



**PRESS RELEASE: Ferris to Support 2011 Cesar Chavez Social Justice March  
in Grand Rapids**

**Sandy C Gholston** to: Archive

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Included below is a press release regarding members of the Ferris State University community who will be in Grand Rapids on Thursday, March 31 to support the 2011 Cesar Chavez Social Justice March. Any questions about this press release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, interim assistant director of News Services.

For Immediate Release  
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**Ferris to Support 2011 Cesar Chavez Social Justice March in Grand Rapids**

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University will participate in an event to honor 20<sup>th</sup> century activist Cesar Chavez as part of the 2011 Cesar Chavez Social Justice March and Community Gathering in Grand Rapids on Thursday, March 31.

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual march will be held from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. beginning at the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, located at 1204 Grandville Ave in Grand Rapids. This will be the second year Ferris has supported the Chavez march. The event is free and open to the public and some transportation will be available to members of the Ferris community.

Even since Chavez's passing, in 1993, the Mexican-American leader continues to be honored for his dedication to farm worker's rights, civil rights, environmental justice, equality, peace and nonviolence.

"We hope that all participants are inspired to be engaged and take action against any social injustices that may exist in society," said Michael Wade, assistant director of the Office of Multicultural Student Services. "The event provides awareness of how one person can start a movement, and no matter what your background may be you can do it too."

This year, approximately 20 Ferris students from Sociology, Communications and Social Work classes will be participants in the Chavez march and related activities. Stephanie Thomson, a previous participant and an assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, said Chavez's life shows how social change can be accomplished by Americans coming together and working for change.

"I value the opportunity to stand with other Americans and celebrate Chavez. I believe that it is important to remind ourselves of the power that each of us has to make change possible. We have the power to look around us, to see injustice and to take steps for change," Thomson said.

Wade believes that the march is an opportunity for students to see the importance of Chavez and the impact he had throughout his lifetime. Chavez, along with Dolores Huerta, founded the United Farm Workers Union. The goal of the organization was for all American workers to work in safe and humane conditions and earn a fair wage.

“The event is an eye-opening experience and a great opportunity to see how significant Cesar Chavez is to the Hispanic community and our society as a whole,” Wade said. “There are hundreds of people from all over who show up each year to take part in the activities in Grand Rapids.”

The event falls on Chavez’s birthday every year with support from Grand Rapids Community College. Among the notable Ferris representatives who have supported the march in past years are David Pilgrim, vice president for Diversity and Inclusion; Sandra Alpsach, a professor of Communication; Thomson, an assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences; Bonnie Wright, a faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences; and Anthony Baker, an associate professor of Sociology.

For more information contact the Office of Multicultural Student Services at (231) 591-2617 or visit <http://www.ferris.edu/omss/>.

Students, faculty and staff needing to sign up for transportation, seating is limited, should contact the OMSS office or in FLITE 159.

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