

A Seat at the Table

April 2020

“If they don't give you a seat at the table,
bring a folding chair.”

Shirley Chisholm

These are the times that try our souls, but isn't that always true? The coronavirus has caused disruption in our lives; nevertheless we look and find creative ways to press forward.

- The Office of Multicultural Student Services (OMSS) will host a virtual Multicultural Graduate Recognition Program on May 7. Graduates will receive a commemorative graduation stole. Those who are interested in participating should contact the OMSS, Office of International Education or the Center for Latin@ Studies.
- Lavender Graduation will be online this year, and graduating students from all Ferris degree programs and locations are invited to send their preferred name, pronouns, major and degree, and notable achievements or contributions to LGBTQ+ life at Ferris or in the greater LGBTQ+ community, and a picture of themselves to Sarah Doherty. Faculty and staff who would like to record messages to be read or viewed (30 second-2 minute video) may send them to Sarah Doherty.
- There is exciting news from the Jim Crow Museum:
 - The video *A Man for This Season* was completed, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyGjRiogiiU>.
 - A digital collection has been created; <https://sites.google.com/view/jcmdigital/home>
 - An interactive timeline was produced (visitors need to click each section to access the interactive timeline) <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/timeline/homepage.htm>
 - The museum's virtual tour was refined; <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=8miUGt2wCtB>
 - The museum is delighted to welcome Jennifer Hasso, its first education coordinator, and is also pleased to announce Cyndi Tiedt, was promoted to museum educator & collections database administrator.
- Speaking of promotions, Julie Alexander is returning to Ferris as the Director of Assessment and Disabilities Services. She is a strong advocate for all students, including those with disabilities. She spent the previous three years as an access consultant at Purdue University. Before that, she worked as an educational counselor at Ferris. Welcome back, Julie.
- The Faculty/Staff Mini Grants Committee recently approved several grants:
 - **Building an Anishinaabe Virtual Village: Expanding Native American History Reach through Virtual Reality Experiences.** This project, led by Jacob

- Pollak, fosters cultural awareness of Anishinaabe Native American history. The project includes building a prototype virtual experience of an Anishinaabe village.
- **SiteStudio: Play Learn Space Project.** Margaret Vega is leading this project to develop a mobile arts curriculum that teaches design and creative thinking within the context and culture of the neighborhoods where students live.
 - **At-Promise Early Move In.** Kaylee Burke is leading this initiative designed to increase the persistence and retention of all eligible students.
- We applaud the Office of International Education for the Inclusion Wall unveiled in January. When this quarantine is done, stop by and take a look. Their latest endeavor is a series of daily virtual Deliberative Dialogues. To learn more about this program, please visit https://www.ferris.edu/international/studyabroad/Study-Abroad/gco/Dialouges/schedule.htm?fbclid=IwAR3n_b7wARROVw5aIeYblwJ31FSwZvwCFtXYFTDALfWN-mywxEdaG8Bys-s
 - This year's Martin Luther King, Jr.,-Social Justice Award was presented to Michelle Johnston for her work supporting the student food pantry. The Wesley House is still offering food for our students. The pickup hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 4-5pm or by appointment. They can be reached at (231) 796-8315.
 - The Ferris Youth Initiative (FYI) program provided support to students by reaching out to them during this turbulent time. Individuals were assisted with completing missing FAFSA requirements, finalizing on-line housing/dining selections, and also applying for additional funding. FYI mentors held a Zoom meeting to support and address current mentor/mentee needs. In addition, preparation is underway for a Virtual Graduation Celebration to honor the accomplishments of FYI graduates.
 - Ferris State University has created a student hardship fund to help students who are in difficult circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. President Eisler discussed the fund, created by The Ferris Foundation and the Alumni Association, in a recent video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2hyurulkoI&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1NJo1g07Rq0E4ce5SZFWRhXOztGN3O_eHoyY8jy3dfB4E1bUs5TA-2me0
 - The LGBTQ+ Resource Center will host several events.
 - Lauren McGahan, a BSW intern, will present her independent research project on issues and best practices that support LGBTQ+ elders on Monday, April 24.
 - During the last week of classes everyone at Ferris is invited to share coloring pages on social media, or send them to Sarah Doherty anonymously or with attribution on the LGBTQ+ Resource Center social media pages, with the tag #ShowUsYourColorsFerris. Folks who want to offer LGBTQ+ affirming black and white uncolored artwork for people to color can contact Sarah.
 - On April 22 at 6PM, OMSS and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center are hosting a viewing and facilitated discussion of the (captioned) recording of the Town Hall on Anti-Asian Racism that The People's Collective for Justice & Liberation in held March 2020.
 - As always, we encourage the Ferris community to review the annual Diversity at Ferris Annual Report, to make sure that we are making progress.

https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/DiversityOffice/pdf/Diversity_at_Ferris2018-2019_report.pdf.

Final Thoughts:

We are proud to be members of the Ferris community. The coronavirus has challenged us to find new ways to do the work that must be done. We have met this challenge with compassion and creativity. Teachers and students have found new ways to teach and learn. Provost Paul Blake summarized this succinctly as a “unified, all-hands-on-deck approach to curriculum, advising, student contact, student needs, and expansion of virtual services.” Outside of classroom instruction, we have sought and found ways to keep our students engaged—and to make sure they are faring well. We will get through this. In the interim, we will find ways to thrive and build community.