

May 21, 2005-May 31, 2005

Media Packet

- **Ferris State University to stage second summer bus tour**
- **Howell KKK auction quieter this time**
- **Ferris thanks Hill-Kennedy**
- **Family honors late Ferris administrator**
- **Ferris Community Summer Band announces concert series**
- **House GOP Higher Ed plan gives more to mid-sized universities (2)**
- **Learning on the farm**
- **Universities' allies lobby lawmakers**
- **MCC, Ferris University debut 4-year degree**

Pioneer

May 23, 2005

Ferris State University to stage second summer bus tour

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University President David Eisler and top administrators will visit nine cities and four community colleges during their second annual Presidential Bus Tour of Michigan.

Eisler and Ferris staff members will spend June 6 to June 9 meeting with alumni, friends and local higher education officials. The initial tour in 2004 introducing Eisler to the state made 16 stops over five days and earned the university a special events award from District V of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

The unique approach to engaging constituents allows Ferris officials to tell their story directly and interact face-to-face with state residents. In addition to discussing academic matters, Ferris staff members in alumni relations, community relations and media relations are able to meet with their counterparts and bolster relationships.

Since 1974, Ferris has taken higher education to the citizens of Michigan through partnerships with local entities, particularly community colleges. With the heightened awareness of the need for education beyond high school and the recent recognition that Michigan lags the nation in baccalaureate degree holders, Ferris has expanded its efforts to offer distinctive baccalaureate-level programming in additional communities. President Eisler and Michael Harris, vice president for academic affairs, have established expanded off-campus programming as a high institutional priority.

The university currently offers certificates and degrees at 19 different sites throughout the state. During the next year, that number will increase to 26 with the addition of programs in Alpena, Auburn Hills, Howell, Livonia, Port Huron, Roscommon and Warren, in partnership with the local community colleges. Through these partnerships, the community college will offer up to three years of the required course work leading to a baccalaureate from Ferris. To complete their bachelor's degrees, students will enroll for 30 or more credits through Ferris, depending upon specific educational backgrounds, making the cost of higher education more affordable.

The tour itinerary starts in Lansing and Detroit the first day, with subsequent stops in Flint, Grand Blanc and Rochester June 7; Warren, Dearborn and Birmingham June 8; and Grand Rapids June 9. The tour also visits Lansing, Mott, Macomb and Grand Rapids Community colleges.

Ferris and community college officials will tour facilities and discuss articulation agreements, sharing resources and mutually beneficial partnerships June 6 from 9 a.m. to noon at Lansing Community College, June 7 at Mott Community College, June 8 at Macomb Community College and June 9 at Grand Rapids Community College.

As part of the tour, Ferris has scheduled five receptions for alumni and friends. A dinner reception will be held June 6 at 7 p.m. at Troppo's in downtown Lansing; a June 7

reception at 2:30 p.m. at the Rochester Elks Club and a dinner reception at 7 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Gateway Center in Flint; a dinner reception June 8 at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham; and a luncheon reception June 9 at Noto's in Grand Rapids. Alumni or friends interested in attending must make advance reservations by calling (231) 591-2345.

Lansing State Journal

May 23, 2005

Howell KKK auction quieter this time

HOWELL - Ron Lehr said he was willing to pay whatever it took to take home two Ku Klux Klan robes from an auction Sunday.

Two hours and \$6,000 on his credit card later, the Howell resident walked away with two black satin robes that belonged to the late KKK Grand Dragon Robert Miles and his wife, Dorothy.

“I am sympathetic to the Klan,” said Lehr, who added he has no affiliation with the KKK.

“It’s freedom of religion. They are just another political group.”

Besides Lehr’s purchase, there was little fanfare at the second auction of KKK memorabilia in this city in four months.

About 50 people showed up at Ole’ Gray Nash Auction Gallery, which is owned by Gary Gray. Some bid on items - mainly books and pamphlets - that once belonged to Miles, who lived near Howell.

Miles died 13 years ago.

Livingston County was the site of several KKK demonstrations and cross burnings in the 1970’s and 1980’s.

Richard Clement of Lansing said he came to the auction because he was curious about the Klan.

“To tell you the truth, I think it’s kind of goofy,” said Clement, who is black. “This is a great nation, and to have this superiority thing is complete garbage.”

On Jan. 29, about 100 people packed the Gray Nash gallery and a few dozen people lined up outside to protest that auction.

But this time around, on a dreary overcast day, there were no protesters.

The event comes five weeks after a larger KKK auction in Mason was canceled by Gray.

Howell City Manager Shea Charles said there is a level of disdain and disgust on the community’s part for Gray.

“He’s sending a message, and the message from our community (back to him) is that he’s not welcome,” Charles said last week.

Gray staunchly defended the auction as a sale of historical items: “Because Miles was a Klan member, all his stuff must be hate? They’re historical items.”

Gray said last week he’s not sure if he’ll sell more Klan items in the future, given the controversy his two auctions have attracted.

“It’s kind of a headache,” he said.

Some people came because they were curious what would happen at the event.

“It’s funny to me,” said A.J. Richardson, 18, of Howell. “Ignorance and bigotry thrives in this community.”

Located 55 miles west of Detroit and about 35 miles from Lansing, Howell is a growing city that had 9,232 residents in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

About 97 percent of Livingston County's 156,951 residents counted in the 2000 Census were white.

Mike Riordan of Hell, about 12miles from Howell, paid \$105 for a letter Miles sent to his wife while he was in prison.

Riordan said he might donate it to a museum, possibly the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University in Big Rapids.

“That would properly put his hate into perspective,” Riordan said.

Pioneer

May 24, 2005

Ferris thanks Hill-Kennedy

Saying thank you: A dessert reception was held for Scott Hill-Kennedy and his family wife, Merrilee, son, Seth, and daughter, Abby - by Ferris State University and its President David Eisler and his wife, Patsy, Monday evening at the Holiday Inn. Here, Eisler presents the Kennedy's with a gift from the university. Many local residents gathered to show their support of Hill-Kennedy as he leaves Ferris for his appointment as 49th Circuit Court judge.

Pioneer

May 25, 2005

Family honors late Ferris administrator

Honors: The family of John L. Johnson, former assistant vice president for academic affairs, honored his memory during a ceremony at Ferris State University. A painting titled "Autumn Apples" by Steve Roberts was given to the university in memory of Dr. Johnson, who served at Ferris from 1957 until his retirement in 1976. Johnson began his Ferris career as professor of economics and later served as associate dean of Arts and Sciences and dean of Educational Planning. Johnson, who passed away in 1979, chaired the institution's first self-study which led to accreditation in 1959 by the North Central Association. His son, John A. Johnson, and stepdaughter, Julie Haggin Bonkowski, spoke on behalf of the family at the event.

Pioneer

May 25, 2005

Ferris Community Summer Band announces concert series

BIG RAPIDS - The Ferris State University Community Summer Band, under the direction of Richard Scott Cohen, has announced its rehearsal and concert schedule for 2005.

Sponsored by Ferris State University, the FSU Community Summer Band provides the opportunity for Ferris students, adult community members, and local student band musicians to gather for a series of six weekly musical escapades, each of which includes a rehearsal and one or two concerts. The concerts are presented outdoors in parks and other venues around the greater Big Rapids area. Each concert features a different program.

All concerts are free and open to the public. Concerts will be performed on the following dates:

- June 9: The Old Jail, Big Rapids, 7:30 P.M.
- June 16: Mecosta County Medical Center, Big Rapids, 7 P.M.
- June 21: Hemlock Park, Big Rapids, 7:30 P.M.
- June 23: The Castle, Canadian Lakes, 7 P.M.
- June 30: South Michigan Ave. (between Maple and Elm), downtown Big Rapids, 7 p.m.
- July 7: Northend Riverside Park, Big Rapids, 7:30 P.M.
- July 14: Mitchell Creek Park, Big Rapids, 7:30 p.m.
- July 18: The Castle, Canadian Lakes, 7 P.M.

The FSU Community Summer Band is open to all area adults, college students and high school students. Advanced middle school students - with a written recommendation from their band director - may also participate. Musically inclined friends or relatives visiting in town this summer are also welcome!

In order to perform in concert, attendance at the rehearsal beforehand is required. If someone can make all six rehearsals and eight concerts, great! If not, musicians are welcome to participate in as many weekly outings with the group as possible.

To participate, either contact Cohen in advance (231) 591-2484 or rscohen@ferris.edu, or simply come to the next rehearsal that best fits your schedule. Rehearsals will take place on the campus of Ferris State University, in Room 108 of the Music Center, 1030

Campus Dr., Big Rapids. Rehearsals run from 7:30 to 9 P.M. and usually are on Mondays. Dates are as follows: June 6, 13, 20 and 27; July 5 and 12.

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

May 25, 2005

House GOP Higher Ed plan gives more to mid-sized universities

A handful of mid-size public universities would fare better under a proposal laid out Wednesday by a group of state House Republicans than under Gov. Jennifer Granholm's higher education budget.

Central Michigan, Ferris State, Grand Valley State, Oakland, Saginaw Valley and the University of Michigan-Dearborn would get 5 percent more funding in the upcoming fiscal year under the plan being considered by the House Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee than they would under Granholm's proposal.

Wayne State and Northern Michigan would see 5 percent less under the House Republican plan than the Democratic governor's proposal. The seven other universities would see smaller increases under the House GOP plan, ranging from a 0.4 percent increase for Michigan to a 3.1 percent increase for Western.

Harvey Hollins III, vice president of government and community affairs for Wayne State, pointed out that the Detroit University would get \$203.3 million under the House plan and \$214 million under the governor's proposal. The university would lose \$13 million between this fiscal year and the one that begins Oct. 1 if the House proposal becomes law.

"We're going to raise tuition," he said. "We will out price kids who would normally go to our university because it's affordable."

Most universities would see more funding under the House GOP plan than the governor's proposal, but half would receive more under the Republican proposal than they are currently getting and half would see less. Lake Superior State would receive the same \$12.6 million it is currently getting under the House GOP plan. All would see a cut under Granholm's plan.

The House Republican plan allocates money for universities based on their enrollment, research activities and the number of degrees granted. It is intended to set up a list of objective criteria to award state dollars in the upcoming fiscal year.

Universities would get at least \$2,190 for each in-state student and \$1,642 for out-of-state students under the House GOP proposal. They would get additional dollars based on the number of students who receive a degree and how much money the schools receive for research from the federal government and other sources.

Kathy Wilbur, vice president of governmental relations for Central Michigan, said the university is happy to see lawmaker's direct funds toward universities that are growing. Central would see its funding increase from \$79.3 million to \$81.7 million under the

House GOP plan. Granholm's proposal would mean a cut of \$1.5 million.

"State dollars should follow students, not institutions," she said.

Republican subcommittee member Jerry Kooiman of Grand Rapids said the proposal creates a solid funding formula, something now missing from the university appropriations process. The current process has allowed Northern Michigan and Wayne State to receive too much, he said.

"For years we've had a funding mix that was not equitable and didn't reflect growth and didn't reflect enrollment," Kooiman said. "It's not a popular plan with Wayne State University or Northern Michigan University, but what we're looking at is what is good for the state."

The House Republicans will have to fight for their proposal. Granholm strongly opposes it and the Senate Higher Education Appropriations Committee still is working on its plan.

Greg Bird, spokesman for Granholm's budget office, said the House GOP plan is politically motivated. It takes away funding from universities that are represented by Democrats and gives it to those represented by Republicans, he said.

"We do believe in accountability and results, but the way they have set this up really plays politics with the colleges and universities and the state's economic future," Bird said.

The House GOP plan only covers \$1.41 billion for university operations. It does not include spending for other higher education programs, such as Merit Award Scholarships and tuition grants.

Granholm's proposal for university operations is \$11.9 million less than the House Republican proposal. Her overall proposal was \$1.64 billion. This year's overall higher education budget is \$1.7 billion.

Subcommittee chairman John Stewart, R-Plymouth, said he is going to take the next month to get feedback on the plan from his colleagues and university officials.

Pioneer

May 26, 2005

House GOP higher-ed plan gives more to mid-sized universities

LANSING (AP) - A handful of mid-size public universities would fare better under a proposal laid out Wednesday by a group of state House Republicans than under Gov. Jennifer Granholm's higher education plan.

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Pioneer

May 26, 2005

Learning on the farm

RODNEY - More than 250 local third- and fourth-grade students from several area schools participated in the annual Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANRS) Day at Person's Farm in Rodney on Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The students, teachers and a few parents were from St. Peter's Lutheran, St. Mary's Catholic, Big Jackson, Brookside and Hillcrest Elementary in Big Rapids, as well as Morley Elementary and Stanwood Elementary.

According to Mecosta County 4-H Coordinator Melissa Bowman, the annual event began more than 30 years ago and is sponsored by the Michigan State Extension Office.

"The purpose for ANRS Day is to teach the kids the different ways they may have an effect on agriculture and natural resources," Bowman said. "We contact guest speakers from all over, who donate their time teaching the students."

Bowman said the event, which rotates locations to farms across Mecosta County, features 11 workshops - ranging from nutrition to wildlife to personal safety.

At one session, Mecosta County EMS member Brett Mason stressed the importance of wearing a helmet when riding skateboards, bikes, snowmobiles and more.

Another workshop, "Michigan Birds," featured Ferris State University Conservation Club member Brent Muller describing the various types of birds found across the state and their feeding habits.

Also, representatives from the Big Rapids Limbangers Wild Turkey Federation demonstrated several turkey calls, while Sandy Persons, co-owner of Person's Farm, discussed "The Wonderful World of Butterflies" nearby.

One of the students' more favorable workshops was "Early Midwest Arrivals" presented by "Prairie Pete."

"Prairie Pete," also known as Kalamazoo resident Wil Reding, dressed as an early 1800's settler arriving to the Michigan Territory - before it was declared a state in 1837 - from New York.

"I will talk about what life was like in the 1830's, when, we came from New York by boat along the Erie Canal," said Reding, who usually performs storytelling with his wife, Sarah.

Reding's program included woodcutting demonstrations, the use of other tools and a display of toys and common household items from the 1800's.

Other characters Reding and his wife perform as include “Yas Ennya Oyaka,” a Great Lakes mammals expert; “Aresfoot: The Loon Lady of the Wilderness,” describes the different bird species; “Marsh Mallow Man,” exploring the wetlands; and “A.E. Claus,” a favorite during the holiday seasons.

“We receive a lot of positive responses supporting the ARNS Day from students and their teachers,” Bowman said. “We try to incorporate as much hands-on learning as possible.”

For example, Sandy Persons allowed the students to release a few butterflies at the end of each session. Also, participants were able to take tours of the farm, including nature walks by Marty Bagley and horse-drawn wagon rides across the fields.

The Detroit News
Friday, May 27, 2005

Universities' allies lobby lawmakers

Political action committees try to use clout to gain funds for Michigan colleges.

LANSING – Michigan's universities, battered by state budget cuts, are stepping up efforts to win friends in high places by allowing closely allied independent committees to give politicians campaign money.

The law prohibits them from using their funds for such contributions because they get about \$1.2 billion in state tax money every year. But there's nothing to prevent their "friends" -- as in Friends of Ferris State University or Friends of Western Michigan University -- from doing so.

These close acquaintances are independent political action committees made up of professors, administrators and alumni who make contributions to state and federal lawmakers and other elected officials in support of the schools.

Just last week, a new Green & White PAC was unveiled that will raise and distribute campaign money on behalf of Michigan State University.

Key lawmakers, in charge of budget decisions, were invited to a reception for the PAC, which made MSU 10th among the 15 schools to begin using this technique to lobby for more money and more favorable state policies.

Political action committees are organized by labor unions, American Indian tribes and other interests. They're a favored way of giving money to politicians, mostly because they bypass the stricter limits Michigan law places on direct contributions.

"Those of us who are forming this PAC don't want MSU to fall behind," said Gary Naeyaert, a Lansing lobbyist who's among the Green & White organizers.

The MSU grad said his group wants to raise and distribute as much as \$100,000 a year, topping all competitors

"There wasn't as strong a need for this in the past, as one of the ways to advocate for the university," Naeyaert said. "Now, we need it in our arsenal. We're all going after diminishing slices of a shrinking pie."

The public universities have seen their allotment dwindle under state budget cuts in recent years and are in competition with each other for shares of state money. Intensified political action is timely, as House Republicans begin work on a new formula for divvying the money.

Legislative term limits, which replace senators every eight years and representatives every six years, only add to the tension.

They create the possibility that the funding formula for universities -now ranging from \$3,296 per student at Grand Valley State University to \$9,438 at Wayne State -- will be reshuffled as frequently as the legislative lineups.

A good way to get the key players' attention is to give them money for re-election. Fund-raisers, where donors line up to chat and commit money, are a popular Capitol City version of the social hour.

And Richard Robinson, director of the watchdog Michigan Campaign Finance Network, said it's clear the universities don't shrink from them. "They're like any business," Robinson said. "You do what you can. They realize you've got to play the game the way it's set up."

He gets little argument from Michael Boulus, who directs the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan, the association representing all of the schools.

"Whether you're a for-profit or a not-for-profit, you've got issues in Lansing," he said.

The beneficiaries of university backers' largess includes David Farhat of Muskegon, a member of the Republican majority and House Appropriations Committee.

The former lobbyist, who needs about \$200,000 every two years to ward off Democratic challengers in his balanced legislative district, makes no apologies for the \$7,500 he's received from university PACs since 2002.

"I fought hard for the public universities last term, and I'll continue to do so," Farhat said. "I believe we have 15 of the country's finest universities."

With the need for such favorable sentiments more urgent than ever, university backers are digging in their pockets to bolster the war chest of Jennifer Granholm, who's received nearly \$20,000 from them since she was elected governor. They've given more than \$26,000 to Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema of Wyoming, probably the most influential Republican in the legislature.

They've donated \$30,000 to House Republicans' re-election kitty, almost \$10,000 to Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Shirley Johnson, and more than \$7,000 to Senate Democratic Leader Bob Emerson of Flint. Johnson, R-Royal Oak, heads a subcommittee on higher education funding.

Friends of Northern Michigan University in Marquette gave \$12,000 to House Republicans and \$4,500 to Upper Peninsula Democratic Sen. Michael Prusi of Ishpeming. Prusi is minority vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Friends of Grand Valley State University, the best-heeled and oldest university political action committee, sprinkles \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year among 50 or 60 of the 148

lawmakers, Granholm and both parties' House and Senate election committees. Among the PAC's recent big givers were Grand Rapids businessmen J.C. Huizenga (\$10,000) and Peter Cook (\$5,000).

Leaders of the Allendale-based school long have argued for changing a state funding formula that keeps it at the low end of the per-student allowance. And Friends of Grand Valley has grown more aggressive -- in both fund-raising and campaign giving -- since former state treasurer Mark Murray arrived as the university's president in 2001.

"We have generous friends," said university vice president Matthew McLogan, who serves as the committee's record keeper. "Friends of our university established a PAC 20 years ago because they believed it was important to be involved in policy decisions in the Capitol. That remains true today."

While the schools are prohibited from direct involvement in fundraising by PACs, many of the contributors are university employees. An equal portion are alums like Tray lawyer John Mills, who recently gave \$250 to Friends of Oakland University.

"If I want my school to be noticed -- and I do -- I'm going to take the action," Mills said. "In this era of term limits, the legislators aren't there long enough to get to know somebody without something that gets their attention. Nothing gets their attention like a little money."

The Macomb Daily

May 30, 2005

MCC, Ferris University debut 4-year degree

In a new partnership between Macomb Community College and Ferris State University, students can now earn a four-year bachelor's degree on MCC's South Campus in Warren. The new arrangement marks the first time in the community college's 50-year history that a student would be able to earn a bachelor's degree on the Warren campus. Another of the degrees might be principally located at the college's Fraser campus.

This new partnership could just be the start of a new trend for MCC.

"If it goes well, obviously, you'll see more," said Richard McMillan, vice provost for the career preparation division at MCC.

MCC created the University Center about 10 years ago, which brings together nine different university partners, including Ferris, that offer advanced classes at the center on the college's Center Campus in Clinton Township. Now, MCC is looking for ways to go beyond those offerings.

The college is also exploring partnership options with Oakland University, a "major partner" at its University Center.

"It is true that we are exploring a deeper partnership with (Oakland University) to look at enhancing higher education opportunities in the county. But at this point, there are no tangible plans to report," said Jeanne Nicol, MCC spokeswoman.

The MCC-Ferris partnership also comes at a time when the state is asking its colleges and universities to do more, though state funding for higher education is tightening. The governor said she wants Michigan to double the number of its residents who are college graduates and a commission led by Lt. Gov. John Cherry is seeking new ways to do that.

Under the new local arrangement, Ferris and Macomb will work together on three new degree programs, one of which was specifically put together at the request of the U. S. Army.

The first degree is a bachelor of science in industrial technology and management. Under that program, students would be able to take three years of classes through MCC and complete the final year under the direction of Ferris State -- taught by Ferris faculty at MCC's South Campus. Roberta Teahen, dean of extended learning at Ferris, said the university is setting up an office at South Campus, with two full-time Ferris faculty members and an office manager.

The second degree will be in criminal justice, aimed at police officers and others who work in the legal system who already have a two-year associate's degree, but want a bachelor's degree for advancement purposes. That degree program may be administered at MCC's Fraser campus, where much of the criminal justice classes are now based.

The final degree came together at the request of the Army, which was seeking a specialized degree for civilians who work at in the logistics management section of the Tank-automotive Armaments Command, or TACOM, which has personnel assigned around the world. That degree, a bachelor's in business administration with a specialization in leadership and organizational development, will be taught primarily on-line, and may be available to the general public as well, depending on the Army's needs. McMillan and Teahen said the industrial degree was the genesis for the programs.

"More often than not, even when our students complete associates degree, given today's times, most people recognize that employees need to have more knowledge and skills," McMillan said. "We've even had some of our larger employers ask us what can we do to raise the bar, to increase the knowledge and skill level of employees."

"For people who are settled, have a family and are already working, their opportunity to head to a place like Ferris (located in Big Rapids in west central Michigan) is very limited," he said.

As the two schools began talking, the idea blossomed to expand criminal justice offerings and around the same time, the Army's TACOM asked MCC if it could develop a plan for providing a bachelor's degree program for its Logistics Assistance Representatives, or LARs, employees. The biggest hurdle there: those employees can be spread around the world, work literally at all hours of the day and night.

Today, LAR's are stationed in Korea, Italy, Germany, Alaska, Hawaii, throughout the United States, and on deployment rotations in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army said.

"To support over 3000 types of equipment, the LAR continuously receives technical training throughout their careers. The LAR's are also required to move throughout these locations every one to three years, which makes it difficult for them to start or complete any type of college degree program," according to a statement from Becky Montgomery, a spokeswoman with TACOM's Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois.

There are currently approximately 240 people in the LAR's program, which is expected to grow to over 300 within the next couple of years. Depending on world events and their mission requirements, 80 to 90 percent of the LAR workforce is expected to participate, the Army said.

Teahen said an additional benefit of the new on-line program is that Ferris will open it up to other students, if Army personnel don't fill all the slots.

"We designed it for TACOM, but all the sudden, a lot of people are interested in that degree," Teahen said. "We do intend to open the enrollment, but giving TACOM people first opportunity."

Like the overall partnership with Ferris, the program to develop a specific degree program to serve TACOM could just be the first of many such programs, McMillan said.

“I suspect this will be just the first request among many,” he said.

The industrial and criminal justice degree programs will begin in the fall, with the leadership degree for TACOM expected to be fully rolled out in January.

Teahen said if the classes do as well as expected, Ferris and MCC could extend the partnership in the future.

“We do want to look in the future at some health education options with Macomb,” she said.

Macomb Daily staff writer Chad Selweski contributed to this report.