



JCGE plans for changes to curriculum

General Education reform questions and concerns



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Editor in Chief

Faculty members attending one of the town hall meetings to ensure their voices are heard and give

Blase Gapinski
Editor in Chief

On Tuesday, April 21, and Thursday, April 23, there were town hall meetings aimed at the potential reform of General Education and determining the future of the curriculum.

The first meetings were held on Tuesday, April 21, with the first being held at 11 a.m. for students only, and a faculty-only meeting that was scheduled for 5 p.m. the same day. Thursday's meeting was open to both students and faculty and acted as a way for everyone in attendance to converse and share their thoughts.

The General Education Reduced Credit Task Force presented a proposal at these meetings, created by Rusty Leonard, Katie Kalata, Paige Young, Leslie Sukup and Michele Harvey. This proposal highlighted how the reform would be implemented. Currently, students of all colleges are required to take 41 to 47 credits of General Education to satisfy the requirement.

The new proposal that is being discussed by the RCT would require students to take only 30 credits of Gen Ed credits.

Paige Young, Photography Professor and chair of the task force, explained the process of bringing this proposal to the JCGE from its members.

"There were three proposals that were brought to the table, however, the committee voted to not extend our charge or the deadline of our committee beyond the charge itself, and due to that majority vote, two of the proposals did not make it to the town halls," Young said.

However, the committee's apparent lack of transparency and disconnect between research methods and best practices for curriculum revision have left faculty members flustered. Some faculty members even made signs that they held, pushing back against the proposal.

Professor in the ELWL department and director of the writing center, David Mar-

quard, discussed the lack of transparency that he and many faculty members have expressed about this proposal.

"It's about the process and how backwards, non-transparent, non-collaborative, non-communicative and rushed. We're in April, and we're just now getting this proposal," Marquard said. "We've kind of heard wind of it, and we were ready, but we couldn't get actual solid answers, so it's really just been shady from the beginning."

Victor Piercy, the director of the Honors Program at Ferris State and former director of General Education, was also in attendance at the town hall meeting exclusively for faculty.

"There are a lot of open-ended questions, and that means it's going to take time for faculty to fill [the survey] out, and it's going to take time to evaluate, because you need to do qualitative coding to really get any useful information out of a survey like that," Piercy said. "I just

want to mention that I believe everybody involved truly has the students at the center of their thoughts, and we're arguing so fiercely because we all care so much."

Having joined the Academic Senate in time to vote on the 2013 general education recommendations, Piercy brings both historical perspective and administrative experience to the current debate over proposed changes.

Not only are faculty concerned with this proposal. A Ferris alumnus attended the meeting and shared a story via the Zoom chat feature about how some of the General Education courses landed them a starting position out of college.

One of those is Sara Walker, who is an alumna of Ferris State's welding engineering technology program and a graduate of the M.S. in career and technical education program. She directly credits a history course that she took at Ferris as to how she landed a position with a \$70,000 starting salary, with FANUC

America Corporation, for a welding engineering role.

"In that history class, my professor invited me to attend a dinner with the visiting Ambassador of South Korea. During my interview, I shared that experience with FANUC, a Japan-headquartered company," Walker said. "Their HR team told me it was rare to meet a technical graduate with both technical skills and cultural curiosity. I would not have pursued that kind of opportunity without my history professor's encouragement, and it became a deciding factor in my hiring."

Walker described how this course directly influenced her worldview and her commitments to moral and ethical practices within her field.

"That history course also strengthened my understanding of how knowledge is created and shared through primary and secondary sources," Walker said. "It sparked a lasting commitment to accuracy that has shaped my integrity as an engineer and supported my graduate studies. I have personally experienced higher pay, better job placement and better relationships with my coworkers as a result of the gen ed courses I took at Ferris. I want our future graduates to have the same opportunities that I benefited from. These classes add value to our degrees."

Some other faculty members also expressed concerns regarding the survey that was put out at the end of each presentation. Students and faculty members were sent the survey on Tuesday, April 21, around 11:40 a.m. and were asked to complete it by Friday, April 24, at noon.

Coordinator of Political Science offerings at Ferris, David Takitaki, discussed some of the concerns he brought up to the committee about the survey that was sent out.

"I have serious misgivings about the survey, and I actually made those known to the

committee as soon as I took it," Takitaki said. "The first point was that there is exactly one piece of what we would consider to be quantitative data in that survey, it is the first question and the thing it measures has nothing to do with the proposal. There were a few other things I pointed out, as there are things that are written in the qualitative responses, that, to me, as a political scientist, there were elements of that survey that I found to be pretty nakedly designed to effectively push support for the proposal as it is written."

Professor of art history in the humanities department, Rachel Foulk, attended the town hall meeting scheduled for faculty only and addressed her concerns with the proposal. One of the things she highlighted was how she was concerned about students

"I'm really surprised by the proposal that was presented. I think it really undermines the work of general education, the strong foundation that General Education provides in areas like writing, communication, mathematics, culture, self and society and diversity in some way," Foulk said. "Each of those is cut in the proposal, and the reasoning for why we would be cutting doesn't make sense to me. I think we have to talk about what the purpose of Gen Ed is. What does it help our students to learn? What kind of foundation does it give them in their academic careers and in their careers that they'll have beyond Ferris, and I didn't see in the current proposal any convincing evidence for all of the cutting. In fact, I'm very concerned about all of the cutting."

This issue is ongoing, and the Torch will provide updates via its website.

Nolan Matthews and Gannon Thomas contributed to the reporting of this article.

LGBTQ+ Special Edition

Learn more about Hankycode, a queer historical magazine put together by Alumnae Sienna Parmelee and Rebecca Vanderkoi. Hear from guest writers Mara Van Wagner and Noah Kolenda. Learn more about the upcoming Big Rapids Pride festival and learn more about the importance of gender affirming care remaining accessible to all. **PAGES 7 - 9**



News

Gannon Thomas | News Editor | thomag17@ferris.edu

Michigan

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Upper Peninsula- Michigan wildlife officials are investigating after finding five dead bald eagles in the Upper Peninsula between April 3 and April 17. The dead bald eagles were all found along the Upper Peninsula's Garden Peninsula, which is a stretch of land south of Delta County between Lake Michigan and Big Bay de Noc, officials said. According to the DNR, the birds did not die of natural causes, predators, or vehicle collisions. Bald Eagles are protected in Michigan. Killing the bird is a 90-day misdemeanor that can carry fines of up to \$1,500, in addition to \$1,500 in restitution per bird.

National

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

Washington D.C.- A man armed with guns and knives attempted to assassinate President Donald Trump during the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner on April 25. The man behind it is Cole Tomas Allen, 31, of Torrance, California, charged toward the ballroom in a chaotic encounter with Secret Service agents as guests dived under tables at the sound of shots being fired. The President was uninjured and was rushed off the stage. Allen, who officials said was a guest at the Washington Hilton where the dinner was being held, was taken into custody and was charged on Monday with the attempted assassination of President Trump.

Global

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

N'Djmena, Chad- Clashes between two families over access to water have killed at least 42 people in eastern Chad, the government says, as resources are stretched in a region where hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring Sudan have poured in. The Deputy Prime Minister of Chad, Limane Mahamat, said another 10 people were wounded in Saturday's clashes in Igote village in Wadi Fira province near the border. The situation is under control after the army intervened, Mahamat said Sunday, adding that a mediation process in the village had begun, as well as judicial proceedings to determine criminal responsibility.

Michigan hit with record flooding and tornado surge

Flooding and tornado activity already above season norm



Photo courtesy of David Takitaki

Photos of the Muskegon River engulfing Ferris Professor David Takitakis yard.

Gannon Thomas
News Editor

Both locally and across the state, communities are dealing with record-high floods and tornadoes, both of which are abnormally high for this early in the season.

In the past few weeks, Michigan has experienced abnormally high rainfall, widespread flooding and an unusual surge in tornadoes, igniting concerns as the state's severe weather season is just starting.

This recent stretch of severe weather has had major impacts on many communities. Homes and businesses across much of the state have been damaged due to rising water levels. Rivers and spillways across the state are also reaching record highs.

Ferris Professor and Mecosta County local David Takitaki explained how the rise in the Muskegon River level has affected him personally.

"The water rose almost exactly to the level of our rear doors. We had sandbagged along those doors, but things got real, real close to being a major problem," Takitaki said.

He added that, along with possible property damage, the flooding has taken a significant emotional toll.

"Watching your backyard

be consumed by the river is very, very anxiety-provoking," Takitaki said. "Not knowing if it's going to cause major damage or how much of your yard you might lose to erosion was not at all a good time."

The prolonged rainfall has led to widespread and ongoing flood issues across Michigan. Rivers, streams and drainage systems have been pushed to or beyond capacity, with some waterways reaching record highs.

Takitaki noted how, using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration station in Ewart and the surge of water in his yard, he was able to understand the severity of conditions locally.

"This was a record high," Takitaki said. "We used the measurements and observations from the NOAA stations in Ewart to keep track, and they exceeded their all-time record of 16 feet. The new record is 16.2 feet."

Statewide regions are seeing repeated storm systems that rain down on already saturated ground. With soil unable to absorb this excess moisture, much of the rainfall has turned directly into runoff, quickly feeding rivers and lakes, worsening flood conditions.

With major storms appear-

ing across most of the state, this wet season has seen precipitation levels well above average.

Geography Professor at Ferris State, Dr. Jennifer Johnson, spoke about how these conditions are affecting most of Michigan.

"Much of Michigan has had above-average snowfall and rain so far in 2026, particularly northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula," Johnson said. "Many locations are 200-300% above normal. March and April have been the wettest on record for quite a few cities."

The amount of precipitation is so great that it isn't just flooding homes and raising rivers, but directly impacting the Great Lakes.

"To put it in concrete numbers, Lakes Michigan and Huron have risen ten inches in the last month. That's 8 trillion gallons of water, with snow still melting and rivers still high and carrying yet more towards them," Johnson said.

Extreme rain and flooding are only some parts of severe weather affecting much of Michigan. Johnson also explained how we have experienced above-average tornado numbers for this early in the season.

"This year has been an

excessively active one so far, with a preliminary count of 280 tornadoes from January to March, 80% above average and the eighth-highest count on record for that time period," Johnson said.

Michigan has already suppressed the state's annual average of 14 tornadoes, hitting 20 before peak season has arrived. Johnson also explained how this spike in tornadoes reflects nationally and how this trend might increase locally.

"Nationally, our long-term annual average is about 1200 tornadoes a year. In 2025, we had 1,559, in 2024 there were 1,791, and in 2023 there were 1,321," Johnson said. "There is considerable evidence that Tornado Alley has been shifting east, and more tornadoes have been happening in the Midwest over the last several decades."

As severe weather conditions increase its important to stay alert, monitor weather updates, and be prepared for extreme conditions.

For many residents across Michigan, the past few weeks have been a reminder of how quickly conditions can escalate and the importance of staying informed and prepared as the season continues.

Ferris State championship weekend

Celebrating the champions as a one big community



Photo by: Clark Vance | Torch Photographer

Bulldogs show off the National Championship trophy at the championship weekend parade.

Bella Brazeau
News Reporter

Ferris State University partnered with the city of Big Rapids to host Ferris State's 2026 championship parade.

Leading up to the parade on Saturday, April 25, there was a schedule that was posted by Ferris State athletics to get everyone ready to celebrate alongside our champions. But it's not just about the team, as there's much more to it.

Athletic associate director Rob Bentley mentioned some important key elements to keep in mind with championship weekend as a whole.

"It's a great weekend to celebrate, what was obviously an outstanding season, but there's a lot of people that play a big part in that, from the community to our administrators, to our sponsors," Bentley said. "It does help not only highlight our program, but also the great support we get from the com-

munity and to bring an event downtown, like the parade, working with the city of Big Rapids, it's exciting for the people downtown that get to feel like they're a part of that championship success, and get to kind of interact with a lot of our student athletes, in our in our coaches."

Bentley also said that Ferris State and Big Rapids are a community like one big family.

"Well, Big Rapids is, is a huge part of Ferris State

University, and Ferris is a huge part of the Big Rapids community as well, but without the support of so many sponsors, the businesses, the people that come to our games, it wouldn't be possible to achieve what we've been able to achieve athletically and as a university, they're vital to what happens here on the Ferris State campus, and we appreciate, all the support that they give us," Bentley said.

Bentley also provided an

acknowledgement of how Big Rapids helps play a huge role in championship weekend as well. Giving much credit to the community for their ongoing support.

"I think it's been a great partnership. So we're pretty fortunate that we've done this a few times, which means we've, you know, won some championships, but it's been great to work with the city of Big Rapids... The mayor, Fred Gunther, is one of our biggest fans, and somebody

who's played an active role in helping highlight our athletes and our teams," Bentley said. "The entire city staff puts in a lot of work to help us put on this event. It's something that we look forward to, forward to doing, and hopefully have a chance to do it in the future again."

Charlie Spencer expressed how fired up he and other players are for championship weekend.

"It's always a fun weekend. You know, we get to see a lot of the young guys play in the spring game, which is a great time. And then obviously, to be able to get our ring is pretty cool. This will be coming up on my third ring, so it'll be just great," Spencer said.

Another football player, Mason Dykstra, spoke about what championship weekend means to him.

"Championship weekend means a lot to me. It means winning. It means success. And you know, success is defined differently by everybody, but in my eyes, it's winning and being the greatest that you can every day and not letting anyone else tell you what that means," Dykstra said. "I think that the biggest impact of championship weekend is the impact that it has on the community. You know, the community comes out and supports us, and it's really awesome."

Ferris State's championship weekend was an opportunity for Students and the Community to connect and celebrate another monumental season for the Bulldogs football team.

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Culture

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Gearing up for the homestretch

Students talk about their preparation for finals



Photo by: Tate Zellman | Culture Reporter

Students gather in the DEC first floor to study and prepare for finals.

Tate Zellman
Culture Reporter

As the semester comes to an end, students are finding ways to study and prepare for their finals to ensure they achieve academic success.

Whether students have a final exam, a final paper or a final project, now is the time when they must use their resources and studying methods to ensure they receive good grades. This is the final stretch before students can go home and enjoy the summer, but to finish the year on a high note, students strive to finish strong.

When it comes to studying

or preparing, students have different ways of feeling ready for their finals, even when all the material isn't accessible yet. History junior Abi Burgess talked about how she's preparing for her finals.

"As a history student, all my finals are essays," Burgess said. "I'm trying to get a good base of knowledge because I'm getting the questions that are going to be on the exam until later this week. So I'm trying to get a good overall base knowledge of what I learned over the semester, so then I can have an easier time gathering my sources that I'm going to use on the exam."

When studying, there are numerous tactics students use to help them study. Some ways can include writing things down, creating tests and flashcards via Quizlet, and studying with friends and classmates.

Public relations senior Izzy Toole uses resources and materials from her classes to help her study.

"I like to rewrite everything until I have it memorized," Toole said. "I go through a lot of my lessons and presentations so I can rewrite everything in my own words. I do this because it helps me obtain information better."

Many students are very

tired and stressed heading into the end of the semester. Building a mindset to sustain motivation may come easily, or it might take some time. While in college, it's essential to finish successfully, but students can build up the energy and motivation to do so on a high note.

Business administration senior Katie Grifka shared a tactic she uses to maintain her motivation.

"I like to utilize my planner because there's a lot I'm keeping in my head," Grifka said. "Everything with school, my personal life and job hunting. There's a lot to remember, so it's helpful for me to

write down the things I need to do."

Grifka also talked about using study breaks to stay motivated and finish strong.

"I remember that while I'm studying, I have to take study breaks," Grifka said. "Every once in a while, I need to go outside and get some fresh air."

As the end approaches, students have mixed feelings about almost reaching the finish line. While students may be happy to be done taking college courses, the thought of leaving friends and the memories made can bring a tear to an eye.

Communications studies

senior Ellie Landis expressed her feelings knowing her time as a college student is coming to an end.

"It's bittersweet because I really enjoyed my time here," Landis said. "Going to class and living in the same place as all my friends is great, but I'm excited to get the rest of my life and see what exciting things happen next."

The finish line has almost been crossed. Just one week of finals and then it's summertime, when students can go home and rest before returning in the fall.

Parties, mishaps and memorable moments

Students share stories from their college experiences

Grace Heethuis
Culture Editor

From Halloween parties to being tackled by football players, students at Ferris have had so many memorable experiences. College is a time that many people reminisce about for the fun and exciting memories they made with their friends, and the Bulldogs are doing just that.

Most students take advantage of their college years, making as many memories as they can during those few short years. While some experiences will be memorable for the fun they brought, others will be remembered for the chaos they brought.

Sports communications sophomore Savannah Hewitt shared a story about a strange occurrence she experienced while working in athletics.

"One of my favorite stories, because I think it embodies my career perfectly and what I want to do," Hewitt said. "I was working on the sidelines filming social media, like I do, and I got ran over by a football player from the other team."

Hewitt's bizarre experience made the highlight reel and is one very different from that of many other college students, one she will be able to look back on and

laugh at for years to come.

For many students, sororities and fraternities have also provided a number of experiences that they have enjoyed.

Construction management fourth-year student Charbel Georges credited his fraternity for aiding in his personal and academic growth, and talked about an experience he had through it.

"The first philanthropy event that we did, which was Manna Pantry for Feeding America, so we basically just took a bunch of cans of food, anything else that they had, we took it off the truck and put it in the Manna Pantry up here in town," Georges said.

Additionally, Georges discussed how his fraternity has impacted his college experience, sharing about what being a part of it has taught him and how it has helped him grow.

"I would say that my favorite time here I've had at Ferris has been a part of my fraternity," Georges said. "It's helped me grow in my academic career; it's helped me grow in my social life, taught me how to be more disciplined and take on tasks that can be challenging at times."

Students at Ferris have had a variety of experiences that have created memorable moments, and many

have had a lot of fun at parties.

Social work freshman LaNiya Tucker and elementary education freshman MeAsia Tate-Martin shared their experiences partying together during Halloween weekend, exploring different college campuses over the course of a week.

"We did it at three different colleges," Tucker said. "We went to Western Michigan, and we went to visit their fraternities and sororities, and it was really nice and really welcoming. We cooked, and we made seafood boil."

Tate-Martin added by describing their experience, sharing that she celebrated her 18th birthday the day before Halloween and continued partying over the course of the week.

"Partying Halloween weekend was super fun. I wore two or three costumes," Tate-Martin said. "I was a bumblebee, and then I was a cowboy. My birthday is the day before Halloween."

College is an opportunity for students to make lifelong memories with their friends, and the Bulldogs are taking advantage of it. While some memories include bumps and bruises, they will surely be remembered for years to come.



Photo courtesy of Savannah Dewitt

Dewitt pictured at Ferris' field during a GVSU vs Ferris game.



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Media minute

“Invincible” season four



Graphic by: Lucas Gill | Web Editor

Lucas Gill
Web Editor

Season four of “Invincible” continues to raise the bar when it comes to the superhero genre, while remaining an engaging adaptation of its source material.

The series’ latest season maintains its reputation for mixing high-stakes action with grounded, character-driven storytelling.

Based on the comic series of the same name by Robert Kirkman, Cory Walker and Ryan Ottley, the latest season premiered on March 18 on Amazon Prime Video and has just wrapped, with the last episode airing on April 22.

This season raises the

stakes as it follows Mark Grayson, as Invincible, along with his father Nolan and brother Oliver, joining the Coalition of Planets to take the fight to the Viltrum Empire.

Viltrum’s bloody conquest of the galaxy has loomed over the series from the start, and it comes to a head here as Mark and his family face their strongest opponents yet.

The show’s main cast has always been held to a high standard, and this season proves no different.

Steven Yeun continues to do an excellent job when it comes to playing the show’s protagonist. This season sees Mark struggling to come to terms with the series’ past events and grapple with the fact that some things will al-

ways be beyond his control. Yeun’s performance makes his internal struggles feel immensely convincing.

Season four introduces the character of Viltrum’s Grand Regent Thragg, who is voiced by Lee Pace. With one of my favorite performances in the series, Pace brings a cold calculation to his line delivery, further selling Thragg as an intimidating antagonist.

I’d be remiss if I did not mention Sandra Oh and J.K. Simmons as Debbie and Nolan Grayson, respectively. One of season four’s plot points focuses on Nolan’s personal development and his desire to atone for his actions during season one. The scenes they share carry such emotional weight and are

among the best the series has to offer, in my opinion.

While season four raises the bar for “Invincible,” that doesn’t mean it’s without its fair share of problems.

The season begins and ends strongly, but I do have some issues with the middle stretch. Episodes three and four in particular take time away from the threat of the Viltrumites to set up their own subplots. While I think these episodes are good in a vacuum, they still hurt the season’s overall pacing.

When I reviewed season three last year, I brought up the show’s inconsistent animation, and I feel the need to reiterate the point here. A good amount of time and effort by the animators went

into the more high-intensity action sequences in the second half of the season. This, however, makes other moments look noticeably low-quality by comparison.

This nitpicking isn’t new to this season, as the animation has been the most contentious aspect of the series since its first episode.

I personally wouldn’t mind waiting longer between seasons if it meant the show’s animation would be more consistent overall. While season four delivers some high highs, it unfortunately showcases some low lows at the same time.

That being said, the voice acting and writing still make these new episodes a compelling watch. The animation

was never a make-or-break for me, and its inconsistencies can be overlooked for the most part.

Overall, “Invincible” season four maintains the story momentum and remains a phenomenal adaptation of the original comic. The show knows what it wants to be at this point. It’s nuanced, more emotionally resonant and builds off of the previously set-up plot threads that tie back all the way to season one.

The entire season is out as of writing and can be streamed on Amazon Prime Video.

LGBTQ+ Special

Harmony Goodman | Production Manager | goodmah2@ferris.edu

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Hankycode Q&A

Ferris and Torch alumni start queer history magazine publication



Photo Courtesy Sienna Parmelee

Physical print edition designed spreads from Hankycode.

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

Hankycode is a queer magazine cofounded by Ferris and Torch alumnae.

2022 journalism and technical communication graduate, Rebecca Vanderkoi, who is the publications Editor-in-Chief, and 2023 design graduate, Sienna Parmelee, the publications creative director. Hankycode focuses on queer history and gets its name from the mid-19th century, when members of the queer community would wear handkerchiefs in their back pockets using different colors and styles to communicate their identities and desires.

Why did you decide to focus on a magazine publication?

Parmelee
Right now, there's been a resurgence in print media. It's such a huge portion of our history, especially queer history, that is queer magazines and queer zines. That was often the only way you could have access to any of this queer content. We have a need for both the digital and physical archive of queer history and queer content. I also think that we're in a time when artificial intelligence is taking so many people's jobs, it's being used more and more to generate creative assets and written assets. It's estimated that over 90% of

what you see on the internet now is generated by AI, which is very sad and devastating. I know that some people might have different opinions but I am a graphic designer and Rebecca is a writer. Print allows us to do something that AI cannot replicate. AI might be able to write the content or do the design, maybe even give you the file, but they can't print it and get it in somebody's hands. AI cannot put the love and care that we put into our magazine. That's something that only humans are able to do.

Vanderkoi

There's something so important about having a physical thing to hold. Especially when history is trying to be erased, it's kind of a way to push back against that. We focus on both the print and the digital publication, so there won't be a way to erase this. Once our content is printed, someone can't change it and go back to make it say something it didn't before. Even if our physical print media gets lost or something happens to it, we will always have that digital archive to fall back on.

How did the idea of Hankycode start and how long did it take to get things off the ground and running?

Parmelee

Rebecca and I are no strangers to creative partnerships, particularly with each other. I mean, this is

so full circle, we met at the torch, working on the paper together. I worked as production manager and Rebecca was the opinions editor. I would come to her with layout ideas and she was always my favorite to work with, even at the Torch. We worked so well together that we even decided to write and direct a short film that we did shoot and hold auditions for, even though that idea eventually got trashed. It was a good experience for us to learn how to work with one another. So when Rebecca came to me and said that she wanted to make a full publication. She asked if I could help her with the layout. I told her I would only help if I got to be fully involved. I told her I was more than happy to help her with the layout, but I want to be fully a part of this as well, because I believed in it so much.

Vanderkoi

In 2023, I began a small Substack under a different name that would eventually become Hankycode. During that time, I started to play around with the idea of what I wanted it to be. I asked myself, what do I want this to be? What do I want to be writing about? And that's when I settled on queer history, especially in the context of where we are today. I wanted to spotlight queer artists, especially artists who maybe weren't getting that atten-

tion that I think they deserve in other publications. So it began as that under my old substack, Sienna and I collaborated on a one-time little zine. Then Trump was elected again and it was kind of that big push for me. I had been mulling over what I wanted to do. But then, when he was elected, I was just so angry and I wanted to do something. I knew that starting a publication or a magazine wasn't going to change the world, but I felt like it was one small thing that I could do with the skills that I had. At that point, I reached out to Sienna and we started collaborating fully. We worked together every day to develop exactly what we wanted this to look like.

How many people are on the team?

Parmelee

Depends. We have a steady volunteer team of about eight people. Outside of that, we have a team of about 13 writers that we send monthly calls to. Everyone who writes to us and regularly submits gets put on our email list, where we send out things that are happening during the month, as well as any important stories that we might want to tell. We also let them know that they can pitch anything they want to us at any time, or if we need to reach out to somebody for them to get a Q&A or feature going. We always end our

emails with a reminder of our zero AI policy. We want to make sure that anybody we're enlisting to help us with stuff is following that.

Vanderkoi

We also have a volunteer team that helps out with specific things. I work closely with our writers and very much appreciate all of their pitches. Originally, I had been writing everything and I knew that doing that wasn't sustainable, especially if we wanted to put out more content.

How do you decide what makes a good story?

Parmelee

I would say that we're very much at the intersection of queer art, history and culture. What I like to say is that we're a soapbox, not a megaphone. So we're not necessarily shouting things at people or getting them to believe something or someone in particular, but we are here to lift somebody else to that platform. Even though we are small now, we are continuously growing. That's sort of our approach when we're working with artists; sometimes we snag bigger artists and in that case, they're working for us. When we're working on historical or culture-based pieces, we always want to draw them back to history.

CONT. ONLINE

Let's Get Political



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Mara Van Wagner
Guest Writer

Let's pretend for a minute that you're in your dorm room, then you leave for class, but you know that by the time you get back to your room, you might no longer be able to get married in the United States. Now imagine it's election day and you go up to vote and you get turned away because your drivers license doesn't match the name on your birth certificate. Now take a second and realize these are real things

that people have to think about.

For many queer people, politics isn't a distant or abstract concept—it's personal. The decisions made by lawmakers shape everything from access to healthcare to the ability to exist openly in public spaces. While some argue that LGBTQ+ rights shouldn't be "politicized," the reality is that they already are. Policies determine whether transgender individuals can access gender-affirming care, whether

same-sex couples can adopt children, and whether schools can create safe, inclusive environments for queer students.

Personally, I think about the government every day. My goal is to work in government, but as a queer person, I often doubt the reality of that happening. As I progress through college, I'm reminded time and time again that knowledge is the most important weapon anyone can wield; without a proper education, or one that is current, you

open the door to ignorance, which leads to oppression.

Recent years have made this especially clear. Across the United States, debates over legislation affecting LGBTQ+ communities have intensified, with some laws expanding protections while others restrict them. These policies don't just exist on paper—they influence people's daily lives, mental health, and sense of safety. For young queer people in particular, the political climate can shape whether they feel

supported or targeted in their own communities.

At the same time, political engagement has been a powerful tool for change. From local school boards to federal elections, civic participation has played a key role in advancing LGBTQ+ rights. Progress has never been accidental—it has come from people speaking out, organizing, and voting.

So when I say "let's get political," it's not about partisanship for its own sake. It's about recognizing

that for queer communities, politics is inseparable from lived experience. Ignoring it doesn't make it go away—it just leaves decisions in the hands of others. So register to vote, talk to people who are asking you to sign petitions, pay attention to the news, and go out and experience the world; figure out what you want to change and work towards making it happen.

Get political.

Community togetherness

A look into the upcoming Big Rapids Pride festival



Photo Courtesy of Big Rapids Pride taken by Hanna Crouch
Drag performance from the 2025 Big Rapids

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

The Big Rapids Pride festival will take place on Sunday, June 28, from noon to 8 p.m.

This year, the festival theme is fearless and free: Better than ever. The theme acts as a call to action for a community to come together and not to let their voices be diminished, no matter what is happening in the world.

President of Pride Big Rapids, Janiza Sawyer-Ocasio, has been with Big Rapids Pride since it started in 2021. She spoke about how this year's festival will be different from previous years.

"We are doing things a bit differently this time around. This year, we're still going to have our afternoon and

evening drag shows, but this year, we have invited a couple of spoken word artists," Sawyer-Ocasio said.

The spoken poetry event by Derek and Gleason will include reciting their poetry onstage, while being accompanied by a piano.

This year, the festival welcomes a new headliner band, VenusEnvy, an all-female group that sings songs from different decades as well as original songs.

"A lot of their members attended our gala earlier this year, and they invited us to one of their performances during the Festival of the Arts," Sawyer Ocasio said. "Their theme for the night was women's rights and activism, so a lot of their songs were about women's empow-

erment and fighting against the system. Their message was really powerful, so we thought, let's shake things up and invite them to perform at our Pride festival, and they agreed."

The festival will include a variety of different vendors from local businesses, as well as operations from the northern Michigan area.

Big Rapids Pride is hoping to invite back the Big Rapids High School choir to perform for the festival's kick-off. The choir performance would be composed of queer kids and their families, similar to years prior.

"We lost touch with them, unfortunately, but we are hoping to bring that experience back. We really appreciate having that part of the

community get involved with the festival," Sawyer-Ocasio said.

Other events that Big Rapids Pride is hoping to include in this year's festival include a talent show. Where they would open up the stage to acts that are signed up to showcase local talent. The goal is to expand the number of showcases at the festival to match the vendor crowd of local operations wanting to get involved.

Those who are interested in sponsoring the Pride Festival, volunteering, or simply getting more information about Pride Big Rapids can visit their website: <https://www.pridebigrapids.org/> or contact them on social media.

What my nails say (So I don't have to)

A short history of saying everything without saying a word



Photo Courtesy of Noah Kolenda

Kolenda shows off his set of acrylic nails.

Noah Kolenda
Guest Writer

I've worn acrylic for years—usually so brightly colored they could be seen from space, long enough that I

need help at ATMs and sharp enough that taking out my contact lenses is quite the precarious task—because of the immense joy I'm brought every time I look down at my hands. They offer me a place

to showcase my personality without needing to dress to the nines or return to an era of unnaturally colored hair, but most importantly, they offer me a canvas to express my identity without scream-

ing it from the rooftop.

While I'm not against the male part of my identity, masculinity has always felt like a box for myself that I never fully fit into—though I never really stopped feel-

ing the crushing weight of its expectations and how it dragged on my expression of my identity. Whether it be the people around me, the influences of media—both social and traditional—or just my own perception of what it meant to present masculinity, having nails that didn't fit into that box allowed me distance to buck those expectations and signal who I was. It was something for me. They offer me a step off the binary while being something I get to dial up or down every two weeks at the nail salon. But the negotiation between identity and expectation isn't one I came to first, or alone—and neither is the instinct to work it out on my hands.

Long before my first ever set of acrylics, femme queer women were working it out on their hands. Navigating a world that didn't read their presentation of their identity as queer—their femininity mistaken for straightness, their queerness invisible in the spaces where they most needed to be seen—they turned to something small. In the early 2010s, a practice taking cues from the 1970s-era hanky code, called femme-flagging emerged: painting one or two nails a different color, a quiet signal legible to those who knew to look. It wasn't a

manifesto, it was just a way of saying I'm here to anyone paying attention—just like they do for me.

My nails change with the season, the occasion, the mood. Come December, mine look like tree ornaments or a snowstorm. Come summer, they're long and neon. I've worn my schools' colors, sported the colors of the Torch, matched events I was proud to be a part of or used them to show off who I was at pride. Then there are weeks where I keep classic and quiet—something that adds to a dressed look at a work function without asking for attention. The range is the point. Most men leave this on the table, not because they can't wear them or dress them up, but because nobody told them it was there for the taking.

The femmes who figured out finger-flagging weren't just finding each other. They were quietly expanding how nails could be used and who they could be for. Thanks to them, and countless others who wore their identity on their hands before it was easy, there's a little more room at the table. Pull up a chair. Grab a bottle of polish and enjoy yourself.

Care for all

The importance of gender affirming care is much bigger than you think

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

When most people think of gender affirming care, they think of transgender individuals needing hormones and surgery.

However, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation describes gender-affirming care as something that benefits transgender, cis and intersex individuals.

We all benefit from having gender affirming care, whether we realize it or not. Examples include hair implants/transplants, testosterone therapy, reconstructive surgeries, breast reductions and much more.

These procedures are all done for someone to feel more comfortable in their body, no matter if they're transitioning or not. Aside from procedures, there are other kinds of gender affirming care, including things such as binders, binding tape, using someone's preferred pronouns and wearing different articles of clothing.

The restrictions on gen-

der-affirming care that are developing across different states are a direct attack on the queer community. Doctors will be able to refuse procedures and the support being taught in our public education system can begin to backpedal if these bans are enforced.

Gender affirming care can save lives. According to the Trevor Project's national 2020 survey, 54% of individuals who identify as transgender or nonbinary have had serious suicidal thoughts, and 29% of those individuals have reported that they have attempted to try and take their own lives. These numbers are scary, and mental health is a huge concern within the community. However, gender affirming care has been reported time and time again to lead to improved mental health for the transgender and nonbinary community.

There's a common misconception that keeping gender affirming care accessible means that children will be able to get irreversible surger-

ies. This is far from the truth; gender-altering surgeries are extremely difficult for minors to receive, and gender-affirming care for our youth is only social and is reversible at any point. Examples of social transitions are preferred names, pronouns, haircuts and clothing.

Social transitions allow for youth and any individual, no matter their age, to learn more about themselves and their identities. If someone discovers at the end of the day that they were wrong to transition, they can decide to detransition. At the end of the day, we're all different, life is intense, unknown and sometimes scary. If identifying as transgender or nonbinary makes someone feel more comfortable in themselves, why is that such a big deal?

Nobody benefits from the ban on gender-affirming care, but everyone benefits from keeping gender affirming care open and accessible for anyone who needs it, no matter the reason.



Sports

Nolan Matthews | Sports Editor | matthen4@ferris.edu

Crimson and gold face off in spring game

Ferris football takes part in the annual scrimmage



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

Head Coach Tony Annese talks to his entire team after the scrimmage.

Devin Wardrop
Sports Reporter

The Ferris State football team played its annual spring game on Friday, April 24, between the crimson and gold teams, with the crimson team winning 55-54.

The Bulldogs split the roster in half and played against each other in a scrimmage for the fans.

Head coach Tony Annese gave his overall thoughts on how the game went.

"I was really happy with a lot of young guys playing," Annese said. "Truthfully, a lot of them didn't have a ton of reps in the spring, and so the ball wasn't on the ground as much as I was nervous about, and the quarterbacks

did a pretty good job. They were all true freshmen, and so all did well. I think everyone got it out of there clean, and it came down to the wire again."

With it not being a real game, the format was different, as there were four 12-minute quarters with a running clock, no stopping, no matter what. The scoring was slightly different as well, with field goals being worth three points. What's added was a first-down for the offense was one point, and a 10-yard play was also one point.

On defense, a touchdown was worth 10 points, a take-away was six, a three-and-out was worth five and forcing a punt was three points. An-

other key component was that no starter played in the game, so this was a chance for the coaches to look at potential players who could get more playing time next season.

The crimson team started with the ball and got a pair of first downs before they eventually had to punt to the gold team, who went three and out to give the crimson team an 11-3 lead. Gold was able to tie it up with 11 points at the end of the first quarter.

Gold got a first down to start the second quarter before punting it back to crimson, where quarterback Jordan Simes ran for a touchdown to bring the lead to 24-12. They added to the lead when defensive back Tyler

Greene intercepted a pass.

Greene talked about the vibe of the game from both players and the fans' perspective of who was in attendance.

"I liked the energy a lot," Greene said. "You know, everyone's screaming, trying to rally and trying to get the best of all of us. The energy here is always amazing. I always love it."

Gold defensive back Tez Joseph then intercepted the ball to make the score 32-18, and a pair of deep passes brought the score to 32-24, and a field goal before halftime made it 32-27.

Wide receiver Jamison Williams loved being back on the field.

"It was great," Williams

said. "You know, it feels great having a good time off in winter. We prepared well and got ready for the spring game. It's just as great to be out here."

During halftime, the 2026 recruits were introduced, followed by the Ferris State volleyball and soccer teams playing against each other, with volleyball running routes and catching passes, and soccer doing a penalty-shot challenge against the football team.

Gold started with the ball after the half and got a pair of first downs before crimson forced them to punt, which made it 35-29. Crimson got the ball but was forced into a three-and-out for gold to take a 37-35 lead. At the end of

the third quarter, gold got the ball but was forced into a three-and-out by crimson to make it 43-37.

After the break, crimson got a first down before they had to punt to make the score 45-40, but then forced a gold three-and-out. Quarterback Kyle Cottee threw a deep pass and then ran in for the touchdown to make the score 54-53, but a crimson first down as time expired ended the game at 55-54.

The Ferris State football team will start the 2026 season at Pittsburg State on August 27, with the home opener coming against Bentley on September 4, at 6 p.m.

Softball preps for final weekend

Bulldogs look to end season on high note



Photo by Clark Vance | Torch Photographer

Pitcher Cecelia Bell winds up to pitch against Wisconsin Parkside on April 25.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

The Ferris State softball team looks to keep the momentum flowing into the final week of the season, where they will take on the Davenport Panthers and Purdue Northwest Pride.

The Bulldogs are currently riding a five-game winning streak. During the winning streak, the Bulldogs have outscored their opponents

24 runs to just seven in that span.

On Saturday, April 25, the Bulldogs took down Wisconsin Parkside in two games, with scores of 7-4 and 6-1, before taking down Roosevelt on the following day by scores of 8-0 and 6-1.

Ferris took game one against Roosevelt by a score of 8-0, thanks to junior first baseman Alexis Kozlowski. Kozlowski went 3-4 with three RBIs coming from a

first-inning two-run home run and a two-run double in the fifth inning.

Ferris then took game two against Roosevelt thanks to the performance from freshman pitcher Katie Shuboy. Shuboy pitched all seven innings, only allowing five hits, one run, two walks and five strikeouts.

Shuboy spoke about what has led to her success so early on in her career.

"I give a lot of credit for

success to my coaches and teammates," Shuboy said. "Having great defense behind me makes everything a lot easier and gives me more confidence. My coaches have also pushed me this season to get better and reach my full potential."

The Bulldogs (29-18, 15-7 in GLIAC) will take on the Davenport Panthers (14-31, 10-12 in GLIAC) over four games from Friday to Saturday.

Davenport has struggled this season, sitting in fifth in the GLIAC standings. Since 2021, the Panthers have had only one season with a winning record, going 25-22 in 2022. Since then, they have a win-loss record of 94-169.

Ferris has not played Davenport yet this season, but last season the Bulldogs took both games from Davenport, winning 1-0 and 14-6. All-time, the Panthers have the Bulldogs' number, holding an all-time record of 23-11 spanning back to 2012.

The Panthers still have a tough offense despite a rough season, with the leader on offense being sophomore catcher Chloe Parker. Parker has a .326 average with a 1.044 OPS, while hitting eight home runs, 23 RBIs, and a .674 slugging percentage.

A pitcher who will look to stifle the Panthers is former Panther junior Cecelia Bell. Transferring from Davenport before the 2024-25 season, but this season, Bell has shown out. Bell has pitched in 121 innings to a 3.41 ERA and a 1.40 WHIP while striking out 72 to 28 walks.

The Bulldogs will then take on the Purdue Northwest Pride (25-19, 11-9 in GLIAC) in a makeup series from April 12 after a weather postponement.

Purdue Northwest comes into the matchup coming off two losses against Saginaw Valley, but winning their prior three games before.

The Pride is bolstered by a tough pitching staff, that staff being led by senior Hallie Charvat. Charvat has pitched in 92 innings this year with a 2.95 ERA and a

1.48 WHIP while striking out 72 batters and 61 walks, which is the third most in the GLIAC.

While the Bulldogs have seen a power breakout this season, with 28 home runs as a team and a .439 slugging percentage, both being the highest marks since 2022.

Head coach Jake Schumann spoke about what has led to this offensive breakout and what he has attributed this to.

"I attribute this to being year three of our quality-at-bat approach," Schumann said. "Which, in a nutshell, isn't the 'I got to get a hit' mentality. Taking walks and seeing good pitches, then putting a good swing on a drivable pitch, is how power numbers increase. Not to mention a core group of talented hitters that can leave the yard at any time."

A player who has shown the power breakout is junior outfielder Emma Gillard, who, in her last two seasons, has had just three home runs in total in 101 games. While this season Gillard has eight home runs, 46 RBIs, a .353 average, and a .639 slugging percentage in just 45 games.

The Ferris State Bulldogs softball team will take on the Davenport Panthers, with the first two games coming on Friday, May 1, at 1 p.m. and then at 3 p.m. in Big Rapids. Then they will travel south the following day to take on Davenport in Grand Rapids. Then the Bulldogs will take on the Purdue Northwest Pride on Sunday, May 3, in Big Rapids, with the games coming at 1 p.m. and again at 3 p.m.

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Tennis tops off their season

Ferris tennis finishes off GLIAC tournament on top



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

Senior Erik Kovacs talks with his team after the final match of the season.

Nolan Matthews
Sports Editor

As the regular season came to a close and the GLIAC tournament crowning their champions, the Ferris State men's and women's tennis teams look ahead to what comes next.

The men were crowned as champions of the regular season and as the GLIAC tournament champions, after taking down Wayne State 4-3. The women's team fell in the GLIAC tournament championship to Grand Valley by a score of 4-1.

Head coach Mark Doren spoke about looking ahead

to the NCAA Tournament.

"We are very excited going into the NCAA Tournament," Doren said. "On the men's side, winning both the regular season and tournament title gives them great pride in knowing all their hard work paid off. I don't think there's any one thing in specific we need to work on as a team. Individuals will each have their own things to clean up, but as a whole, they just have to stay focused."

Women's

The Ferris State women's team (13-7, 6-1 in GLIAC) ended the regular season strong, winning four of its final five matches of the

season. While in the GLIAC tournament, they took down Davenport 4-0 in the tournament semifinal.

In the semifinal, freshman Madeline Peisley, sophomore Yara Madi and senior Ana Hernandez all won their singles matches. Each of these matches was won in two sets.

While in doubles play, Maria and Ana Hernandez fell to Davenport 6-0, before Peisley and sophomore Ayva Johnstone won 6-3 in their match. While Madi and freshman Ainzley Zulueta finished Davenport off 6-1 in the final doubles match.

While in the GLIAC tour-

namment championship, the team fell to Grand Valley 4-1. The only victory of the day came in singles play, with Maria Hernandez winning her match 6-4 and 6-4.

The season did not end the way the team would have liked it to, but the team looks ahead to what comes next. Johnson spoke about what that will look like.

"After losing to GV in the final, it was really tough to accept, especially with how hard we've been practicing and how well everyone played and fought in their matches," Johnson said. "However, we're still looking forward to regionals, and we

aren't planning on letting this result affect how we perform in this upcoming tournament."

Men's

The Ferris State men's team (17-3, 6-0 in GLIAC) topped off their regular season with the fewest losses since 2017-18 and capped it with a regular-season GLIAC title and the GLIAC tournament championship.

The team finished the season off with a six-game winning streak; during the streak, the team only lost a total of seven points.

The Bulldogs took on the Purdue Northwest Pride in the GLIAC tournament semi-

finals, taking down the Pride 4-0. In doubles play, freshman Praneel Pichika and Leuenberger won 6-4, while senior Kacper Pasielak and sophomore Jose Perez won their match 6-3.

In singles play, the Bulldogs showed out, winning all but one singles match, with Kevin Kovacs winning his 6-4 and 6-2, Perez winning both sets 6-3 and Andrew Vincler winning his sets 6-1 and 7-6.

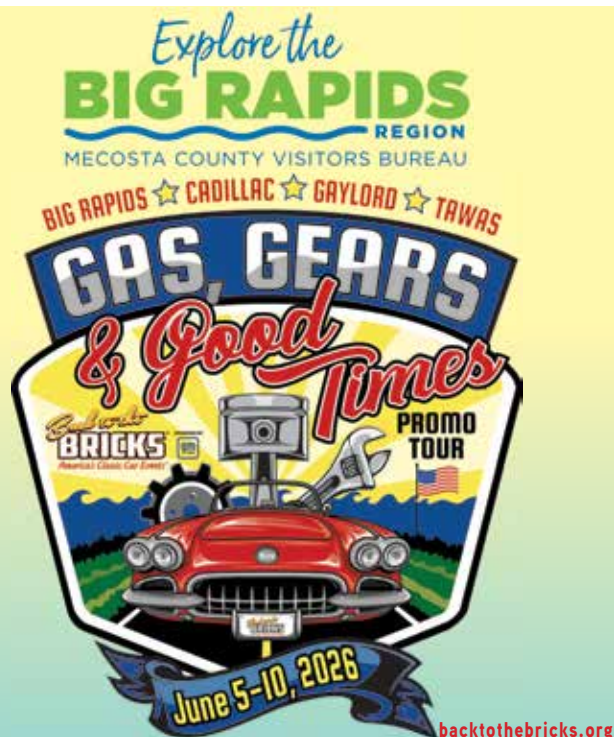
In the GLIAC tournament championship, Ferris State took down the Wayne State Warriors 4-3.

In singles play, it was back and forth the entire match, with the Warriors and Bulldogs both winning three singles matches. In doubles play, is where Ferris pulled ahead, with Erik Kovacs and Adrian Catahan winning their match, while Pasielak and Leuenberger were the deciding match of the day. They were able to win 6-2, helping the Bulldogs capture their sixth tournament title in the last 10 years.

Sophomore Milo Leuenberger spoke about what winning these titles means to him and the team as a whole.

"It means a lot to me," Leuenberger said. "The titles are the biggest achievements of my college career so far. As for the team, we've been so close together this season, and really presenting ourselves as a unit. Ultimately, winning those titles is incredible for us."

The Ferris State tennis men's and women's teams look ahead to the NCAA DII Midwest Regional Tournament to see if they will receive a bid in the tournament.



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