



# Points of Pride

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY • SPRING 2008



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FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

*Imagine More*



## President's Corner

This issue of *Points of Pride* highlights outstanding achievements by members of the Ferris faculty. The financial assistance of grants and fellowships have helped make it possible for them to bring the most up-to-date developments in their fields back to the classroom. At Ferris State University, we are fortunate to have a very active group of faculty who have been Fulbright scholars. They help encourage an international perspective on campus by sponsoring lectures and seminars by visiting scholars and maintaining exchanges with institutions as diverse as Vietnam's An Giang University and the University of Debrecen in Hungary.

Exactly 125 years ago, in the spring of 1883, Woodbridge N. Ferris first visited Big Rapids. A year later, in the fall of 1884, he would begin the school that bears his name. Mr. Ferris himself taught the first class of 15 students at his new school. Although we have more students today, the faculty profiles in this second edition of *Points of Pride* make it clear that we honor and uphold the tradition of educational excellence established nearly a century and a quarter ago.

David L. Eisler

## On Campus

### Michigan Energy Conference opens dialogue on efficiency and effectiveness

The Michigan Energy Conference will promote open dialogue on using energy effectively and efficiently to create sustainable environments at home and work during a two-day series of sessions April 11 and 12 at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center in Big Rapids, and at Ferris State University's Granger Center for Construction and HVACR.

Keynote speaker Gordon V.R. Holness, PE, will draw upon his more than 50 years of experience in design and construction to discuss technology and energy conservation, for which he has won 12 regional and national awards.



The conference will continue with an expert panel discussion, breakout sessions and educational workshops. Also highlighting the conference will be a presentation by former Michigan gubernatorial candidate Dick DeVos of Grand Rapids.

"The Michigan Energy Conference will provide a broad forum for discussion of important energy issues," said Ron McKean, associate dean of Ferris' College of Technology. "Bringing industry, government and educational leaders together to dialogue on our energy challenges will foster ideas that will result in opportunities for Michigan."

### Strong enrollment continues into spring semester

School officials once again reported a record spring enrollment, with 12,407 students attending classes systemwide. Historically not seeing spring enrollment at Ferris above 12,000 students, University officials are pleased with campus-wide efforts to increase enrollment.

"The University's success is based upon the hard work of faculty and staff at Ferris to create a supportive and welcoming student environment," Ferris President David Eisler said. "The continued increase in the number of students attending Ferris is great news."

Eisler also noted that the enrollment growth is evidence that Ferris State University's academic programs are serving the needs of Michigan citizens.

Off campus, the University is also seeing growth with 2,211 students enrolled, an increase of 180 students more than spring enrollment in 2007 of 2,031 students. Ferris offers degree programs in Grand Rapids at the Applied Technology Center and at more than 20 additional locations throughout the state of Michigan.

Kendall College of Art and Design set its own record for enrollment and is up 99 students to 1,042 above last spring's total enrollment of 943. Kendall has added offerings in photography, painting, digital media, sculpture and functional art, art education and metals/jewelry design, as well as a Master of Fine Arts and Master of Art Education. Most recently, Kendall collaborated with Ferris' College of Business to develop a core of courses in design and innovation management that have become a part of the University's MBA program.

## Get caught reading

Diane Griffin discovered that inspiration sometimes occurs when least expected.

That inspiration came as part of the AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) program, through which Griffin has been engaged on a grass-roots level to encourage reading.

"My inspiration started for this program this past summer, when I was doing a summertime reading program at the Big Rapids Housing Complex for low income families. I would search the Internet to find ways to show the kids reading could be fun," said Griffin, who is hopeful her efforts will have even more traction. I came across the Web site 'Get Caught Reading' and thought it was great. But I wanted it to be more personal and specific to the people involved. I wrote to the publisher, Tina Jordan, who owns the rights to the 'Get Caught Reading' logo. She gave me permission to use it for my project."

"Get Caught Reading in Mecosta County" is a collaborative local effort that includes assistance from the Big Rapids Community Library as well as from the Ferris FLITE Media Production. The inspiration of the young people she met last summer in Big Rapids has motivated Griffin to set personal goals for the project: "Promote literacy and volunteering in the schools and/or library."





## Software engineers needed. Ferris responds.



*Hired at FSU-GR in September 2007 in response to industry trends and the increasing need for software engineers, Frederick Baker has been busy researching the competition, developing the curriculum and promoting the program that was launched in January.*

Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Edison. Benjamin Banneker. Growing up, these were the men Frederick Baker looked up to as a budding inventor himself. When Baker was just 5 years old, he was attracted to all things scientific, and had a love for magnets and electromagnetism. But all creations require gears, kite string or silicon chips as Baker can attest. He “invented” Ferris’ new Digital Media Software Engineering program.

“As an only child, I had a lot of time to dream and invent and make things,” shares Baker about his childhood. “I even had a scrapbook of inventions...for example, I would tell my mom ‘This is how we’re going to help blind people get around the city,’ and I’d have a sketch to go with it...It was just so natural for me, making inventions. A number of them actually exist now,” he laughs.

Hired at FSU-GR in September 2007 in response to industry trends and the increasing need for software engineers, Baker has been busy researching the competition, developing the curriculum and promoting the program that was launched in January.

“We have researched all of the software engineering programs across the nation and the curriculum I’ve developed for our students meets the needs of the industry today. We also allow students who are interested in other areas,

such as Digital Animation and Game Design, to incorporate that into the curriculum. It's a very flexible and comprehensive program, and probably the most exciting program out there," adds Baker.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, software engineering is an occupation that is projected to grow the fastest and add the most new jobs over the 2006-16 decade. Employment of software engineers is projected to increase by 38 percent over the 2006 to 2016 period and generate about 324,000 positions, making it one of the largest employment increases of any occupation.

Not only are the employment prospects excellent, but so are the starting salaries of graduates, the benefits, the environment and flexibility.

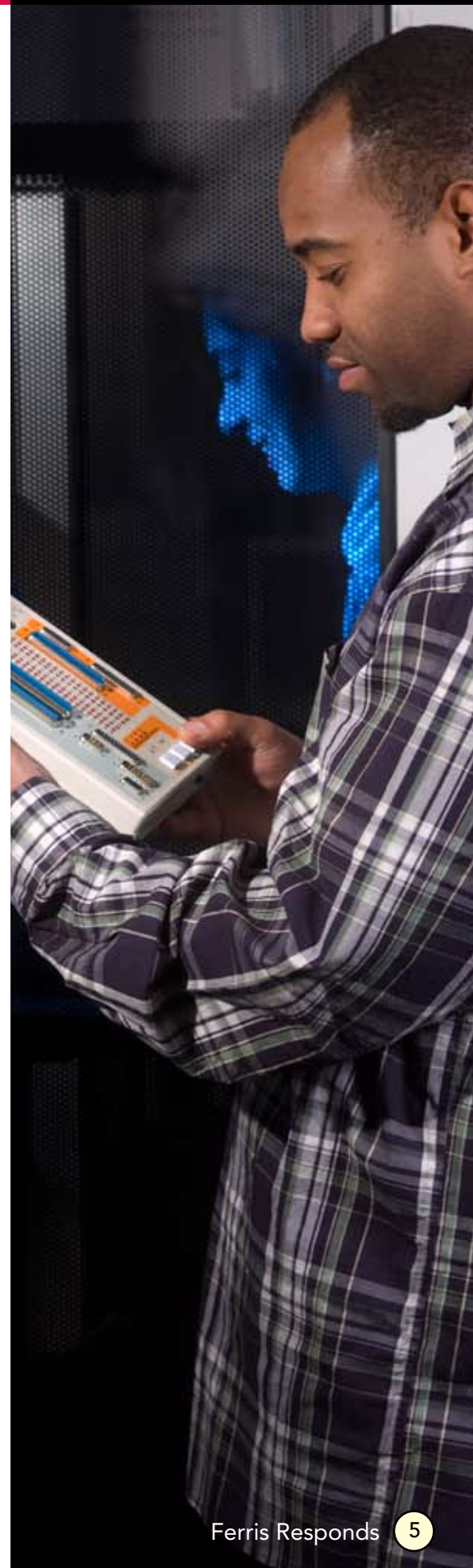
"You would think that with all those wonderful things you would have a lot of people coming into this program, but it's not for the faint of heart. Every single day you have problems, and you have to be comfortable with tackling these problems and being the 'go-to' person to get them solved. Students will need training and experience, and this is what our students will get in the program.

*"You would think that with all those wonderful things you would have a lot of people coming into this program, but it's not for the faint of heart."*

"I'm also hoping to find students who are excited about math and to attract a more diverse student body to come into the field, women in particular," shares Baker. In fact, he's actually writing two grants right now that would provide scholarships to women and disadvantaged youth.

"There are a number of kids that would love to do this job, and they have the skills and passion, but just can't afford it financially," says Baker.

Although we may not realize it, software engineering is all around us, from traction control systems in cars to cell phones to the ever-popular Xbox 360. They all work because of software engineering. Thanks to Baker and his expertise, Ferris students will be on the cutting-edge of new technologies, learning how to develop software that keeps us ahead of the digital divide.





## Cerdena examines parasitic disease wreaking havoc in Southeast Asia

*Schistosomiasis japonicum*, a fast-spreading parasitic disease, has wreaked havoc in a number of Southeast Asian countries – including the Philippines. The Philippines is the native country of Ferris State University associate professor of Geography Renato L. Cerdena. Cerdena still has a strong interest in the Philippines and has taken a special interest in the spread of a disease he sees as particularly endemic in Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Troubled by the spread of the disease in his home country, Cerdena wrote a proposed faculty research grant that would allow the use of satellite remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems to more closely examine a disease that affects more than 250 million people worldwide and puts an additional 400 million at risk in more than 70 other countries according to the World Health Organization.

“The long-term broad goal is to gain a better understanding of the environmental and cultural factors that influence the transmission cycle of the disease called *Schistosomiasis japonicum*,” said Cerdena, who has been employed as a professor at Ferris since 1997. “It is a parasitic disease that is acquired through water contact. About 250 million people, in the less developed parts of the world, are infected with this disease.

“I also want to know how water resources development projects, such as irrigation development, have inadvertently caused the increase in the prevalence of the disease (schistosomiasis is acquired through water contact and largely impacts children).”

Cerdena hoped to use technological advances to examine potential correlations between environmental factors and the spread of the disease in Southeast Asia.

“The immediate goal in this field research project is to use satellite remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems to understand environmental conditions and human activity patterns in areas that harbor the snail, the intermediate host of the disease,” Cerdena said. “I needed to conduct field work to gather ‘ground truth’ which will validate the information that I extract from satellite imagery.”

Cerdena, who has both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of the Philippines, put together a detailed proposal for the project and submitted it to Ferris State University officials with whom he works.



"The University's faculty research committee approved my faculty research grant, which called for field work in the Agusan River Basin in the island of Mindanao in the Philippines where schistosomiasis is endemic," he said.

"It allowed me to gather lots of field data and to increase my network of research contacts. I also was able to help the Department of Health and Provincial government in setting up a disease monitoring system using Geographic Information Systems," he said. "In return, they are now giving me field data that I am able to use for research and teaching purposes."

In his proposal, Cerdena discussed citizens in many rural areas are more susceptible to the spread of a disease. A lack of toilets leads to bodies of water that have been contaminated by human feces which aides the transmission of the parasite. He used his experiences to work with farmers and others to try and control the spread of the disease.

"I have also gained valuable experience in trying to educate the farmers and people in the endemic areas about the disease transmission cycle," Cerdena said. "Based on this experience, I am now developing teaching modules aimed at (kindergarten through 12th-grade) students – the most vulnerable group – in the Philippines. I'm trying to get help from the Association of American Geographers in this endeavor."

Even as a native of the Philippines, Cerdena had barriers he had to overcome in working with natives of particular regions of the country.

"I don't speak the local language and dialects Butuanon or Higaonon, and so I had to use the national language Tagalog, which the locals understood but did not speak well," he said. "In addition to schistosomiasis, some of the areas of the Agusan River Basin are endemic to malaria, so I had to take precautions.

"(Also) the security situation in the area is also a source of concern," he added. "Because communist guerillas operate in the area, we had to coordinate with Philippine Army units whenever we entered critical municipalities like Talacogon, Loreto and San Luis in the western part of the river basin."

Being a geographer who understands the area, and someone who appreciates a good cup of coffee, Cerdena took an opportunity to make a little purchase.

"I was also able to buy my favorite coffee beans, locally called 'Kape Barako,' which are grown in the tierra templada volcanic soils of the province of Batangas," he said.





### Killian works with young people inside, outside the classroom to make a difference

Bill Killian, for more than 20 years, has taken pride in making a difference in the lives of scores of young people whether in the classroom, on the basketball hardwood or the baseball diamond.

The last two decades, since he began working at Ferris State University, have been almost like a dream come true for the native of Chicago, Ill. Rather than ask what Killian has done, a better question might be to ask what he has not done in his life. In Ferris' Physical Sciences department, Killian works as a teacher of both general and industrial chemistry courses. He is the coordinator of the Industrial Chemistry Technology program. That is only part of the equation, however, as Killian also serves as a Michigan-based regional scout for the San Diego Padres franchise of Major League Baseball and volunteers as an assistant coach for the Bulldog men's basketball team.

So, his summers keep him busy as a part-time professional baseball scout and his winters keep him occupied as a volunteer assistant hoops coach. But, his roots are entrenched in the classroom, where he loves to make a difference in the lives of so many young people – some of which are psyched out before they even get to him. Killian proudly trumpets the value of good education as he has watched countless students come through his classrooms since 1987.

"I got into this because I really like working with young people. ... I really like the students," said Killian, who was a four-year letter winner in baseball and basketball at North Park College in Chicago, where he also served as an assistant basketball coach, winning the NCAA Division III National Championships in 1986. "I think it started for me as I was attending graduate school working as a teacher's assistant. It was then I started to really get that feeling that teaching was something I wanted to do for my career, and I have pretty much been doing it ever since then."

Beyond his work in the classroom, Killian has been involved in athletics during his time at Ferris – whether it is on the basketball court or even the baseball diamond. He became involved in baseball as he worked under Hall of Fame Head Coach Judd Folske from 1988-92, but his true athletic passion has been in his work with basketball. Under Tom Ludwig, the long-time successful head coach of the basketball team in the 1980s and early 1990s, Killian served seven seasons as an assistant coach utilizing his expertise in skill development. As Ludwig's tenure ended, so too



did Killian's time as an assistant coach – until Bill Sall was hired as head coach in 2002. One of the first people Sall called, to join his staff, was Killian.

"I was really honored when Bill asked me to come back to be on the basketball coaching staff. I knew it was going to be a great opportunity for me," said Killian, who served as the head basketball coach at George Williams College in Illinois. "I love being out there teaching the game of basketball. Coaching basketball is something that has always been special for me and it's always been something I've loved to do."

Something Killian also has enjoyed is the time he gets to spend with his wife, Michele, and his three sons, Billy, Dan and Joe. Athleticism and talent runs in the Killian family as Billy was a third-round pick of the San Diego Padres in the 2004 Major League Baseball draft (72nd overall). Currently, Billy is playing for the Chicago White Sox. Dan was a 32nd-round draft choice (969 overall) in the 2007 MLB draft by the Washington Nationals, but currently is in his freshman season playing college baseball at the University of Kentucky.

The elder Killian has certainly shown enough of an eye for spotting talent – whether it's in his own house or in someone else's house in the state of Michigan. His scouting duties take him all over the state with his eyes open looking for talented prospects for the draft.

"A lot of times it's who you know," Killian responded when asked how he became a scout for the Padres organization. "A guy I played baseball with in college got a job as a Padres scout and he heard I was in Michigan. He got permission to hire a scout in the state and that is basically how it happened.

"It's actually a big time commitment," he added. "I'm traveling all over Michigan and things get even busier when we get closer to the June draft. It's a big time commitment, but it's definitely something I've enjoyed doing."

Killian has a lot of commitments for his time, but the Stanwood resident is still enjoying all of the things he gets to do – from teaching chemistry at Ferris, to coaching Bulldog basketball, to scouting for Major League Baseball, to raising his sons with his wife, to just enjoying life.

"All of these are things I enjoy doing and they're all things that allow me to do so much of what I like to do," Killian said. "And, really, that's a big part of what life's all about."





## Michigan College of Optometry students spend spring break providing eye care in Haiti

Being oceans apart did not stop students from Ferris State University's Michigan College of Optometry from making a difference.

While many of their peers enjoyed a week of reprieve from classes, exams and homework, MCO students traveled to Haiti for a spring break mission trip sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Optometrists – a registered student organization at the University's Big Rapids campus.

Making stops in Port-au-Prince and Jacmel, Haiti, students provided vision care services to children and adults that would not have access to this type of care if not for the group of doctors, students and lay persons' volunteer efforts, said Erica Touhill of Big Rapids, a second-year MCO student.

"We simulated a regular U.S. exam by checking eye health and giving prescription assistance," she said, adding the team's goal also was to provide eye health education.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for early clinicians, who are working hard at their basic skills already, to learn," Touhill said. "Most students find their skills increase greatly after mission trips."

The group's advisor, Ferris MCO professor Dr. Jim Miller, said one of the goals of mission trips such as this is to provide students an opportunity to use their professional skills and act out their Christian faith.

FCO is an organization designed as a vehicle for spiritual growth and fellowship that encourages opportunities for optometry students to combine their professional skills with mission work consistent with their Christian faith.

"If we didn't go, there's no way these people would have access to this type of care," Miller said.

Ultimately, Miller added that trips such as the mission to Haiti will inspire students to help people locally, nationally or internationally once they become doctors.

"They may decide never to go on a mission trip again but decide to give back locally, or they may decide they want to continue going to other countries," he said, adding it's about having a heart for this kind of service.

## Ferris students give back to community through volunteer efforts

Nichole Wheelock has never been afraid to listen to her heart; and her heart has always been in volunteer work. Even though the 22-year-old Ferris State University senior majoring in Social Work is living in Big Rapids – her home away from home – it hasn't stopped her from putting down roots in the volunteer community.

To help make Mecosta County feel more like home, Wheelock, of Traverse City, maximized her college experience at Ferris by taking on leadership roles in numerous volunteer efforts on campus and in the Big Rapids community. Thanks to the leadership of Wheelock, fellow co-chair David Stevens and scores of other students, the University managed to raise more than \$56,000 for the Mecosta-Osceola United Way Campaign.

"Volunteering is something I live for, and I look at myself as having a heart for service and being a person who believes in the value of helping others," said Wheelock, part of a group of students, faculty and staff that have helped push the Mecosta-Osceola campaign beyond its original goal of raising \$440,000. "Community service and just volunteering in general are things I've been passionate about."

Achieving the established goal, even though the campaign and the job are hardly finished, has become a symbol of achievement, leadership and hard work at Ferris.

"I'm proud of our colleagues and our students for playing such a pivotal role in pushing us past our goal year after year," said Jeremy Mishler, Ferris' director of Alumni Relations and president of the Mecosta-Osceola County United Way Board of Directors.

During the campus-centered campaign, students alone raised more than \$5,000, surpassing their initial goal of \$3,500, Mishler said. Even as the student volunteers wrapped up the successful campus campaign, the effort continued as Ferris' Office of Student Leadership and Activities continued to sell United Way wristbands to not only raise funds but also to increase awareness and visibility for the campaign.

"The neat thing about the efforts of these students is that there is no doubt they are learning the values of hard work, leadership and volunteerism that is helping them now and will continue to help them in their private lives," said Dan Burcham, vice president for Student Affairs at Ferris. "They are learning the kinds of values that will help them to be solid and productive citizens on this campus and when they leave this campus and move into new communities."





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*Snow turned the Campus Quad into a winter wonderland as students come and go from the Rankin Student Center on their way to class and the Ferris Library for Information, Technology and Education.*

# Points of Pride

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