1-4 record in their last five games.

Roosevelt's pitching staff is led by junior Kailey Hancock. Hancock has appeared in 22 games, pitching 100 innings, with a 4.06 ERA, 1.56 WHIP, 37 strikeouts to just 18 walks.

A player who will look to take advantage of this is junior first baseman Alexis Kozlowski. So far this season, Kozlowski has a .352 average, a .407 OPB, 12 extra base hits, four home runs, and 35 RBIs.

The Ferris State Bulldogs softball team will return home to take on the Wisconsin Parkside Rangers on Saturday, April 25, at 1 p.m. and then at 3 p.m. The following day, they will take on the Roosevelt Lakers at 1 p.m. and then again at 3 p.m.

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