

## Division of Inclusion & Equity | Winter 2017



*March 1, 2017*

### **A Message from Vice President Bernal:**

Last month marked two years since I arrived in West Michigan to serve as the Vice President for Inclusion and Equity at Grand Valley. It was a big move for me -- a chance to advance equity, inclusion, and social justice at an institution that was growing in these areas and ripe to become a national model for equity and inclusion in higher education. It also represented a chance for me to put down roots in a new place, far from where I grew up in Texas and where I began my career in California. Over the past two years, I have come to feel at home in West Michigan and at Grand Valley.

I have been fortunate to have the support of so many great partners at the university who have led this work far prior to my arrival and who, together, work to advance inclusion, increase accessibility, and ensure equity. The Division of Inclusion and

Equity has grown significantly over this period and has worked concertedly to advance our [strategic plan and Framework for Inclusion and Equity](#).

Most recently, the Kaufman Interfaith Institute joined the Division of Inclusion and Equity. This move will allow the Institute to continue its exceptional community work while also continuing to develop a presence on our campus. Interfaith dialogue and understanding, as well as religious tolerance, are more important than ever in today's world. The Division of Inclusion and Equity seeks to embrace diversity in its fullest sense and to understand complex intersecting social identities. Attention to religious and spiritual identity is a natural part of this work.

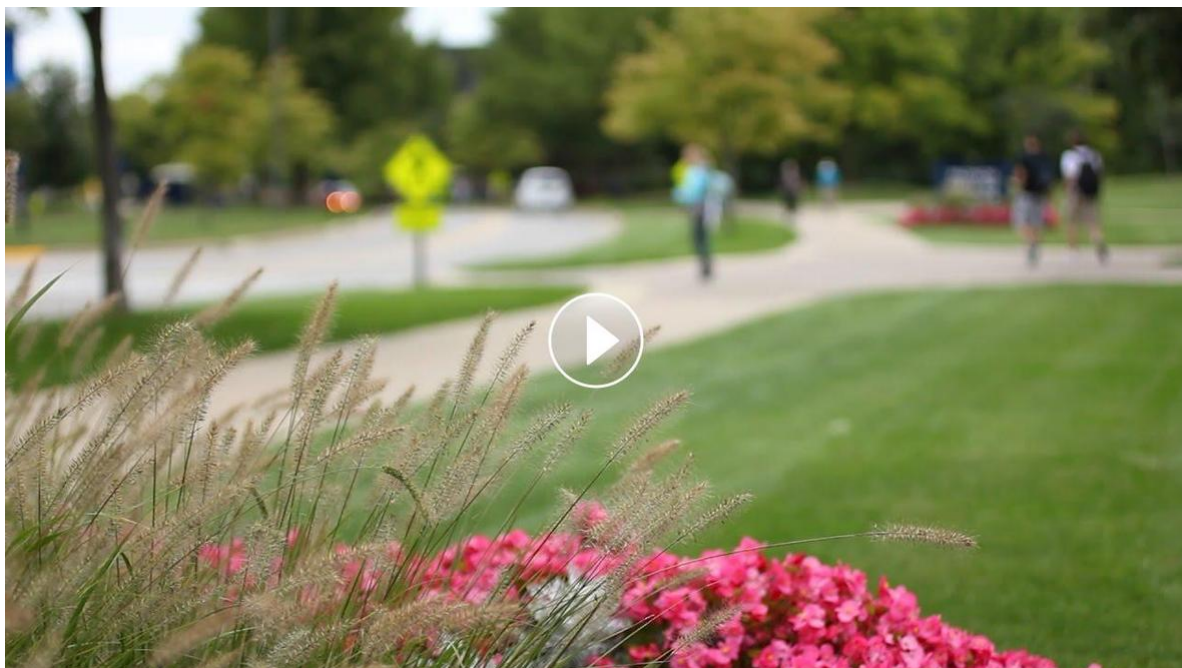
The past two years, have of course, not been without challenges. However, I remain confident that Grand Valley is well positioned to address the challenges ahead and become a national model for equity, inclusion, and social justice in higher education. We remain committed to creating an environment where everyone can be their full authentic selves, and where your Laker Effect -- our collective impact on the community, West Michigan, the state, and beyond -- can be fully realized by every single member of our community. I am optimistic because I have colleagues, like President Haas and his cabinet, who share this vision for GVSU and our community. Furthermore, I am grateful for the team in Inclusion and Equity and partners across campus who make this work possible. And, as I reflect on the past two years, I also look forward with excitement about what the future holds for Grand Valley and our community.

Sincerely yours,



Celebration of the Women's Center's 15th anniversary continues through the end of the academic year. Join us at [EqualiTEA](#) on March 20th to reflect on the history and achievements of the Women's Center, celebrate the present, and gear up for the future. [Registration for this event is encouraged.](#)

## Accessibility at Grand Valley:



## News Bulletins:

*\***Ashley Schulte**, victim advocate in the Women's Center, was honored with the "**Laker of the Year**" award at Presidents' Ball on February 3rd. **Congratulations, Ashley!***

*\***Donald (D.J.) Mitchell**, assistant professor of education and Inclusion and Equity faculty associate, was presented with the **University Outstanding Service Award** at the Faculty Award Convocation on February 2nd. **Congratulations, D.J.!***

### Select Upcoming Events:

- [Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration](#) events continue through March.
- March is [Women's History Month](#).

### Kaufman Interfaith Institute joins the Division of Inclusion and Equity

Following seven years of development and growth in the area of interfaith understanding, the Sylvia and Richard Kaufman Interfaith Institute

- "Invisible Walls, Ceilings, & Floors: Championing the Voices of Inclusion and Female Leadership" forums hosted by Patricia Sosa VerDuin and Shannon Cohen on [March 2 in Allendale](#) and [March 16 on the Pew Campus](#).
- **Campus Climate Forum - March 30th 10:30 a.m., 2204 Kirkhof. ([More info](#))**
- GVSU's annual [Pow Wow](#) hosted by the Native American Student Association to be held April 8th and 9th

#### **Staff Changes in I&E Since Sept. 2016**

\***Juanita Davis**, formerly an academic advisor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, joined the Office of Multicultural Affairs as assistant director.

\***Jessica Jennrich**, director of the Women's Center, was promoted to director of the Women's Center and social justice project specialist.

\***Mark Saint Amour**, formerly the office coordinator at the Johnson Center, joined the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center as the center assistant.

#### **[Over 1,000 Lakers attended the 4th annual Teach-In on January 19, 2017.](#)**

#### **SAVE THE DATE: Graduation Celebrations**

Inclusion and Equity and GVSU's Faculty and Staff affinity groups are sponsoring a variety of year-end/graduation celebrations. An invitation to register for one or more of the following will go out later this semester.

- \* Mar. 31, 6 p.m. - **International Student Pineapple Awards Ceremony**
- \* April 13, 6 p.m. - **Asian Student Graduation**
- \* April 18, 9 a.m. - **Hispanic Student Graduation**
- \* April 19, 4 p.m. - **Lavendar Graduation**
- \* April 28, 12 p.m. - **Black Student Graduation**
- \* April 28, 3 p.m. - **Native Student Graduation**

has moved to the Division of Inclusion and Equity. [Read the full announcement on GVNow.](#)

#### **New Directory of LGBTQ Faculty and Staff**

[Add yourself to the Out List](#), a directory of LGBTQ faculty and staff at GVSU. The [Out List](#) furthers the mission of the LGBT Faculty and Staff Association to build a more welcoming and inclusive university community for LGBT faculty and staff through advocacy, education and networking.

#### **New Testing Request Portal**

Disability Support Resources (DSR) will introduce a new online portal for test requests beginning in fall 2017. Stay tuned for details about trainings to be held this summer.

#### **Community-Based Learning at GVSU**

As part of the Division of Inclusion and Equity's mission to build capacity for intersectional, social justice-based community engagement at Grand Valley, the Division is sponsoring the second colloquia series on community-based learning at GVSU. Learn more about the four part Winter Colloquia series [here](#). Registration is available through [Sprout](#).

**Request a training or workshop by one of our Speak Up! student educators [here](#).**

#### **Faculty Associates Program Expands**

The Division of Inclusion and Equity is seeking two additional faculty members to serve as Faculty Associates. Appointments are made for terms of two or more years and will begin in fall 2017. Faculty Associates play leadership roles in a variety of justice-based initiatives for faculty university-wide. Their roles and responsibilities vary based on interest, expertise, and current needs of the division and university. Interested faculty should send applications to Dana Munk ([munkd@gvsu.edu](mailto:munkd@gvsu.edu)) by April 30. Click [here](#) for full application instructions and more information about the program.

## Featured Stories:

\* [Queer Connections](#) \* [Affirmative Action Director](#) \* [DSR Trip to Meijer Offices](#) \*  
\* [Campus Climate](#) \* [Solidarity Dinner](#) \* [Sexual Assault Prevention Grant](#) \*



### Queer Connections Update

The Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center and the LGBT Faculty and Staff Association launched a mentoring program called Queer Connections this past fall to enhance LGBT student satisfaction with their GVSU experience, increase retention, and increase "connections" between students and faculty, staff, or graduate student mentors. The program currently has 12 mentee/mentor pairs. One of which is student Eliza Ruffner and assistant professor Karen Pezzetti. Eliza is a senior studying secondary education and English. Karen Pezzetti is in her first year as an assistant professor of English at Grand Valley. Prior to earning her Ph.D., Karen taught high school in Oakland, California. Karen and Eliza began meeting in October and have since developed a mutually beneficial mentor/mentee relationship. Eliza has helped Karen get to know Grand Valley's campus, the community, and what it's like to be young and queer in West Michigan. Karen has helped Eliza think more about and navigate the challenges of being out in the workplace, particularly as a future teacher. At the beginning of her own teaching career, when she was serving as a student teacher, Karen was fortunate to be placed with a cooperating teacher who was also gay. Working with this teacher, the first "out" professional she had met, had a tremendous impact on Karen. Now that the tables are turned, Karen says she hopes to provide that sort of experience to Eliza, her mentee. And, according to Eliza, those efforts are paying off. As she nears graduation, Eliza says she feels more confident about being her authentic self as she prepares to embark on her career as a teacher.

*Faculty, staff, and graduate students who are interested in serving as mentors can apply on the [LGBT Faculty and Staff Association's website](#). Students interested in being paired with mentors, can sign up on the [LGBT Resource Center website](#).*

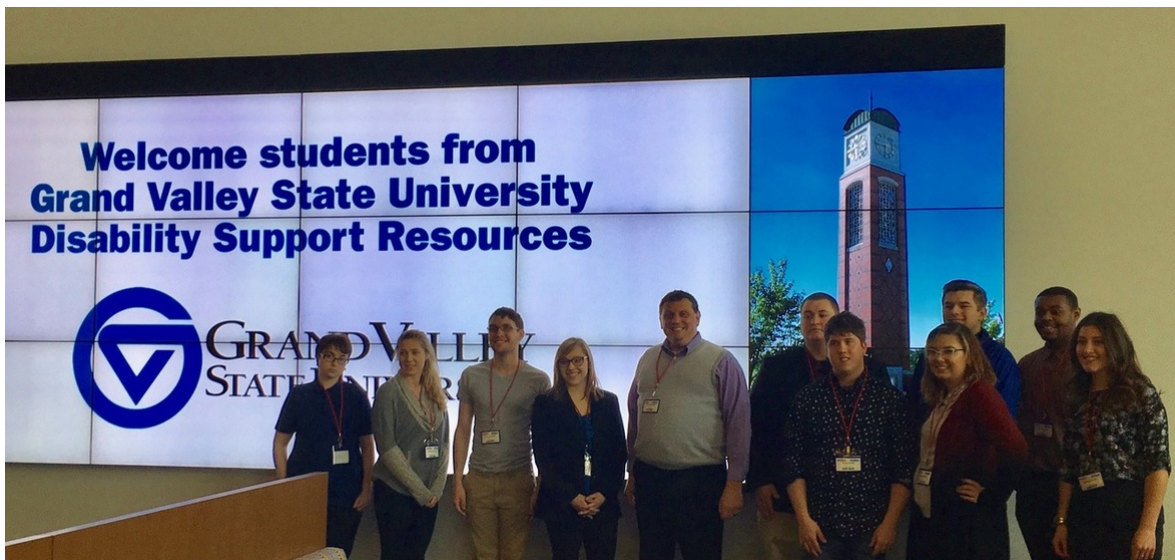


### New Director of Affirmative Action/EEO

Part-time faculty member in the Seidman College of Business and Legal Studies program, Scott Ayotte will join the division in March as the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) director and equity officer. Ayotte holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Grand Valley and a Juris Doctor from Western Michigan Cooley Law School. Before joining GVSU, Ayotte focused extensively on corporate inclusion and diversity counseling in the health care sector. Ayotte currently serves on the boards of directors for the Grand Rapids Women's Resource Center and Disability Advocates of Kent County. In addition, he was appointed to the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission by Governor

Snyder in 2015. In his new role, Ayotte will oversee the university's affirmative action program, consult with university leadership on inclusive employment practices, and provide leadership and oversight of the Inclusion Advocates Program.





### **Students registered with Disability Support Resources visit Meijer Corporate Office**

On February 10, twelve students visited the Meijer Incorporated in Walker, MI with Shontaye Witcher, director of Disability Support Resources (DSR); Jason Osborne, senior program advisor in DSR; and Susan Proctor, employment development manager in the Career Center. The trip was part of increased collaboration between DSR and the Career Center to assist students with disabilities as they seek post-graduate employment. At Meijer, the Grand Valley attendees heard from human resources outreach staff, the director of accommodations and ADA compliance, the director of inclusion and diversity, and several interns and full-time employees who are GVSU students and alumni, respectively. Representatives from Meijer shared their commitment to diversity and inclusion and stressed the importance of disclosing one's disability early in the onboarding process so that accommodations to ensure the employee's ability to be successful can be made. Several of the GVSU students on the trip were encouraged to apply for internship opportunities with Meijer. Students registered with DSR who are interested in career advising or future opportunities to engage with local businesses should call the office at (616) 331-2490 to make an appointment with Jason Osborne.

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### **myGVSU Campus Climate project wraps up**

Expanded findings from the myGVSU Climate Survey 2015 were released on December 5, 2016. (Download a copy of the report at [www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu](http://www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu) or read the announcement on [GVNow](#).) Individual faculty, staff, and student action teams are currently developing recommendations based on these findings. These recommendations will be submitted to the Division of Inclusion and Equity in early March. The myGVSU 2015 project will come to a close at a campus-wide forum on **March 30th at 10:30 a.m.** in the Pere Marquette Room of the Kirkhof Center. Recommendations and action plans will be shared. In addition, information about ongoing analysis and protocol for requesting data will be shared. Those unable to be in Allendale will be able to tune into a livestream or view a recording following the event at [www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu](http://www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu).

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### **Hillel, Muslim Students Association, and Better Together host solidarity dinner**

Over 200 students attended a solidarity dinner hosted in support of Muslim, refugee, and immigrant students and community members on February 1. The event was organized by student leaders in Hillel, the Muslim Students Association, and Better Together. The dinner brought students, faculty, and staff together to share a meal and have intentional dialogue about recent events and their impact on the Muslim community. Attendees wrote letters of support to local mosques and refugee assistance agencies. Better Together member Sydney Watson reflected on the event: "The event to me was a glimmer of hope in what was a dark week. To see so many people of different races, religions and genders in one place standing in solidarity for our neighbors who need help was inspiring. I cannot wait to see how else students at Grand Valley will help those in need."

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### **Grand Valley receives campus sexual assault prevention grant**

Grand Valley received a grant through the Michigan State Police Campus Sexual Assault Grant Program, led by Michigan First Lady Sue Snyder, to aid in efforts to prevent sexual assault on campus. The \$33,454 grant will be used to implement a national bystander intervention program called Bringing in the Bystander. The Women's Center will utilize peer educators to facilitate these trainings related to bystander intervention and consent. In addition, the Bringing in the Bystander model will be used in trainings with community members including staff in Allendale Public Schools.

## **Social Justice Education**

DIVISION OF INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Visit the [Social Justice Education website](#) to view currently scheduled events and trainings, request a training, or let us know about a relevant event that your office or group is hosting.

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