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The Grand Rapids Press

November 29, 2005

WMU's free housing offer rankles those left out

GRAND RAPIDS -- Jane Vogel has no "ill will" toward Western Michigan University. The school gave scholarships to her freshman daughter, Amanda that no other campus matched.

But when Vogel hears about free housing next year for Kalamazoo high school graduates, she wishes WMU would share the gravy.

"It's expensive to stay down there," the Grand Rapids woman said. "I can see not making it free for everyone, but cutting it in half would be nice. Do it for neighboring cities."

WMU is offering free food and lodging for recipients of the Kalamazoo Promise, a scholarship that covers tuition and fees for graduates of Kalamazoo Public Schools.

The graduates can take their prize to any Michigan public college, compliments of wealthy donors in Kalamazoo. WMU hopes to keep many of those homegrown students with its housing offer, even if it might disappoint others who come from elsewhere.

"Nothing is fair in life. I don't mean to sound cavalier," said John Beacon, WMU's vice provost for enrollment management.

"We have a responsibility to support this venture," he said, referring to a way to complement the Kalamazoo Promise. "We have been in the back yard for more than a century. We are part of this community."

The offer is substantial: The price of living in a WMU residence hall is \$6,700 a year.

Wayne State University is cutting its dorm rate in half to lure Kalamazoo graduates to Detroit. Grand Valley State University and Central Michigan University will not join the bidding war. Ferris State University said it has nothing extraordinary to offer "at this time."

"We wonder if it's wise to offer incentives to a select group," CMU spokesman Steve Smith said. "Most students make a decision based on courses and what kind of degree they want to get."

So how will WMU afford it? Kalamazoo freshmen who accept free housing still will be required to fill out a federal financial-aid application. If they are entitled to aid, based on family income, or other scholarships, the school will put the money toward food and lodging.

"It provides us with flexibility," Beacon said.

No carrot will be offered at GVSU. Demand for 5,000 beds typically exceeds supply at the Allendale Township school.

GVSU this fall had nearly five times the number of applicants for its 3,400-student freshman class, said Matt McLogan, vice president for university relations.

The school will send a letter to seniors describing ways to pay for housing and other costs not covered by the Kalamazoo Promise.

"We want to make sure they understand why Grand Valley's a great value and what we can offer," McLogan said.

Pioneer

November 30, 2005

AIDS Quilt to be on display through Thursday

BIG RAPIDS - A portion of one of the world's largest memorials, the AIDS Memorial Quilt, went on display Tuesday afternoon in the Rankin Center Dome Room on the campus of Ferris State University.

The floor-to-ceiling display will continue through Thursday, with public viewing from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. today (Wednesday) and 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday, which is World AIDS Day.

Also, individuals will be able to purchase AIDS awareness ribbons today and Thursday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. in the Rankin Center Atrium. All proceeds will go to AIDS charity.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt display at the Rankin Center contains 20 12-foot-by-12-foot blocks of eight three-foot-by-six-foot panels each; each panel is in memory of an individual who has died of HIV/AIDS. The display is only a small portion of the 54-ton Quilt, noted NAMES Project volunteer Gary DuBois. The NAMES Project is the organization that cares for and oversees the AIDS Memorial Quilt. DuBois and another volunteer, Michael Cadotte, were on hand in Big Rapids to help set up the local display.

"There will be 20 panels on display, each containing eight panels," DuBois began.

"Which is a tiny, tiny percentage of the entire AIDS Quilt, which is also a tiny

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November 30, 2005

FSU's Annual Holiday Band Concert Dec. 4

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University's West Central Concert Band directed by Richard Scott Cohen, FSU'S musical director, will perform on Dec. 4 at 4 p.m. at FSU's Williams Auditorium.

The Annual Holiday Band Concert is a lively assortment of holiday favorites, which this year will include: "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and Leroy Anderson's perennial holiday classic, "Sleigh Ride." Also featured will be, "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" with guest narrator Bruce Dilg and WCCB announcer Donna Smith. The program will include the following works:

- A Celebration of Hanukkah by Howard Rowe;
- A Charlie Brown Christmas by Guaraldi & Mendelson;
- Overture to a Winter Festival by James Curnow;
- Sleigh Ride by Leroy Anderson;
- 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime arr. Robert W. Smith;
- 'Twas the Night Before Christmas arr. Newell H. Long; and
- Winter Wonderland by Smith & Bernard.

Tickets are free and are available in advance or at the door Williams Auditorium ticket office hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the phone number is (231) 591-5600 For assistance with attending this event, please call Williams Auditorium at (231) 591-3676.

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December 2, 2005

History of Mecosta County presentations

BIG RAPIDS - For those who have always wondered about the history of Mecosta County, now is the chance to learn everything about it.

A presentation on the history of Mecosta County will be given at Artworks on Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. Three knowledgeable speakers will be covering various topics of interest.

Jim Bruskotter will speak about the beginnings and progress of schools and industries throughout Mecosta. Richard Santer will address the early state roads such as M-20, the arrival of Amish, the foundations of Ferris State University and the early women of Mecosta. Jim Wood will speak about the earliest families in Mecosta and the first woman physician, Alma Hutchinson.

The community is invited to attend.

The Detroit News

December 5, 2005

Macomb doesn't need its own university

But county does need more focus on getting its children educated

Michigan needs more college graduates. But it doesn't need more college campuses.

U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Royal Oak, established a congressional committee to begin the process of bringing a four-year state university to Macomb County. The idea of a new university is off-target. There's still plenty of capacity in the existing 15 state universities, and to build a 16th campus would be wasteful.

But the goal of getting more Macomb residents a college degree is right-on. The county is at the center of the economic transformation that is up-ending Michigan, and the best strategy for Macomb to continue its prosperity is to focus on education.

Can it do that without building its own four-year institution? Certainly. County residents are within easy driving distance of three four-year schools -- Oakland University in Rochester, Wayne State University in Detroit and the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

In addition, Wayne State and Ferris State University have satellite campuses in Macomb County, and Oakland University has a formal arrangement with the very fine Macomb County Community College for a four-year degree program.

Levin, whose district includes part of Macomb County, notes that Macomb is the largest population county in Michigan without a four-year campus. He also contends that Macomb, with only 18 percent of its residents holding a college degree compared with the also dismal 22 percent statewide average, could improve that number with a campus in the county.

Certainly, if Michigan's universities were being sited today, there would likely be fewer in the remote, sparsely populated regions of northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula and more in the densely populated southeast, including Macomb. But those campuses are already built and can't be moved.

Constructing a 16th four-year university in Macomb would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Operating the campus would put an additional strain on the state's higher education budget, which has been steadily cut in recent years.

The state doesn't have the luxury of building a new university.

And at this point, the need is not for new campuses, but rather for more students on those campuses.

Macomb should look at other options -- including encouraging universities to expand their satellite offerings in the county.

And it should also explore ways of better using its excellent community college to encourage high school students and their parents to pursue post-high school training.

More agreements like the ones Macomb Community College has with Oakland University would greatly benefit Macomb students.

Some day, hopefully, Michigan will need more seats in university classrooms and may even get to the point where a new university is needed to meet the explosive demand for higher education.

That will be a good day, but it is 'still a ways off. In the meantime, Macomb County and Michigan should focus on encouraging students to fill the empty seats in existing universities.

The Detroit News

December 6, 2005

Career planning 101

How to give your teen a head start

As the dean of the career-oriented Ferris State University in Big Rapids, William Potter has plenty of experience in preparing kids for the world of work.

But even he was surprised at the sometimes quirky twists in the career paths of his own three sons. After majoring in technical writing (sports information), Potter's youngest son landed an internship with the "CBS Late Show with David Letterman" and then parlayed that into his current job as a graduate assistant in sports administration at Indiana's Ball State University -- the comedian's alma mater.

"The Ball State people saw Mike's resume on the Internet (complete with the David Letterman connection) and contacted him for an interview," says Potter, obviously proud that his son, who is pursuing a master's degree, forged a route -- however roundabout -- into his chosen field.

Now, when advising other parents about their teen's career path, the veteran college administrator says: "You can't predict where it's going to go, so you have to be open and supportive." And, to students, Potter emphasizes: "Follow your heart."

Here are more career-preparation suggestions for students -- and their parents -- offered by several representatives of Michigan colleges, post-secondary programs and businesses.

Take whatever you do well and fashion that into a career, says Ray Green, a sales representative for Analysts International, which provides technology support for industry. "You're going to have to work real hard, so do something you like. Be passionate about your work."

Hands-on experience is crucial, from learning how to fix computers or computer viruses in your basement to building skills through an internship, adds the firm's vice president, Bill Murray.

Incorporate real-world knowledge and interests into teenagers' lives, says Debbie Bayer, a retired police lieutenant, mother of five and director of an emergency services training center (CREST) at Oakland Community College in Auburn Hills.

For teens who balk at reading, she says, "Quit throwing a 'Romeo and Juliet' novel at them and give them something to read that interests them" -- such as a subscription to PC World magazine for someone hooked on video games. "It not only helps them keep up with technology, but they're learning to read good, structured sentences," which, she says, will prove helpful later.

Encourage students in whatever area they're interested in, yet know their interests could change. "What they like now may not be what they like two or four years from now," says Melanie Myers, coordinator of the construction management program at Oakland Community College-Orchard Ridge campus. "And don't assume that college is for everyone. Some students are better-suited for trades management -- and there's nothing wrong with that."

Steer adolescents to volunteer work, says Jean Jernigan, assistant director of membership services for the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants. It not only exposes them to a field, but also lets them see if they're interested enough to pursue a career. "Beyond that, it might be a resume-builder," she says.

Keep a clean record, advises Pamela Newsome of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. "Many teens don't realize that what they do now counts," she says.

"Everything they do today affects their ability to be hired in the future."

The Detroit News

December 7, 2005

Push is on for 4-year college

An advisory committee will begin meeting in the new year to study options for Macomb Co.

Macomb County-- The only obstacle keeping Megan Pavlak from majoring in veterinary medicine at Purdue University after graduating from high school is money.

The 16-year-old Fitzgerald High School senior from Warren has already been accepted, but needs money for tuition, books, and room and board.

She would love an alternative closer to home -- a four-year public university in Macomb County. "The (idea) of having a university here ... it's something big. If it were here, I'd apply."

But that's exactly what may be on the horizon for Macomb County, the most populous county in Michigan -- and the third-most populous in the nation -- without one.

Elected officials who have established a committee to study the issue say a university could increase opportunities for students and improve the local economy. But some others say it may be a waste of money when Macomb already offers several higher education options, such as Macomb Community College and Davenport University, which is private. MCC offers four-year degrees through partnerships with other institutions.

"We're in a very good position to assist in meeting the needs of high school students needing to go on," said Randy Flechsig, president of the private Davenport University, which enrolls 1,500 students at its Warren campus. "The job of all of us ... is to take the resources we have.

"It's more a matter of making sure we're providing the programs and training that our high school graduates need the most to enter meaningful careers."

Officials and educators have talked about establishing a public university in Macomb for years. It would be the state's 16th such institution.

But recent increased efforts by U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Royal Oak, are the result of Gov. Jennifer Granholm's goal of doubling the number of college graduates in the next decade.

Only 18 percent of Macomb County residents 25 and older hold a college degree, which is below the state average of 22 percent. In addition, Macomb County has lost roughly 20,000 manufacturing jobs in the past five years.

"Things are changing in a fundamental way," said state Rep. Fred Miller, D-Mount Clemens, to a group of seniors at Fitzgerald High last week.

"It's less about what you can do and more about what you know."

But it's going to be a challenge because responsibility -- jobs, bills and family -- can interrupt further education, County Commissioner Paul Gielegem said.

Roughly 44 percent of Metro Detroiters ages 16 to 19 were employed in 2002, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's latest statistics.

"That opportunity needs to be here ... in Macomb where it's convenient," Gielegem said.

Todd Nunlee, 17, said it's a good idea.

"It'll open up more opportunities for students to go to college in Macomb," said the Fitzgerald High senior who plans to attend the University of Michigan.

"It's real important -- the more you use college, the better job you'll get."

According to Lt. Gov. John D. Cherry's Commission on Higher Education & Economic Growth report, for each year of college finished, an individual can increase his or her annual income by an average 10 percent.

Sterling Heights resident Dorothy Langan, 50, thinks a public university in Macomb would benefit more than just the high school students.

She has been unemployed by the insurance industry for more than a year and is ready to get a business degree.

"I'll be there," Langan said.

"I think that would be marvelous. It's too much to worry about with a job. You used to be able to get (a job) without one."

Macomb County residents already live within driving distance of three four-year public schools -Oakland University in Rochester, Wayne State University in Detroit and the University of MichiganDearborn.

Additionally, Wayne State and Ferris State University have satellite campuses in Macomb County, and Oakland University recently joined forces with Macomb Community College to offer a four-year degree program.

Jeanne Nicol, director of communication at MCC, said she's pleased there's going to be discussion on higher education.

"Only more good will come out of that," said Nicol, who doesn't believe it will pose competition to the community college.

"The real issue is increasing the availability of higher education options," she said.

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December 10, 2005

FSU RSO, 'March for Peace' show their support to community.

BIG RAPIDS - Two local groups converged Friday along the east and west sides of Northland Drive to show support for their two different causes to motorists passing by.

Supporters of "March for Peace" walked with signs along the west side of the street spreading the message to bring U.S. troops home and end the war in Iraq quickly.

Ferris State University's College Republican Student Organization and other residents marched along the east side of Northland Drive holding signs expressing their support for President George W. Bush and U.S. troops.

According to Mike Miller, who oversees the local RSO, they gathered Friday to show area residents there is support for what is currently happening in Iraq.

"We've seen similar protesting of the war, against the president and the war on terror," Miller said of the March on Peace. "We just want people to know there is more than one side to this issue."

Miller added that the group was primarily showing its support for the war, the president and the troops.

"We can't cut and run," he said. "We need to continue to show our force and strength.

We can't cut and run. We have to show the world we are serious about what we are doing there and we will defeat terrorism."

Reuban Velthouse, a student at FSU, was standing on the east side of Northland Drive waving at those who supported the group with a honk of the car horn or a wave.

"I'm out here to support the war effort and the troops," Velthouse said as he continued to walk "We still need to fulfill our obligations to the Iraqi people. We can't just leave them there alone, I don't think that would be right.

"We just need to keep going until the Iraqis are able to manage their country," Velthouse added.

Allene Long spent the hour marching with a peace flag for passersby to see.

"People need to know that we support the people who are there, but we have no business being there," she said. "I firmly believe in peace and working things out.

"There's got to be a better way to work things out," Long added.

Long says people need to realize our resources when it comes to diplomacy.

"We are entirely old enough and educated enough to make things work," she said. "We are making the entire world unsafe. I think we need to take care of the earth and each other."

Michael Sullivan, who lives in Petoskey and works in Big Rapids, spent the afternoon advocating for the creation of the Department of Peace while participating with "March of Peace."

"I'm trying to gain support for the Department of Peace," he said. "It is cabinet-level position thought up by Dennis Kucinich to have someone sitting at the table with the president to offer more options to the president to choose from."

Sullivan added, "The Department of Peace is to an anti-war organization, but pro-peace. We are hoping to have this position in action within five years."

Abby Wagner, a local resident, believes the wrong message is being perceived about the war in Iraq.

"I think the media has given an overly negative perspective of the war," she said holding a sign saying, "A Winner Never Quits," showing support for the president and the troops.

Wagner believes the legislators and people need to know the good coming from the war effort.

"President Bush has been doing a good job, and we need to support the right people," she added.

"Yes, I am making a difference," she said. "They say, 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing, and we don't want that happening.'"

Dave Meier, who attends FSU, spent Friday showing his support for the troops on the "March for Peace" side of Northland Drive.

"There's a lot of good stuff going on in the world, and I don't think our troops need to be there," he said. "They need to bring them home and support them, unlike our Vietnam veterans who returned to America and were hated for what they did."

"I think everyone needs to show their appreciation to the troops because they are giving up their lives for us," Meier added.

Phil Stich and Fran Alagretto, who have spear-headed the “March for Peace,” were happy of the turn-out Friday.

“I’m so happy with the crowd,” Alagretto said Friday.

Stich believes the U.S. should have never went to Iraq to fight a war.

“We should never have been there in the first place,” he said.

“We are creating more terrorists all the time. There were no terrorists there until we opened the borders and let them in.

“We should have handled the job in Afghanistan first,” Stich stated.

Stich added the organization will continue to march every Friday afternoon.

“We’ll keep doing this every Friday for a while,” he said.

If anyone would like more information on “March for Peace,” contact Stich at (231)591-2569 or Alagretto at (231) 591-5360.

According to Miller, the FSU RSO will continue to show its support as often as possible.

“We will be out here to show the other side,” he added. “We might not be out here every Friday, but we’ll be showing the community there is more to one sided of this issue.”

If you would like more information on the RSO or wish to show your support, call Miller at (231) 591-5221.

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December 10, 2005

FSU Timme building catches on fire

BIG RAPIDS - The Big Rapids Fire Department was called to a structure fire on the Ferris State University campus early Friday morning.

At 3:25 a.m. fire fighters responded to a smoke alarm at the FSU Timme Center for Student Services located at 1201 S. State St.

Approximately \$7,500 of damage was done to the roof of the building as the result of a fire in the ceiling insulation of a mechanical room located on the top floor. Fire Department officials believe the fire was caused by heat from a generator exhaust pipe that ran through the roof.

"Insulation in the ceiling of a mechanical penthouse of the Timme Center ignited after being exposed to the heat of a generator exhaust pipe," Bledsoe said. "The building sustained minor damage to the insulation, roof and protective rubber membrane."

According to FSU Physical Plant Assistant Director Mark Eichenberg, the building is safe to occupy and it's business as usual.

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December 10, 2005

FSU Chemistry Review Club and Big Brothers/Big Sisters provides Thanksgiving dinners

The season for giving: The Ferris State University Chemistry Review Club and the Big Rapids Big Brothers/Big Sisters program provided Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 20 for the families of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. With donations from FSU faculty/staff, help from Julie Doyle, the use of Cafe Ferris assistance from Eta Sigma Delta members, volunteers from the Chemistry Review Club and funding from the Big Brothers Big Sisters board the dinner was a success. Over 30 people were served a delicious Thanksgiving dinner.