

A Seat at the Table

October/November 2018

- ✓ A truly diverse and inclusive university recognizes, embraces and celebrates differences. It *actively seeks* diversity, not just *tolerates* it. The University hosted the following events in October and November.
 - On Oct. 2, the Office of Multicultural Student Services (OMSS) facilitated a campus dialogue as part of their *Conversations on Race*. The topic was Latinx Identity.
 - Each year, Ferris State University's Liaison Committee for Students with Disabilities (LCSD) coordinates events in observance of Disability Awareness Month. On Oct. 9, LCSD brought the Theater Delta Interactive Performance to campus. This event explored depression and suicidal ideation in an interactive format, allowing attendees to understand how to have challenging conversations and be active allies.
 - Bobby Gonzalez, a nationally-known motivational speaker from the South Bronx area of New York City, presented poetry and perspective on issues impacting contemporary Latinx society on Oct.10.
 - Liz Plachta, CEO and co-founder of Ruby's Rainbow, a non-profit organization that has provided over \$643,000 in scholarships to 224 adults with Down syndrome seeking post-secondary education, delivered a keynote address on Oct. 23 encouraging universities to recruit students with disabilities.
 - Día de Muertos (The Day of the Dead) is a multi-day holiday that focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember deceased loved ones. A Dia de Los Muertos celebration was held on campus on Nov. 1.
 - On Nov. 1, the Ferris campus hosted a vigil for the victims of the hate crimes in Pittsburgh and Jeffersontown. A big shout out to Devon Herrell, the pastor of Wesley House, for organizing the event.
 - On that same day, a Native American Ghost Supper was held at West Campus. A ghost supper is a feast that combines

celebration and commemoration and shows respect for ancestors.

- Ferris State hosted the ACE Women's Network of Michigan Women of Color Collaborative Luncheon on Nov. 9. More than 300 attendees heard Ana L. Ramirez-Saenz, Ferris Board of Trustees member, delivered the keynote address.
 - Franklin Hughes presented information about early African American students at Ferris—including the pharmacy program—at the District IV Pharmacy Meeting Lunch in Grand Rapids, on Nov. 7.
 - The 2nd Annual First Generation College Student Celebration occurred on Nov. 8 as part of a Diversity and Inclusion Faculty and Staff Mini-grant.
 - Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, symbolizing the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. A Diwali festival was held on campus Nov. 9.
- ✓ Diversity champions are not driven by a desire for awards; however, sometimes the work leads to recognition. Congratulations to Kaylee Moreno, Executive Director of the Center for Latin@ Studies, and Jessica Ledesma, Coordinator of the Promesa Scholars Program, for being recognized as members of the inaugural class of the Top 50 Latinas in Michigan for 2018. This honor was bestowed by the Hispanic Latino Commission as part of the statewide Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. You can read more about the event and their achievements on the [University News webpage](#).
 - ✓ The Office of International Education, in collaboration with the Fine Art Gallery, the Center for Latin@ Studies, and others, invites the entire campus to be part of an [Inclusion Wall Art Project](#). Al Wildey, a nationally known artist, will create a composite portrait with images of individuals from the Ferris community. From a distance, the collection of photographs will form the images of our founders, Mr. and Mrs. Ferris. To be part of this project, you are invited to share your image in the form of a selfie, which will become part of the composite portrait.
 - ✓ Tracy Nichols Bush, history professor, discussed America's role in WWI at the Veteran's Day Concert. We were excited to hear her mention the Harlem Hellfighters, which included Percy Fitzgerald, a Ferris alum.

- ✓ Kemi Fadayomi received the Michigan American Council on Education Women's Network 2018 Distinguished Woman in Higher Education award.
- ✓ The OMSS hosted a meeting/training session for 50 representatives from Michigan's 15 public universities and from the State of Michigan's Talent and Economic Development Department, which oversees the grant that funds the King/Chavez/Parks initiative.

Building and Sustaining an Inclusive Campus

There are many simple practices we can adopt to help our fellow employees feel valued. For example, we can be respectful of the workspaces of others. There are many employees who work in open spaces, meaning they do not work in offices with doors. Being respectful of their workspaces means, among other things, being cognizant of the reality that loud conversations may interfere with their work. It's a small gesture but it sends the message that the university belongs to all of us as much as it belongs to any of us.