

FREDERIK MEIJER HONORS COLLEGE

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2022



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A New Start

The pandemic encouraged us to strip inessentials and lean into our core mission: providing a vibrant social and intellectual community for highly engaged students. Through 2020 and 2021 we retained face-to-face instruction in almost all of our classes, and the Honors Student Council, with help from faculty and staff, continued to offer nearly weekly opportunities for Honors students to gather safely and build community through games, crafts, discussions, and other activities. Our revised curriculum started officially in Fall 2020, which at the time felt like terrible timing, but because much of the revision focused on second-year cohort-building, that first class of students was able to experience some of the key curricular changes, largely without pandemic restrictions, in Fall 2021 and Winter 2022:

- 281 students completed HNR 201, the new events-based “Live Learn Lead” course, and another 72 upper-level students served as teaching assistants in the course
- 252 students took one of our new project-based learning courses, HNR 250 or HNR 251
- 76 students earned credit toward fulfilling the new HNR 300 Campus/Community Engagement requirement

The hallmark of our curriculum remains the team-taught first-year interdisciplinary sequences, which continue to provide students with such timely and fascinating topics as “Culture, Power, and Inequality,” “Dangerous Ideas,” “The Middle East Beyond the Headlines,” “Water in a Changing World” and “Engines of Innovation.” Students in these year-long topical explorations learn about and discuss big issues, share meals together, work on group projects, and build strong connections with their faculty and classmates. Some visit the Detroit Institute of the Arts, for example, or tour ArtPrize, while others hike Rosy Mound Natural Area, learn Salsa dancing, or camp in Indiana Dunes State Park. The sequence is where many Honors students make their first college friends and, as they often tell us, learn how to be active and effective college students.

As the pandemic eased, we managed to have a fairly “normal” year—which is to say happy and productive—in 2021-22, and we are eager to share our news. In this report, we share some of the activities and projects our students experienced through the new curricular components mentioned above, detail some of the typically impressive achievements of our current and graduating students, review our ongoing diversity efforts, and provide updates on our faculty and staff.

As always, we are grateful for the endorsement and support of the Meijer Foundation, whose continuing partnership makes so much of what we do possible.



Roger Gilles, Director

Cohort Building in the Second Year

HNR 201: Live Learn Lead. The basic idea of this revamped course is for second-year students, third- and fourth-year teaching assistants, and faculty to collectively experience a series of campus and community events as actively and thoughtfully as possible. The syllabus is organized around 12 to 15 events, which rotate and change every semester depending on the campus and community calendar. The class prepares for each event through readings and discussions. Students are required to attend 5 or 6 events, so not everyone attends each one, but those who do attend are expected to participate as fully and conscientiously as possible. Then, after the event, the entire class processes the event, with the help of those who attended, in both small- and large-group discussion. The teaching assistants pose discussion questions and lead the small groups—and indeed one of the benefits of the class is the “intergenerational” connection made between the second-year students and their upper-division counterparts.

In 2021-22, HNR 201 events included an art opening (complete with hors d’oeuvres), ArtPrize, a string quartet performance, and lectures on a range of fascinating topics, from North American Indian boarding schools in the 20th century to the role of Jewish women in the development of early Christianity. Students enjoyed cider and donuts while learning about local history on the Grand Lady Riverboat, and they participated in the Civil Discourse Symposium in downtown Grand Rapids. Some activities, like the wall climbing pictured here, were more social than strictly intellectual.



HNR 201 students challenge and support one another at the GVSU climbing wall, December 2021.

HNR 250 and 251: Project-Based Learning. As the description suggests, these are courses that culminate in a major collaborative project that requires students from a range of majors to work together to explore an issue or idea related to the broad topic of the class. The slate of last year's course titles indicates the fascinating range of possibilities available to students:

- The Holocaust and Its Legacy
- Jazzin' the Culture
- The Healing Power of Plants
- Biodiversity Matters
- Molecules that Matter
- Megafloods, Meteors, & Mishaps
- Our Evolving World
- Zombie Physiology
- The Human Body in Motion

What kinds of projects do the students do in these classes? In Professor Karen Amisi's "The Healing Power of Plants," for example, students choose a plant or family of plants, typically those native to Michigan or the U.S., and investigate its history, its traditional medicinal uses, and the degree to which the plant or plants have or have not been explored by the scientific literature. In Kurt Ellenberger's "Jazzin' the Culture," students use what they've learned about the structural elements of jazz to create and theorize their own musical compositions using the digital audio workstation GarageBand. In Professor Peter Wampler's "Megafloods, Meteors, & Mishaps," students investigated and reported on a disaster of their choosing—and how this disaster impacted the lives and societies around it.

HNR 300: Campus/Community Engagement. We want all of our students to engage with others on campus or in the larger community, and we want them to reflect thoughtfully on their experiences in order to grow as people and as leaders. Our website says the HNR 300 requirement "aims to help Honors students build practical knowledge and skills in community engagement, leadership, and cultural understanding—attributes that characterize strong job and grad-school applicants as well as fully engaged citizens."

Students can satisfy the requirement in 1-, 2-, or 3-credit increments, depending on the time and effort involved in the activity. Besides engaging in the activity itself, students register for HNR 300, an online course in which they share their experiences and reflect individually and collectively on how their activities help them develop personally and professionally. Some students satisfy all three credits in a single semester by studying abroad or by taking a registered "Community Based Learning" ([CBL](#)) course on campus. Others satisfy the requirement by serving as a teaching assistant in the HNR 201 course described above. Most, however, use campus leadership positions or community service activities to satisfy the requirement. Special Education major **Hannah Hosfelt**,



A student brochure from "The Healing Power of Plants"

for example, earned one credit per semester in Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 by serving as president of the GV GrooVe! a capella group on campus. Here's how she described her experience:

“This position satisfies the goals of HNR 300 in many ways, but primarily the goal of building on leadership skills. For example, as president I plan, schedule, and run auditions, rehearsals, concerts, and gigs. I also facilitate all communication within the group and with other groups on campus, as well as with potential clients. Finally, I oversee a five-person E-board that helps keep our group running smoothly. I have learned so much about how to effectively manage a group, as well as my own emotions. I learned how to put my own anxiety aside and break down the overwhelming amount of work into sizeable chunks. I also figured out how to delegate and trust the process, and stumbled upon the idea that not everything has to be done alone. This position and the HNR 300 class have helped me to recognize skills that I will be able to utilize for the rest of my life.”

Another student, **Grace Cairry**, an Accounting and Marketing double-major, served as a teaching assistant, or TA, in Professor Peter Wampler's HNR 201 class in Fall 2021. Here's how she reflected on her experiencing leading a small group of second-year students:

“We have really been able to learn and grow together as a group and get to know each other on a deeper level. I have learned a lot about leadership and small group dynamics from this. Leadership is a skill that I have always possessed in some capacity, but it is a skill that I was able to work on and improve on a different level during this class. I was put into a situation where I wasn't inherently more skilled than my group members and was essentially the same age as my students. This actually helped my leadership skills in a unique way, as I was able to really connect with the students and grow side by side with them. During discussions we all equally contributed and were able to all become aware of each other's different perspectives and thoughts. I was able to serve as the guiding hand to help ensure we were all on the same page and getting a lot of useful information out of our discussions. In a small group, it's not possible to just blend into the background and not participate, so it was important to me to ensure that everyone felt comfortable and safe voicing their opinions.”

Achieving Beyond Our Numbers

Our 1,500 or so Honors students make up just 7% or 8% of GVSU's undergraduate population, but their impact around campus and beyond suggests much greater numbers.

University Awards. We're proud to say that no fewer than 40 undergraduate and graduate Honors students were recognized by the provost's office for their outstanding achievements. **Sarah Fayth Bear Krishef** (Film & Video and Writing) was one of three undergraduate student winners of the prestigious Glenn A. Niemeyer Award, which recognizes well-rounded students who demonstrate excellence in both the classroom and extra-curricular activities that enrich their lives and the lives of others. **Faith Kidd** (Political Science) was one of five seniors receiving the Thomas M. Seykora Award for Outstanding Contribution, given each year to those who make significant and outstanding contributions to the campus community. And **Marian Reid** (Biomedical Sciences) was

recognized with the Kenneth R. Venderbush Leadership Award, given each year to a senior who has demonstrated an exceptional blend of academic achievement and leadership here on campus. In addition, each department in the university names one “Excellence-in-a-Discipline” awardee, and again this year fully one-third of the overall award winners were Honors students:

Stephen Arnold, Sports Management

Hamlet Arnott, Theatre

Rebekkah Bowen, History

Mackenzie Broekstra, International Business

Nicholas Brough, Allied Health Sciences

Ian Curtis, French

Robert Dolan, Physics

Madelyn Eckel, Behavioral Neuroscience

Micah Fernando, Biochemistry

Nathan Funckes, Computer Science

Joshua Geyer, Film & Video



Hamlet Arnott, Theatre award winner



Tumaini Sango, Music award winner

Nadia Gonzalez, Honors College *and*

Human Resources Management

Leah Hall, Integrated Science

Jesse Handelsman, Special Education *and*

Science/Arts for Teaching

Liam Hart, Psychology

Alyssa Hawker, Data Science & Analytics (M.S.)

Nicholas Layman, Mathematics

Camryn Lozon, Mechanical Engineering

Elizabeth Martin, Nursing

Emma Miller, Biology

Elizabeth Mitchell, Applied Computer Science (M.S.)

Tina Nguyen, Biomedical Sciences

Tumaini Sango, Music

Miyah Seckinger, Criminal Justice



Isabel Soberal, Geography award winner

Dominic Smith, Computer Engineering
Katelynn Smith, Cardiovascular Sonography
Isabel Soberal, Geography
Michael Stefanou, Geochemistry
Isabel Thompson, Cell & Molecular Biology
Raven Thompson, Hospitality/Tourism Management
Mila VanderWall, Art History
Rachel Velderman, English
Karmyn VonEhr, Electrical Engineering
Audrey Whitaker, Multimedia Journalism
Jacob Wilson, Management
Thomas Worm, Social Work (M.S.W.)

Scholarship and Travel. We understand that meaningful learning often occurs outside the classroom, and our Honors students do get out and around. Here are just a few of our students' outstanding out-of-class experiences this year, some of which we highlighted on our [Spotlights](#) page on the Honors website.

Coltrane Bodbyl-Mast (History), **Nicole Speare (Marketing and Business Economics)**, **Madeline Tripp (Global Studies)**, and **Riley Wroblewski (Environmental and Sustainability Studies)** attended the National University Model Arab League in Washington, D.C., with Honors Professor **Coeli Fitzpatrick**, who teaches in the "Middle East Beyond the Headlines" first-year sequence.

Haley Clark (Biochemistry) and **Jacquelyn Molloseau (Biology)** co-facilitated, along with Modern Languages and Literatures Professor **David Eick**, who teaches in the "Dangerous Ideas" first-year sequence, a pre-conference workshop at the national conference of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in Baltimore in March 2022. The workshop demonstrated a "Reacting to the Past" role-playing game, which Professor Eick uses in the Honors sequence, set during the Enlightenment.

Kathryn Fulton (English), **Sierra Gulli (Biomedical Sciences)**, **Mackenzie Johnson (Biomedical Sciences)**, and **Matthew Koren (Elementary Education)** joined Honors College Academic and Enrichment Advisor **Kary Wickham** in an April 2022 presentation at the Mideast Honors Association conference in Cleveland. The group's presentation focused on the newly revamped peer mentoring program in the Honors College.

Janelle Cook graduated in April with a Geology major a Chemistry minor. In November 2021, she presented at the 15th annual West Michigan Regional Undergraduate Science Research Conference at



Bella Griesmaier, Noah Wise, Kari Shadab, and Max Foreback with Director Gilles at MEHA in Cleveland.

the Van Andel Institute in Grand Rapids. Her talk focused on a specific growth of bacteria types found only at the bottom of a Lake Huron Sinkhole in northeast Michigan. These bacteria grow in mats that display a curious pattern of migration: during the day, they are covered in a purple photosynthetic cyanobacteria, and at night they are white from sulfur-oxidizing bacteria. Janelle and her team at the Annis Water Resources Institute studied the nature of this migration and hypothesized about its effects on Earth's atmosphere.

Max Foreback (Computer Science), Bella Griesmaier (Psychology), Kari Shadab (Biomedical Sciences), and Noah Wise (Biomedical Sciences) joined Honors College Director **Roger Gilles** in an April 2022 presentation at the Mideast Honors Association conference in Cleveland. The group's presentation focused on the new HNR 201 course and the teaching assistant position.

Brady Mills, an Advertising & Public Relations and Public & Nonprofit Administration double-major, traveled to Nicaragua in August 2021 with Professor **Paul Lane** of the Management department and "Design Thinking for Social Product Innovation" first-year Honors sequence, to run a series of innovation workshops for university students, faculty, and staff. The workshops helped participants design creative preschool buildings for rural Nicaraguan communities, develop strategies for local artisans to sell more products to tourists, and assist the university's Center of Research and Study for Health to better reach its surrounding neighborhoods.



Brady Mills and Professor Lane in Nicaragua

Honors Awards. At our April 2022 senior recognition ceremony, the Honors faculty were pleased to present Honors-specific awards to three outstanding graduates. **Nadia Gonzalez**, a Human Resources Management and Marketing double-major with a minor in Psychology, was named Outstanding Senior—the Honors College “Excellence-in-a-Discipline” awardee. Nadia was also named top student of Human Resources Management. During her time at GVSU, she served on the e-board of GVSU Habitat for Humanity and Camp Kesem and as a College Prep Mentor. She also completed four different internships in Human Resources. A first-generation college student, Nadia made the Dean’s List all nine semesters of her college career.

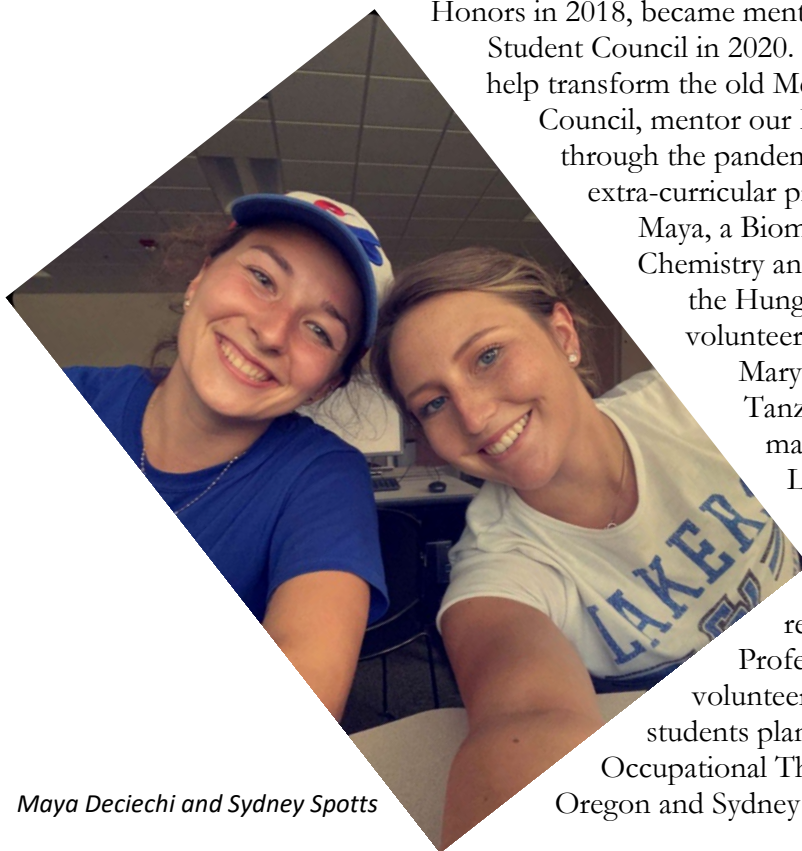


Nadia Gonzalez, the 2021-22 Honors outstanding student of the year

This year, Honors chose two students to share the award for Outstanding Leadership and Service. **Maya Deciechi** and **Sydney Spotts** both started in

Honors in 2018, became mentors in 2019, and joined the Honors Student Council in 2020. In these roles, they worked together to help transform the old Mentor Council into the Honors Student Council, mentor our Fall 2020 students, in particular, through the pandemic, and offer an engaging range of extra-curricular programming for all Honors students.

Maya, a Biomedical Sciences major with minors in Chemistry and Human Rights, served as president of the Hunger and Homelessness Club and volunteered at the Children’s Healing Center and Mary Free Bed. She also volunteered in Tanzania in 2019. Sydney, a Psychology major with a minor in Aging and Adult Life, served as president of Best Buddies and Students for Aging and Gerontology Enrichment. She was an Anatomy and Physiology tutor and a research assistant for Psychology Professor **Tessa Jordan**. Sydney also volunteered at the Community Food Club. Both students plan to pursue graduate studies in Occupational Therapy—Maya at Pacific University in Oregon and Sydney here at GVSU.



Maya Deciechi and Sydney Spotts

Honors Scholarships. Nearly all first-year Honors students earn either the Laker Scholarship, the Award for Excellence Scholarship, the Faculty Scholarship, or the Presidential Scholarship—as well as other more narrowly defined scholarships. In addition, we have a handful of Honors-specific scholarships: the Frederik Meijer First Generation Honors College Student Scholarship, the Donna K. Brooks Presidential Scholarship, the Arend D. and Nancy Lubbers University Honors College Scholarship, the Zukaitis Honors Scholarship, the Ruth Chamberlain Global Issues Scholarship, the Jonathan and Marcia White Honors College Scholarship, and our newest—the Jeff “Dr. J” Chamberlain Honors Scholarship. Here’s what three of this year’s graduates accomplished with the support of these scholarships:

- **Paige Berman**, a Nursing major, earned the Lubbers University Honors College Scholarship as an entering student in Fall 2018. A Phi Kappa Phi honoree, Paige served as volunteer director of the Student Nurses’ Association and a mentor to Nursing students. She also participated in the GVSU Winter Guard. Her Honors Senior Project, “Medical Controversies in the Emergency Department,” grew out of her clinical immersion experience in the Neuro Intensive Care Unit at the Meijer Heart Center in Grand Rapids. After graduation, Paige began working as a Registered Nurse at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, and she’ll also be attending the University of Michigan to pursue a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree to become an Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.
- **Rebecca Muir**, a Biomedical Sciences major with a Spanish Minor, earned the Ruth Chamberlain Global Issues Scholarship beginning in her second year in Fall 2019. She served as an Honors College mentor, a Resident Assistant in the Niemeyer Learning & Living Center, and a Cook Leadership Academy Fellow. She was active in numerous clubs and organizations, and she studied abroad in Chile in 2019, where she lived with a host family and traveled to Peru and Argentina. In August 2022, Rebecca will begin medical school at Marian University in Indianapolis.
- **Emilie Seibert**, a Recreational Therapy major with a Human Rights minor, earned the Zukaitis Honors Scholarship as an entering student in Fall 2018. She served as resident assistant in the Kistler Living Center, co-president of Universities Allied for Essential Medicine, and executive chair on Disability Rights for the American Civil Liberties Union. Emilie interned with the Wyoming Senior Center and Pure Abilities in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In the fall, she will attend Boston University to pursue a doctorate in Occupational Therapy.



Paige Berman

Working Toward Greater Diversity

Readers of our annual reports know that, for the past several years, we've been working to catch up to the rest of the university in terms of racial and ethnic diversity. Back in 2014, just 7% of all Honors Collage students were classified as minorities, and since then that percentage has increased to 12% or 13%, with some recent fluctuation due to the pandemic. These 175-or-so students are important members of our community, student leaders inside and outside the classroom. But we know there are others who will benefit from and enrich the Honors community. Our initial goal is to match the university figure, which is approaching 20%. We still have plenty of work to do. This year, we can highlight two main initiatives that we've added to our ongoing efforts:

Signature Saturdays. In summer 2021, our new Vice President of Enrollment Development and Education Outreach, **B. Donta Truss**, introduced something he'd seen work at other institutions. One Saturday per month, beginning in November, Admissions and the Honors College partnered to welcome to campus groups of high-achieving students (and their parents or supporters) from underserved populations. We met in the library multi-purpose room and started with presentations by Admissions and Honors, including Honors faculty and a handful of Honors students. Then we shared a plated lunch together, got to know one another, and addressed any questions the students and their supporters had about GVSU or the Honors College. We don't know how many of the students might have attended GVSU or applied to the Honors College without the event, but we can say that about a quarter of the students who participated ended up enrolling in the Honors College, and we are eager to welcome them into the Honors community in Fall 2022. We also look forward to continuing, and improving, this new initiative into the future.



Elora Ferrie

The National Society for Minorities in Honors.

This year, Honors Professor **Melba Véez Ortiz** and four students—**Brendan Burnside, Elora Ferrie, Jaden Phung, and Baylee Viau**—worked with folks from the National Collegiate Honors Council and GVSU's Office of Student Life to establish a GVSU chapter of the National Society for Minorities in Honors. Second-year Electrical Engineering major **Elora Ferrie**, who also served as a Signature Saturday student ambassador, will lead the group in 2022-23. Here is what she had to say about their plans:

“My hope is that the NSFMIH gives Honors students the opportunity to connect with other fellow minority students, engage or deepen their knowledge of other cultures, and teach others about their own. In our first year as a program, I would love to build our campus presence as a place where people can be their own authentic selves. Our goal is to hold campus culture nights and other activities for people to interact with one

another, form relationships, and deepen their appreciation of other cultures. My hope is that students will apply what they have learned at our events and from the relationships formed from it, to continue their journeys as lifelong learners. A key part of the Honors program for me is the emphasis on every student becoming a global citizen, and the NSFMIH gives us and Professor Vélez Ortiz the perfect opportunity to deepen our knowledge of the students within the Honors college, as well as teach others about our own cultures. I am so excited about all the fun activities we have planned and making an impact on our community, both in the Honors College and the Grand Rapids area.”

Faculty and Staff Updates

Rosalynn Bliss completed her third year as our Meijer Endowed Chair of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In addition to teaching her popular seminar in “Effective Leadership and Creative Problem Solving,” she hosted two [Meijer Lectures](#) and four Fireside Chats:

- On September 16, GVSU alumnus **Aaron Radelet**, global chief communications officer and senior vice president at Walgreens Boots Alliance, delivered the Meijer Lecture in the Seidman Forum in Grand Rapids.
- On October 18, **Emily Loeks**, director of public relations and community affairs for Studio C and Celebration Cinema Theaters, joined Mayor Bliss for a fireside chat.
- On November 15, **Steve Heacock**, CEO and president of Grand Rapids Whitewater, joined Mayor Bliss for a fireside chat.
- On February 22, **Christina Keller**, CEO and president of Cascade Engineering, delivered the Meijer Lecture in the Pere Marquette Room in Allendale.
- On March 14, **Kristian Grant**, donor development manager for ArtPrize, secretary of the GRPS Board of Education, and candidate for state representative, joined Mayor Bliss for a fireside chat.
- On March 28, **Guillermo Cisneros**, CEO and president of the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, joined Mayor Bliss for a fireside chat.



Rosalynn Bliss and Kristian Grant

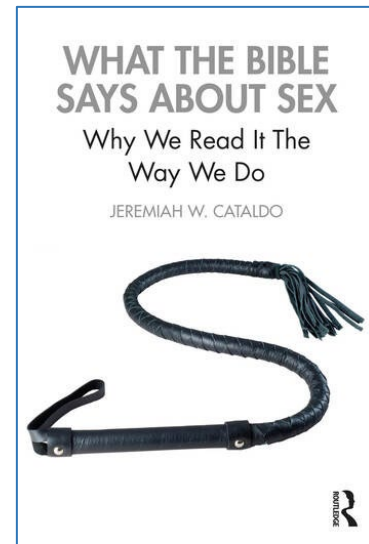
Jeremiah Cataldo published “Did the Prophets Teach Us to Protest?” in the journal *Religions* in May 2022. His latest book, *What the Bible Says About Sex*, will be published by Routledge in August 2022.

Maria Cimitile was named Professor of Philosophy in Honors and will begin teaching in Honors in Fall 2022. She served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs at GVSU from 2017 to 2022.

Kurt Ellenberger was named editor at *All About Jazz*, where he also published three feature articles: “Musical and Lyrical Sophistication in Jazz and Other Genres” (December 2021), “A Tale of Two Genres: The Surprising Similarities in the Development of Jazz and Classical Music” (January 2022), and “Music and Evolution: Hearing Math, Seeing Sound, and Other Unanswered Questions” (April 2022).

Barry Kanpol was named Professor of Education in Honors and will begin teaching in Honors in Fall 2022. He served as Dean of the College of Education at GVSU from 2016 to 2018. Together with former GVSU professor Danielle Lake, Barry is co-editor of a Peter Lang book series called Higher Education and Civic Democratic Engagement: Exploring Impact.

Melba Vélez Ortiz co-authored a book, *Communication Ethics: Activities for Critical Thinking and Reflection*, published by Kendall Hunt.



Emily Zeliasko

Joel Stillerman received the Charles Horton Cooley Award for distinguished scholarship in sociology from the Michigan Sociology Association. His latest book, *Identity Investments: Middle Class Responses to Precarious Privilege in Neoliberal Chile*, will be published by Stanford University Press in Fall 2022.

Emily Zeliasko served the first of a two-year term as Graduate Assistant in Honors. Emily, a 2020 Honors graduate in Biology, is a student in the College Student Affairs & Leadership program in the College of Education and Community Innovation. As Grad Assistant, she advises the Honors Student Council and assists with academic advising.