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Cadillac News

February 2, 2007

Changing gears: Older workers seek place in fierce labor market

Job loss is a devastating experience for anyone, but for the older worker who has already devoted decades to a job, finding their groove again can be a daunting challenge.

"The fact is in Michigan companies are going out of business. People who have worked in a factory all their life don't have other skills or employers don't want to give them a chance," said Sandy Rogers, regional employment and training coordinator for Experience Works, a job program for those 55 and older.

The program partners unemployed seniors with agencies who provide job training through a subsidized arrangement. Seniors gain skills, references and self-esteem and participating agencies gain a reliable worker.

EVART - Tom Bennett works as a jack of all trades supporting senior congregate meal operations in Evart. It's a world away from the life he once knew and hopes for again.

Bennett, 58, was laid off from his factory job at Collins & Aikman in May 2004. He has turned over every stone to find a similar job and continues to monitor job boards daily.

"I'm tired of being unemployed," he said.

Last March, Bennett enrolled with Experience Works, a job training and counseling service for workers 55 and older. The program places workers at nonprofit agencies and government units, picking up the tab for salaries at minimum wage.

Bennett works 15 hours weekly at the meal site, the maximum allowable hours. He warms boxed meals, cleans tables, scrubs floors and engages guests in lively social conversation.

"It's a hundred bucks I wouldn't have otherwise," he said.

With three months of hiring seniority remaining from his five-year stint at C&A, and rumors abounding about the auto parts manufacturing plant ramping up its workforce, Bennett harbors hopes he will be recalled to his job as a press operator. If not, he anticipates leaving the area before next winter for a better job market.

Bennett is not alone. Older citizens throughout the area are traveling down a similar road. The reasons vary - job loss, the loss of working spouse, becoming a displaced homemaker or suddenly finding social security checks no longer cover the bills. Any of the situations may lead an individual to the doors of Experience Works, a federally funded job training program for those 55 and older.

The need to generate income is not bound by age.

"I've had people in their late 80s. There's no limit," said Sandy Rogers, regional employment and training coordinator for Experience Works. "in some areas I've seen people in their 90s."

A workers' education or past experience doesn't always translate to today's job market, and like Bennett, it may not add up to employment.

"I have people with master's degrees that just can't get jobs," Rogers said. "It's sad to think you've spent your whole life working and can't find a job."

Neither is need defined by gender.

"In the past I didn't see as many men," said Pat Petri, senior employment assistant for Osceola, Wexford and Missaukee counties. "Now, more men are coming into the program because of our economy and the lack of jobs."

The program's end goal is helping the older workers stand on their own two feet again.

"When you have no money, no prospects and find yourself working again, it's a tremendous boost for your self-esteem" Petri said. "It gets people back into society, gets them working and able to pay their own way."

And that may be counted as priceless.

Retraining at midlife and beyond isn't always a matter of necessity. Job security and advancement also rate as factors. At Ferris State University, 19 percent of part-time undergraduate students and 35 percent of part-time graduate students are 45 and older. The number of full-time students 45 and older drops to 15 percent in graduate programs and only 1 percent in undergraduate programs.

"It indicates to us people are coming back to school while they're still working," said Kristen Salomonson, FSU associate dean of enrollment services.

At FSU the most popular programs for the older students are the master of business administration and education degrees.

Responding to trends, FSU is actively developing partnerships with community colleges.

"We have rolled out a new transfer student scholarship," Salomonson said. "We've gained 200 students over last winter - a lot of older students."

FSU's older students in the marketplace are likely in good company. The number of working older Americans is growing with projections suggesting by 2014 the 55-and-older age group will gain share in the labor force, making up 21 percent of the labor force, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But how old is too old to learn new skills? Older workers are setting the bar high. FSU enrollment includes students 65 and older, Salomonson said. While some of the retirement-age students attend for personal enjoyment, she said others are cracking the books to earn certifications to maintain their independence and build a more secure future.

Your local connection

Older American workers:

- 16 million Americans 55 and older are working or seeking work.
- Almost 60 percent of Americans expect to work at least part-time after age 65
- More than 53 percent of older women are working, up from 43 percent in the last decade
- More than 1 million workers between ages 70 and 74 are employed

Source: National Council on Aging

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Muskegon Chronicle

February 14, 2007

Kendall first to offer art design MBA

As a computer animation and video game designer, Ward Makielski knows creativity and the business world don't always mix well.

"A businessperson wants to know how much a project will cost and how long it will take to complete," he said.

But the creative process "cannot be so easily pinned down."

To bridge the gap between business and the leeway an artist needs to be creative, Makielski last month enrolled in a new graduate program offered by Kendall College of Art & Design of Ferris State University.

One of 10 students enrolled in the two-year program, Makielski hopes the master's in business administration degree will equip him with the knowledge he needs to better understand and communicate with the people who fund his work.

Kendall is the first art and design college in the country to offer an MBA with a concentration in design and innovation management, Kendall President Oliver Evans said.

He announced the new master's program at a news conference Tuesday.

"Design is not something that people (in the business world) think of automatically," said Evans, adding a product's design elements often get considered only at the end of development.

He points to successful coffee shop chains recognizing they "are selling a kind of experience."

Kendall's new MBA program was "designed from what we see going on in business today," Evans said.

"Whatever a person's field, a knowledge of design and innovation is going to be critical."

The new MBA program will be offered at Kendall's Grand Rapids campus, 17 Fountain St. NE, and online.

Students opting for the online program will be required to attend two "intense weekend sessions" on campus, Evans said.

Kendall's affiliation with Ferris State University will allow Kendall officials to attract business leaders familiar with the university's Big Rapids-based College of Business. Ferris State offers an MBA degree through the college.

In addition to bringing together the worlds of design and business, the new Kendall MBA program also will address issues of social responsibility, Evans said.

Students enrolled in the program must take an introductory seven-week class as part of the 33 credit hours of course work.

The first introductory class began in January, and a second is scheduled for May.

A student enrolled full time in the MBA program can complete course requirements in 12 months, he said.

Muskegon Chronicle

February 15, 2007

See Ladysmith Black Mambazo at FSU

Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the South African a cappella vocal group featured on Paul Simon's acclaimed "Graceland" album, will perform an 8 p.m. Tuesday concert in Big Rapids.

Tickets to the group's 8 p.m. show at Williams Auditorium on the campus of Ferris State University are \$10 and \$24. For reservations and more information, either call (231) 591-5600 or visit www.ferris.edu.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo's latest CD, "Long Walk to Freedom," was up for two Grammy Awards this year, as Best Contemporary World Music Album and Best Surround Sound Album.

Tuesday's concert will feature selections from the recording, sung in the Zulu and English languages.

In October 2006, Ladysmith made its Carnegie Hall debut with a number of other artists who perform on "Long Walk to Freedom": Sarah McLachlan, Natalie Merchant, Vusi Mahlasela, Pete Seeger and MaHotella Queens.

"Long Walk to Freedom" was released Jan. 24, 2006, in recognition of the 20th anniversary of Ladysmith gaining worldwide acclaim. Other artists who perform on the album include Melissa Etheridge, Emmylou Harris, Joe McBride and Zap Mama.

South African artists performing on "Long Walk to Freedom" include Lucky Dube, Bhekumunzi Luthuli, Vusi Mahlasela, Hugh Masekela, Nokukhanya, Phuezkhemisi, and Thandiswa.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo was formed, in the early 1960s, by South African musician Joseph Shabalala.

In 1986, Paul Simon introduced Ladysmith Black Mambazo to mainstream American audiences with his release of "Graceland."

Oakland Business Review

February 15-21, 2007

Freshman numbers drop at Michigan universities

The number of freshmen at Michigan's 15 public university campuses dropped for the first time in five years, while the number of overall students dipped a bit, too, a report on fall enrollment shows.

The declines come even as Gov. Jennifer Granholm pushes to get more kids into college by offering \$4,000 scholarships, replacing the high school Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test with the ACT college-entrance exam and requiring college-prep courses for all students.

The universities reported 39,284 freshmen last fall, down nearly 3 percent from 40,407 in the fall of 2005. Nine campuses experienced drops, while six reported increases, according to a report compiled by the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan.

The report is available at www.pcsu.org/pdfs/EnrollmentReport200G.pdf.

Overall student numbers were more stable - 287,747 last fall, down from 288,350 in the fall of 2005 - a decline of 0.02 percent. Mike Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council, said the drops were disappointing but not alarming. He said the total head count drop was small, and that when combined with fewer incoming freshmen, the shifts mean more students are staying in school and continuing toward graduation.

"I think it's clear that we're doing a better job of retaining students. When you retain more students, you have less capacity to bring new students in. That's what you're seeing here," Boulus said.

Michelle Begnoche, a Granholm spokeswoman, said a drop "underscores the importance of providing students with the ability to attend college." Granholm has proposed creating "Promise Zones" in areas of high unemployment and poverty, which would guarantee college tuition for high-school graduates in those zones.

Also, Begnoche said, students may be pursuing other routes to higher education, through technical training schools or community colleges.

Community college enrollment is up, especially among teenagers. The number of students 19 and younger at the 28 community college campuses hit more than 63,000 last fall, up from 59,000 in the fall of 2005.

Enrollment at the 50 private colleges in Michigan hasn't yet been compiled, according to the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan.

<u>College</u>	<u>Fall 2006 enrollment</u>	<u>% change from fall 2005</u>
Michigan State	45,520	+0.78%
University of Michigan	39,536	-0.73%
Wayne State	32,982	-0.47%
Western Michigan	24,825	-5.37%
Central Michigan	24,556	-0.02%
Grand Valley State	23,295	+3.24%
Eastern Michigan	22,949	-2.19%
Oakland	17,737	+2.3%
Ferris State	12,560	+0.26%
Northern Michigan	9,689	+1.99%
Saginaw Valley State	9,543	-0.27%
University of Michigan-Dearborn	8,566	0.55%
Michigan Tech	6,549	+0.63%
University of Michigan-Flint	6,527	+1.64%
Lake Superior State	2,913	-0.21%

Source: Presidents Council, State Universities of *Michigan*

Pioneer

February 22, 2007

Walk for Warmth set for Saturday

The 16th annual Walk for Warmth campaign by the Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency will take place Saturday morning on the campus of Ferris State University.

For anyone wishing to collect money, pledge sheets are still available at the local office, 405 S. Third St., Big Rapids. Pledge sheets will be available at the event for people wishing to raise money who don't have time to come to the office. Anyone wishing to donate without walking is welcome to send a check made out to MMCAA Mecosta Walk for Warmth to the office. Donations are tax-deductible.

The annual fund-raising event has locations in Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Midland and Osceola counties in addition to Mecosta County. Money collected from the event goes to help people with heat-related emergencies pay their heating bills.

The indoor, two-mile walk will take place in the Student Recreation Center with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and the walk at 9 a.m. The goal for the Mecosta County event is \$13,500, but the agency has until August to collect enough money to meet it, said Jo Ann Longcor, agency spokesperson. Funding also comes from corporate and community donations, other fundraisers and matching funds from the Michigan Community Action Association.

Last year, the event had about 300 walkers and raised \$9,358. The local agency helped 58 families with a combined total of \$17,957 in heating bills.

The agency helps people not usually eligible for assistance programs, Longcor said. Anyone in Mecosta County needing assistance with their heat bill should call (231) 796-4664.

Pioneer

February 22, 2007

Free FSU concert set for Sunday

"A Spanish Serenade" featuring the Ferris State University West Central Concert Band (WCCB), directed by Richard Scott Cohen, will take place at 4 p.m. at the FSU G. Mennen Williams Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public. For assistance with attending this event, call (231) 591-3676.

This year's winter concert features a lyrical and lively variety of musical styles from Spain, including pasodobles, marches, zarzuelas and folk melodies from the Valencia region of Spain. Spain's most famous pasodoble - "Amparito Roca" - is featured on the program.

The program will include "Amparito Roca" by Jaime Texidor, "Cordero de Dios" by Ricardo Dorado, "El Relicario" by Jose Padilla, "El Tambor de Granaderos" by Ruperto Chapi, "L'Entra de la Murta" by Salvador Giner and "Rapsodia Valenciana" by Manuel Penella-Moreno.

The WCCB is currently celebrating its 15th concert season. It is comprised of talented musicians from the area, including Ferris State University students, adult community members from throughout West Central Michigan, and talented musicians from area high school music programs. The WCCB is sponsored by Ferris as part of its "Music for Life!" program and presents a series of varied and diverse concerts throughout the concert season.

Pioneer

February 24 & 25, 2007

Female Bonding: Welding students create lifelong careers with training

To see five 20-something women gathered around a table at a college campus is not usual. As they chatter away, laughing and joking, the casual observer would be hard-pressed to guess what sets them apart from the other 4,718 female students at the Big Rapids campus of Ferris State University.

Two juniors, one sophomore and two freshmen. Different backgrounds, but all from Michigan or Ohio. Very much like many of their contemporaries at the school.

But very different. They find the white-hot glow of fusing metal soothing.

Juniors Erika Kovach and Amanda D'Arcy, sophomore Ashley McElwain, and freshmen Carley Krosschell and Randi Gelisse - are the only five women of the 135 students in the welding program at Ferris.

Their interest piqued by parents, a friend's sister, a brother, a teacher, or someone else, they began their journey in welding technology in high school.

"It's a stress reliever," McElwain said.

And it pays the bills. The average starting salary of a Ferris graduate with a four-year welding degree is \$54,000. University estimates put the average salary of all graduates since the welding engineering program was begun in 1986 at \$75,000.

"We're kind of able to set our own price;" said D'Arcy. "There was a company on campus offering \$5 less than everybody else, and everybody turned them down."

Even before graduation, welding students can find paid internships offering \$15 to \$20 an hour, McElwain said.

Their interest in a traditionally male field - and one that is still male-dominated - has made them the minority in their classes and lab sessions. It's not uncommon for each of them to be the only woman in the room during lab time. Still, they haven't had to face serious teasing or discrimination.

"You get it once in a while, but you know they're just teasing," McElwain said. "The guys are like a whole bunch of brothers. ... I know I can count on them for pretty much anything. It's a family - the teachers treat us like we're their own daughters."

While they do feel a little pressure not to be the worst in the class, they agree the pressure they're under to achieve is put on them mostly by themselves.

"You get the opportunity to prove yourself," D'Arcy said. "You're one of them - they don't see you as a girl," Gelisse added. It's such a unified, genderless environment that their classmates are often surprised when they dress up.

"I think guys are easier to get along with," D'Arcy said.

Part of the attraction for these five students is a feeling of job security. Often, students in the program have jobs waiting for them when they cross the stage to accept their degree.

"Over 90 percent of our graduates are placed by commencement," said Kenneth Kuk, a welding professor at Ferris for 22 years. "We have 26 seniors - 20 have now signed on the dotted line and they don't graduate until May."

The two-year welding technology program confers an associate's degree and trains students to be welding technicians, supervisors, inspectors and sales representatives. The four-year welding engineering technology program confers a bachelor's degree and prepares students for plant-level welding engineering positions. They are two of the 74 programs at Ferris with 100 percent placement rates for graduates. Between the junior and senior years of the four-year program students are required to complete a paid internship, which often leads to job offers, Kuk said.

Even students in the early years of the program receive offers of work, whether it's summer jobs or internships.

"It's amazing - you don't even know of the company and they're calling you," McElwain said.

Ferris has become more and more well-known for its welding program in the last 20 years, said Jeffrey Carney, welding engineering technology department chair.

"We've got about 350 alumni out there right now," he said. "Now, some of them are in positions where they do the hiring or they come back to recruit. ... It's one reason we have such good placement.

"We're the only four-year program in Michigan and one of five in the United States," Carney said. "Only about 80 four-year welding students graduate every year in the United States and Ferris consistently graduates 25 to 30 of those."

In addition to the starting salary level in the mid-\$50,000 range, graduates have the ability to advance in the industry. The typical career ladder includes starting as senior welding engineer and then moving into a managerial or supervisory position over other plant-level welding engineers, Kuk said.

"What's so phenomenal about this is some 95 percent of our graduates are still in the field," he said. "Almost all of them stay within welding - it speaks to the career progression."

Welding engineers work throughout the country and have many opportunities for overseas assignments. Four-year Ferris graduates alone have had international assignments on six continents and 21 countries, according to university information.

"You pick what state you want to go to and they try to find a job for you," McElwain said.

"Our students are not afraid to relocate," Carney said, referring to a pie chart showing where graduates currently work.

Most four-year graduates now live in the Midwest, but that is changing.

"We put seven in Texas, just this year," Kuk said. "We're sort of an economic indicator - we can tell you what's going on by where we put graduates."

For example, many newly-minted bachelor's degree recipients went to work for military contractors in the 1980s. While many graduates still go to the automotive industry - four of this year's seniors, according to Kuk - construction and construction equipment manufacturing are booming.

"Now, there's a huge up-tick in power plant construction work," Kuk said.

The success of the welding program is no accident. Welding professors at Ferris have a combined 89 years of experience in teaching at Ferris and about 125 years of welding experience, not including their own training, Carney said. Professors go out to vocational classes and centers to recruit students into the program; admissions standards were recently raised to ensure the students entering the program had the ability to succeed, Carney said.

The students say preparation and dedication are keys to success in the program.

"This takes a lot of dedication a week, you're in class over 30 hours a week. They're always prepared for class - they know to bring their textbooks, calculators. People in our program are really prepared."

McElwain noted friends in other programs sometimes don't understand her need to attend every class and lab session. Welding students who fail a class have to wait a full year for it to be offered again.

"You've got to have the drive," Krosschell agreed. "There's no summer classes to make it up."

Even while recognizing the effort needed to succeed, all five women encourage others to try welding.

They believe girls thinking about a technical field or any other male-dominated field should explore their options and not think about traditional stereotypes.

"Go ahead and try," said Kovach. "Your school might offer other technology programs that interest you, too."

To Clarify . . .

Due to a production error with the weekend *Pioneer* story "Female Bonding," a sentence describing the career ladder of a welding engineering graduate was printed incorrectly. It should have read, "The typical career ladder includes starting as a welding engineer, promotion to senior welding engineer and then moving into a managerial or supervisory position over other plant-level welding engineers, Kuk said." Kuk is Kenneth Kuk, a welding professor at Ferris State University. Errors also occurred in the pull-out box "Welding Program Graduates." The salary figure of \$75,000/year should have been labeled "Average salary of all graduates since 1986." The 90 percent placement number should have been labeled "Percentage of students placed by graduation."

Pioneer

February 24 & 25, 2007

Eating disorders discussed

Ferris to offer information on disorder symptoms, prevention and treatment to the Big Rapids area.

About 24 million U.S. citizens suffer from an eating disorder and Ferris State University counselors want to provide help to those in the Big Rapids area.

As part of National Eating Disorder Awareness Week, from Monday to March 3, the campus counselors will have a table set up from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, in the Rankin Center Constitution Room, 129. Information pamphlets and questionnaires will be available.

"This is one of the biggest things that we see people for," said Paul Sullivan, head of Ferris' counseling department.

While the event is geared mainly toward students, Sullivan said anyone who is concerned about themselves or an acquaintance can get information.

"There's a lot of this going on out there and we will provide information to anyone who wants it," Sullivan said.

Also, people can take an online survey, to see if they fall into trends related to eating disorders.

"The online survey is nice because people can do it in the privacy of their own homes," Sullivan said. "They might not feel comfortable doing something like this in the middle of the Rankin Center atrium, so it gives them another option."

To take the online survey, visit www.mentalhealth.org/screening.

Eating disorders are common in college-aged people because of changes in their life styles, said Douglas Jacobs, president of Screening for Mental Health Inc., which provides the online survey.

"Adjusting to college life can be difficult for many and the desire to fit in can make students susceptible to eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia and compulsive overeating," Jacobs said. "The goal of the screening event is to reduce the stigma attached to eating disorders and let students know that help is available."

Anorexia commonly refers to a person who doesn't consume enough calories to maintain normal body function, causing rapid weight loss. The person often feels "fat" and has a skewed self image, according to information from the Eating Disorders Professional League of Michigan. Bulimia refers to someone often eating larger than normal quantities of food and then inducing vomiting. The process is often done secretly and with guilty. Binge eating is when someone eats large quantities of food and causes their weight to go up.

"Usually if the person doesn't have an eating disorder, then a friend or roommate does," Sullivan said. "We really hope being there to handout information can help."

For more information, visit www.health-screening.org

Pioneer

February 26, 2007

Walk for Warmth fails to meet goal

In order to meet its goal of \$13,500, more fund-raisers are planned for this year.

Jeslyn Cedeno wasn't able to finish the entire two-mile length of the 16th annual Walk for Warmth in Big Rapids Saturday, but she gave it her all.

Cedeno circled the indoor track of the Ferris State University Student Recreation Center only three times before being carried off. She completed nearly a tenth of a mile - not bad for her age. Cedeno is 16 months old. She accompanied her grandmother, Therese Bechler, to the Saturday fund-raiser for the Mecosta County chapter of Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency.

Cedeno was the youngest person to actually walk in the event, said, Jo Ann Longcor, agency spokesperson. Longcor estimated the walk brought in \$2,700, far less than the \$9,358 raised last year.

This year, an estimated 217 people participated in the walk, also down from last year's total of about 300.

"I'm not sure if it's the economy or just what it is," Longcor said. "I do know we're going to have other fund-raisers and we're going to do great with those and meet our goal."

In Mecosta County, the goal is to raise a total of \$13,500 from the walk and other fund-raisers throughout the year. All money raised in Mecosta County stays in the county to help families pay their heating bills. Last year, the local agency helped 58 families experiencing a heat-related emergency with a combined total of \$17,957 in heating bills.

In addition to Cedeno and her grandmother, walkers included 167 Ferris students and a variety of community members. Nine-month-old Paulgreggory Bunkercass took part from the comfort of his stroller, pushed by his parents, Joe and Rebecca Bunkercass of Big Rapids.

Kloe, 6, and Devon Snyder, 9, came all the way from Detroit to walk with their grandmother, Betty Snyder.

"They brought almost \$300," Betty said. "They wanted to help."

While Longcor said Cedeno was the youngest walker, she said' Subinah Howe, 87 of Morley, was probably the oldest.

Howe has participated in the event for several years to help people who need assistance with their heat bills. She wishes more people were involved with the event. "People don't realize what Walk for Warmth is," Howe said. "In my church, I had to get up and explain what Walk for Warmth was."

Howe walks every day, she said. This year, in particular, she is keenly aware of what families without heat have to face.

"This winter, I've been walking on the treadmill - the cold gets to me," she said.

Pioneer

February 26, 2007

FSU fresh from win

Rube Goldberg Machine moves on to national contest.

How many steps does it take to squeeze and pour orange juice? For the Ferris State University Rube Goldberg Machine Contest team, the answer is 345.

Saturday afternoon, the Ferris team won the regional competition against Michigan Technological University. The prize? A trip to Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., to compete in the national Rube Goldberg Machine Contest on March 31.

"Now, it's back to the lab and start processing all the information we've gained (in regionals)," said Tom Sybrandy, team captain.

For the contest, teams had to build a machine that would squeeze orange juice into a pitcher and pour the juice into a glass in 20 or more steps. The contest is named after cartoonist Reuben Lucius Goldberg, who died in 1970. Goldberg's cartoons showed complex machines designed to complete simple tasks in order to showcase his belief that most people prefer to do things the hard way, rather than by the simplest method.

The contest began between two engineering fraternities at Purdue and has since grown to include teams from across the country. Ferris has entered the competition each year for the past four, taking second place at the national level twice. Purdue has always captured the top spot, said Thomas Hollen, team advisor and Ferris professor of mechanical engineering.

This year, the Ferris team will attempt to take two of Purdue's achievements: the top spot in the national competition and the world record for the most steps used by a machine in the contest, Hollen said. The record could be won with a perfect run in competition, he said.

"I'm very pleased we get to go to nationals and get a shot at beating Purdue," Hollen said. "We might be able to do it, if we can make the machine work for two perfect runs."

During competition Saturday, the Ferris team experienced trouble with some of the switches in the machine. The switches were made entirely by the team members and were beginning to show some wear, Sybrandy said. In addition to several "touches," or times when team members had to manually complete a step, the Ferris team voided one run because parts of the machine went off too soon. Every "touch" is a point deduction. One voided run per team is allowed; teams get three chances to have their machine complete two runs.

Work on this year's machine began with the selection of the theme: A toy factory testing each of its toys. The concept was developed a year ago as the team headed back from Purdue following a fourth-place finish, Holten said.

"They spent a lot of time thinking about it over the summer," he said. "Tom, our captain, had a lot of ideas and the general flow of the machine."

Team members began constructing the machine even before the task - squeezing and pouring orange juice - was announced in September.

"What we've learned from Purdue is to build the machine, then work in the task when it comes out. ... You've got to get started early," Hollen said.

Conceptualizing and building complex machines to do simple tasks provides students with a great deal of knowledge, he said. The Ferris machine uses pneumatics, hydraulics, gravity, mechanical and electrical power to complete its 345 steps.

"Students have learned more doing this than in pretty much any class they take," Hollen said. "Some parts of that machine could easily qualify as senior projects."

The machine must complete the task twice for judges, with teams having an opportunity to redo one run.

While this is the fourth year Ferris has entered the contest, it is the first time the team has had competition in regionals.

This is Michigan Tech's first year in the competition. Emily Harrison, a member of the school's student chapter of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, initiated the entry.

Her high school has become involved with the secondary education portion of the contest. Despite losing the regional, Harrison is pleased with her team's performance.

"We're all really happy," she said. "This is a very intense project. ... We built it between Christmas break and now. The fact that we got it up, transported it about 500 miles, rebuilt it and it ran - we couldn't be more pleased about it."

The Michigan Tech team had a perfect run on the second try. Their machine had 21 steps. Seeing the Ferris machine and talking with the Bulldog team was very educational for Harrison and her team.

"This has been a total learning experience," she said. "We've learned a lot this whole time and a lot this morning."

Pioneer

February 26, 2007

Crime down at Ferris for fifth straight year

Ferris State University is steadily becoming a safer place for its students and staff with crime decreasing in 2006 for the fifth straight year.

Marty Bledsoe, chief of the university's department of public safety, said 2006 showed an overall 9 percent drop over the previous year. Crimes against people decreased 15 percent and property crimes were down by 5 percent, Bledsoe said.

"There are things that my officers can do to deter crime, such as patrolling but I think we're also seeing a more responsible community where people are making better choices," Bledsoe said. "This really is a joint effort.

"While we, in the department of public safety, are proud of what we've done, I don't want to diminish the relationships we have with area departments and with the administration."

Bledsoe attributes the crime decrease to many factors, including a higher quality of students and increased cooperation between his department and the university's leaders.

It's important that students and staff feel and live safer, but warned them not to take things lightly, he said.

"People still need to be aware of their relationships, because that's where a lot of crimes happen and people need to be aware of their surroundings and try not to put themselves in a situation where a crime might occur," Bledsoe said.

He recommends people not leave items visible in their cars that thieves might want and to never leave belongings unattended on campus.

"We are certainly happy that crime is down ... but we still want people to be aware of their actions," Bledsoe said.

University President David Eisler said he is pleased campus crime is on the downfall.

"When I talk with students and parents about the campus, we talk about the safety and this is a welcoming thought to the community," Eisler said. "Parents, especially those of college students (right out of high school), are looking for a place where their children will be safe."

Like Bledsoe, Eisler said a "conscious effort" of campus administrators to admit students who are geared toward their studies.

"With students who are more academically prepared ... we have been seeing this change in crime (statistics)," Eisler said.

Eisler also echoed Bledsoe's statements that students still need to be wise to what is going on around them.

"(Ferris) is like all public places, where all people need to be mindful," Eisler said.

Pioneer (Editorial)

February 27, 2007

(Also ran in The Daily News of Greenville on 2/21/07)

Why is it spend, spend, spend at many state schools?

Grand Valley State University has fired the most recent building project salvo among Michigan's colleges.

The university has announced plans to expand the Kirkhof student activity center. The \$6.2 million addition will be the latest construction project planned for the school's Allendale and Grand Rapids campuses. The total price tag? About \$100 million.

The news out of Allendale was the latest in a series of multimillion-dollar building projects going on at many of the state's public universities.

We're left with one looming question: Where is all this money coming from? Right now Michigan's economy remains mired in red while most of the rest of the country is enjoying a rebound.

For example, Forbes magazine released a list of the Best U.S. Cities for Jobs. Five factors were taken into consideration - job growth, income growth, unemployment rate, median household income and cost of living. The top 10 locations were spread out among Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, North Carolina, Utah and the Washington, D.C., area.

Meanwhile, the Michigan communities of Dearborn, Detroit, Farmington Hills, Grand Rapids, Warren and Wyoming all ranked among the country's bottom 10. Yet institutions of higher learning in these parts are spending millions of dollars on new buildings.

We'd like to give Grand Valley State the benefit of the doubt. The Grand Rapids area is one of the state's few bright spots. And just because the state is at the job desirability bottom doesn't mean we shouldn't be doing things to improve this.

Like Montcalm Community College's current projects, perhaps this project is one of the right things. But it's still a lot of money. This all comes in the wake of a story several weeks ago about a situation at the University of Michigan, where an internal survey commissioned by President Mary Sue Coleman and the Board of Regents produced several unsettling revelations.

It discovered that most of the rooms in newly constructed buildings are used only rarely, that many buildings are empty before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m., and that just 14.4 percent of class sections meet on Fridays in the school's largest college.

The reason given? Faculty and-or students don't like early morning, late-afternoon or Friday classes. So we're building nicer, sometimes unnecessary castles, filled with spoiled teachers and students, and with money scarce in this state?

Pioneer

February 28, 2007

Fulbright Foreign Lecture set

The 13th annual Fulbright Foreign Lecture will take place on March 1 at Ferris State University. Dr. Liljana Elverskog, a native of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, will deliver the lecture entitled "Arabic: The Language of God and Man."

All members of the campus and Big Rapids communities are invited to attend the free lecture from 4 to 5 p.m. in room 111 of the Ferris business building. Dr. Elverskog is currently teaching Arabic at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. She earned her B.A. at the University of Sarajevo in Language and Literature in both Arabic and English. Her graduate studies in Sudan in Africa led to a M.A. degree in 1987 from the Khartoum International Institute for Arabic Language. She holds a Ph.D. from Indiana University in Arabic Linguistics.

She has taught, Arabic at the University of Texas-Austin, Indiana University, University of California-Santa Barbara, Middlebury College and Brown University.

In addition to teaching, she has worked as a translator, language consultant, and interpreter for academic, private, and government organizations and institutions. She has received numerous teaching and language awards, and has also been recognized for starting Arabic language programs at a number of colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

In addition to the lecture on March 1, Elverskog will be available for classroom and seminar lectures on March 2. She is prepared to speak on topics related to Arabic language, teaching, cultures where Arabic is spoken and her experiences in these countries.

ES Magazine
February 28, 2007

Mechanical system industry leaders and educators form Green Mechanical Council

Mechanical system industry manufacturers, labor unions, contractor organizations, educators, students, consultants, individual contractors, and others have joined together to form the Green Mechanical Council (GreenMech). GreenMech, an international not-for-profit organization, was formed in part, "To bring bold, decisive, and innovative action to the critical question of global warming. GreenMech members believe that no less than the planet's future is at stake," according to Dan Chiles, GreenMech chairman of the board of directors.

Tom Meyer, executive director, describes GreenMech as a "Clearing house of information and education for designers, installers, and service techs who deal with mechanical systems every day. They are the people who can have the most immediate effect on reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. We give them the information to take green components, to make them into a green system and to commission and service the systems to keep them green.

"One of the benefits to manufacturer involvement is there is a feedback communication from the field to the manufacturers making practical changes and improvements to products based on field experience and ingenuity. It's a win-win deal," Meyer added. "There is no doubt the world we know will change. GreenMech was formed to ensure the change is one the world can live with."

The organization's founding members include: Watts-Radiant, HVAC Excellence, Legend Valve, Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA), Mechanical Service Contractors of America (MSCA), Mechanical Contractors Education and Research Foundation (MCERF), the FloorHeat Company, the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA), and Ferris State University.

GreenMech issued a challenge to the structural mechanical system industry during a press conference held at the AHR Expo in Dallas. "Almost every mechanical system in the 5 million commercial buildings and 125 million homes in the U.S. are obsolete," according to Chiles. "The rising price of fuels, the scarcity of fresh water, the growing waste streams and our rising impact on global warming demand improvements in our homes and our businesses."

"This critical work cannot be done in China or Bangladesh. It cannot be done in Mexico or Vietnam. It will be done house by house, building by building by trained North American contractors," he added. "We can't all build new buildings on green grassy hilltops, so we have to improve what we've got. This is hard and it's complex work, and it will require the cooperation of manufacturers, designers, installers, service techs, educators, and the government."

Chiles said the organization joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the USGBC and others in rising to the "2030 Challenge." "We accept the challenge to meet building performance targets of a reduction in fossil fuel consumption by 60% before 2010 stepping by decade to a goal of totally carbon neutral buildings by 2030."

"The mechanical system industry can significantly contribute to meeting the carbon reduction challenge sooner and more effectively than any other industry. We have the designers, installers, and service technicians in position," he concluded. The organization's website can be accessed at www.greenmech.org/.

Additionally, as a founding member of the Green Mechanical Council, HVAC Excellence announced that during this year's review of their exams they will add green technology and additional energy efficiency questions wherever they may be applicable. In addition to the review, HVAC Excellence has added "Combustion Analysis" to its Professional Level and Master Specialist certifications. An in depth understanding of the combustion process and the proper adjustments of the fuel/air mixture will reduce fuel consumption and maximize efficiency.

HVAC Excellence is also completing pilot testing of its "High SEER" competency Professional Level certification, which is scheduled for general release in the spring. Finally, HVAC Excellence reached a new milestone on December 18, 2006 by certifying its 50,000th technician. Now they would like to challenge the industry to reach a new milestone; reduce HVAC energy consumption by 12% within 3 years. Competent contractors and technicians can meet, and possibly exceed this goal. For additional addition information contact HVAC Excellence at 1-800-394-5268 or visit www.hvacexcellence.org

Grand Rapids Press

February 28, 2007

Local campuses on crime watch: making information public is key to keeping down violence, officials

"When a Grand Rapids Community College student was sexually assaulted in a parking ramp one day more than a year ago, administrators used posters and e-mail warnings to encourage professors and students to be more watchful.

At Aquinas College, a string of muggings in neighboring Easttown in 2005 prompted administrators to notify students via e-mail, offering them rides to and from campus and alerting them to an increased police presence in the area.

At Grand Valley State University, warnings were published across its Allendale campus last spring after a woman was assaulted in a parking lot.

Violent crimes on college campuses are rare, and administrators say early notifications to students and staff are the key to keeping it that way.

"If there's been some kind of assault that could happen again, (we) let everyone know," said Cindy Kennel, chief of police at GRCC.

This issue is a point of controversy at Eastern Michigan University, where students and faculty this week criticized administrators for with-holding information about the investigation into the death of Laura Dickinson of Hastings.

After the 22-year-old student's body was found in her dorm room Dec. 15, campus authorities told her family no foul play was suspected.

On Friday, investigators and school officials announced a fellow EMU student had been arrested on charges of murder and sexual assault.

Rare cases

The most serious local college-related crimes occurred more than a decade ago. In 1994, a GVSU student fatally shot another student in an off-campus apartment. The slaying was handled by the Ottawa County Sheriffs Department and immediately became public.

In 1995, a Calvin College student was raped on campus and administrators quickly posted "crime alert bulletins" throughout the college and sent letters to all students. A serial rapist later was convicted of the crime and sent to prison.

Under federal law, colleges are required to alert students to ongoing threats, make public a crime log on all reports to campus security and report crime statistics annually. The 1990 Clery Act is named after Lehigh University student Jeanne Clery who was murdered on the

Pennsylvania campus in 1986. After her death, students learned they had not been told about a spate of prior violent crimes.

Public colleges such as GRCC and GVSU have safety departments that investigate serious crimes and call in out-side police agencies as needed. Private schools such as Aquinas have safety offices but work with local police when needed.

Getting information out there School officials say notification is key, even for less-severe incidents. Area colleges keep daily hand-written logs that are available to the public. Some, like GVSU, post weekly logs online and others, including GVSU, Calvin, Aquinas and GRCC, send the information to student newspapers.

"We send notices in the area and through the Internet, tell them to watch for certain persons. The more information they have, the more chances (students) won't walk into dangerous situations," said Tony Nolan, Aquinas' safety director. "Sometimes, it's just common-sense type stuff."

A student's death would be reported to all Calvin students through an "SOS e-mail," said Shirley Hoogstra, the college's vice president for student life. If police were investigating the death, as was the case at EMU, the e-mail would say so, she said.

"You don't want to overly-alarm or under-warn," she said.

Capt. Brandon DeHaan of GVSU's campus police said any death scene is treated as a homicide until the medical examiner determines a cause. Suicides and medical-related deaths have occurred at the school.

GRCC's Kennel said going public with assaults is easy but homicide investigation could be trickier, especially if there is a suspect at large.

Before coming to the college 12 years ago, Kennel, worked for the Wyoming Police for 23 years.

"You don't want (suspects) to have an opportunity to come up with an alibi or to destroy evidence they might have taken from the scene. There's a lot of evidence that could be lost if information is released prematurely," Kennel said.

Crime on campus

Federal law requires public and private universities to report serious crime. Here's what was reported in West Michigan for select categories and campuses in 2005.

	Enrollment	Sex Offenses	Agg. Assault	Burglary	Car Theft
Aquinas	2,235	0	4	5	2
Calvin	4,180	0	0	3	0
Ferris	11,803	1	2	18	2
GRCC	14,144	2	10	10	7
GVSU*	22,063	2	0	4	0
Hope	3,112	2	2	9	0
Kuyper	2,412	0	0	0	0

*Combines Allendale and Grand Rapids campuses. GVSU also reported 176 larcenies. Others do not report larcenies.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

Pioneer

March 1, 2007

Money for the taking

Many scholarship dollars go unspent because local high school students are not applying for the funds.

With scholarship deadlines approaching for high school seniors, concern that all available scholarships will be utilized continues to grow.

Scholarships are open to just about any student who wishes to apply, with varying Grade Point Averages and levels of student achievement requirements. Unfortunately, many scholarships receive little or no applications for a variety of reasons.

"We have tried to make information and access for our scholarships more available through online applications and promotion," said Rita Conrad, chair of the scholarship committee for the Mecosta County Community Foundation. Even if you get one person applying for a scholarship, there are still so many students missing out on scholarship possibilities.

"There are always a couple scholarships that we offer every year that either go unclaimed or only have one or two students apply for. The information is made available by the guidance office at schools, but counselors are too busy to seek out each and every individual student."

Conrad said scholarships are a quick way of helping students finance college, with most "scholarships offering between \$500 and \$1,000 and only requires a couple hours of work from students.

"It's money that you don't have to borrow for college," Conrad said. "If a student applies for and receives a few scholarships, it goes a long way in paying for their college."

Chippewa Hills High School Guidance Counselor Kathleen Gaffner added that a common misconception with scholarships is that students must be toward the top of their academic class to be recipients.

"I think a lot of students misinterpret scholarships and assume that your GPA is the only factor that is considered," Gaffner said. "You don't need a 4.0 (GPA) to get a scholarship. It's a much more holistic process in most cases, involving community service and a lot of other factors."

Big Rapids High School Guidance Counselor Shelly Fortier agreed, saying that the majority of high school seniors can be eligible for scholarships.

"There are scholarships out there for everything from your heritage to where your parents work," Fortier said. "We try very hard to tell them that grades aren't the only factor in deciding who gets a scholarship, but I think many of them just assume that scholarships are for the smartest students."

In fact, of the 10 scholarships available by the MCCF, many of them require a minimum GPA of 2.5 and often require no financial information. The MCCF scholarships are as follows:

- Scott D. Anderson Scholarships for Ferris State University's College of Technology;
- Scott D. Anderson Scholarship for Morley Stanwood High School graduates;
- Barry Barratt Scholarship for Big Rapids High School graduates;
- Robert D. Miller Scholarship for Mecosta-Osceola Career Center students;
- Alice Stephenson Schuberg Scholarship for Mecosta County high school graduates for Ferris State University in education;
- Trainor-Schinderle Scholarship for Mecosta County residents for Franciscan University in Stubenville Ohio, or Ave Maria University in Naples, Fla.
- Class of 1974 Linda Willette Scholarship for Big Rapids High School graduates (Equestrian Club or Cheerleader participation);
- Jacob and Gertrude VanDyke Scholarship \$1000 for health care fields. Mecosta County high school graduates or students in the Career Center's health occupations program or the Math/Science/Technology program;
- Harold Boerma Eagle Scout Scholarship for members of Boy Scout Troop No. 114; and
- STAGE-M Leon Keys Scholarship for high school students attending a fine arts camp.

Another reason students don't apply for scholarships is because they are already overwhelmed with the responsibilities of school and extra curricular activities.

"Scholarships can be pretty demanding for kids who are involved in sports, clubs and community service," Fortier said. "Sometimes they just can't find the time to complete all of those applications."

Conrad said that applying for scholarships also is a good way of preparing for the future and plays a factor in teaching responsibility.

"Filling out applications, being held responsible for seeking letters of endorsement and writing essays can be wonderful teaching tools," Conrad said.

"Students are going to go through similar processes when they apply for jobs. It teaches them a good deal of responsibility."

For more information about MCCF scholarships, contact Conrad at (231) 796-2417. Additional information about MCCF, applications and scholarships can be found at www.mccf.us.

Pioneer

March 1, 2007

Universities charging more in fees

Tuition and fees collected at Michigan's 15 public universities rose an average of 37 percent over a four-year period ending with the 2005-06 fiscal year, according to a state audit released Wednesday.

The higher prices at Michigan universities at least in part are because of declining state taxpayer aid. State government appropriations going to universities declined by about 12 percent in the same period, and schools made up the difference with higher prices charged to students.

Some of the increased costs of attending a university came in new fees, which aren't as immediately apparent to students applying to attend a particular school. Some universities held tuition increases fairly well in check, but raised fees charged for items such as technology, class registration and student activity centers.

The average cost of tuition and fees for an undergraduate who was a state resident in 2004-05 ranged from \$4,952 at Saginaw Valley State University to \$9,402 at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

The price of attending Michigan's 15 public universities has drawn scrutiny from both inside and outside the state in recent years.

Policymakers want to keep tuition and fees affordable to give more people a chance to go to college, which they say would boost the economy by providing a better-educated work force.

Pioneer

March 3&4, 2007

Big game hunter sets sights on new challenge to tame

Within the last few weeks, big-game hunter Roger Card reached the peak of a mountain he set himself to climb nearly 10 years ago. At the Safari Club International Convention in Reno, Nevada, Card received his World Hunting Ring, the culmination of years of effort and thousands of miles of travel.

But as he reached his goal and joined only 48 other people on earth to ever earn the award, he learned several people had climbed even higher.

Safari Club International added a new tier to its World Hunting Awards program - the World Conservation and Hunting Award, presented for the first time in 2006. The award recognizes hunters who have bagged more than 300 species on six continents, while fulfilling the requirements for 37 other award categories along the way.

"It gives me a reason, a focus to continue hunting different places," Card said. "It's the adventure of going to different countries I haven't been to before because we'll be looking for different animals in different places. I get to travel again, to meet new people."

Still, the knowledge there was another, higher level to achieve did nothing to sap the accomplishment of reaching his goal.

Card and his long-time hunting companion and friend Rodney Merchant traveled to Spain last November to acquire the final three animals needed for the World Hunting Ring.

Hunting in the treacherous Gredos Mountains of Spain, soaked daily with rain and ever cautious of the slightest misstep that would send them tumbling down the steep cliffs, Card and Merchant stalked the final prize - a Gredos Ibex.

The pair had decided long ago that the final hunt would be one worthy of the prize, Merchant said. This trek up the mountain on horseback fit the description.

After a morning of sitting and glassing - scanning the area with binoculars - the guides found the ibex first. They directed Card's attention to a large ram 300 meters below and he dropped the animal with one shot.

For the first few seconds, the knowledge he'd achieved his goal soaked into Card's mind.

"I expected to see him jumping up and down, giving a King Kong yell, and he didn't - he just kind of stood up," Merchant said. "It was kind of strange, the 'Wow, I really did it' (realization). When these things happen, they happen really fast - all of a sudden, the animal's there. It's time and you get it done, almost mechanically."

Once the reality hit, so did the emotion.

"We're up in the mountains, in Spain, and I let out a war whoop they could hear halfway to Madrid," Card said, grinning ear-to-ear. "We were so excited.

"After the celebration, that's when we thought about Deb and we cried," said Card, referring to his late wife, who passed away suddenly due to illness. "She wanted me to have this thing so badly. She sacrificed hunts so I could go."

Two months later, the excitement was back, but with one difference - Card had time to get nervous.

"Everybody was congratulating me (at the convention). About half of them knew I was getting the award, and they'd say, 'Be sure to stop back and so we can see the ring,'" he said.

On awards day, it was even worse.

"Thursday, all day, I had jitters, 'I was so excited,'" Card said. "The excitement was definitely mounting all day

At a special reception for the five World Hunting Award Ring recipients and trophy record book contenders, Card finally got to hold the prize he'd sought around the world since 1999.

"They went through several other awards, and then it was time," he said. "I got butterflies ... then I slipped it on my finger. It felt really good."

And heavy. The Superbowl-style ring is about an inch long and nearly an inch wide, made of gold and gemstones. Card's ring has two circles of small diamonds around the edge.

"It's the Superbowl of Hunting," Card said "I was the 49th guy in the world to get this - some major, major big-time hunters before me got this. ... It's pretty special."

The physical, financial, emotional and time concerns of achieving the goal had been discussed at the outset, Merchant said. Card has a bad knee due to a hunting accident in Africa.

His late wife encouraged him throughout the planning stages.

"Deb was big on that," Card said. "She'd say, 'Roger, don't go anyplace twice.' We got the map out and made a hunting list. In 1999, we'd go here; in 2000, we'd go there, and so on. We tried to book two years in advance, always."

Merchant joined in the discussion and traveled with Card as he chased his dream.

"Was I able to go with him, was he able to do it - we talked it all over, Merchant said." "This was the culmination of eight years of hunting he's done toward winning this award and I don't know how many countries - some several times.

"It was very emotional. It was the culmination of a lifetime achievement and a really cool thing he did," Merchant said. "I was really proud to be there with him when he finished that."

There are three key components to achieving this level of hunting award, Card said.

"You need the time to do it - an average of six to eight weeks a year," he said. "You need the money and the dedication to put those two together to accomplish the World Hunting Award Ring."

Among the family and friends joining Card in Reno was Matthew Klein, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Ferris, State University.

"I went to support Roger, who has made this major contribution to the university," Klein said. "And, he and I have developed a personal relationship. ... He was just so excited, just so pleased. He was so full of youthful exuberance and excitement - he was ecstatic then and is still ecstatic."

The College of Arts and Sciences is the location for the Card Wildlife Education Center, a museum of animals from around the world. Card established the free-admission museum in 2000 and funds an annual scholarship for students who work there.

Scholarship applicants must be a full-time student at the university, with preference given to applicants majoring in biology, applied biology (environmental track), biology education or recreational leadership management. Applicants must have a minimum high school cumulative grade point average of 3.25 and earn a 3.0 GPA while at Ferris to continue to receive the scholarship.

Recipients of the scholarship work in the wildlife center conducting tours, training volunteers, developing materials for the center's use and delivering out-reach programming at the direction of the faculty coordinator. The scholarship stays with the student for four years at Ferris. Every year, a new scholarship is awarded for a total of four active scholarships at all times.

"Education is something Deb and I so strongly believe in," Card said. "(The wildlife center) is so kids and adults can have the opportunity to go there and see the animals and learn about them. ... We have 5,000 to 6,000 people a year go through that now."

Card finds his reward in seeing the amazed looks on children's faces as they come nose-to-nose with a lion or polar bear. He receives letters and notes from museum patrons thanking him for the facility and telling him what they've learned.

"It's overwhelming," he said.

Now, Card embarks on his next goal, the World Conservation and Hunting Award. This year, he has hunts booked on four continents to pursue the species he needs to join an even more select group.

Grand Rapids Press

March 4, 2007

Big colleges `arrogant': three largest universities want funds separately

Michigan's Big Three universities are asking lawmakers to fund them separately from the state's other universities, a move some fear would hurt smaller schools.

But the bid is far from a done deal.

"Why should the three universities get more? They're all educating students," said state Rep. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland. "Why do they feel they deserve more money? The big three are ... a little arrogant."

The pitch surfaced last week in the annual round of hearings in which college presidents jockeyed for their share of next year's financial pie.

Presidents for Michigan, Michigan State and Wayne State universities lobbied legislators to split their money into a different pot from other universities.

Already they get the lion's share of higher education appropriations. This year, the three got 57 percent of the total.

"It's important to recognize the unique - and I don't use that term lightly - impact and contribution of the research universities," said Terry Denbow, MSU's vice president for university relations.

The three universities have historically received more money because they focus on expensive research programs. But rapid enrollment increases at other universities have them clamoring for more money, too.

The discussion should focus on how to get more money for all universities, not dividing the existing pot, said Matt McLogan, GVSU's vice president for university relations.

"Public interest is best served when universities find ways to cooperate," he said.

State Rep. David Agema, a member of the subcommittee overseeing appropriations, also would like to see a per-pupil system in which universities are rewarded for efficiency, training, and keeping a work force in Michigan.

"Is it right for the state of Michigan to pay for people that come, study and then leave again?" asked Agema, R-Grandville.

Research universities pay their presidents generous salaries and benefits, while smaller institutions are more efficient, he added.

"Grand Valley and Central have done everything efficiently, and they're being punished for it," he said.

Kuipers said he is not sure any changes will come from the universities' lobbying, but had a warning.

"If someone is going to get more, someone is going to get less," he said.

By The Numbers

How state funds are distributed to Michigan's public universities. The statewide average is \$5,309 with a total of \$1.46 billion being spent

University	Per Student	Total	*Percent
Central	\$3,844	\$82.4	5.6
Eastern	\$4,126	\$78.2	5.3
Ferris	\$4,745	\$50	3.4
Grand Valley	\$3,340	\$64.8	4.4
Lake Superior	\$4,990	\$12.0	0.9
Michigan State	\$6,984	\$292.2	20
Michigan Tech.	\$8,298	\$49.2	3.4
Northern	\$5,508	\$46.4	3.2
Oakland	\$3,788	\$52	3.6
Saginaw Valley	\$3,775	\$28.9	2
Michigan	\$8,288	\$325.8	22
U-M Dearborn	\$4,088	\$25.5	1.7
U-M Flint	\$4,355	\$21.5	1.5
Western	\$4,702	\$112.9	7.7
Wayne	\$8,818	\$220	15

*Total is in millions of dollars; Percent is of state's total distribution.

Grand Rapids Press

March 4, 2007

Exhibit's images hold a mirror to our faces

The exhibit "Them: Images of Separation" addresses discrimination in the context of bias leveled at many groups.

Blacks, Poles, Mexicans, Irish, Asians, Jews and Native Americans are targeted by the hateful, mostly commercial, items on display. So are women, gays, Middle Easterners and low-income whites.

On view in Grand Valley State University's Art Gallery through March 21, the traveling exhibit was organized by Ferris State University's Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, a courageous, regional defender of tolerance.

Items in the Ferris museum, as in the exhibit, are postcards, souvenirs, toys, games, T-shirts, bumper stickers and other everyday objects whose familiarity may fog their heinous nature.

The Grand Valley exhibit's title, "Them," references a defensive, us-versus-them mentality, text explains. Suspicion and demonization are easy, protective responses to threats posed by others' differences, be they in looks, dress, language, customs or beliefs.

Although the exhibit never questions root causes, the displayed objects may be seen as manifesting supreme personal insecurity. Worse, many of the items obviously and cynically have been created to turn quick profits; manufacturers, whatever their true beliefs, have courted and provoked potential buyers' basest impulses.

Items date from the turn of the 20th century to today. Among the oldest is a piece of sheet music for "Stay in Your Own Backyard," a popular vaudeville song - doubtless performed by a white singer in blackface - espousing racial discrimination.

Later items include a "Chinese Honeymoon" hand towel and, from the 1940s, five toy sets of "Professional Character Makeup." The miniature pots of face paint in the sets are labeled "Minstrel," "Zulu," "Indian," "Chinese" and "Mexican."

Viewers of a certain age may find childhood nostalgia soothes somewhat the outrageousness of the makeup kits. But to other, contemporary items, many for sale on the Internet, visitors can register no such tranquilized response.

One contemporary item is a faux movie poster for an epic, "Die! Raghead Die!" Another is a CD, "Ethnic Cleansing: The Game." A set of novelty "Trash Talker Dolls" caricatures a variety of minorities. A Halloween costume, "Frank the Tank," includes a padded, flesh-colored torso, hat, wig and "Bubba teeth." That these and other items find buyers seems unconscionable. But decency survives in America, the exhibit also shows.

One display documents the lynching of a 19-year-old African American, Michael Donald, and the subsequent apprehension of his killers. The display also documents a successful suit

brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center against the killers, the United Klans of America. As a result of the suit, the Klan had to pay \$7 million to the Donald family and was bankrupted.

That the chain of hatred can be broken is the message "Them" delivers. Visitors will leave the exhibit shaken but inspired.

Detroit free Press

March, 5, 2007

Expect tuition to go up

Tired of the sticker shock that comes each summer when the state's universities announce their tuition rates for the upcoming school year?

Well, prepare yourself.

Even if Michigan's 15 public universities get a boost in state funding this year, university officials say tuition is still likely to go up -- albeit probably not as much as the rates in 2005-06, which averaged 12%.

The possibility has some students wondering why.

"When you're talking about students who have to work full time just to go to school part time ... we can't take another tuition increase or another fee," said Cindy Chidi, a 20-year-old junior from Detroit who is studying nutrition and food science at Wayne State University.

Michigan's public universities lost about 12% of their funding -- or \$200 million - from the 2001-02 to 2005-06 fiscal years. At the same time, they netted an average of 37% more -- \$739 million -- in tuition and fees, according to a state audit released last week.

Educators say the disproportionate increase in tuition and fees is caused by costs rising faster than universities' ability to control them.

They cite sharp increases in health insurance premiums for employees, skyrocketing energy costs and the price of remaining competitive with other universities in hiring.

Energy costs have nearly doubled in the last five years, university officials said, and health insurance premiums are up 7.7% this year, the Washington-based National Coalition on Health Care said.

Funding increases rare

Michigan's struggling economy has resulted in universities receiving only one funding increase in the last five years. That was for this fiscal year, when schools got a 3% boost, roughly the rate of inflation.

State universities are funded mostly from four sources: state appropriations, student tuition and fees, grants used to cover expenses for certain research projects, and a small fraction from other sources.

At the University of Michigan, for example, \$1.1 billion of this year's \$1.3-billion general fund budget comes from state appropriations and student tuition and fees. So when one of its two main sources of revenue is slashed, the other must be raised to balance it, said Phil Hanlon, U-M's associate provost for academic and budgetary affairs.

To cut costs at U-M, floors aren't being swept as often, and garbage might linger in trash cans longer to cut back on maintenance costs, Hanlon said.

Some class sizes are larger than they were five years ago.

As part of the cost cutting in the 2004-05 fiscal year, the political science department nearly doubled class sizes in some of its upper-division courses, from 45 students to 80.

Some courses with low enrollment were cut.

The university also has looked to reduce energy costs by installing more-efficient glass and beefing up insulation. In 2003, the most recent year for which data were available, U-M saved \$53,000 on its Energy Star program.

That hasn't been enough to balance the budget. In five years, the share of the general fund that was provided by the state for U-M's Ann Arbor campus shrunk from \$363.6 million to \$325.8 million.

"We do everything we can to hold costs down," Hanlon said.

Remaining competitive with the top colleges around the world also does not come cheap, Hanlon said, adding that U-M recently hired a Princeton physicist who works on solid-state electronics and new generation microprocessors.

"To lure him here, we spent millions of dollars outfitting the right kind of labs. It will have an enormous benefit to our research mission, but it won't boost our bottom line," Hanlon said.

Worse than national average

Compared with tuition increases at public universities in other states, the increases at Michigan's schools are higher than the national average, said Edward Elmendorf, senior vice president of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

He cited a 2006 College Board study that shows the national average for in-state undergraduate tuition at a four-year public university at \$5,836 this school year. In Michigan, the average student pays \$7,661, the study found.

"We take a look at appropriations because it is the single factor that makes a difference in what universities and colleges charge for tuition," he said, noting that last year, Michigan's tuition increases were the third highest in the nation behind Colorado and Kentucky.

Appropriations, meanwhile, are among the lowest.

"Only three states have increased their support for higher education less than Michigan in the last 10 years, and that's Colorado, Iowa and West Virginia," said Mike Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has proposed a 2.5% increase for the state's universities in her budget for the 2007-08 budget year.

But many are skeptical about whether lawmakers can come through on that recommendation. With a shortfall of nearly \$900 million in this year's state budget and a potential \$3-billion gap in next year's budget, the Legislature is trying to make cuts just to break even.

Nancy Barrett, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at WSU, said that even if an increase comes through for next year, "I can't guarantee what our board is going to do, but I think it's fair to say there's going to be some increase."

That's not what Ashley Terhune, 23, of Detroit wants to hear.

Relying on financial aid

The WSU senior said she's starting graduate school next year, and even \$5 in extra costs makes a difference. That money, she said, could buy milk and a box of cereal that would provide five meals.

"My financial aid, when I first started here, it covered everything. Now, it doesn't," said Terhune, who works 32 hours a week and is taking four classes this semester.

While the added expenses are difficult for many students to take on, most university officials said tuition increases are paired with rising levels of financial aid.

But even with financial aid, many families think they just can't afford the cost of college.

A 2003 congressional report titled "The College Cost Crisis" found that 48% of eligible high school graduates in America said they can't afford to attend a four-year college or university.

And cost keeps 22% of eligible students from attending college at all, said the report, which was compiled by the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness.

"At this rate, by the end of the decade, more than 2 million college-qualified students will be completely denied the opportunity for postsecondary education," the report said.