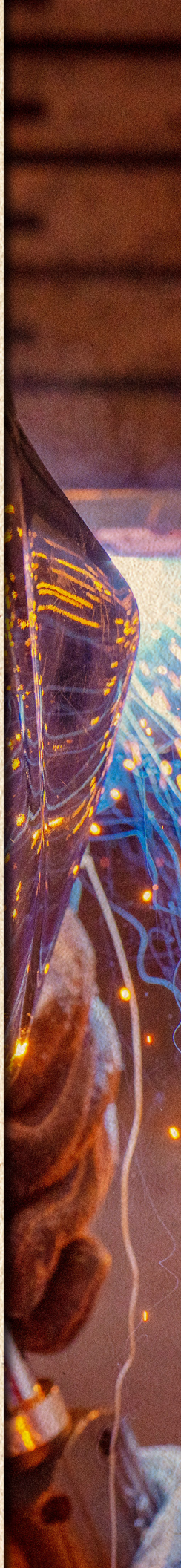


THE FERRIS FOUNDATION

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT





## A GREAT DAY ON THE LINKS WITH ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

The Ferris State University Alumni Association hosted its 33rd annual Alumni Golf Outing on May 12. First-time host Clio Country Club in Clio presented an exciting change of scenery and a challenging course that sees skilled amateur tournament play. After playing, attendees enjoyed dinner with recreational giveaways. The event is a fundraiser that supports the association's Legacy Scholarship program for high-achieving students with a parent, sibling, grandparent or child who graduated from Ferris State University. Plans are underway for the 2024 event, and anyone interested in attending or sponsoring the outing should contact LynnMiller@ferris.edu for more information.



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### On the Cover

*Sneak peeks representing stories of impactful giving and partnerships featured in this edition.* The sparks of a welding torch symbolize the synergy of Ferris State's Manufacturing and Welding programs with local businesses such as RoMan Manufacturing, thanks to the support of College of Engineering Technology alumnus Kurt Hofman. The support of office equipment supplier Trellis and maker Herman Miller Gaming have made state-of-the-art equipment and internship experiences available to Esports students in the university's new Center for Virtual Learning. The success of One Day for Dawgs, Ferris' annual day of giving, gave Brutus reason to celebrate and stop for a photo opportunity. A generous gift by the Piepkow family has supported the university's renovation of the Center for Athletics Performance.

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**GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT BILL PINK AND FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR ARLEN-DEAN GADDY**

Ferris State University is proud of its history, and rightly so. But we are just as proud about the history being written today, and what is to come in the years ahead.

We are constantly evolving, growing and responding to the needs of the students, community and state we serve. Ferris State has new leadership, new buildings and new opportunities, continuing the legacy that started nearly 140 years ago.

This year we cut the ribbon on the Center for Virtual Learning. This facility represents a \$32 million investment into preparing our students for the high-tech jobs of today and tomorrow and exploring new ways to teach and connect with even more students. The world is changing, and our university is committed to staying out in front, so our graduates are prepared with skills for evolving fields.

We are preparing Student Success Hubs in five locations across Michigan. We know our students and their needs are changing, and many can't come to take classes on our beautiful Big Rapids campus. Our Student Success Hubs will help us bring a quality Ferris State education to them wherever they live. Our hubs, working with Michigan's community colleges, will make classes and support services available to more potential students who are balancing their education with home and work responsibilities.

We are bringing the impactful stories of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery to more people as well. Our "Overcoming Hateful Things" traveling exhibit this year started its journey at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. The exhibit, supported by a grant from the Wege Foundation, will find new audiences around the nation and around the world, stimulating discussions breaking down barriers, and fostering a more inclusive environment.

This work builds upon the magnificent things that happen at Ferris State year in and year out. As you flip through this annual report, you will read stories of successful programs, students and alumni. They are making a difference here in Michigan and around the world.

There is another constant in this change: you, the people of The Ferris Foundation. You have continued to support our students and their changing needs. The life you change today sets in motion generational changes.

We have so many other students who need our help. Our world is changing and so is Ferris State. But our mission is unwavering. We humbly thank you for your generous support of the Ferris Foundation and our greater community. We hope you can continue assisting us as we move forward together.

Sincerely,

*Bill Pink, Ph. D.*  
President, Ferris State University

*Arlen-Dean Gaddy*  
Chair, Ferris Foundation Executive Board



**THANK YOU FROM JENNIFER SHAW, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FERRIS FOUNDATION**

I already knew Ferris State University was a special place when I arrived this summer as the associate vice president for Advancement and executive director of The Ferris Foundation. And yet, every day I learn of something new—a different way Ferris State connects with students and our greater community.

I quickly realized these wonderful things happen because we remain committed to the mission set forward by our founders nearly 140 years ago. We are unwavering in our goal of making a quality, life-changing education available to as many people as possible.

The Ferris Foundation and its donors play a major role in this mission. Your continued support is vital.

As you read the success stories in this annual report, remember that you played a role in each of them. Your help inspired someone to carry on. Your gift reminded them they are not alone, that a caring community stands with them.

You continue to shape our campus. Your support helped Ferris State modernize and construct new facilities and develop innovative programs that prepare our students for exciting careers in emerging fields. Together, we created the environment where Ferris State students will thrive now and long into the future.

I continue to meet alumni statewide and hear about the role Ferris State played in their life journey. Their stories are inspiring, and I know our work together is creating opportunities for new graduates to follow in

their footsteps.

I've also encountered many of our donors. Some have supported our university for decades while others are making their first donation this year. Each and every gift matters as we change lives and make our communities and state stronger.

There is so much we've been able to do, and we recognize our students' needs continue to grow. The Ferris Foundation's work is as important as ever.

Last year, our foundation provided almost 4,700 scholarships valued at \$17.8 million. For many students, that financial help keeps them on track to gain a quality Ferris State education.

I'm so proud of the work we do together. Please know that your generosity is appreciated and celebrated – and never taken for granted by me, or by the people we help.

Thank you for all you do to make Ferris State University an incredible place. I'm excited to be here, and I look forward to meeting more of you as we move forward.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Shaw*  
Associate Vice President for Advancement  
Executive Director, Ferris Foundation





# Center for Virtual Learning Grand Opening

## SHAPING THE SKILLS OF TOMORROW

Celebrating a fresh approach to innovative learning, Ferris State University welcomed students, educators and partners to the grand opening of its state-of-the-art Center for Virtual Learning on Aug. 31. Located on the Big Rapids campus, this \$32 million facility marks a significant milestone in Ferris State's commitment to preparing students for careers on an ever-evolving technological landscape.

***"The Center for Virtual Learning is not just relevant today—it is poised to shape the skills of tomorrow."***

## LASTING RELEVANCE

"The potential this building has for programming is amazing," Ferris State President Bill Pink told the crowd at the dedication. "It has the kind of technology that is not only relevant for today but is malleable for skills for tomorrow."

His words captured the essence of the cutting-edge facility. The Center for Virtual Learning was designed as a dynamic hub where students and educators worldwide can engage in the physical realm and the digital metaverse. It stands as a beacon of innovation, offering a space that is ready to change on demand to meet the challenges of the future.

Bobby Fleischman, Ferris State's provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, reinforced the university's commitment to relevant educational resources.

"At Ferris State, we are proud of our history and our mission. We are inspired to do better and think more boldly every day," he said. "Years from now, when future generations look back, I'm convinced they will look at this day and this facility as a key moment in our university's history."

## EXCELLENCE TO MEET INDUSTRY DEMAND

Ferris State, rooted in its commitment to student success and adaptability in a constantly evolving education landscape, is embarking on a groundbreaking journey with the new Center for Virtual Learning. This forward-thinking endeavor

reflects the university's dedication to fostering an environment where innovation, practicality and inclusivity converge.

The facility's design encompasses state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, research spaces and digital media production facilities. These resources will provide students with an immersive learning environment, keeping them at the forefront of emerging technologies.

As industries evolve globally at an unprecedented pace, the Center for Virtual Learning is uniquely positioned to respond to these changes. It has been tailored to serve specialized programs that address the growing demand for skilled professionals in key sectors.

**Information Security and Intelligence:** A recognized national leader, this program is accredited by prestigious institutions such as the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Defense. One standout feature of the facility is the Faraday Room—a super-secure space for forensic analysis and artificial intelligence work. In this room, students will tackle cybersecurity challenges and work on methods to identify and combat malware, contributing to a safer digital environment.

**Artificial Intelligence and Project Management:** The Center for Virtual Learning includes dedicated space for Artificial Intelligence and Project Management degrees. The Artificial Intelligence program, one of only a few in Michigan, prepares students for careers in cybersecurity, Internet of Things, machine learning, and more. Project Management graduates are equipped to lead complex projects in various industries, meeting the growing demand for skilled project managers.

Greg Gogolin, the Information Security and Intelligence and AI programs' founder and coordinator, served as a primary contact for design considerations in the center.

"The Faraday Lab will allow us to isolate all network communication," Gogolin said. "The CVL will help facilitate AI instruction and research with several instructional delivery technologies that will provide the adaptive capability."

**eLearning:** Ferris State University's School of Education is pivotal in addressing teacher shortages, particularly in economically challenged urban and rural areas.

With the rise of online learning, the new facility will be instrumental in training the next generation of educators to effectively teach remotely, providing them with the tools and support they need to excel.

Andrew Peterson, Ferris State's interim director of eLearning, noted a dramatic increase in demand for online instruction.

"This new facility enhances our faculty's ability to use eLearning to help students connect to academic concepts and provide instruction in this format," he said.

**Esports:** Highlighting the CVL's grand opening is the inauguration of its dedicated Esports Arena, the first of its kind in Michigan. Ferris State's Esports program has experienced significant growth since 2017 while providing students with competition skills and preparing them for careers in an evolving field.

With the new arena and launch of the Bachelor of Science in Professional Esports Production, the university is preparing students for dynamic careers in an increasingly popular field. According to Ferris State Esports coordinator Jono Eaton, the arena is the Center for Virtual Learning's centerpiece, providing not only a platform for competitive gaming but also serving as a hub for nurturing talent in the burgeoning esports industry:

"We will be able to show off our 74 varsity athletes, competing in national collegiate leagues in a manner that was impossible before," Eaton said.

"Our technical capabilities to support producers and directors who head up game broadcasts, along with 'casters' who describe the action, take a big leap forward, thanks to the design and outfitting of our arena."

## RESPONSIVENESS TO A CHANGING WORLD

The global COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the need for innovative virtual learning spaces and support systems across all sectors. Ferris State University recognized this urgency and gained bipartisan support in the form of \$22.5 million in construction funding from the Michigan Legislature and governor. This funding paved the



way for the realization of the Center for Virtual Learning, making it a symbol of adaptability and progress during challenging times.

The facility was also developed considering environmental standards. In alignment with Ferris State University's commitment to sustainability, the center rates a Silver-level LEED certification.

But beyond even its responsiveness to the issues and industry demands of the day, the center

plays a pivotal role in expanding access to quality education into the future. It empowers nontraditional students by offering flexible, remote learning options that allow them to balance work, family, and personal circumstances. It equips educators to deliver content remotely, making access to a high-quality Ferris State education more accessible and equitable than ever, fulfilling the vision of the university's founders more completely than ever before.

Herman Miller, a renowned name in design for office environments, outfitted the Esports Arena with specialized chairs to enhance users' comfort and prevent injuries during periods of extended use, in a gift facilitated by office equipment supplier Trellis.

Jon Campbell, vice president of Herman Miller Gaming, recalled his personal history with gaming and expressed his pride in partnering with Ferris State, particularly in the arena.

He said the company will use its history of furniture design to explore opportunities for performance improvement.

"How do we use this expertise in ergonomics and human-centered design to really make gamers more comfortable and prevent injuries as they play? You guys are creating opportunities for future gamers."

Herman Miller's support underscores the importance of industry collaboration to the university, particularly in emerging fields. It is a testament to how private-sector engagement can enhance educational initiatives, providing students not only with high-quality physical tools of the trade but critical experience and insights, as well.

The university's partnership with Herman Miller Gaming includes workshop and product testing experiences for Ferris State students at the company's Los Angeles, California location, and one full internship position.

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Ferris State University's Center for Virtual Learning stands as a testament to its commitment to student success, innovation, and adaptability. With first-rate resources, a focus on emerging industries, and a dedication to sustainability and inclusivity, this center is poised to shape the leaders of tomorrow, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The grand opening of Ferris State University's Center for Virtual Learning was more than a celebration of a facility—it was a celebration of a vision for the future of education.

The center's innovative programs and invaluable partnerships represent Ferris State's unwavering commitment to preparing students for a world where the only constant is change. As President Pink put it: "The Center for Virtual Learning is not just relevant today—it is poised to shape the skills of tomorrow."

## CELEBRATION OF SYNERGY

This sense of education coming full circle was palpable on the morning of the dedication. As the ribbon was cut and the doors of the Center for Virtual Learning swung open on its high-tech interior, the facility's significance became clearer. It is not just a university building; it is a testament to the power of collaboration between the university and its generous donors and partners.



# Reimagined Center for Athletics Performance Opens

## UNLEASHING EXCELLENCE: FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR ATHLETICS PERFORMANCE

Chloe Idoni, a senior and captain of Ferris State University's women's basketball team, sees the renovated Center for Athletics Performance in the Ewigeben Sports Complex as more than another building. To Idoni, CAP represents what a family of current and former Bulldog student-athletes can accomplish.

"We've had national championships and people make it to the Final Four and gone really far into the postseason. So, it's really cool to see what the athletes have done," said Idoni, an academic All-American who led her team to a GLIAC Tournament championship during the 2021-22 season.

"Coming from what we had before and seeing the weight room and the facilities that we have now, it's really going to take us up to the next level," said Idoni, a Fenton, Michigan native.

Ben Davidson has turned the Center for Athletics Performance into a second home—the place where the Bulldog men's basketball standout builds strength while bonding with his teammates. The senior guard earned All-GLIAC First Team honors during his junior year, averaging 13 points while shooting nearly 50 percent from the floor and nearly 43 percent from outside the 3-point line during the 2022-23 season.

"It's not just a gym," said Davidson, a native of St. Clair. "It's where we connect and get stronger as a team."

Ferris State has always been synonymous with excellence, academically and athletically.

However, as the university's sports teams reach new heights, the grand opening of the Center for Athletics Performance marked a milestone in the university's commitment to fostering champions and sharpening its awareness of the value that athletic participation adds to the college experience for many students.

## "NOT JUST A GYM": THE CENTER FOR ATHLETICS PERFORMANCE

The March 19 grand opening of Ferris State University's Center for Athletics Performance was a moment of pride and celebration for the entire Bulldog community. The \$18 million facility, located on the Big Rapids campus, reflects Ferris State's unwavering commitment to athletics excellence and its vision for the future of its sports programs.

"This is another one of those days when we say,

"It's a great day to be a Bulldog," Ferris State University President Bill Pink said. "When you see our facility and what has been built here, and just how it advances our athletic programs—and what I love about this facility is how it does just that. It touches every program."

The Center for Athletics Performance is an innovative system of resources designed to power athletes to their full potential. With 42,000 square feet of space adjacent to the university's Bulldog, Ice and Wink arenas, the CAP offers the latest in training and weightlifting equipment, recovery facilities, sports medicine resources and other innovative performance technology.

One of the standout features of the CAP is its commitment to holistic athlete development. The facility includes a dedicated sports science lab, where athletes undergo performance assessments, biomechanical analysis and nutrition counseling.

“You think about 17 different programs, almost 400 student-athletes, and this athletic facility will impact all of them,” Athletic Director Steve Brockelbank said.

The Center for Athletics Performance represents

more than building stronger bodies and optimizing performance from every angle. Stepping inside the CAP, Brockelbank believes Ferris State student-athletes will know they are in a place where champions are made.



### Triumphs on the Field: Recent Athletic Success

The Center for Athletics Performance might be the jewel in Ferris State’s athletic crown, but it is the athletes and coaches who truly shine. In recent years, Ferris State’s sports teams have achieved remarkable success, setting new standards of excellence in collegiate athletics.

### Football: Bulldog Dominance

Ferris State football continues its meteoric rise, capturing the hearts of fans and dominating on the field. The Bulldogs, under the leadership of Head Coach Tony Annese, have consistently ranked among the nation’s top Division II teams.

In 2022, the Ferris State football team embarked on a historic journey, winning the NCAA Division II National Championship game for the second year in a row. The Bulldogs’ unrelenting spirit and teamwork propelled the team to victory over the Colorado School of Mines, elevating Ferris State Athletics to a national stage. The CAP is poised to play a pivotal role in this journey, providing an enhanced training ground to mold future champions.

“We’re very pleased with this facility,” Annese said. “It’s amazing for our student-athletes.”

Bulldog football was recognized in a series of Spring 2023 events, ranging from campus and community celebrations, a visit to Lansing for recognition by the state of Michigan, and even an invitation to The White House on Monday, June 12, 2023.

*Speaking of jewels, what could be better than a matching pair of championship national championship rings? Ferris State University and the Bulldog football program celebrated the school’s second consecutive NCAA Division II National Championship squad on April 22 during a National Championship Ring Ceremony held at the David L. Eisler Center on the Ferris State.*

*The 2022 Ferris State NCAA DII Men’s Football Championship ring features representations of both 2021 and 2022 DII championship trophies and the phrase “Back-to-Back.”*

### Women’s Volleyball: A Tradition of Greatness

The Bulldog volleyball team captured the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships and reached the Midwest Regional final in 2022.

That success continues a longstanding tradition for the program, which has seen 11 consecutive NCAA Tournament bids, not counting the 2020 season, in which no event was held due to the pandemic. The Bulldogs have advanced to at least the regional semifinals nine of the past 10 years under Head Coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm. The program’s Fall 2022 regional appearance was its 26th.

Along with winning the 2022 GLIAC regular-season crown, Ferris State also captured the 2022 GLIAC Tournament Championship, to earn the program’s ninth league tourney title in school history.

According to Wilhelm, the CAP’s resources will go far toward helping the program continue its winning tradition.

“I’m thrilled for our student-athletes, who are so deserving of this expansion, and the opportunities it will create for them to maximize their success,” she said.

### Women’s Soccer: An Emerging Powerhouse

The Ferris State’s women’s soccer team has emerged as a powerhouse in Division II soccer. Under the guidance of Head Coach Greg Henson, the Bulldogs have consistently delivered championship performances.

In 2022, the women’s soccer team won the NCAA Division II Midwest Regional Championship and advanced to the national Final Four, both for the first time in program history. The team’s tenacity and skill on the field captivated fans and showcased the depth of talent on the Bulldog roster.

The CAP will provide the team with a training environment that pushes their limits and prepares them for success.



## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

As the Center for Athletics Performance ushers in a new era of enhancing athletics excellence, the Ferris State University’s sports teams continue to reach for the stars. With dedication, teamwork and the CAP’s high-caliber resources, Bulldogs student-athletes are poised to leave an even greater mark on the collegiate sports landscape.

“When you look at our past success, they’ve earned this opportunity to have this facility,” Brockelbank said.

“And when you look at trying to maintain that trajectory of success, you need a facility that’s going to allow you to properly train your student-athletes, to provide them with the athletic training needs that they have, with the rehab needs that they have, with the nutritional needs that they have, with the learning needs that they have, and this facility addresses all those areas.”

Ferris State’s commitment to fostering champions on and off the field is unwavering. The CAP symbolizes that commitment—a place where

dreams are forged, where champions are made, and where the legacy of Bulldog excellence continues to thrive. Whether on the gridiron, the soccer pitch or the volleyball court, Ferris State’s athletes are united by a common goal: to unleash excellence and proudly represent the Bulldog spirit.





**THE PIEPKOW FAMILY'S COMMITMENT TO STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS IS BUILT ON A FOUNDATION OF LOVE FOR FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY**

The family ties binding the Piepkow family to Ferris State University date to the early 1970s at what was then Ferris State College.

Luke Piepkow, a four-year starter for the Bulldog football team at middle linebacker, competed for Ferris State in the early 2000s. A three-time All-Conference player and team Most Valuable Player as a senior, Luke graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor of Science in Business.

"It was an amazing experience being a student-athlete at Ferris State. I have made lifelong friendships with former teammates, students and community members," Luke said, shouting out former Ferris State head coach Jeff Pierce and former defensive coordinator Duane Wilson. "I am forever grateful to Coach Pierce and Coach Wilson for providing me the opportunity to play for Ferris State."

Luke's story is a middle chapter of a 50-year Ferris State family legacy – beginning with his father, Ralph, an All-Conference tight end for the Bulldogs from 1970 to 1973. This is more than football. A love story began in the early '70s as Ralph met Luke's mom, Kim, at Ferris State.

Luke's uncle, Tom, was also a Bulldog who met his wife, Jeanie Prichard, at Ferris State.

The Ferris State-Piepkow alumni tally, Luke said, stands at nine people, including aunts, uncles and cousins who attended Ferris State. His younger brother Teddy played a high school football game at Top Taggart Field before playing college football at Bowling Green State University.

"My father, brother and I all played at Top Taggart," said Luke, adding that he has a 2-year-old golden retriever named Taggart.

The memories are extensive.

"I started to come to Ferris State football games in elementary school. We typically would come up for Homecoming games, attend the parades downtown and watch our dominant football teams of the '90s," Luke recalled. "I think that's

why I had a deep connection with Ferris State from a young age. I remember seeing my father reconnecting with former teammates and getting that sense of family through the football team and the city of Big Rapids."

As a young professional, Luke yearned to stay connected to Ferris State – personally and financially.

***"I am a very proud to be a Ferris State Bulldog."***

"Early on, I was a member of the Gridiron Club, I attended a few games a season, and participated in the Football Alumni Golf Outing. My father, Ralph, has been a longtime member of the Gridiron Club and has bled crimson and gold for more than four decades," he said. "My life started to change in 2009 after I moved to South Carolina. Me and my two business partners started a returnable packaging company primarily serving the automotive industry."

Starting a business has no shortage of twists and turns. The partners, however, maintained their focus.

"We come from blue collar backgrounds and took a huge risk at the height of the recession in 2009," Luke said. "Our company started with about five employees in the back of a sub-leased industrial building in Spartanburg, South Carolina."

Those humble roots were the product of seeds for future growth.

"Fast forward nine years. We grew our company into an industry leader with over 250 employees and plants in Detroit, South Carolina, and Mexico," Luke said. "I was probably most distant from our program and Ferris State during that timeframe due to the demands of growing a company and spending whatever remaining time I had with my wife, Erin, and our two children Owen, now 13, and Lila, now 11."

Luke's personal and professional life began an upward trend to new heights of fulfillment.

"We sold the company in April 2018, and that provided me with more time to spend with my

family and the ability to start giving back to the places that I felt were instrumental in helping me get to where I am today," he said.

Following the height of the pandemic, Ferris State sharpened its focus on completing the \$15.3 million Center for Athletics Performance project, featuring a new 6,000-square-foot Bulldog Arena and 42,000 square feet of new or renovated space.

Luke and his wife, Erin, saw an opportunity to support future Ferris State student-athletes while further cementing the legacy of the Piepkow family's half-century connection to the university.

"I was so excited to hear about how the university was looking to improve the Sports Complex, which was long overdue," Luke said. "Our student-athletes give a better part of their college lives in that building, and I thought it was a very worthy cause and that would help continue to drive the recent success of all of our sports teams here at Ferris State."

Luke shares credit for the project's success, noting, "I was a small piece of the puzzle. This CAP project was a very heavy lift for those deeply involved and committed to pushing this project across the goal line."

Watching the success of Ferris State athletes is particularly gratifying.

"The unbelievable success our athletic programs have had recently is most important to keep alumni and the community excited about our university," said Luke, who is fulfilling a dream in his third season as coaching varsity football at Christ Church Episcopal School in Greenville, S. C., defending its state championship, currently coaching the safety position. "The Athletics Department, our coaches and our student-athletes do a tremendous job. I am very proud to be a Ferris State Bulldog."







# Manufacturing and Welding Programs

## SYNERGY WITH INDUSTRY

Manufacturing and welding are critical to the U.S. economy, contributing significantly to its GDP, employment and innovation. According to data from the National Association of Manufacturers, the manufacturing sector contributed \$2.4 trillion to the U.S. economy in 2020 and employed more than 12 million people.

The American Welding Society estimates that welding-related activities influence more than 50 percent of the U.S. GDP.

RoMan Manufacturing, headquartered in Grand Rapids, exemplifies manufacturing excellence. The company specializes in designing and manufacturing transformers, power supplies and related electrical equipment, catering to industries such as automotive, aerospace and electronics. Its commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction has established it as a key player in the manufacturing sector.

Like all manufacturers, RoMan depends on the steady entry of new talent. But a national crisis looms with a projected need for more than 453,000 welders by 2029, reflecting a 3-percent growth rate in employment. Several factors, including infrastructure projects, technological advancements in the manufacturing sector and an aging workforce drive this demand.

***“... it is our responsibility to support the universities that produce this talent.”***

As manufacturing engineers and welders age and retire, a skills gap is emerging in the field, making workers with experience using the tools of the trade more important.

Anticipating this need, RoMan Executive Vice President and Ferris State University trustee Kurt Hofman looked to his alma mater. A 1983 graduate of the Welding Engineering Technology program, he knows well the quality of preparation offered by the university’s College of Engineering Technology.

“As a proud alumnus from the Welding Engineering Technology program, I have always known that the program produces students that are industry-ready and have an impact in their jobs on day one,” Hofman said.

Ferris State offers comprehensive manufacturing and welding programs that play a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce of the manufacturing and welding industries. Led by experts in the field, the programs equip students with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed to excel in the industry.

The programs also collaborate with industry partners, including RoMan, facilitating internships and co-op experiences and benefiting from in-kind gifts of equipment for training purposes, which ensure that students gain real-world exposure to enhance their employability upon graduation.

“Our lab is very well-equipped, and a lot of that equipment is a result of our support from industry,” said Jeff Carney, program coordinator for Ferris State’s Welding programs.

“They see the value of our program to their future company outlook because welding is a very important process to many industries across the country and the globe.”

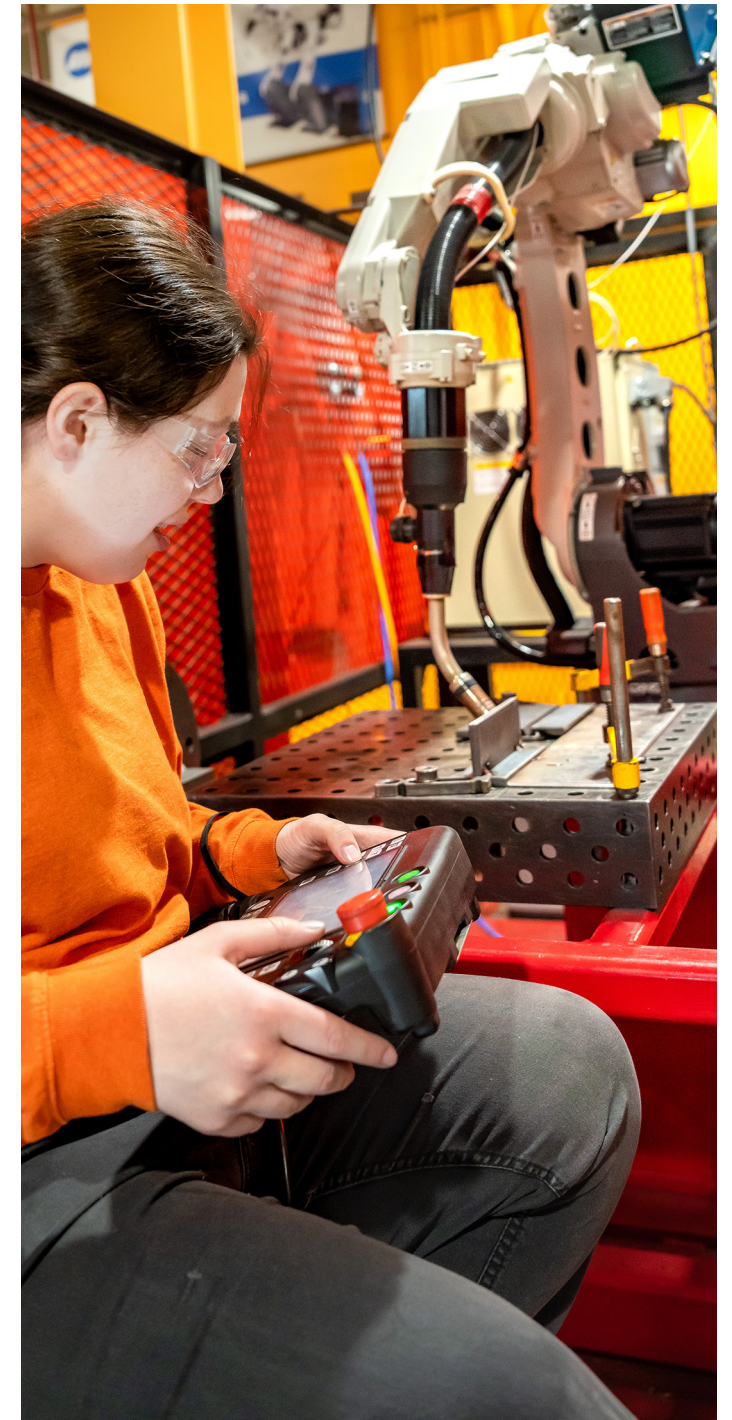
The collaboration between manufacturers like RoMan and educational institutions like Ferris State illustrates the symbiotic relationship between industry and academia, emphasizing the pivotal role each plays in driving economic growth, technological advancement, and workforce development.

“It is a case of supply and demand,” Hofman said. “And, as employers of technical talent, it is our responsibility to support the universities that produce this talent.”

Such partnerships are poised to bridge the gap in industries such as manufacturing and welding, fostering better-rounded educational experiences so graduates can make seamless transitions into the workforce.

“At RoMan Manufacturing, we have hired many welding graduates, as well as graduates from design and manufacturing programs,” Hofman said.

“The role that the Ferris State University plays in the manufacturing sector in the state of Michigan is critical, and we believe it has dramatically contributed to RoMan being a global leader in the manufacturing of welding and other industrial power systems.”





# Chloe Flora

## JOHNSON SCHOLARS PROGRAM

For Chloe Flora, a career as a law enforcement officer is an opportunity to protect people at their most critical or vulnerable moments.

Flora grew up in difficult family circumstances and was moved between a series of households as a child, finally calling for help and entering the foster care system after being abandoned by a family acquaintance.

Flora proved herself tougher than that experience. She completed school and enrolled at Ferris State University with the support of the Ferris Youth Initiative's Johnson Scholars program for foster youth. The program provides scholarship resources and connects students to Ferris State employee mentors to help them navigate the challenges of college studies and independent living.

Graduating in May 2023 from the university's Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice program, Flora looked back on the support she received.

"You can call someone you can count on, day or night, to help," she said. "Whether it's study advice, help with student services or just life skills. And, if you don't call, they'll be calling you to check on you."

"Chloe is a dynamic young adult who has worked so hard to accomplish her goals, and working with her and watching her grow over the years has been such a pleasure," said Janette Ward, coordinator of Independent Living - Fostering Success coach II for the program. "She has overcome so many barriers and still persevered."

Flora is now considering law enforcement career opportunities in and out of state. She hopes that her service will position her to mitigate harm through intervention when needed.

# Sean Snead



## ALUMNI LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sean Snead knows what it is to stand on the shoulders of giants—one giant, in particular.

His grandfather, Ronald E. Snead, has served multiple terms on Ferris State University's board of trustees, and is widely renowned for his efforts as a student in the early 1970s to organize nonviolent protests in response to incidents of racism on campus and university officials' handling of those incidents.

Snead is proud of his grandfather's legacy of social justice and looks to carry it on in his personal conduct. An excellent student who is quick to lend a hand, the senior in Ferris State's Sports Communications program is also gaining valuable work experience as student staff for Ferris State's Athletics Department.

A true student of communications, Snead understands listening is key.

"Listening to others lets them know you value them. It makes them more open to exchanging ideas," he said. "I feel like my family raised me to be considerate for a reason, and listening is a form of courtesy, helping people feel heard and sharing their stories."

Fittingly, Snead has been supported along the way not only by the steps his grandfather helped the university take toward social justice decades ago, but also by its Legacy Scholarship.

Designated for family members of alumni, Ferris State's Legacy Scholarship program is supported by participation in alumni activities and events. It helps the university make an impact that spans generations.

For his part, Snead is poised to leave a legacy of his own. Armed with the skills he built at Ferris State, he hopes to enter a career path that takes him into athletic program leadership upon graduation.



# The Mickey Shapiro Opportunity Scholarship

Mickey Shapiro wasn't exactly a model student when he enrolled at Ferris State University. But the university's supportive environment quickly helped change that.

"I struggled in high school and was accepted at Ferris into a summer probationary program in 1965," he said.

"It was small. They noticed whether or not you were there. They taught you how to study."

Shapiro later attended Michigan State University and founded the successful M. Shapiro Real Estate Group. He chose to give back to Ferris State in 2015 by starting the Mickey Shapiro Opportunity Scholarship Endowment, designated for provisionally approved students who successfully complete their trial year.

Recipients of the scholarship had a chance to meet Shapiro in person and thank him for that gift during his visit to the university's David L. Eisler Center on Sept. 13.

Though no longer as small as it was in 1965, the university still prides itself on its low 16:1 faculty-student ratio and the personalized attention it allows instructors to provide to students, whether for that extra measure of academic support and encouragement, or career advice and networking opportunities.

"I've never forgotten what Ferris did for me," Shapiro said. "Through this scholarship, I am supporting promising students who struggle and giving back to the school that first gave me a chance."

## THE FERRIS FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE

The Ferris Futures Scholarship Challenge reached its six-year goal. The challenge provided a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$3 million per year for the establishment of or addition to endowed scholarships.



# One Day for Dawgs

Ferris State University's One Day for Dawgs took place on April 12. This event empowers university and affinity groups to raise funds for the Ferris State need that matters to them.

The event offers alumni, friends, and family the opportunity to be a part of the Ferris State mission to make the college experience for current and future students transformational. Individuals form groups to support an existing university program, scholarship endowment, equipment purchase or other cause.

One Day for Dawgs raised more than \$222,960, including more than \$70,000 for groups

supporting university athletics programs. A total of 1,587 donors, led by 157 individuals or group fundraisers, supported the event.

This year, more than 70 programs from across the university joined the 24-hour giving effort. Alumni, family and friends were asked to join the vision and make a gift. All dollars raised went directly to support each special cause.

One Day for Dawgs will return on April 10, 2024. For more information or to become involved, visit [ferris.edu/oneday](https://ferris.edu/oneday).



## The Jim Crow Museum

Ferris State University's Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery is actively fundraising toward a \$22 million goal to pay for a new facility featuring 7,500 square feet of exhibition space. The new facility will more than double the current display space.

The board of trustees committed \$5 million to support the future museum at its February 2023 meeting. With \$14,049,555 raised, the campaign for the museum's new home has reached 60 percent of its goal.

In June, a \$500,000 pledge from the Wege Foundation supported bringing the museum's traveling exhibit, "Overcoming Hateful Things," around the nation. The traveling exhibit debuted in West Michigan on June 3 at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. "Overcoming Hateful Things" will tour the country – and beyond.

The Jim Crow Museum developed the traveling exhibit in 2021 to increase access and enhance the preservation of its more than 20,000 assets.



UPDATES



# Jill (Eichenberg) Bush

When Jill Bush's father passed away in 2022, she and her family considered how best to honor him. Her father, Mark Eichenberg, was a well-known Ferris State University professional community member as well as a Ferris State alum, like Jill and her siblings.

"When we were thinking about memorials, we thought about what was important to him, and we thought of a scholarship at Ferris," Bush said.

The family began collecting gifts to establish the Mark J. Eichenberg Endowed Scholarship, and Bush and her husband, Jason, have chosen to increase its influence by making a planned gift of a percentage of their estate.

The family is earmarking the scholarship dollars to support nontraditional Ferris State students.

It is only fitting. Mark Eichenberg started his relationship with Ferris State University as a nontraditional student. After working for ANR Pipeline, he returned to his alma mater to become its director of Plant Operations and Project Management, a role he served for more than 20 years.

He took immense joy in his career at the university and was proud when younger family members, including Bush, chose to work and study there. Bush graduated from Ferris State in 2007 and currently works as its Facilities Operational Services supervisor.

Both Eichenberg and Bush attended as nontraditional students, working full time while earning their degrees. Bush and her family are glad the new scholarship meets a greater-than-ever need for support for these students.

"There's not a lot out there for non-traditional students," said Bush. "So, it was a way to help an overlooked group. It's become very important to me. Ferris was an important part of his life and the lives of our family members."



# John Elenbaas

John Elenbaas was the first in his family to graduate high school, and his family was excited to see him go on to college and be successful. After a career in the financial world, Elenbaas is looking to help future generations by supporting scholarships and through planned giving.

Elenbaas spent most of his career in financial consulting, working for several companies before starting his company, Delta Consultants, in 1997.

The name came from his Delta Sigma Pi fraternity membership while at Ferris State. Delta means to help or support change, and Elenbaas worked with acquisitions and dispositions, so the idea of fostering change struck a chord.

Elenbaas said he came from a humble background. His parents and their families grew up on farms and left school to work there. His parents were proud and supportive as he sought to complete his education.

A high ACT score qualified him for a full-tuition scholarship at what was then Ferris State College. He worked hard to maintain a 3.0 GPA to keep the scholarship. He also earned a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University, a master's degree from Michigan State University, and CPA and CMA designations.

He intends to leave a planned gift to fund an endowed scholarship benefiting accounting students with financial need.

"There are many folks today in the same position I was in then, a first-generation university student looking for a good life," he said. "I'm fortunate to be in a position to help, and a tuition scholarship similar to what helped me is just my way of paying that back."



# Dick Shaw

Dick Shaw graduated from Ferris State University with an associate degree in Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration in 1962 and with a bachelor's degree in Technical Education in 1971. His degrees frame his work in industry and service in the U.S. Armed Forces, from which he was honorably discharged in 1970.

Shaw's career at Ferris State began as an instructor, and he rose to professor and HVACR program director before his retirement in 1998. Throughout his tenure, his passion for collaboration with industry partners helped leverage much-needed assistance for his program for hands-on application coursework to support students' environmental certifications, as well as in-kind gifts of state-of-the-art equipment from industry.

His steadfast support for the university has continued beyond his retirement. In the 2000s, Shaw made an initial planned gift to support the HVACR program, one that he has since extended and continued to build upon, with significant additions in FY20-23 utilizing the Ferris Futures Scholarship Fund's matching program.

With his consultancy skills still in high demand, Shaw routes payment for his services directly into the foundation, so that students can benefit from the full, tax-free value.

"I don't do it for the money," said Shaw. "I do it because I enjoy it, and HVAC technicians across the country seek the challenge."

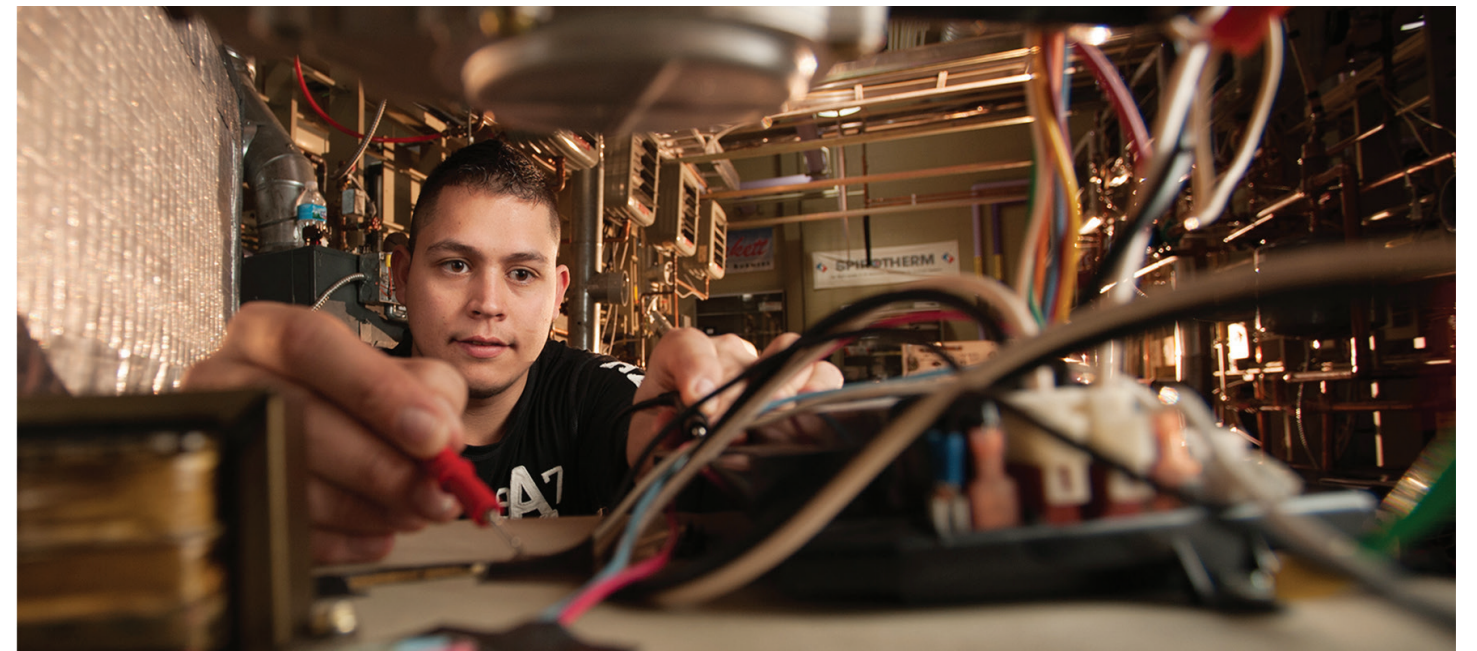
*"The feeling that you're doing something appreciated—in some cases, desperately needed—is very uplifting."*

The result? A legacy of six total endowments supporting Ferris State students and programs.

Shaw's programmatic support benefits HVACR, as well as the Ferris State football program and Athletics Department. His endowed scholarships serve students with special consideration to foster youth and veterans.

"The feeling that you're doing something appreciated—in some cases, desperately needed—is very uplifting," he said.

Shaw also supports the university as a member of The Ferris Foundation's board of directors, a role in which he has served since 2005, with two years service as board chair. In 2022, he was recognized with the university's Honorary Doctorate of Industry at its spring commencement.





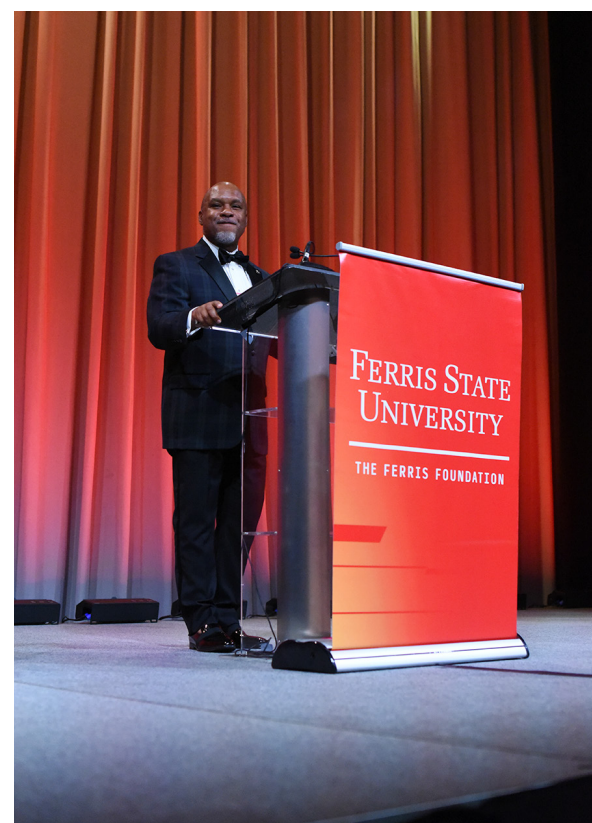
# Foundation Benefit 2022

The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit was held Nov. 4, in the Steelcase Ballrooms at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids.

More than 500 friends, alumni, students, faculty and staff gathered for an evening of philanthropy, connection and success stories. The theme was “A Day in the Life of a Student.”

Hosted by President Bill Pink, the program included keynote speaker and alumna Dana King. During her presentation, King shared her Ferris story and her journey from student to broadcast journalist to professional sculptor.

Proceeds generated by the Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit support The Ferris Foundation Opportunity Scholarship Endowment and The Ferris Foundation Exceptional Merit Grant Awards.



## Opportunity Scholarships and Merit Grants

The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit funds two key programs supporting deserving students and Ferris State University staff.

The Ferris Foundation Opportunity Scholarship Endowment makes annual awards to outstanding full-time undergraduate students beginning or continuing their Ferris State studies.

Scholarship candidates must have a minimum 3.25 GPA at the time of application and demonstrate multiple situations in which they overcame obstacles related (but not limited) to social, economic, diversity or gender status. Candidates may also have their financial needs considered.

The benefit also supports The Ferris Foundation’s Exceptional Merit Grant Awards for faculty and staff.

The annual grants are available to projects representing the innovative and collaborative spirit of Ferris State, including pilot programs, matching grant expenses, research or special projects that involve students, and opportunities that enhance faculty expertise or fund equipment dedicated to specific programmatic objectives.



# Kathy Mullins

KATHY MULLINS MAKES A FERRIS STATE EDUCATION MORE ACCESSIBLE AS THE NEW VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT AND MARKETING

Dr. Kathy Mullins is a Ferris State University alumna who oversees efforts to make a college education accessible to more students and to share the university's story around the state and beyond.

Mullins, who became vice president for University Advancement and Marketing in January, was the first member of her family to attend college.

She has spent nearly 30 years working in education, including 10 years in K-12 administration and 18 years at Grand Rapids Community College, where she last served as vice president for College Advancement and executive director of the GRCC Foundation.

Under her watch, the GRCC Foundation doubled the amount of scholarship money available for students and raised funds for new facilities and renovations to historic buildings, all aimed at improving the student experience and creating more educational opportunities.

The Communications team under her leadership earned more 60 state and national honors for its storytelling, and the Grants Department set a record for financial support from governmental and philanthropic sources.

As Ferris State's vice president for University Advancement and Marketing, Mullins leads efforts to connect with local, state, and national partners and philanthropic donors to support students and enhance educational opportunities. She oversees the marketing and communication teams and connects with the hundreds of thousands of Ferris State alumni around the globe.

Mullins is a leader in the community, serving as a member of the board for the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan, and the Mecosta County Development Corp. She was a 2013 GRCC Salute to Women honoree.

Mullins earned a doctorate in Community College Leadership at Ferris State. She also earned associate and bachelor's degrees in business, and a Master of Business Administration in Leadership Studies from Baker College.



# Jennifer Shaw

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS ARE AT THE HEART OF GOALS FOR NEW ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

Building relationships and further inspiring philanthropic support for student, faculty and staff excellence are at the heart of Jennifer Shaw's work since she stepped into her new leadership role as The Ferris Foundation's executive director in June.

"It has been exciting to build relationships while establishing a rapport within our Advancement team, as well as across campus and with The Ferris Foundation and, of course, our generous donors," Shaw said.

This year, The Ferris Foundation celebrates its silver anniversary – 25 years championing the mission and core values of Ferris State through inspired leadership, goal-driven fundraising and ambassador work that keeps the university strong after 139 years.

A commitment to educational access has been central to Ferris State's mission since Woodbridge Nathan Ferris first came to Big Rapids in 1884.

"I was impressed by Ferris' history as one of opportunity, placing a high value on diversity and inclusion," Shaw said. "I truly appreciate Woodbridge Ferris' philosophy of educating all men, women and children of Michigan and beyond."

Before Ferris State, Shaw was Grand Valley

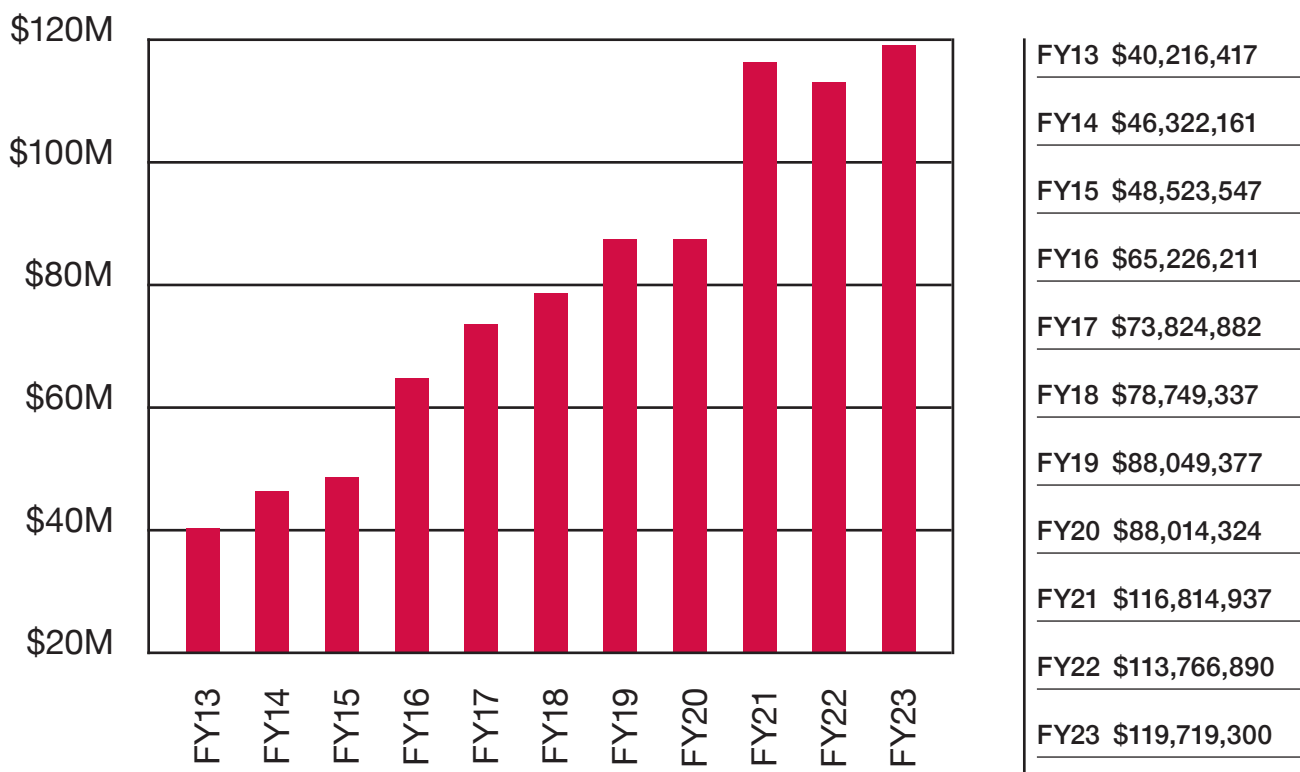
State University's assistant vice president for development, campaigns, college advancement and development services. She was a leader in planning and carrying out GVSU's Laker Effect Comprehensive Campaign, which raised \$132 million, far surpassing its initial \$85 million fundraising goal. Shaw has been a part of raising over \$320 million throughout her career.

As Ferris State moves closer to its 140-year anniversary, she sees that the best is yet to come. Shaw and her team are excited to engage people who are passionate about Ferris State.

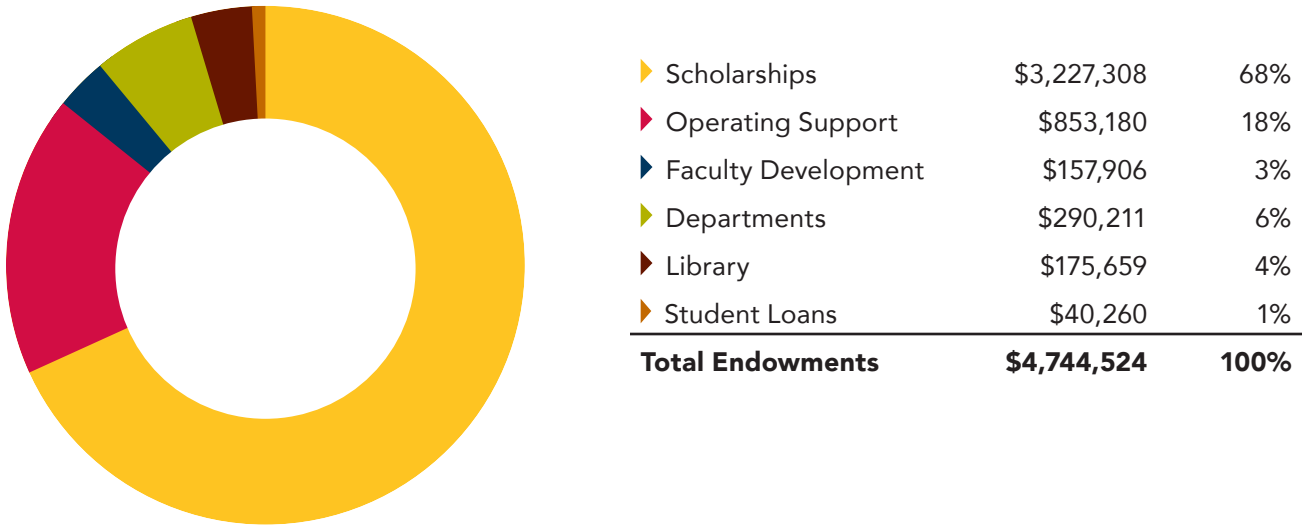
"I want to hear their personal Ferris stories, thoughts, and ideas. There are many philanthropic needs at Ferris," she said. "Together, we can work to fulfill them and even better serve our students, faculty, staff and alumni."

Shaw earned a Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership from Grand Valley State University, Certificate of Fundraising Management from Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy in Indianapolis, and Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts from Aquinas College.

# Fiscal Year End Balances

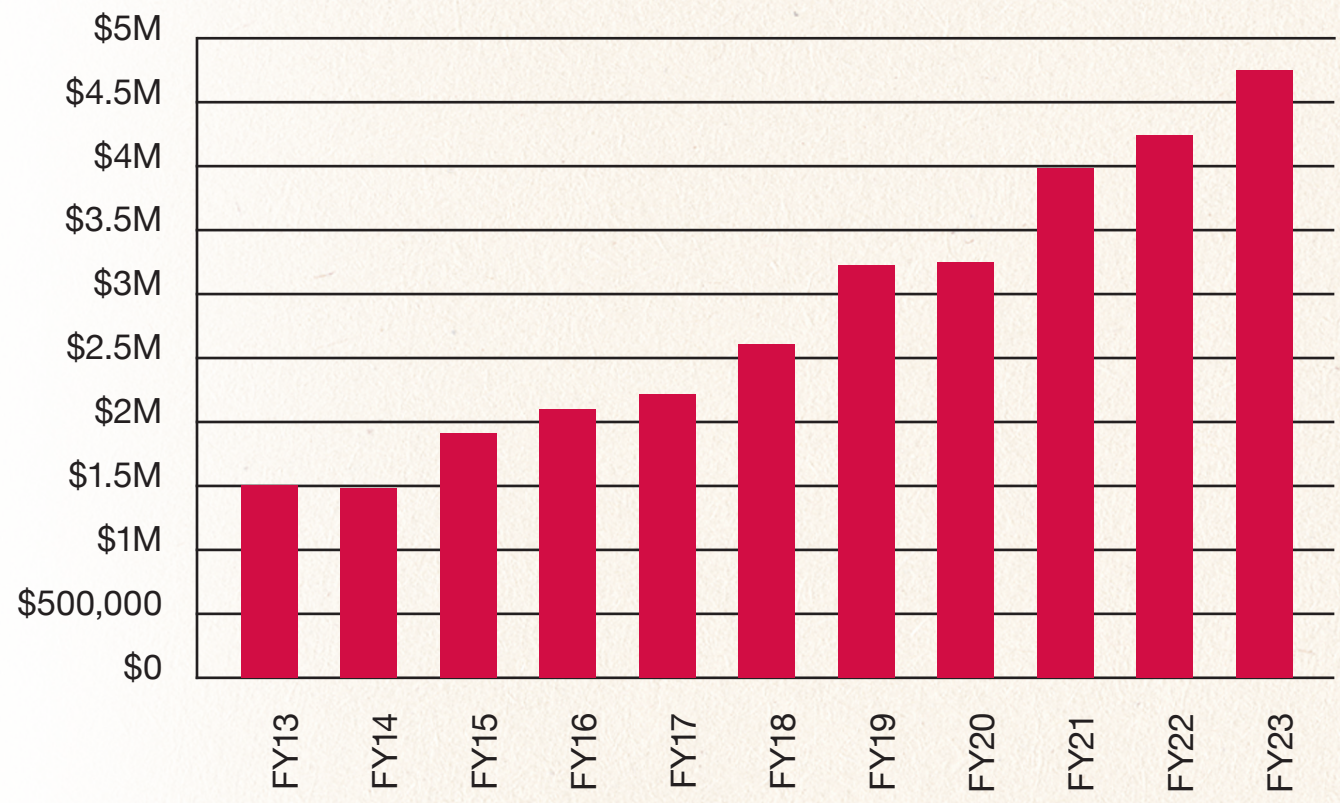


# Distribution Restrictions



\*Endowment spending of 4% plus 1% administrative fee and other support such as Merit Grants.

# Ferris Foundation Distributions by Fiscal Year



FY13	\$1,504,880	FY19	\$3,223,766
FY14	\$1,490,633	FY20	\$3,247,230
FY15	\$1,930,082	FY21	\$3,989,035
FY16	\$2,098,302	FY22	\$4,238,340
FY17	\$2,208,734	FY23	\$4,744,524
FY18	\$2,613,897		



# Directors

## Arlen-Dean Gaddy

B '87, Chair, Caledonia

## Timothy Murphy

EHS '83, Current past-chair, Sarasota, Fla.

## Emily Hancock

P '76, Secretary, Indianapolis

## Jennifer Shaw

Executive director, Grand Rapids

## Jim Bachmeier

Treasurer, Big Rapids

## Kenneth Bailey

T '90, Grand Rapids

## Matthew Bissett

T '98, South Lyon

## Kevin Cross

B'86, Ada

## Jenifer Cutter

B '01, Grand Rapids

## Paul Doyle

EHS '79, Caledonia

## Jean K. Elder

H Doc. '87, Grand Rapids

## John Engelman

AS '64, H Doc. '03, Jonesborough, Tenn.

## Gary Granger

Byron Center

## Denise Graves

B '89, Brighton

## Kurt Hofman

T '83, Caledonia

## Susan K. Jones

East Grand Rapids

## Andrew Kalinowski

B '15, Santa Monica, Calif.

## Dana King

B '82, Vero Beach, Fla.

## Matt Nawrocki

T '95, Lone Tree, Colo.

## David Pilgrim

Rockford

## Jack Roberts

Utica

## Thomas Scholler

B '59, H Doc. '84, Clarkston

## Richard Shaw

T '63, EHS '71, Grand Rapids

## Kevin Simon

B '07, Grand Rapids

## Alton Smith

HP '95, Grosse Pointe Park

## Terry Stewart

B '69, Saugatuck

## Howard Stross

Palm Harbor, Fla.

## Christine Visner

Grand Rapids

## Russell Visner

Grand Rapids

# Emeriti Directors

## Mindy Anderson

Palo Alto, Calif.

## Michael Bigford

EHS '83, Current past-chair, Sarasota, Fla.

## Dale DeHaan

B '70, Alto

## Paul Eichenberg

T '92, Novi

## John Fenn

H Doc. '07, Sterling Heights

## Mary Garvelink

EHS '72, H Doc. '17, Colorado Springs, Colo.

## James Giroux

T '75, Grand Rapids

## John Hare

B '68, H Doc. '08, Dallas

## Richard Hurst

T '62, Rockford

## Stephanie Leonardos

H Doc. '09, Ada

## Dennis Lerner

B '70, Big Rapids

## Adel Makki

P '05, Detroit

## Joseph Mikols

Big Rapids

## Elizabeth Peacock

EHS '77, Sunset, S.C.

## Randall Phelps

B '81, Ada

## Karl Roth

P '55, Bay City

## Gary Trimarco

Naples, Fla.

## Sueann Walz

Big Rapids



The Ferris Foundation is the fundraising arm of Ferris State University. Since 1991, the foundation has been responsible for receiving, investing and distributing endowment gifts, which provide a source of perpetual support for Ferris State University.

In January 2015, The Ferris Foundation's role expanded beyond managing endowments, becoming the umbrella organization that receives and acknowledges all gifts to the university. This includes annual gifts that meet present needs, with the goals of enhancing stewardship and communication with donors, creating a more efficient and unified approach to philanthropy, and further strengthening the foundation's mission as a valued and trusted intermediary between Ferris State University and its donors.

Ferris State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, veteran or military status, height, weight, protected disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable state or federal laws or regulations in education, employment, housing, public services, or other university operations, including, but not limited to, admissions, programs, activities, hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, or retention. Retaliation against any person making a charge, filing a legitimate complaint, testifying, or participating in any discrimination investigation or proceeding is prohibited.

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## THE FERRIS FOUNDATION

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