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Subject: Vote Slam Educates Students on Political Candidates, Ballot Initiatives
Date: 10/13/2006 11:31 AM

Following is a news release from Ferris State University regarding an upcoming event to inform students and community members about politics in a fun way. Please contact Leah Nixon if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you.

For Immediate Release
Oct. 13, 2006

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Vote Slam educates students on political candidates, ballot initiatives

BIG RAPIDS – The American Democracy Project, a program sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges & Universities, is putting on a political educational program called Vote Slam from 4 to 6 p.m. on Oct. 18. on the Campus Quad.

At Vote Slam, students and community members have the opportunity to learn about statewide candidates for governor, senator and secretary of state, among other offices. The five ballot initiatives, which include topics such as affirmative action, morning dove hunting, private property issues and school funding levels, will also be discussed.

The band Ultraviolet Hippopotamus will perform throughout the evening in 20-minute intervals. After 20 minutes of music, 20 minutes of open mic will allow audience members to exercise their right to free speech to express their opinions about current political issues.

Connie Meinholdt, coordinator of the American Democracy Project and associate professor of Psychology, is hoping to accomplish many positive things at Vote Slam.

“One desired accomplishment is to increase voter participation by young adults,” Meinholdt said. “We figure that if people know about the candidates and issues, they are more likely to form an opinion and more likely to exercise their right (by voting) to participate in a democratic government.”

Ferris joined the ADP along with 212 other colleges and universities to develop programs and ideas to educate citizens in addition to all the other goals of a university education. This year, Ferris joined two specific ADP programs – the Young Voter Initiative and the Political Engagement Project.

The Young Voter Initiative is trying to register 40,000 new voters this year between the 80 universities that are participating. Ferris’ goal is 500 new voters, and so far, 389 new registrations have been filled out, Meinholdt said.

“The goal of YVI is not only to have students register to vote, but we want students to actually vote in the November 2006 general election,” she said.

The Political Engagement Project is a pilot program at eight universities with the goal of

helping faculty re-design course curricula to course content with everyday civic and political life. About 30 different classes across the curriculum are included in PEP.

For more information on ADP and PEP, visit
www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/ADP.

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