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Included below is a press release regarding graduate students from Ferris State University, who will be presenting their research to state legislators April 13. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Leah Nixon
Ferris State University
Assistant Director of News Services
leahnixon@ferris.edu, (231) 591-5604

Ferris Graduate Students Present Research to State Legislators

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University will be represented by seven of its leading graduate students at the state capitol on April 13 in celebration of Graduate Education Day.

These Ferris students, along with more than 80 others from 20 Michigan private and public colleges and universities, will display their graduate research work to state legislators or participate in discussions with state officials as part of Graduate Education Week.

This week acts as a time for Michigan leaders, legislators and graduate professionals to examine the importance and impact of graduate studies on the wellbeing of the state.

Kate Harms, a Ferris Master of Business Administration senior, said, “My hope for attending this day is that our representatives and senators will see the impact graduate education can have on the state of Michigan. We are no longer a state that can survive on manufacturing. Education is critical for the success of our state.”

John Godfrey, assistant dean of International Education at the University of Michigan and organizer of this year’s event, added, “This opportunity allows graduate students to step back from their own program and explore why they’re studying what they are in a broader sense.”

Fellow Ferris MBA seniors Valerie Garrett and Linda Pobocik are doing just that as they prepare for the event.

Garrett explained, “I’m partnering with (Pobocik) to create a poster that does two things.

First, it asks these questions: ‘What if Michigan led the nation in economic growth? What if Michigan businesses weren’t so challenged? What if Michigan businesses were so healthy that they were irresistible to top talent?’ Second, it answers those questions by sharing our own visions for how to make that happen.”

Pobocik added, “Both (Garrett) and I feel the uniqueness of our program gives us the fodder for a unique message: Integrated design thinkers are being nurtured right here in Michigan, and we have the ability to change Michigan’s economic future.”

“Our legislators need to recognize that Ferris State University offers top-notch programs, and the people who are taking these classes are using this knowledge to better themselves and the state of Michigan long-term,” Pobocik said.

These three students, along with four others, were selected to act as representatives of their Ferris graduate programs because of the level of excellence they have demonstrated in their studies, and the dedication they have shown to the Ferris vision of education, said Shannon Yost, department secretary for the College of Business graduate programs, who filled a primary role in selecting these students. The College of Business is sending five representatives: Joe Bennett, Garrett, Harms, Jess Lancaster and Pobocik; the Master of Criminal Justice Administration program will be represented by two students: Whitney Hatheway and Robert Maiorana.

“Our job in going to Lansing is not to beg for money for graduate education; it’s to share with our legislators what our own graduate education has meant for us and how we see it adding value to the state at large,” Garrett said. “True leaders are those who roll up their sleeves and get involved, who seek to serve and who are willing to dialogue for positive change. If graduate students who are passionate won’t be those leaders – won’t be involved in that dialogue – then who will?”

Graduate Education Week activities have been taking place in Michigan since Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed a decree in March of 2009 declaring that a week was to be set aside for reflection of the contributions of graduate education in Michigan. This year, activities will take place during the week of April 12 at the state capitol.

University Advancement & Marketing
420 Oak Street, PRK 101
Ferris State University
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2031
(231) 591-5604 / fax (231) 591-2985