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# **Media Packet**

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## **The Grand Rapids Press**

September 23, 2006

### **Historian speaks of cultural impact on sacred art**

GRAND RAPIDS -- Art produced by Jews, Muslims and Christians throughout history is so similar there is no need to exclude one from another, an art historian says.

The monotheistic religions stem from the same Semitic culture and share many visual representations, Hashim Al-Tawil, chair of the Art History Program at Henry Ford Community College, said at Eyekons Gallery on East Fulton Street last week.

The Interfaith Dialogue Association invited the Baghdad native to speak at its annual conference, themed "Art Meeting the Sacred."

Starting with Mesopotamia, he described 14 historical periods when culture influenced sacred art.

He compared Gothic cathedrals to nearly identical mosques of the same time, Jewish and Islamic writings covering buildings from the Byzantine period.

One major difference is Christian art often depicts God and sacred figures in human form, while traditional synagogues and mosques do not, said Al-Tawil, at the conference featuring dozens of multi-faith artworks. He theorizes that Romans, with a strong tradition in idealized human forms to depict gods, influenced early Christians.

Islamic teachings, by contrast, prevent Muslims from putting Allah, Mohammed or any prophet in figurative forms, at least in public places, he said.

Artists have drawn Mohammed with full facial features or with a veiled face, representing the light of Allah that overwhelmed him, but those images were meant for kings, sultans and other leaders, not for mosques, Al-Tawil said.

Suzanne Eberle, art history chairwoman at Kendall College, said Christians have not only used the body for spiritual inspiration in art but have "mutated" the images of Jesus over the years.

She showed paintings of a curly haired, beardless Jesus in a Roman toga, a red-bearded Christ in an Irish picture and God looking an awful lot like Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

"It shouldn't be surprising, because everyone wants their God to be relatable," Eberle said.

## **Pioneer**

September 23 & 24, 2006

### **Ferris Board OK's contract**

Ferris Board ratifies a contract officially giving faculty a four-year contract.

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University faculty members officially have a contract following ratification Friday afternoon by the FSU Board of Trustees.

The four-year agreement, hammered out in the evening hours of Aug. 27 before the scheduled start of a Ferris Faculty Association strike on Aug. 28, calls for a 2 percent salary increase for the first year and 3 percent for each of the following three years. Additionally, supplemental market adjustments will be available to all the faculty, which was not previously true.

Many faculty members will pay only 10 percent of their insurance costs in the first year, and in the following three years they will pay between 15 and 20 percent.

There will be a variety of health care insurance options offered to professors.

The numbers of part-time faculty will increase during the life of this contract. Previously, part-time faculty members were capped at 15 percent of the total number; by the end of the contract, the cap will be 19 percent.

FFA members ratified the contract on Sept. 15.

"The faculty is happy the process has come to a conclusion but not particularly happy with the process itself," said Mike Ryan, FFA president.

Ryan said the faculty saw problems with the length of time negotiations took and university leadership regarding negotiations.

"They're not pleased with the eleventh-hour negotiations after six months of negotiating," Ryan said.

University President David Eisler is likewise pleased with the official conclusion of bargaining.

"I'm very pleased that the contract was approved and ratified by the board of trustees," he said. "We're looking forward to working with the faculty to provide students the education they need here at Ferris State University. I want to express my thanks and appreciation to all members of the campus community who participated in this process and helped us reach this agreement."

## Arizona Daily Sun

September 24, 2006

### **Professors want their classes 'unwired'**

NEW YORK -- When Don Herzog, a law professor at the University of Michigan, asked his students questions last year, he was greeted with five seconds of silence and blank stares.

He knew something was wrong and suspected he knew why. So he went to observe his colleagues' classes -- and was shocked at what he found.

"At any given moment in a law school class, literally 85 to 90 percent of the students were online," Professor Herzog says. "And what were they doing online? They were reading The New York Times; they were shopping for clothes at Eddie Bauer; they were looking for an apartment to rent in San Francisco when their new job started.... And I was just stunned."

Wireless Internet access at universities was once thought to be a clear-cut asset to education. But now a growing number of graduate schools -- after investing a fortune in the technology -- are blocking Web access to students in class because of complaints from professors.

Herzog first went on the offensive in his own law classes, banning laptops for a day as an experiment. The result, he says, was a "dream" discussion with students that led him to advocate more sweeping changes.

Last school year, the University of Michigan Law School became the latest graduate school to block wireless Internet access to students in class, joining law schools at UCLA and the University of Virginia.

The problem professors face is "continuous partial attention," an expression coined by Linda Stone, a former Microsoft executive, to describe how people check e-mail and try to listen to someone at the same time.

"As a teacher, you can tell when someone is there, but it's just their body that is there," says Douglas Haneline, a professor of English literature at Ferris State University in Grand Rapids, Mich. "Their face is on 'screensaver,' so to speak, because what they are really doing is checking their e-mail."

Like most professors, Haneline wants to be flexible about computer use in class. At the same time, when it comes to holding face-to-face discussions about a poem, he wants to see a student's face -- not a laptop screen.

A growing number of professors now want computers -- not just the Internet -- out of class. Two professors at Harvard Law School have independently banned laptops in their classes, and many other law professors around the country have done the same.

For some, the issue comes down to learning styles. Professor June Entman of the University of Memphis Law School in Tennessee says some students with laptops end up typing every word said in class.

"When you focus primarily on transcribing everything said, you are not making good use of the class as a practice opportunity," she wrote in an e-mail to her law students, explaining her decision to ban laptops.

Law school students say laptops are good for taking neat notes and e-mailing them to friends who miss class. Laptop notetaking is still largely a graduate-school phenomenon, but the practice will probably spread to undergrads -- unless teachers balk.

"It would have upset me if they had banned computers at Michigan," says University of Michigan Law School student Michael Jacobson. "I think my laptop has enhanced my study skills in that I'm able to capture a lot of what's said during class."

Educational assets aside, the main issue for graduate students with banning technology is their freedom - the freedom to use a tool that can be useful in class.

"If [the] Internet is distracting in law school," wrote second-year Harvard Law student Bryan Choi, "it will be just as distracting in the real world, and if Internet is helpful in the real world, it can be just as helpful in law school."

The UCLA Anderson School of Management realized the futility of blocking Internet access last year. In 2004, when it began offering wireless, it installed blocking devices " classrooms. Last year, however, the school decided to remove the block.

"We all came to realize that if students wanted to communicate electronically, they could do so by hooking up their cell phones to their laptops or by just text messaging," wrote Susan Gutman, an official at the school. "In some ways, student behavior is the same as it ever was. In the old days, they chatted with each other, passed notes, read the newspaper, or did other work in class .... Now they surf, IM, and e-mail or play solitaire. The issue is behavioral."

Supporters of computers in the classroom emphasize useful ways that computers can be used in class, such as a program that lets professors ask questions of students and receive responses electronically to see how well they understand a lecture.

Professor Steven Smith, a psychology professor at Texas A&M University in College Station is "delighted" when students use laptops in class to access lecture outlines posted on course Web sites.

This may be the wave of the future. According to one recent study by the Campus Computing Project, more than one-quarter of university campuses have campus-wide wireless networks. That portion grew from one-fifth in 2004 and only 3.8 percent in 2000.

As wireless Internet access expands on campuses, the next frontline for laptop use may be undergraduate classrooms, where, for whatever reason, most students still don't use them in class.

"Every single person I have ever seen bring a computer to class has also surfed the Web or been on IM," says Amy Kornell, an undergraduate at the University of California at Davis. "I saw one girl watch a whole episode of 'Gray's Anatomy.' But I would guess that solitaire is the most popular game."

## Central Michigan Life

September 25, 2006

### Weekend of war

Cadets spend time bettering combat skills in Grayling

GRAYLING - Government-issued paintball guns and more than 700,000 rounds of ammunition might sound like fun to some people.

But not for 82 student cadets in the Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

It meant the beginning of military training for them.

The group, made up of 65 ROTC students from CMU and 17 from Ferris State University, spent the weekend at Camp Grayling for annual field training exercises.

"We got in these big Chinook CH47 helicopters," said Kansas junior Cadet Capt. Jeff Scott. "Like the kind of thing you see with G.I. Joes - it was pretty rad."

Once the helicopters landed at the drop point within the 147,000-acre Army and Air National Guard military installation, the cadets did their best G.I. Joe impersonations.

"We were patrolling an area and came across a village," Wyoming sophomore Jerell Johnson said.

"Our mission was to clear the buildings, just like how you would do in Baghdad."

Johnson and his fellow Bravo company cadets completed the mission early and were able to conduct other missions in the same village.

"We did encounter enemy activity," he said. "But overall the mission was real successful."

The enemy activity came from upperclassmen like Scott who were positioned in the buildings with paintball guns of their own.

"All of the cadets were issued paintball guns to simulate weapon-carrying, because in the field they have to carry live M-16s," Scott said.

When they weren't carrying around paintball guns and ambushing villages, the cadets were involved in other training activities, including firing of live M-16 rifles, Zodiac boat exercises, urban combat and other various round robin training drills.

Maj. Gregg Mays, military science professor, said the type of training the cadets received over the weekend will benefit them immensely.

"The cadets will gain all of the skills that corporate America wants," Mays said. "(Like) confidence, team work, team building and the importance of mission accomplishment."

Mays said though not all of the students who went through training will become military cadets, the training and experience they gained will help them prepare for the rest of their lives.

"Seeing the progression of the freshmen and sophomores is very rewarding," said Mark May, Warren senior and battalion sergeant major.

He said the bonds and friendships he has made with other students in the ROTC program have made him a better person.

ROTC is an academic minor in the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences and gives students training, whether they plan to go on to a career in the military or not.

"You can be an ROTC minor without contracting with the military," Scott said. "With what you learn with ROTC, you can make yourself much more marketable."



## **Pioneer**

September 28, 2006

### **Event raises assault concerns**

BIG RAPIDS-- Take Back the Night brings people together to raise awareness of the fight against domestic abuse and sexual assault. This year, Ferris State University organizers have added a new visual representation of abuse victims to the Oct. 4 march and rally.

Next week the Campus Quad will be populated by paper cutouts of people; 42 larger, lavender people represent victims of domestic abuse homicides in the past year in Michigan and smaller purple people represent 34 children who have lost one or both parents to domestic violence in the last 12 months.

"We realized although numbers speak loudly, some people may not grasp what the number is," said Nichole Wheelock, Take Back the Night student chairperson. "We're going with visual impact. We want it set up so they stop and read (the victims' stories printed on the cut-outs) and take it in."

The usual events for Take Back the Night, the march and rally, will begin with registration at 5:30 p.m. The march begins at 6 p.m. and starts in the Campus Quad. Participants will walk to State Street and then north to Cedar before looping back into campus and ending in the quad.

The rally, in the Rankin Center Dome Room, will follow. The rally will feature an explanation of the event and its goal of raising awareness and a reading of all domestic violence victims' names and stories.

Last year, about 350 people marched and 200 to 250 stayed for the rally.

## Pioneer

September 29, 2006

### **Mixed views on DeVos' creationism curriculum**

Teaching intelligent design OK for some, appalling to others.

Whether or not to teach creation alongside evolution in public schools and how to teach is an issue that has divided people for generations.

Recently the issue made its way back into the news with republican gubernatorial candidate Dick DeVos saying that intelligent design should be offered in Michigan's public schools.

"I would like to see the ideas of intelligent design, that many scientists are not suggesting is a very viable alternate theory,"

DeVos told the Associated Press earlier this month. "That theory and others that would be considered credible would expose our students to more ideas, not less."

Intelligent design means different things to different people.

For supporters, intelligent design is something to teach alongside evolution.

The idea is that intelligent design gives students another option when learning about how the universe came into being.

"If we are teaching evolution as a theory in schools, then we should teach intelligent design as a theory and only a theory," said Rep. Darwin Booher, R-Evart. "While I personally believe that God created heaven and earth, I would never place my beliefs on other people."

But for those who disagree, intelligent design is nothing more than religion masked by science.

Robert Pennock, president of Michigan Citizens for Science, said intelligent design is just "sectarian religion masquerading as science."

"Michigan Citizens for Science is about defending the integrity of science education in the state and this is a direct attack on that," Pennock said. "DeVos' proposal brings religious conflict into science classrooms."

Intelligent design's proponents hold that living organisms are so complex they must have been created by a higher force than evolving from more primitive forms. Some want science teachers to teach that Darwin's theory of evolution is not a fact and has gaps.

Fred Heck, a professor of geology at Ferris State University, said teaching intelligent design to high school students would only cause problems.

"In my classes I teach evolution regularly as we look at the fossil research and to explain where fossils come from." Heck said. "I feel it would be dishonest to present this as science."

"It's not accepted as science and it's not a theory."

Heck added that use of the term "theory" is what confuses most people. He said in science a theory is something that has been repeatedly tested and is accepted as fact.

"Intelligent design hasn't even been scrutinized or been published in any professional journal," Heck said. "It's not looked at as a theory in the scientific community."

However in December, a federal judge barred the school system in Dover, Pa., from teaching intelligent design alongside evolution in high school biology classes. The judge said intelligent design is religion masquerading-as science and that teaching it alongside evolution violates the separation of church and state.

David Aiken, professor of humanities, philosophy and religion at Ferris, said that historically - dating back to ancient Greeks - there has been a discussion about learning things that aren't just quantifiable. "Things like history, poetry, mythology, all of these things make claims that there might be more to education that you can quantify," Aiken said.

He added that while science has had the "poker hand" since Darwin's theory of evolution, it might be time to come back to a balance in what is taught.

"But that wouldn't be to teach intelligent design in a classroom, because it doesn't belong there," Aiken said.

Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm has said that Michigan schools need to teach the established theory of evolution in science classes and not include intelligent design. She says school districts can explore intelligent design in current events or comparative religion classes.

The State Board of Education decided earlier this month to postpone adopting new science curriculum guidelines to allow lawmakers get more time to weigh in on what the state's public schools science curriculum should be and how it should approach the teaching of evolution.