

# Points of Pride



## IN FOCUS

Hundreds of Ferris students participate in one or more of the 250 academic, Greek, social, political, faith-based or athletic Registered Student Organizations on campus. The winter edition of the Points of Pride newsletter features a small handful of these RSOs and the faculty or staff advisors committed to helping them succeed.

# Military Support Group

**MEMBERS:** Varies from **10** to **20**

**MISSION:** To support Ferris students with loved ones serving in the military.

**ADVISOR:** Thomas Larabel

**HE IS:** Assistant professor of Construction Management, College of Engineering Technology

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** "This RSO offers students the opportunity to support each other and the community."



Michelle Frahm (front left), Thomas Larabel

The motto of Ferris State University's Military Support Group is "Supporting each other, supporting our troops."

When he was asked by a student to serve as the Registered Student Organization's advisor, Thomas Larabel saw the request as another supportive measure.

"The MSG affords me the opportunity to become more involved in campus activities and student life," he said. "Advising is important to help students meet their needs throughout their college education."

For the past four years, Larabel's advisory responsibilities have included championing the group's efforts.

"He is very supportive of what we, as students, do," said MSG President Michelle Frahm, a senior from Clinton Township majoring in Applied Math/Actuarial Science. "He trusts us to get the job done."

The majority of MSG members have some connection to the military, said Frahm, whose brother serves in the Marines and two cousins in the Navy.

"We strive to support our members and those in the campus community who are affected by difficult deployments or other issues related to having a loved one in the military," she said. "We also work to support our active troops and veterans by sending care packages, writing letters and participating in events that support military men and women."

The group meets weekly to provide support to each other and plan fundraising events for military care packages. Members also participate in community events such as the Veteran's Day Concert and Luminary Tribute.

The group has sent Valentines from Ferris students in its Kisses for Troops initiative and raised more than \$200 at a Bowl for Troops event to help send almost 200 care packages to the Big Rapids National Guard Unit deployed to Afghanistan. For its True to Troops activity, the MSG invited Ferris students and Big Rapids community members to write letters, record video messages and pack care packages for troops.

"Each year, we send 20 to 30 care packages overseas and close to 1,000 letters," Frahm said.

Student involvement in the service organization is beneficial in many ways, said Larabel, whose father served in the Navy Construction Brigade during World War II. His brother and best friend served in the Army during the Vietnam War.

"The MSG is an extension of the classroom, because students are working together to support each other and to plan and manage group activities that fulfill goals and objectives," he said. "This is what we try to teach in the classroom."



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Welcome to the winter issue of *Points of Pride*, which focuses on Ferris' Registered Student Organizations. Many of these student-led groups extend learning beyond the classroom and provide opportunities for professional networking.

Some groups focus on a particular discipline, such as the Pre-Pharm D Club or the Public Relations Student Society of America. Others, including the Collegiate Entrepreneurs Association, bring together students with a particular professional interest that transcends individual academic programs. Entertainment Unlimited, Ferris Recyclers, the Student Alumni Gold Club and others provide important campus services while also giving students vital organizational and decision-making experiences.

There are about 250 RSOs at Ferris, and they enrich student life and the lives of others in our community in many important ways. Student engagement extends into Big Rapids, Grand Rapids and communities across Michigan where Ferris has a presence. The Big Event, for example, sponsored by Student Government, has become an important positive force in improving the Big Rapids community by assisting homeowners who might otherwise struggle to maintain their homes and property.

We are fortunate to have a student body at Ferris State University that is actively engaged in helping others. We also are fortunate to have dedicated faculty and staff advisors who help RSOs contribute to student success, to Ferris and to the community.

The stories here paint a portrait of the type of students I interact with day-in and day-out: engaged, responsible and preparing themselves for success. They truly do make a difference. To paraphrase the words of our founder, Woodbridge N. Ferris, "They make the world a better place."

  
David L. Eisler, president

# Ferris Recyclers

**MEMBERS: 30**

**MISSION:** To improve the campus environment through the act of recycling.

**ADVISOR:** Paul Klatt

**HE IS:** Associate professor of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences

**OTHER ROLES:** Advisor for the Table Tennis RSO

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** *"Students learn about environmental issues in the classroom and do something about them in Ferris Recyclers."*

The Ferris Recyclers provide "a much-needed awareness to many environmental issues," said the group's advisor.

"Students serve as an example to what just one individual can actually do to make a difference," said Paul Klatt, who has worked with the Registered Student Organization for seven years. "That difference turns into something special when those individuals work together. Recycling can become second nature, like brushing your teeth or washing your hands."

In an effort to make recycling accessible for students, the RSO hosts collection events every other week in the Interdisciplinary Resource Center connector. Recyclables are taken to the Mecosta County Recycling Center.

The collection events help serve the group's mission to foster an awareness of the benefits of recycling, said Tyler George, a junior from Shelby who serves as the group's president.

"We help contribute to Ferris and the Big Rapids community as a whole by putting on events that help lessen the amount of trash we produce and hopefully make a difference in landfills and the rest of the world," said George, a Mathematics major.

He called Klatt "an excellent leader for our organization.

"He is always there when we need him, but he allows us to make our own decisions – sometimes mistakes – which are all part of the process of building one's leadership skills," George said. "He is an irreplaceable asset."

Klatt, who has been with Ferris for eight years, said he prefers to serve as a guide to members but enjoys brainstorming ideas, as well. He attends most meetings and makes himself available when George or the group needs his assistance.

"I work with the group to support specific activities and initiatives that they come up with toward their mission," Klatt said. "Working with students outside the classroom gives me a chance to actually apply many of the things I usually only talk about."

Paul Klatt, Tyler George



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Matthew Chaney

## Black Greek Council

**MEMBERS:** About **25** representatives from six active fraternities and sororities

**MISSION:** To provide representative leadership, judicial oversight and democratic governance of its members, and develop leadership, community-service activities and scholarship opportunities that serve students and Big Rapids-area residents.

**ADVISOR:** Matthew Chaney

**HE IS:** Director of the Office of Multicultural Student Services

**OTHER ROLES:** Advisor to seven additional Registered Student Organizations

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** *"Advising allows me to massage students' growth and development, to share in their successes and to initiate healthy learning outcomes from their mistakes."*

Matthew Chaney said his role as a Registered Student Organization advisor is a responsibility he takes very seriously, times eight.

Chaney advises eight RSOs in addition to directing the Office of Multicultural Student Services, another Ferris resource that champions student success.

"My entire career has been built on developing student leaders in a variety of capacities," said Chaney, who has worked at Ferris for 17 years. "Advising student organizations is a great way to facilitate this kind of development."

He has overseen the Black Greek Council, the governing body of the university's historically black Greek-lettered organizations, for nearly 16 years.

"My main goal is to encourage honorable achievement in each student I come into contact with," Chaney said. "I try to build leaders and help students develop into contributing members of our campus community and to develop and hone a variety of transferrable skills that will benefit them in their respective careers."

That is why he has an open-door policy.

"My working relationship with each organization that I advise is one that's not overly intrusive; however, I try to be available for students to be able to share their ideas and planning concepts with me," said Chaney, who also has spent a considerable amount of time on campus as a Ferris student. He earned an associate, bachelor's and master's degrees at Ferris and is working toward a doctorate. "I pride myself on being a true Bulldog."

As the Black Greek Council's advisor, Chaney provides mentorship and guidance to members striving to implement successful programs and service initiatives. The RSO hosts a plethora of events throughout the year, including fundraisers for scholarships, community-service activities and events that promote education, leadership and positive social interaction, such as its annual Step Show.

The council awards three \$1,000 scholarships each year and donates 10 backpacks filled with school supplies to students who attend OMSS' annual Get Acquainted Day program. Members also orchestrate food and clothing drives, and participate in Ferris initiatives such as The Big Event.

"Black Greek Council provides social programs and events for students from diverse backgrounds that provide a healthy social outlet," Chaney said. "Research suggests that students who feel comfortable on campus tend to do better both academically and socially. BGC does its part to create this kind of culture and atmosphere on our campus."

As BCG president, Mario Patton values Chaney's dedication to helping the group provide opportunities for students, alumni and the community.

"I have known Matt since I was a freshman here at Ferris," said Patton, a senior from Detroit majoring in Healthcare Administration. "We talk all the time about how we can improve events and student life on campus. He helps us become better as an organization and as individuals. He guides us in our endeavors."

Chaney calls involvement in an RSO the perfect platform for students to develop leadership skills they will utilize after graduation.

"My reward is being able to witness the growth and development of students that I advise," Chaney said. "I watch students go from being shy, and almost what I would call introverted, to blossoming student leaders who are not afraid to step to the forefront and host events and facilitate healthy discussions."

"To know that I have made a positive impact in their development as future leaders is what inspires my work each and every day."

# Student Government

**MEMBERS: 35**

**MISSION:** To represent student interests in all aspects of campus life, as well as maintain open channels of communication between students, faculty, staff, administration and the Big Rapids community.

**ADVISOR:** Daniel Burcham

**HE IS:** Vice President for Student Affairs

**OTHER ROLES:** Previously served as an advisor for a Native American RSO.

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** *"To see the incredible personal growth that occurs is incredibly exciting."*



Daniel Burcham, Byron Williams

Daniel Burcham has served Ferris State University for the past 43 years, most recently as vice president for Student Affairs. He will retire in March after holding a vast range of positions, from faculty member to department head to dean to acting provost. But his role as a Registered Student Organization advisor has been one of the most fulfilling.

"My work with Student Government is the most satisfying part of my work," Burcham said. "I learn so much from this relationship. It makes me a better administrator and teacher, and it keeps me focused on what is really important – the students."

As the group's advisor, Burcham's responsibilities have focused on assisting students in decision-making and understanding the processes and values of the university, as well as serving as a mentor to its officers and members.

"Student Government is at the center of all campus life," he said of the organization made up of student representatives from every college and RSO. "These students inform all university decisions."

RSO advisors serve an important role that he's been happy to fulfill for 16 years.

"Simply put, students need to have access to the processes and people of the university," he said. "At times, they need additional resources to carry out their missions."

RSO involvement is a key way for students to apply classroom knowledge – regardless of their major – develop general leadership and organizational skills, and small-group communication, Burcham said.

"The students have a voice to find answers, and they inform institutional decision-making," he said. "They are incredibly capable in forming relationships with the community."

Student Government members are asked to serve on university committees and to attend city commission meetings. The group also organizes several campus- and community-service efforts, including its annual Holiday Food Drive for local food pantries and The Big Event, which mobilizes 1,500 volunteers, including students, faculty, staff and community members, in a spring-cleanup effort.

Burcham's relationship with current president Byron Williams has made his role this year somewhat effortless.

"I am blessed," he said. "Byron is mature beyond his years. It's like having another administrator on my staff. He ably leads the group through very important and complicated initiatives."

Williams, a senior in Public Relations from Pontiac, said Student Government provides a voice for Ferris students and acts to close the gap between faculty, staff, students and the community through its philanthropic efforts.

Work toward that mission has been easier with Burcham as an advisor, said Williams, calling him "the best resource on campus" because of his long-time experience with the RSO.

"He truly cares about the students," Williams said. "His determination to provide the best service to students possible is inspiring. He truly believes in education and empowering student leaders. When he sees an attribute in someone, he works with them to reach their best potential."

# Public Relations Student Society of America

**MEMBERS: 50**

**MISSION:** To enhance public relations skills through real-world experience and to establish a network of professional contacts.

**ADVISOR:** Patrick Bishop

**HE IS:** Associate professor of Public Relations, College of Business

**OTHER ROLES:** Start-up advisor for Student Fashion Alliance

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** *"My students give me energy, enthusiasm and a desire to be my best. They make me a better teacher and leader."*

Patrick Bishop calls himself Ferris' "Public Relations Program Champion."

"I love my job, and I love my students," said Bishop, an associate professor who joined Ferris seven years ago. "I couldn't be prouder of the incredible accomplishments my students are making happen. I would put their skills up against any group of PR students in the nation."

About 80 percent of PR majors at Ferris also are members of the Public Relations Student Society of America, a chapter of the nation's largest network of public relations practitioners. Students pay a membership fee and must remain active.

Bishop served as support advisor for three years before taking over the primary role four years ago.

"I have structured PRSSA to be as close to a business as possible within an educational environment," he said. "We have an amazing, talented group of students who run and participate in PRSSA. My role is to listen and mentor them while removing obstacles and challenging them to reach their potential."

PRSSA members operate a public relations firm that provides services for actual clients, host monthly guest speakers and visit two agencies each year. The club also plans social events and participates in intramural sports and service projects such as The Big Event.

Experienced students help new students develop their PR skills by creating blogs, newsletters, social media postings and more.

"The student-run firm of PRSSA logs more than 2,500 hours annually, equating to at least \$90,000 per year in services provided," Bishop said.

His role as its advisor pervades everything he does.

"Every day I'm talking with a student about an activity he or she is involved with that affects their academic or professional career," he said. "It's important because it's their life, their passion, their future. I can't walk the path for them, but I can show them the way."

PRSSA President Stephanie Dallman appreciates Bishop's support and values their working relationship.

"As the president I do the best I can to bring innovative, fresh ideas to our chapter, and it's so nice to have an advisor who supports and trusts my aspirations to hold together our PR family and help it grow," Dallman said. "It means a lot knowing I can go to someone who is experienced and knowledgeable about any PR issue or if I need help with any aspect of PRSSA."

Dallman, a senior from Gladstone, appreciates that Bishop allows her and the group's board to "run the show" but will step in as needed.

"Stephanie is a smart, caring and committed president," Bishop said. "We have a great working relationship because we are honest and respectful with each other. We trust each other to do what is best for the members and the program."

PRSSA is a critical part of a student's success and "more than academic," he said.

"To be in PRSSA means you have support from people who care about you and want to see you succeed," Bishop said. "Our slogan is 'Built on Character. Driven by Business.' It starts with principle-centered leadership combined with high-quality performance; it extends into friendships that last a lifetime."

Students in the RSO must be ready to meet with clients, prepare and present strategic plans, create tactics and perform a variety of PR techniques at a high skill level.

"What they learn in the classroom can be implemented in the student organization," Bishop said. "If they walk the path, by the time they are seniors, they have a thick portfolio filled with high-quality pieces and a list of networks ready to help them. The classroom provides the foundation. The RSO provides an outlet to hone the skills."

*Stephanie Dallman, Patrick Bishop*





Zachary Walters, Dr. Tracey Boncher

## Pre-Pharm D Club

**MEMBERS:** Nearly **200**

**MISSION:** To support fellow Pre-Pharmacy students in their quest to get into pharmacy school through development of good study habits, preparation for the application process and clarification of guidelines and degree requirements.

**ADVISOR:** Dr. Tracey Boncher

**SHE IS:** Associate professor of Medicinal Chemistry, College of Pharmacy

**HER POINT OF PRIDE:** *"I get to know some of the students I will likely see in a few years in our professional program, yet also help them in getting here."*

The College of Pharmacy at Ferris State University is the principle source of pharmacy practitioners in Michigan, and its graduates can be found in various practice settings nationwide.

Students enrolled in the university's Pre-Pharmacy program are on the path to a career in the competitive health-care field and many find additional support through involvement in the Pre-Pharm D Club. The Registered Student Organization meets bi-weekly to help members achieve their career goals.

"Pharmacy is one of the main reasons people come to Ferris," said Zachary Walters, a Pre-Pharmacy major from Hartland who serves as president. "The club helps facilitate student success through various study tools such as PCAT prep help, guest speakers and test banks, and we try to go in-depth with the pharmacy school application process.

"Our mission is to help Pre-Pharm students get into pharmacy school."

Dr. Tracey Boncher advises the support network.

"Dr. Boncher basically takes care of whatever we need done on a professional level," Walters said. "She really has helped the club grow closer to the pharmacy school."

"I provide guidance and insight when needed but give them freedom to develop themselves as a group," said Boncher, who has been with Ferris about 10 years and has served as advisor since the RSO began five years ago. "There are so many Pre-Pharmacy students coming to Ferris, yet for so many years there was no club for them to get involved in and help them form a network."

The two-year program is designed to prepare students to meet the admission requirements of Ferris' College of Pharmacy, which accepts 150 students each year. Involvement in the RSO is an extension of that.

"Sometimes along the way, they need help and career guidance," Boncher said. "Every group needs an advisor to make sure they stay on track and also to provide them the information and/or resources their group may need."

In addition to providing a support network academically, the organization provides members with an avenue to give back. The club participates in community-service projects such as The Big Event, Rake 'n' Run, Relay for Life, Race for the Cure and Habitat for Humanity.

"We've done every single major community-service project around," Walters said.

Boncher is proud of the group's efforts to contribute to overall RSO involvement on campus.

"It's a learning experience, especially for leaders in the RSO, to run and lead an organization here at Ferris," she said. "This gives students an opportunity to learn about leadership as well as rules on how organizations are run. This is a very professional learning experience for them."

# Student Alumni Gold Club

**MEMBERS: 48**

**MISSION:** To foster a connection between alumni and the university to create an environment in which both alumni and students can enrich their university experiences. Provide leadership opportunities for members and promote activities that will build a deep loyalty and commitment to Ferris.

**ADVISOR:** Brandi Behrenwald

**SHE IS:** Assistant Director for Alumni Relations

**OTHER ROLES:** Homecoming Committee advisor, Bulldog Mascot program co-advisor

**HER POINT OF PRIDE:** *"I am in awe of these students' responsibilities with class schedules, jobs, other organizations, social lives...and yet they make SAGC a priority, and they do wonderful things for this community and the university."*



Advisor Brandi Behrenwald (left) and SAGC President Kirsten Slack (fifth from left), along with SAGC members, are pictured with Mike Eruzione (center), captain of the famed 1980 U.S. Olympic ice hockey team, who served as the keynote speaker at The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Gala.

Brandi Behrenwald has two children of her own, but she's known as "Momma B" to nearly 50 others.

As advisor for the Student Alumni Gold Club, Behrenwald plays an important role in guiding the leadership organization charged with representing the university. She helps its executive board make sound decisions, attends its general meetings and serves as liaison with the university on SAGC events and responsibilities.

"They bring so much energy each and every day, and they give 100 percent at every event or project they are a part of," said Behrenwald, who has been with Ferris for seven years and served as SAGC's advisor for the past four.

SAGC aides the Alumni Office on its signature events, including Homecoming and The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Gala, and at regional events throughout Michigan and the Chicago area.

The group also serves as ambassadors for the university by welcoming President David Eisler's guests at home football and hockey games, alumni guest speakers and helping at commencement ceremonies. SAGC also serves as the official handler for the Bulldog Mascot program.

"This organization opens the door for many students to network and interact with people they may never have had the opportunity to meet," Behrenwald said. "Students have been fortunate to land internships and jobs. They are the front-line students we put out there to be the face of Ferris."

Behrenwald said RSO advisors must keep students grounded. She expects the current and past presidents to call their relationship with her "love-hate."

"We work pretty closely together and see each other almost daily," Behrenwald said. "Communication is key, and there are the infamous 'red alert' text messages when I get in a pinch and need help

right away, but I consider us equal partners and value our working relationship and the friendship that develops."

She calls current president Kirsten Slack's dedication to the organization and the university as "fabulous representation of a student and future alumna." The feeling is mutual.

"Brandi goes above and beyond," said Slack, a senior from Edwardsburg majoring in Biology and minoring in Marketing and Sales. "She is very active and helps to make sure that everything we do runs smoothly and efficiently. Brandi is more than an advisor – she is a great mentor and role model.

"Her guidance is what has helped this club to excel and continue to grow into a great organization."

SAGC serves the West Michigan community by holding two signature events each year. In Fall 2012, about 200 students raked more than 100 yards in Big Rapids for its Rake 'n' Run event. For Cover the Seal, also held in the fall, donated change was placed on the official University Seal in the Campus Quad to raise money for various charities. In 2012, about \$1,500 was donated to Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids.

"On a personal level, advising is important to me because I am offering advice and sharing experiences to help make life a little easier for our students," said Behrenwald, who makes it clear to graduating members she still plans to rely on them to host regional alumni events, speak with current students and support Ferris' Alumni Association.

"As a parent of two children that will one day go to college, I can only hope they will become a part of an organization like Gold Club and have a special relationship with their advisor, who will help guide and transition them into future leaders of this country."

# Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization

**MEMBERS: 10**

**MISSION:** To inform, support and inspire Ferris State University students to be entrepreneurial and seek opportunity through enterprise creation.

**ADVISOR:** Shirish Grover

**HE IS:** Assistant professor of Management, College of Business

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** *"Ferris was founded on the basis of application and industry, and I can help create opportunities for students to progress and learn valuable skills outside the classroom."*

Advising the Ferris chapter of the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization is a natural extension of Shirish Grover's role as head of the university's Entrepreneurship Institute.

Ferris launched the institute in Fall 2011 to provide opportunities for students to learn more about entrepreneurship and develop skills to create their own business. The university's effort to nurture an entrepreneurial spirit gained additional support when students from different programs and academic levels started a Ferris chapter of CEO.

"One of the most important goals of the Entrepreneurship Institute is to get students involved in exploring entrepreneurial pursuits. A Ferris chapter of the national CEO is an ideal vehicle to support this goal," said Grover, an associate professor of Management who joined Ferris three years ago. "As advisor, I can accomplish the dual role of leading EI and engaging students more effectively."

As a partner in executing the institute's mission, students in CEO have been planning and hosting events such as CoffeE-Connect, a series of casual social gatherings organized in collaboration with Michigan Works West Central, and other meet-and-greet opportunities with established entrepreneurs.

EI and CEO also planned events in Big Rapids and Grand Rapids for Global Entrepreneurship Week in Fall 2012 and for the Innovation Unleashed business plan pitch competition for students and community members in Spring 2012. The latter event will be held again in April.

"As the chapter advisor, I believe it is my responsibility to engage and inspire students to get involved in exploring entrepreneurship, to get involved in our community and to be involved in creating an entrepreneurial community," Grover said. "Ultimately, whatever I do as instructor or advisor is for advancing our students' potential to succeed in life, professionally and personally."

The RSO is in its building phase, but members are excited about the potential to help other RSOs and the Entrepreneurship Institute, and eventually hope to fund a charity, said CEO President Samuel Waters. Grover's guidance and support as an advisor is crucial to that, he said.

"Shirish is always there when you need something – it doesn't matter what time of day or what he is doing, he can always be reached and likes to give a helping hand," said Waters, a junior Music Industry Management major from Fremont. "He provides the guidance and leadership we sometimes are lacking this early in our careers but are learning."

Involvement in any RSO helps students apply concepts they learn in class, add valuable resume experience and build relationships with other students and community members, Grover said. In turn, students offer advisors an opportunity to build collaborative relationships across campus and beyond.

"I get to learn about the diversity of programs we offer, the range of student priorities and learning needs that I would not be just teaching in a classroom setting," he said. "It is rewarding to see students take responsibility for projects and enjoy the success of the projects."

As the CEO's advisor, Grover said he can invest in the furthering of institutional goals beyond the classroom.

"It is our hope that this RSO offers students and community members opportunities for developing skills and exploring interests that help create new businesses, innovative products and contribute to the local and Michigan economy."

CEO President Samuel Waters (left), advisor Shirish Grover (right)





Angela Roman, Melissa Hanson, Amber Balmer

## Entertainment Unlimited

**MEMBERS: 30-40**

**MISSION:** To provide social, recreational, cultural, educational and entertaining programming for the Ferris campus and Big Rapids community while providing members with leadership development and personal and professional growth opportunities.

**ADVISORS:** Angela Roman, director of Career Services and Student Leadership and activities, and Amber Balmer, coordinator of Student Leadership and Activities

**ROMAN'S POINT OF PRIDE:** *"I enjoy educating students. I think this is a great way to provide a learning environment so students can add skills and experience to their resume."*

Making thousands of people happy for free is the fun part of the job for Entertainment Unlimited President Melissa Hanson and advisors Angela Roman and Amber Balmer.

"We try to provide a diverse variety of entertainment for all students and the campus community," Roman said of the campus programming board.

Roman got involved to serve students but also for the opportunity to develop relationships that will help her in her job as director of Career Services and Student Leadership and Activities.

"My responsibility is to be a mentor to members by teaching them how to plan events, be a leader, manage finances and more," said Roman.

Balmer believes advising is another way to educate students while they gain valuable professional experience.

"I enjoy watching students feel accomplished," she said. "After each show, I can't help but smile when I see how excited they are to have completed another successful event."

EU is a popular RSO for student involvement. Students work at EU-sponsored and co-sponsored events and attend the National Association of Campus Activities Conference twice a year to find interesting, entertaining and educational performers to bring to Ferris.

EU provides two Five Star events per semester – educational presentations on hot topics – as well as performances by comedians, magicians, hypnotists and other variety acts. Its signature event is Ferris Fest, a spring concert featuring national headliners that is highly anticipated by students.

"Our events have good attendance," said Hanson, a senior from Pinckney majoring in Accountancy/Finance. "More than 5,000 students and community members attended Ferris Fest, and hypnotist Tom DeLuca has attracted more than 1,000 students in Williams Auditorium. And all of our Five-Star events generally have 300-plus and sometimes as many as 600 to 700 attendees."

Adding to the popularity of EU events is that no one pays admission.

"The entertainment EU provides is always free and open to the public, so the organization is contributing to the Ferris and local communities by offering a broad range of entertainment at no cost to them," said Roman, who meets weekly with Balmer and Hanson to discuss the organization's goals, concerns, upcoming meetings and events.

Hanson appreciates the support.

"They are a great source of advice and expertise on how we can be a better, more efficient RSO," Hanson said. "Angie and Amber help us with administrative tasks, finances and logistics, and guide us to be professionals."

Involvement in EU is a wonderful teaching tool, Roman said. Students like Hanson are gaining leadership skills that could one day help her manage an accounting department, and Music Industry Management majors are taking what they learn in the classroom and planning events or hosting talent.

"EU gives students the opportunity to be involved in something educational and fun," Roman said. "Students who are involved are more likely to feel like they are a part of Ferris and the community, and tend to stay."

How does her involvement as an advisor benefit Roman?

"Being an advisor gives me the opportunity to interact with students in their own space," she said. "I tend to get real answers to issues that affect college students today. This allows me to better meet students' needs in my professional job."

# Disc Sports Club

**MEMBERS:** About **20**

**MISSION:** To promote disc sports and to have fun while doing so.

**ADVISOR:** Leonard Johnson

**HE IS:** Professor of Education, College of Education and Human Services

**OTHER ROLES:** Chair, Strategic Planning and Resource Council

**HIS POINT OF PRIDE:** *"It's all about seeing the joy and enthusiasm students bring to the game year-after-year."*

Leonard Johnson



When a student asked Leonard Johnson if he would be interested in advising a new RSO for disc sports, he "gladly signed on" to help out. That was 13 years ago.

"It has increased opportunities for me to participate and compete in a sport that has given me a tremendous amount of joy over the years," said Johnson, a professor in the College of Education and Human Services who has been with Ferris just two years longer than he has served as the group's advisor.

About 20 students at a time are actively involved in the club, which promotes disc golf and ultimate frisbee. More players are active in disc golf and participate in leagues and tournaments, including a series of intercollegiate match-play events held statewide and hosted by Johnson. The "season" runs from September through April.

During an October tournament in Mount Pleasant, a team of four students earned an invitation to represent Ferris at the National Collegiate Disc Golf Championships. The team of Brennan Billow, Bryan Murphy, Mitch Hubbard and Nate DeFrain will compete at the event in April in South Carolina.

"Ferris finished second to a team from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, while beating out the teams from Notre Dame, Wright State University and Bowling Green State University," Johnson said.

As the group's advisor, Johnson assists in skill development and encourages sponsorship of events. Members host the "Bulldogs Take FLITE" disc golf tournament in the Ferris Library for Information, Technology and Education each fall, and co-sponsor fundraising events for the Salvation Army and Healthy Heart Campaign at Northend Riverside Park in Big Rapids. Members also maintain the course there.

As advisor, remaining active in the sport is important, said Johnson, who has been disc golfing competitively since 1999.

"Students benefit from the counsel of those who have years of experience in areas where students have an interest," he said. "It's fun to play, and it can be played year-round – I've played tournaments in the dead of winter in two feet of snow and below-zero temperatures!"

Billow, a senior from Ludington who is majoring in Chemistry, said playing disc sports is a "nice break from school."

"I can relax, play some disc golf and hang out with friends," said Billow, who added that members are undeterred by the season's weather conditions. "I'm fairly obsessed with it."

He credits Johnson with being a valuable resource to the RSO through his knowledge of disc sports and active involvement in hosting tournaments.

"He's wonderful," said Billow, who assisted Johnson with a disc golf class he taught. "He's always there if we need anything."

Johnson, who describes his advisory role as "supportive," recently received an email from a student who played on the first ultimate frisbee team he organized and coached 35 years ago. The student told Johnson "playing ultimate has been one of my lifetime highlights... thanks Leonard, for spreading your passion and causing a spark."

"The community has benefitted from these same opportunities by participating in various events sponsored at Northend," said Johnson, who designed the course as well as courses at Newaygo State Park and Big Bend Park, both in Newaygo.

"No matter what the nature or mission of the RSO in question, organizations that bring people together around a common interest provide opportunities for students to develop not only their social skills but to put into practice or to witness the application of knowledge, skills and dispositions being promoted in their programs of study."

# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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