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## 2020-2021 University Academic Senate Leadership Team:

Felix Ngassa, Chair

Shawn Bultsma, Vice  
Chair

Lisa Surman-Haight,  
Executive Assistant

**Governance Homepage:**  
<https://www.gvsu.edu/facultygov/>

## LAKER Tenacity in the Face of COVID-19: Shared Governance and the Response to the Challenges of COVID-19

**Provost Maria Cimitile:** Maria is the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic



and Student Affairs. Maria is also a Professor of Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Maria shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what she captioned, “How Shared Governance Helped Us to Respond in Productive Ways to the Challenges Presented by COVID-19”. This is what Maria had to say.

This past year we found ourselves faced with decisions that I had never imagined would confront us. When the pandemic first hit us, fear engulfed me – fear for the health and safety of our entire community, first and foremost, and also fear for our livelihoods and how we would keep the university whole with so many unknowns before us. As we realized the potential impact of the pandemic, I turned to faculty governance for guidance and support as we, the university, had to make hard decisions. The Executive Committee of the Senate met nearly every week throughout May, June, July and August. We asked faculty to

sit on numerous committees to help determine how to structure the very thing we hold close – educational transformation. How would we make the classrooms safe? How could we support our students? How could we track and get ahold of the virus? What were the best pedagogies to ensure our students could continue on their educational journeys? At ECS we put temporary policies in place to make sure that neither students nor faculty would face undue consequences as we made our way through a year rife with challenges. We had robust debate around modalities, schedules and most difficult, budget reductions. At the time, and with the principles of shared governance, we made the best decisions that we could with the facts that we had. Thank you to all my faculty governance colleagues who spent countless hours this year representing their colleagues and finding sound paths forward.

My faculty colleagues truly humbled me with their insights and willingness to explore every option on behalf of students and our community. Our shared governance model rose to the occasion, knowing that decisions were not about making any one person satisfied, but rather about making decisions that would lead to the best possible outcomes for all of us together – in the immediate and for the future. No one wanted to be in our situation or make the hard

## UAS/ECS Members

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### COE:

Shawn Bultsma\*

Nancy DeFrance

Karyn Rouborn

### PCEC:

Shirley Fleischmann

Dave Huizen

Jared Moore\*

Jeff Ward

decisions that we needed to make, but we had to move ahead. On many occasions, I was reminded about why I so appreciate being at the university, being here at Grand Valley. What shone through to me is that we are a community, a place of mutual respect, determination and genuine care for one another.

Thank you to all the faculty and staff for enduring a year like no other and sacrificing so much for the sake of students. As we think about our future and continue to build Grand Valley as we have for the last 60 years, I hope we hold onto the lessons we have learned. I have learned that deliberative discussions not only result in better decisions but build empathy toward one another; that intellect and compassion are at the core of creativity and problem-solving; and that laughter always makes things easier. I trust in all of us that our future is bright because we will make it so.

## Faculty Respond to the Call for Contribution in the 2020-2021 Senate Newsletter: LAKER Tenacity in the Face of COVID-19

Managing any crisis, especially a pandemic requires everyone to work together—faculty, staff, students and administration—towards a common goal. In other words, it is “all hands on deck”. It is incumbent upon leadership to have a good understanding of the competencies and capabilities of each constituency and how to put them to the best use to accomplish the goals and strategic priorities in order to thrive in crisis. With the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020-2021 academic year, the need for us all to work as a team, “The Laker Team” was critical. In terms of faculty involvement within the framework of our shared governance culture, working together as part of “The Laker Team” requires knowing who we are and knowing our foundation especially in times of crisis, which is the basis of tenacity. The theme of our 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter is “Laker Tenacity in the Face of COVID-19”. Faculty were invited to write articles that address an aspect of the theme or close enough to the theme. To help faculty in formulating their articles, the following prompts were shared: (1) How has shared governance helped us to respond in productive ways to the challenges presented by COVID-19? (2) What experience in COVID-19 has impacted you the most in your work? (3) In what ways have you been able to “make connections and build relationships” with your students and colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic? (4) What might you have done differently in your response to COVID-19 now that you know what you know? (5) Looking ahead, how has COVID-19 impacted your appreciation for shared governance? The contributions of some of our faculty colleagues are now presented.

**Andrea Bostrom:** Andrea is a Professor of Nursing and Chair of the Graduate Council (GC). Andrea shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what she captioned, “LAKER Tenacity: Resilience in the Face of the Most Horrible Terrible Year”. This is what Andrea had to say.

This past year has been beyond what any of us could have imagined possible.



Unfortunately, imagining what will become the “new” normal is close to impossible as well. Yet life and our responsibilities persist as we try to figure out how we will deal with what will happen next. In my personal life, I am facing many additional changes: finishing my career as a faculty member at GVSU, anticipating how my mother’s upcoming year will progress after her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday, and considering the possibilities for making another couple of decades in my life meaningful (if my life span matches my mother’s). This life transition is similar to the life transition of our students. While I am looking at changes in responsibilities at the end of my adult career, our students are looking at the changes that are required to begin their adult life and career. Erik Erikson spoke of these transitions as crisis points from which we may grow toward being the best we can be

as we shed the circumstances of the past and move with strength to the challenges of the future. The Covid-19 Pandemic has made this transition point more difficult than usual for all of us—for students who are experiencing it and for faculty members who are trying to help students build their skills for the future while dealing with their own challenges of

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 Wil Rankinen  
 Jody Vogelzang

**BCOIS:**

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**KCON:**

Barb Hooper  
 Joy Washburn\*

**UL:**

Hazel McClure  
 Elizabeth Psyck\*

**Students:**

Kelly Dowker (Student  
 Senate President)\*  
 Three Student Senators and  
 Graduate Student  
 Association President

**Ex-Officio, Non-Voting:**

Maria Cimitile  
 Ed Aboufadel  
 Suzanne Benet  
 Bonnie Bowen  
 Chris Plouff  
 Ellen Schendel  
 Annie Bélanger  
 Lola Coke  
 Jennifer Drake  
 Diana Lawson  
 Jean Nagelkerk  
 Roy Olsson  
 Paul Plotkowski  
 Jeff Potteiger  
 Loren Rullman  
 Mark Schaub  
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teaching students in new ways. Yet moving to that next life stage is always built on the strengths of the past stage and difficult circumstances, like Covid-19, give us additional ways to test our capacity to persist in the new stage. Tenacity in the transition can be facilitated by using some of the structures of the past that give a firm foundation. For faculty members at GVSU, one of the structures that has provided a foundation for this horrible, terrible year of crisis and transition, is faculty governance. Faculty governance committees have helped to keep faculty members across the university connected to each other—something I particularly enjoy about Graduate Council. These committees help us to support each other to grow. They maintain the structural foundation for the resilience and tenacity needed to educate young adults in Michigan. These opportunities to find structures that give us support are some of the best ways to manage these crisis transition points—and one of the best lessons to carry away from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**Shawn Bultsma:** Shawn is an Associate Professor in the School Counseling Program of the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department of the College of Education (COE). Shawn is also the Vice Chair of ECS/UAS for 2020-2021. [Shawn shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what he captioned, “Ways that Our Collective Need for Milk Shaped Some of the Ways that I Contributed to Shared Governance and Witnessed LAKER Tenacity in the Face of COVID-19”.](#) This is what Shawn had to say.



“You need some milk” originated in 2015 as a viral YouTube video. This phrase has been used when something goes so wrong that no other words can describe it and sums up my feelings about COVID-19. The photo submitted with this newsletter contribution was a screenshot that I took during a recent video conference meeting. The background serves as my visual reminder of a lesson that resonated for me during COVID. “If you want some milk, you don’t go out in the

middle of a pasture and wait for a cow to back up to you.” As my tenure on UAS/ECS comes to a close, I am grateful for the opportunity to highlight some of the ways that our collective need for milk shaped some of the ways that I contributed to shared governance and witnessed LAKER tenacity in the face of COVID-19.

Admittedly, LAKER tenacity in the face of COVID-19 has played out differently for every individual in our community. I recognize that my own tenacity continues to be bolstered by my privileged identities (e.g., faculty rank, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation), and that COVID-19 has not impacted me in the same way that it has impacted others. For example, the scourge of systemic racism that has exacerbated inequity across various communities within and beyond GVSU during this public health crisis did not add to my own emotional labor given my own privileged identities in the same way that it might have impacted others; consequently, my tenacity was not tested in the same way that it might have been for others.

This recognition led to an acute awareness of my *way of being* as a faculty leader when joining colleagues in spaces impacted by shadows cast not only by one but two pandemics. I challenged myself to consider the role that privilege plays in various conversations across campus and how privilege runs the risk of further marginalizing voices that might otherwise be silenced or ignored. I often thought about who was invited to various Zoom meetings to participate and who was absent as well as how various individuals participated in these spaces. I also recognized that engaging in shared governance work meant that I needed to acknowledge my feelings of denial, guilt, and shame about my privilege while placing them in check and not simply blocking out those feelings while participating in this work.

As I contributed to shared governance as a faculty leader throughout this past year, three ideas informed my participation and my goal of discerning a way forward to get the milk that we all needed so badly in the middle of two pandemics without expecting cows to back up to us in the middle of a pasture. These ideas included (1) focusing on what I could control, (2) seeing the folks sitting across from me as people and not objects, and (3) committing to helping things go right rather than brooding over what’s going wrong.

There were times over the year that I lost sight of one or more of these ideas. I recall instances where I failed to focus on what I had control over, I dehumanized people



who made things more difficult for me, and I spent more time considering my fears and exhaustion than how to help things go right. This was especially true during the spring/summer months at the start of COVID when ECS/UAS was more engaged than at any other time that I can recall. Looking back on it now, I have no idea how I did this while teaching two courses, participating in new student orientation, and preparing for the fall semester all from a home not really set up to easily accommodate a home office.

Although there were many times that my tenacity was tested, I do not feel that I was alone in this work. I appreciate that I benefited from others who pointed me to one or more of the ideas that initially grounded me. I was touched by a faculty colleague who reminded me to focus on what I could control after I expressed frustration over what I thought was a misguided interpretation of governance policies. I am grateful to a staff member who challenged me to reframe my thinking about a colleague whom I was ready to write off and dismiss as ridiculously irrational. I was humbled by my students who provided me with encouragement as I was struggling with our online platform after they had just finished an impossibly long day of trying to engage k-12 students using a similar platform.

COVID-19 has tested my tenacity not unlike the ways it has tested our shared governance practices at GVSU; however, I remain confident that our long history and commitment to shared governance will continue serving us well as long as we do not expect cows to back up to us in the middle of a pasture when we need some milk. I am convinced that the same ideas that sharpened my tenacity and helped me navigate the challenges brought on by these pandemics are the very same ones that can help us navigate the challenges to our shared governance process in the coming years.

[Martin Burg](#): Martin is a Professor of Biomedical Sciences in the Department of Biomedical Sciences of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Martin is also the Chair of the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) for 2020-2021. [Martin shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what he captioned, “Making Connections and Persisting in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic”](#). This is what Martin had to say.



Serving as the Chair of the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) has provided me a perspective few in this University enjoy. This perspective has given me a sense of responsibility that has been, during some moments in this past year, difficult to bear. However, I also felt that in times of despair that I have experienced, when it seemed like the odds of getting through even the current week seemed low, that the other members that make up the UCC supported the committee’s mission through their efforts, lifting my spirits up and renewing my energy. This caused me to also realize that all of us have felt the same isolation, amplified by distanced working and learning - which was broken up each week

when we would meet to create our ‘normal’ environment. Thus, I began to look forward to weekly meetings, despite the extra workload placed on all of us because of our commitment to educating students in any way that was still possible. While some may question my mental stability in looking forward to curriculum committee meetings, I realize that the faculty that serve with me are incredible servants to this institution and I thank them for their careful and deliberate efforts given each and every week. Without this persistent effort in moving the curricular changes made to courses and majors through a careful and deliberative process, many new courses and programs would not be offered next fall (ok, some *still* have yet to be approved 😊-but the semester is not yet over!).

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us opportunities to share with each other before and after our weekly meetings. Indicating how we are doing, both professionally and personally, is something which I am sure has increased in many faculty meeting groups as this pandemic has lengthened our time apart from each other even more. I also realize that trying to be persistent and having a regularly scheduled meeting does provide a ‘sense of normalcy’, in the face of all the significant changes in style of teaching (and meetings) encountered. From a Committee Chair’s perspective, the Zoom platform has enabled me to more efficiently manage meetings-and save travel time as well (love the ‘mute’ button). When we have missed a meeting (a rare but ‘welcome’ occurrence), I get a sense that something was missing that particular week and feel a little less fulfilled as a result-this



group that I help steer like a boat in the water feels more like family at times.

How the members of the UCC consistently and persistently carry out their roles also reminds me that we are here for a purpose, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the reason why I continued to serve this particular year. The pandemic reminds me that we need to serve while we can, rather than wait on the sidelines for ‘someone else’ to fill in the gaps for us in what needs to be done. While the UCC’s role sometimes seems insurmountable, it is not, due to the work done by all of the College Curriculum Committees that also have continued to shape, craft, and (hopefully) improve the curriculum of this University, to meet the needs of the students and the times in which we find ourselves. Those members also continue to serve their fellow faculty, consistently attending their own ‘Zoom’ meetings, assisting authors in helping get their proposals through the peer review process in their College. The resilience of faculty involved in this aspect of our University governance system is one facet of many, which demonstrates to me that in many instances where needed, we will step up and do what is needed. This is the spirit of service that I have been aware of for many years and is what continues to drive me on in my current role—enabling persistence in effort even during these times that sometimes goes unnoticed. While we are all in the ‘homestretch’ of this most interesting semester and academic year, my hope for our future remains bright. Knowing of some of the work that has been done during this difficult year to better our student’s outcomes and lives, I can only see great things happening in our future—perhaps the biggest reason that has kept me here. Let’s move onward together and use this shared experience to appreciate what we have here at GVSU.

[Chris Haven](#): Chris is an Associate Professor of Writing in the Department of Writing of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Chris is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2020-2021. [Chris shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by writing a poem that he captioned, “Pop Quiz”.](#)

### Pop Quiz

We have been given a multiple-choice test  
and every answer takes something from us.

You think you might prove yourself, demonstrate  
resilience with this or maybe that answer.

With each question we have to wonder why  
is this test so exhausting, so unfair?

Then, the bonus section: You have been given



less time to do more work. The stakes, never  
higher.

While you’re still taking the test, your email  
pinballs with student notifications.

Quarantine, isolation, funerals.  
Things we never studied in graduate school.

I hope this finds you well. I hope you are all  
right. Please take care. Dear ones. Sincerely.

How long is this test anyway? How can  
unlimited time feel so limiting?

What will we take away, when so much has been  
taken? So much left? What will we have learned?

How we depend on each other. Prop. Lean.  
And this: What to call each human. Essential.

—Chris Haven

**Bob Hollister:** Bob is a Professor of Biology in the Department of Biology of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Bob is also the Chair of the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) for 2020-2021. [Bob shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter.](#) This is what Bob had to say.



As a member of faculty governance, 2020 was a difficult and stressful year. So many decisions had to happen so fast, there was so much opportunity for disagreement. As part of faculty governance leadership there were lots of meetings to attend and significant pressure and stress associated with being one of the only faculty voices. Countless hours were spent in meetings and crafting carefully worded emails. I felt many times like poor decisions were being made without the understanding of the impact on faculty and how those decisions would then cascade poorly throughout the university. In one sense it was very rewarding, because I felt I made an impact on issues such as: not forcing faculty to teach in-person, minimizing the number of faculty forced to teach an extra course, and protecting the budget of Academic and Student Affairs. Like other faculty,

at the same time, I worked hard to move my courses from in-person to on-line, my research program was in chaos, and my own three kids were struggling.

There are some good things that have happened this year, too. Moving meetings to on-line made meetings more efficient and effective; my cat absolutely loves zoom, he sits on my lap for most meetings that I am not leading. I discovered most one-on-one meetings can be done on my phone with ear buds while weeding, fishing or biking. Since remote work is so common now, it is much easier to communicate with my research colleagues in other parts of the world, and one of my former grad students who moved and never finished is finishing soon. I have also really enjoyed experiencing the change of season doing outdoor activities as my main form of entertainment and I have gotten in better physical shape because exercise is my main way to relieve stress.

**Jon Jeffries:** Jon is Department Head for Special Collections and University Archives for the University Libraries. Jon is also a Co-Chair of the Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) for 2020-2021. [Jon shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what he captioned, “LAKER Tenacity in the Face of COVID-19: Teach-In 2020”.](#) This is what Jon had to say.



I think this past academic year has been rife with examples of faculty and staff colleagues and students demonstrating consistent tenacity during difficult times, but there has been one specific example that I got to witness up close through my work in shared governance that I appreciate the opportunity to share more widely: the work of the Teach-In Planning Team and my colleagues on the Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC)’s commitment to ensuring a successful Teach-In.

This year was the first year that the EIC was going to partner in leading the event without the leadership of our inaugural chair, John Bender. John left immensely large shoes to fill and the need to move the event into a completely online format added additional complexity. My EIC co-chair, Josita Maouene, moved fearlessly into this space, partnering with our experienced collaborators Lisa Surman-Haight, Relando Thompkins-Jones, Linda Ray, and Marlene Kowalski-Braun as well as new technology partners Vince St. Germain and Samantha McLaughlin.

Josita delved into a new technological platform, Whova, to host the event and worked out a clear path for integration with existing Zoom technology. She also met with each presentation team to ensure that they could navigate the technology. Josita navigated all of that work along with learning and implementing all of the traditional responsibilities that went along with the EIC Chair’s role in Teach-In work – updating the website, ensuring messaging to all faculty, and recruiting room moderators, among others.

The EIC was right behind Josita to provide additional support playing an expanded role this year in directly inviting previous presenters to consider presenting again, reviewing session proposals, and many members acting as presenters or room moderators.

Scheduled for a week after what was likely to be a divisive national election, following a summer of focus on issues of racism and structural inequities following the police killing of George Floyd, and recent racist Zoombombings that occurred at virtual campus events, the need for the Teach-In felt as vital as ever.

During times of great stress and uncertainty I believe tenacity can showcase the core values of an individual and institution and ensuring the successful implementation of a Teach-In during the pandemic illustrated GVSU's commitment to making positive change; from the leadership of Josita and the planning committee through to the additional work and time of our EIC committee, presenters, volunteers, and attendees.

The Teach-In this year reached 1235 registrants who on average attended 1.5 sessions. Over 30 sessions were offered and one individual session saw an astonishing 151 participants – more than a single physical venue would have allowed. This experience is allowing the planners to consider how we might build off of what we learned this semester and pair it with our traditional experiences to see how we might continue in the most effective way forward when campus reaches a “new normal” – a practice many of us going through after this difficult past year.

[John Lipford](#): John is an Affiliate Faculty in the Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management of the College of Community and Public Service (CCPS). John is also the Chair of the Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) for 2020-2021. [John shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter](#). This is what John had to say.



All in the GVSU community have undoubtedly juggled both professional and personal obligations during these tumultuous times. However, the past academic year has also presented significant opportunities for all at GVSU to become more resilient in the face of adversity. On behalf of the Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC), we extend our gratitude to all in the GVSU community for their compassion and diligence as we continue to adapt to an ever-changing academic landscape. We also extend this gratitude to the faculty representatives for their service on AFAC; as well as all those who serve on other shared governance bodies. Finally, we would like to thank and acknowledge our fellow Affiliate faculty, in particular, for their commitment to teaching and learning.

When classes went online in March 2020 - for what was, initially, a two-week break -, none could have anticipated what was to come. From the abrupt transition to virtual instruction, to the subsequent isolation many in the GVSU community have experienced in the subsequent months, we have been challenged in ways never before seen in ‘modern’ higher education. Were it not for the technological advances made over the past few decades, we struggle to think of how active learning could have still been accomplished - short of shouting to each other in an open field - via social distancing measures; many of which are now simply a way of life.

Clearly, the sheer ability to engage in online education is nothing short of remarkable. This modality has been a saving grace during the pandemic. However, it certainly is not *ideal* for all types of learners. We’re sure many faculty have encountered students who have experienced difficulty with the transition, or who (themselves) may have experienced difficulty in crafting and navigating web-based curricula. The authenticity of in-person discussion is also difficult to replicate under artificial circumstances. The organic nature of conversations, which many may have taken for granted before ‘all of this,’ has now been interrupted with statements, such as: “you’re on mute” or “could you please turn on your camera, as stated in the syllabus?” Nevertheless, we have persisted; and we trust many have now developed materials and curricula which will better serve our learners for years to come.



Our first year of participating as an ‘online’ committee chair and vice-chair for AFAC has been challenging, but it has also been profound and, we hope, impactful for our faculty colleagues. Through the work of our channels of leadership at GVSU, we are emerging more resilient and adaptable *than we ever had to be*, pre-pandemic. We will not know the full force and effect of the pandemic for quite some time. Certainly, the history books will have much to say. Until they are written, it is up to all in the GVSU family to continue our efforts to lift each other up, dust each other off, and move forward so whatever they write about us (someday) will accurately capture all of the work we have done over the past academic year. Although our work is far from done, we hope everyone has a safe and relaxing summer. You all have certainly earned it. – John Lipford and Jennifer Cymbola, Chair and Vice-Chair of AFAC 2020-2021.

**Elizabeth Psyck:** Elizabeth is a faculty member in the University Libraries. Elizabeth is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2020-2021. [Elizabeth shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter.](#) This is what Elizabeth had to say.



2020 was not an easy year. Between toilet paper shortages and teaching my parents how to FaceTime, there were new and unexpected challenges around every corner. Some were hard, like when I missed my mother’s 70th birthday because of mandatory travel quarantine. Others, like getting to sleep in a bit and skip my morning commute, were a welcome surprise. As vaccination rates go up and new infections go down, I’ve begun to reflect on the last year, what we accomplished, and what was gained and lost.

We learned how to work in an environment filled with distraction: partners, children, roommates, pets, neighbors doing crossfit on the sidewalk across the street... And we learned how to work in an environment without any of the casual social interaction that is the hallmark of working on a college campus.

For many of us, myself included, the line between home and work blurred so much that it became non-existent. As hard as that has been, there is also something wonderful about being invited into the homes and lives of our colleagues. I’ve met your children and your pets, and I promise you that I never once thought your child was annoying. We traded recipes (and sourdough starter), went to the grocery store for people who couldn’t, and held Zoom baby showers. Some of you have met my cats and seen my “corner office”, literally a corner by the coat closet. In some ways, we all became a bit less polished and a bit more human.

I saw faculty come together with administration to quickly develop policies and procedures, giving students more time to withdraw from courses that were moved online and giving faculty an extra year (or two) on the tenure clock. It wasn’t always smooth and we didn’t always agree on what the “right” answer was, but I never once questioned that everyone at the table wanted what was best for our students, our faculty and staff, and our community.

Of course, not everything has been positive. Many of us have struggled with emotional and physical exhaustion. Some of us have dealt with burnout and the question of why we do what we do. Speaking only for myself, there were times when I threatened to drop everything and become a goat herder. Not because I think animal husbandry is easy, but because it is the farthest thing from librarianship that I could come up with. All kidding aside, some members of our community have lost loved ones. Others have been subject to discrimination and attacks on the basis of race or ethnicity. Jobs have been lost and lives thrown into disarray. None of us are the same person we were in February 2020.

As we approach the beginning of the end of the pandemic, it is up to us to make sure that we don’t forget the lessons learned over the past year. That our colleagues, even the administrators, are real people with pets and families. That our students’ lives are complicated and filled with competing priorities. That they have uneven access to technology, high speed internet access, and other resources. That we, collectively, can

accomplish so much more than we can alone. I also hope that we remember everyone who continued to go to campus every day: Our facilities and maintenance crews, our public safety officers, and our PSS and AP colleagues, who work in departments across the university. Like an army that marches on its stomach, a campus community does not function without all of its members, including those whose work is less glamorous and less visible.

**Anne Sergeant:** Anne is a Professor of Accounting in the Department of Accounting of the Seidman College of Business (SCB). Anne is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2020-2021. [Anne shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what she captioned, “The Happy Hour”.](#) This is what Anne had to say.



Wednesday March 11, 2020, I wrote to my students “WOW students, I never expected to have SICK days in place of SNOW days...” The COVID shutdown caught me by surprise. Like 9/11, I had been going about my business without concern. But suddenly everything changed, a dislocation in time itself occurred. “Be safe” became our national motto. Public spaces were emptied. Virtual meetings and online shopping became a way of life. We lived in our homes and waved at our neighbors. At first it was exciting, but soon I began to feel a great emptiness. I missed my students; I missed my colleagues; I missed my neighbors; and yes, I missed my extended family. I longed to see people’s faces and smiles. Public communication was masked and incomplete. I realized there was a huge void in my life. I am a social person; I like people; I needed to interact with people; and I was not alone. Soon I learned that my colleagues were also feeling this way. So, we initiated a weekly Zoom Happy Hour. The Zoom Happy Hour was a simple concept. All were welcome. No business was to be discussed. Creature comforts were encouraged. Friday afternoons we loaded up our glasses and turned on our webcam to greet each other. It was easy. We didn’t have to go anywhere. I found we could be more informal with each other because we were wearing our favorite hoodie and slippers. It was a time when I could unmask myself and share more completely. I hadn’t realized how much I needed to be with my colleagues until we started these happy hours.

Early on, no one knew how to use a virtual backdrop. So, we visited each other in our own homes, in all their reality. Although Zoom was impersonal on some dimensions, it was more personal on other dimensions. I was able to show my friends (colleagues) the view from my office window, which had been setup in my bedroom overlooking a lake. Others introduced us to their pets. We talked about our families, our lives, our students, whatever was of interest. Colleagues who would not have joined us for a social outing came to the virtual happy hours. It was a time for developing deeper bonds that did not occur when we were meeting in more formal surroundings.

As with all things, soon we learned how to create nice virtual backdrops and to adjust the angle of our camera and lighting so we could look like newscasters. The informality was gone. But we had had a moment of truth, a moment of revealing of who we are and what we love. That moment has not been lost. We continue to be closer because we have been invited into each other’s lives in a deep way. As I reflect on these happy hours, I think maybe we need to do more of this kind activity, sharing that is open, inclusive, honest, and fun.

Let the Happy Hour live on!



**Melanie Shell-Weiss:** Mel is an Associate Professor in the Department of Integrative, Religious and Intercultural Studies (IRIS) of the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies (BCOIS). Mel is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2020-2021. [Mel shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what she captioned, “We Care: Laker Tenacity in Crisis”.](#) This is what Mel had to say.



It is sometimes said that you don't really know someone until you have had a conflict or suffered a crisis. Over the past year, we have all seen a great deal of conflict and crisis. From the COVID-19 pandemic, which compelled us off campus just over one year ago, to the violent reminders that racism is a constant threat in our communities, to the myriad other disparities – economic, gendered, and ideological – that have been thrown into stark relief, the past year has tested our individual strength as well as our relationships. It also distilled many

essentials, not the least of which are good health, safety, and connectedness. Perhaps most importantly, it has reminded us how important it is to care for one another.

The decision to return to face-to-face learning this year was controversial. Through Spring and Summer, faculty governance committees and the University Academic Senate (UAS) met regularly to put into place temporary policies designed to support both students and faculty. A significant number of representatives, myself included, pressed university leadership to move more classes online with the goal of lowering COVID-19 infection risk among students, staff, and faculty. These were difficult discussions. A majority of Grand Valley classes did ultimately move online. But the greater flexibility afforded to many faculty differed from options for staff. Where many faculty were able to work off campus, student services, housing, dining, and facilities staff (among others) remained on campus, contributing to a perception that faculty were absent even as staff worked long hours meeting essential, day-to-day student needs. Students and their families also faced difficult decisions. Not all students are able to learn remotely or have living situations to support fully online studies. We saw this plainly through Winter 2020 when the university moved online emergently. The extent to which our campus serves as a safe haven for students from a whole range of backgrounds is also critical.

We watched through early fall as [other universities passed a range of ‘zero tolerance policies,’ such as banning student gatherings, shaming, or punishing students for ‘irresponsible behavior.’](#) Meanwhile, Grand Valley focused on how to make our university community safer. In an open letter from Grand Valley employees to our students published in the *Lanthorn* on August 31, 2020 – and ultimately signed by nearly 800 faculty, staff, and administrators – we welcomed students back, underscoring not blame, but community-mindedness. It read, in part:

*...The last several months have changed us all. Like you, we have experienced pains, griefs, losses, and disruptions. We have experienced rage over persistent inequities and wrongdoing along with uncertainties about what lies ahead. We have also seen tremendous acts of courage, kindness, and selflessness. Like you, we persisted. These months have cemented our core values: a commitment to learning and teaching excellence, integrity, critical inquiry and lifelong learning, inclusiveness, community, sustainability, and innovation. These experiences have also stiffened our resolve, bolstered our commitment to act, given us hope and new energy. We cannot wait to build forward with you, our students...*

This was among many stand-out moments from this past year that I believe showcase the absolute best of who we are as Lakers and our commitment to supporting each other.

Despite our best efforts, as students, faculty, and staff returned to campus in Fall 2020, rates of COVID-19 infection and exposure increased significantly, compelling hundreds of students to quarantine or isolate. Again, members of our Laker community came together to support each other through these struggles. Mindful of the challenges facing isolated or quarantined students along with the reality that we as faculty were not physically on campus in the same way as we would have been in a “normal” semester, UAS



launched the “We Care Project.” Starting in September 2020 and continuing through Winter 2021 semester, faculty and staff donated several thousand dollars along with books and a range of small gifts, all designed to brighten the days of quarantined or isolated students living on or near campus. Drop-off sites were set up on both the Allendale and Pew campuses, with remote locations run by faculty and staff volunteers. The effort was coordinated by Lynnette Keen, academic department coordinator for the Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies Department (IRIS), and the Brooks College Dean’s Office. Students and staff worked with faculty to put together and decorate scores of packages each week throughout the year. Housing advised on numbers and needs, coordinating with Facilities and even the Department of Public Safety to deliver the “We Care” packages to students. To date, 570 packages have been assembled and delivered to student living on or near campus in Allendale and Grand Rapids.

Both of these efforts highlight what is often among the most under-valued and under-recognized aspect of faculty work within higher education: emotional labor. Caring may not fit neatly into a box labelled “policy” or be the type of effort that we as faculty typically delineate as part of our annual workload reporting of teaching, scholarly/creative activity, service, or significant focus. Yet the past year has certainly spotlighted the value of caring, both on a day-to-day, individual basis as well as collectively and systematically within the larger context of our institutional initiatives. We know that caring in education makes a difference. Scholarly studies have demonstrated that “college students are more motivated to succeed, are more likely to attend, and feel more satisfaction in classes where they perceive that their professors care for them” (Larsen 2014). The literature on crisis leadership within higher education similarly emphasizes the value of caring not just during, but after, an organization emerges from crisis (Gigliotti, 2019).

The emotional labor of higher education is also not, and has never been, born equally. Recent studies of gender-based disparities within universities show plainly that female and gender non-binary faculty are more likely than male counterparts to cite resource constraints or disproportionately high teaching and mentoring responsibilities as limiting factors in their ability to research and write. With the shift to predominantly online teaching and greater service expectations during COVID, national studies have shown that women and gender non-binary faculty reported regularly working 50 or more hours per week since the onset of the pandemic, including through many nights and weekends, all owing primarily to their being “mainly employed in the teaching-heavy, casualized levels of the academic hierarchy” (Duncan, Weir, et. al., 2020). This is but one reason that I remain grateful to colleagues on the Faculty Personnel Policies Committee (FPPC) for their leadership in incorporating national best practice recommendations to support women and marginalized faculty during and after the pandemic into their policy recommendations.

We have also seen new direct and material threats to racial and class-based inequities on university campuses. National examples include disproportionately placing essential workers at risk, sending infected students home to vulnerable families and communities, placing student athletes at higher risk, racialized digital access inequity, students’ off campus housing and food insecurity, and increasingly racialized input and stakeholder feedback in decision-making on university campuses nationally. To quote a powerful editorial published by Shaun Harper in the *American Journal of Education*, “seemingly color-blind” decisions about re-opening campuses, budget allocations, and policies that are made primarily by “well-intentioned white institutional actors...have unintended consequences on communities of color” (Harper 2020). To use what has become an oft-quoted metaphor that may be particularly apt for us as Grand Valley Lakers: we may all be sailing through the same storm, but we are not in the same boat.

With expanded access to vaccines, we all hope that the COVID-19 pandemic is waning at last. Yet just as we entered the pandemic in different places and with varying levels of security, we risk leaving with an even greater divide between those who have and those who have not. As a community, we are only as strong as our most vulnerable members. Having seen the extent to which disease, isolation, racism, and gendered inequities directly impact our colleagues and students, let us recommit ourselves to inclusion and equity as we move forward. We should do this without compromising, looking toward specific institutional and material strategies to support women and BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) faculty, staff, and students in particular. Teaching and learning must remain central to the work we perform as a university. Collaboration is key. Shared governance is one profound example, with the long list of critical measures

passed over this academic year providing only the most recent illustrations.

As my term on the Executive Committee of the Senate ends and I move into a new, administrative role here at Grand Valley, I know how fortunate I am to have been able to work alongside my senate colleagues through these most trying times. Thank you inspiring me. Thank you for teaching me lessons that I will not soon forget. Thank you for caring.

[Deana Weibel](#): Deana is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Deana is also a member of UAS for 2020-2021. [Deana shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what she captioned, “Roger That! V – The V is for Virtual”](#). This is what Deana had to say.



A young boy with a bandanna tied around his forehead stared with great concentration into the screen, a little brother occasionally appearing behind him and looking over his shoulder. In another square, a small girl perched on her mother’s lap, the whole family gathered around an armchair to watch the computer together. The next square over, a bespectacled child applauded and grinned, clearly delighted to be experiencing something so exciting on a cold February evening during quarantine. These young people were participating in a Zoom call watching retired astronaut Leroy Chiao give a talk entitled, “Succeed Like an Astronaut: An Astronaut’s Path to the Stars.” The next afternoon a JPL flight software engineer for the Mars Perseverance rover and a meteorite specialist from the Vatican Observatory appeared absolutely giddy to be able to hear from (and talk to) a childhood hero who had created memorable starships and other

props for various Star Trek series during a live panel on space art and special effects. All kinds of dreams were coming true during the 2021 Roger That! conference, put on every year since 2017 by Grand Valley State University and their partner, the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

Roger That! was first conceived in early 2016, around my kitchen table. Space historian Glen Swanson (then a physics instructor at GVSU, now a board member on the Roger B. Chaffee Scholarship Fund, and, not coincidentally, my husband) and I had realized that January 27, 2017 would be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Apollo 1 fire that had killed three pioneering astronauts. One of those astronauts, Roger B. Chaffee, was a Grand Rapids native, a hometown hero whose selection as a NASA astronaut had electrified West Michigan and brought great local excitement about the race to the Moon. His death in 1967 was a terrible loss. He was honored by the GRPM, who named their planetarium after him, and Grand Rapids designated a Roger B. Chaffee Memorial Boulevard, but 50 years later there seemed to be no event in place to mark the accident that had taken his life. We began to plan.

We reached out to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Padnos College of Engineering and Computing, bringing together an affiliation that eventually comprised a core team – Glen, Samhita Rhodes of Engineering, Karen Gipson of Physics and Brooks College, and myself. Karen, Samhita and I all knew each other from our shared time on GVSU’s Executive Committee of the Senate. Our group found allies at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, and by mid-February 2016 a memorial event to mark Chaffee’s life and the Apollo 1 fire had begun to take form. Roger That! would take place at both the Eberhard Center and the GRPM and would be a two-day event filled with a wide array of approaches to space exploration and space appreciation.

Our first Roger That! had a Friday program comprised of local speakers who focused on the arts (such as science fiction and NASA’s art program), society (history, archaeology, psychology, anthropology) and science (engineering, mathematics, physics, biology). There was a design challenge competition with entries from GRPS students, a live experimental musical performance, a lunchtime keynote talk by Vatican Observatory Director, Carl Sagan Medal awardee, and native Michigander Brother Guy Consolmagno and a special dinner that included a talk show-like conversation with Roger Chaffee’s daughter, Sheryl Chaffee, who had gone onto a career at NASA herself, focusing on safety.

The Grand Rapids Public Museum hosted a special planetarium show for guests after the dinner. The next day, Saturday, Brother Guy gave a second talk at the GRPM and the Museum provided space-related family activities and planetarium shows for their guests. The event was a success and a fitting tribute to Roger B. Chaffee.

As we regrouped after the 2017 event, it became clear that there was interest, both at GVSU and in the wider community, in making Roger That! an annual occurrence. We applied for, and received, a NASA Michigan Space Grant for the 2018 event, held at the Pew Center, where we brought in retired astronaut Guion Bluford, Jr., the first Black American in space. Our design challenge expanded and we pulled colleagues we knew from ECS and other faculty committees to give space-centered talks, such as then ECS member Brian Lakey, who spoke on psychological issues that could affect long-term space travel. We also brought in speakers from the University of Michigan and Hope College.

With another Michigan Space Grant for 2019 we invited astronaut/artist Nicole Stott and focused on space as a site of creativity and performance. A statue of Roger B. Chaffee had just been placed in front of the Children's Museum of Grand Rapids and our morning keynote featured its sculptor, J Brett Grill, who spoke to a crowded auditorium filled with field-tripping elementary schoolers about his statue. The students were then able to set up and adjust their own creations, entries in the Design That! design challenge.

For 2020 we took inspiration from GVSU's Making Waves about Water initiative. Another Michigan Space Grant allowed us to bring in Alice Bowman from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab's New Horizons mission, who talked to our audience about water on Pluto, and retired astronaut Story Musgrave who took water as the theme of his own talk, discussing how the various characteristics of water were also the characteristics of successful human beings. We were even able to include a panel by the Adler Planetarium's Aquarius Project, a joint effort between school kids and scientists to search for meteorite remnants in Lake Michigan. The Design That! design challenge entries included many focused on using and finding water in space and GVSU faculty speakers were joined by professors from other nearby colleges as well as local authors.

The 2020 Roger That! was fantastic but took place during increasingly nervous times. I recall thinking about a new virus I'd heard about as I made airport runs for our guests, wondering if this "Coronavirus" would be appearing in Michigan soon. I didn't have to wait long for an answer. Within a month the United States and most of the rest of the world were under lockdown, struggling to contain and understand Covid-19. Classes and faculty governance meetings went online, leading to a time of great improvisation, adjustment, sacrifice and sorrow. There were many challenges to deal with immediately and we let Roger That! sit for a while, waiting to see what would happen.

Fall semester was a time of planning and it was clear by then that Roger That! V would need to be online. There would be no guarantee of a respite by February 19, 2021. We had all attended conferences, classes and faculty governance meetings via Zoom, and with our expanded Zoom licenses (courtesy of GVSU), Zoom seemed to be our best way forward. Armed with our fourth consecutive Michigan Space Grant we reached out to numerous astronauts and eventually settled on Dr. Leroy Chiao, the first Asian-American astronaut to fly in space and a veteran of three American Shuttle missions and one Russian mission, during which he was commander of the International Space Station. Dr. Chiao had given many engaging online talks and we were thrilled to bring him aboard.

We also began to think of going online as a benefit rather than a drawback. We had always relied on keeping most speakers local to stay within our budget, but with Zoom, the world was our oyster. We recruited the head of the space history collection at the Smithsonian, experts on virtual reality and space from Australia, a Vatican Observatory physicist who uses 3-D printing to study the composition of space objects, a meteorite expert from Arizona State University, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's chief engineer and a colleague of his from in West Michigan (a flight software engineer who worked on the "alarm clock" for the Perseverance rover), collectors of "lost" space films of the Cold War era, and a group of world renowned space artists and special effects designers, eager to discuss their own creations and the works that inspired them. Our partners at GRPM booked Goddard Flight Center engineer Brent Bos (who worked on the asteroid sampling-and-return mission to Bennu) and, with our financial support, planned a Zoom showing of the silent 1925 German film "Our Heavenly Bodies" with live Wurlitzer pipe organ accompaniment.

As our schedule began to coalesce, we got busy in numerous ways. We learned the



ins and outs of Zoom and how to livecast meetings to YouTube. We reached out to our GRPS partners and adjusted our Design That! design challenge so that students could participate online and so their efforts could be shown to our audiences via Zoom. We brought in STEM-focused GVSU student groups. We studied other online events, consulted with the GRPM and GVSU faculty governance colleagues, and promoted Roger That! with TV spots, news stories, posters, video previews and social media. We mentioned Roger That! whenever we could, including during various GVSU faculty meetings. Online registrations poured in.

The pandemic required original thinking, so we decided to create excitement ahead of the event by doing something brand new to us - sending science kits to local Grand Rapids Public School students. In each one we included “rainbow” diffraction glasses, mirrors, half-moon dishes, light emitting diodes, protractors, and other items that could be used to study the behavior of light waves. Simple experiments for studying the reflection, refraction and diffraction of light were included with the kits. This new approach to public outreach allowed a wider range of students than before to have a Roger That! experience.

Before we knew it, Roger That! V was just days away. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, the day before Roger That! started, the Perseverance rover landed safely on Mars, the perfect opening act to our upcoming “show”. At 1 pm on February 19<sup>th</sup> the online audiences arrived and soon we had numerous experts in multiple space-related fields answering audience questions and sharing their incredible work. We adapted quickly learning between the first and second talk, for instance, how to mute Zoom’s “doorbell” noise, and got things humming along: Introduce the guest, collect questions from Zoom chat and YouTube, keep the questions coming, add questions of our own, start to wrap up when Karen rang her bell...

It was an exhausting two days, but incredibly rewarding. It was wonderful to get positive feedback from long-time participants and from folks who had always wanted to participate but had been previously unable due to distance or disability. It was amazing to have speakers and audience members from North and South America, Europe and Australia. It was satisfying to watch featured speakers log back in as guests to hear about the space-related creativity of people they admired in other fields. After we hit “end meeting” on the last Zoom and archived each session into YouTube playlists for posterity, each member of the Roger That! planning team withdrew for a few days, engaging in some well-deserved rest.

As we look forward to February 2022, much remains uncertain, but we’re grateful to have had the experience of putting Roger That! on in both ways, in person and online. We learned that we missed the spontaneous interactions that happen when the event is live – audience members chatting with speakers after a talk, friends snacking together between sessions, and Academic Senate members going from Friday meetings to 6pm astronaut talks just a few steps away. We missed the dinners, joining in laughter with dozens of other guests, and marveling at 10 feet-high planetary images on large screens – it’s not quite the same on a laptop. We missed college staff and students wandering by, being pulled in by their own curiosity, and registering in person, same day, on a whim. We missed strolling through Design That! design challenge entries and hearing excited elementary students tell us what they had learned. We missed the chaos.

At the same time, we didn’t miss worrying about whether a blizzard would close GVSU or cancel flights. And we loved the inclusivity of the online approach, how we were able to bring together speakers and audience members from near and far, and how people for whom travel to a conference was impossible were able to log in and enjoy the days’ events. As we pore through participant comments and watch the recorded talks, we are thinking about Roger That! 2022 and other ways we can reach out to the community. Perhaps some combination of in-person and online events will mark Roger That! VI, so that our audience and speakers can continue to range wide, while the intimacy of the in-person returns. We will continue to learn from other GVSU programs, including initiatives proposed and promoted via faculty governance, as we plan for the future.

[Alex Wilson](#): Alex is an Assistant Professor of Trumpet in the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Alex is also a member of UAS for 2020-2021. [Alex shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by answering specific questions in the prompts.](#) This is what Alex had to say.



Looking ahead, how has COVID-19 impacted your appreciation for shared governance? Being part of the University Academic Senate during a pandemic has increased my appreciation for shared governance considerably. Most of the crisis management and solutions came from other quarters (like the Virus Action Team and the Provost's Office), but many of those pandemic-related decisions were necessarily difficult or unpopular. I deeply valued the opportunity to review relevant data, debate suggested action, and vote on important decisions as part of a large cross-section of GVSU faculty. In fact, it would have been difficult to fully accept that some of those decisions were for the best if I hadn't seen the

senate's skepticism and exploration of proposed alternatives myself. I feel comforted knowing that the shared governance of GVSU will continue to think critically about issues, both big and small, and look out for the needs and best interest of our community.

In what ways have you been able to "make connections and build relationships" with your students and colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic? Making connections and building relationships normally comes naturally to the trumpet studio at GVSU, which is a relatively small group of students with similar goals. It's been that way since I was a student here (from 2006-2010), and I make a point of fostering a friendly community with trumpet ensembles, group activities during our weekly studio class, and the occasional field trip to a symphony concert or competition. Covid-19 made those things unlikely or impossible during the Fall 2020 semester, and I began to really worry about the isolation of the first-years in the studio. In fact, I began to have serious doubts as to whether they could even name all their fellow trumpeters! So, I did something I would never have tried in normal circumstances, and added a big dose of Dungeons & Dragons (the popular, cooperative role-playing game) to studio class in Winter 2021. I rewrote the rules of the game to fill it with musical or trumpet-related challenges, then created sets of challenges intended to reinforce the concepts I was teaching in applied lessons. Ordinarily, it would still be hard to see the game as anything but a distraction, but as I think the pandemic proved, students deprived of their normal social networks and activities are much more difficult to motivate!

Ten weeks into the experimental studio class format, my students and I have both learned a number of important things. Aside from the obvious social benefits, a gamified studio class helped me better gauge my students' proficiency with various techniques and musical skills, and helped me craft a system that set clear challenges and metrics related to those skills. My students, for their part, seemed to be more motivated to improve than in the Fall semester, and my annual campaign to inspire efficient practice structure and goals seemed more successful than usual. They certainly got a lot better at the exercises they were presented with in studio class!

In retrospect, I think the game helped with three important things: a sense of community, a sense of playful challenge, and finally a sense of accomplishment that the study of music sometimes lacks. Progress towards a lofty goal (like becoming a great musician) is difficult to measure without clear and consistent reference points, because as students study, practice, and improve, they develop more ambitious goals. "Success" is a moving target, and students can easily lose track of their own progress and feel discouraged.

Will my studio class include D&D next year? I don't think so. It'll be time to cover all those small ensemble skills we missed out on in 2020-21. Will I run a trumpet D&D campaign as an optional activity, though? I suppose it will depend on student interest, but I'd like to! I enjoyed the more playful approach to trumpet pedagogy, and I think the cooperative style of the game helped build community. Will it take the edge off of the naturally competitive environment of a university music studio? That might be too much to wish for! Oh well...at least they know each other's names.

**Ed Aboufadel:** Ed is Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost and ex-officio member of ECS and UAS. Ed's faculty rank is Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Ed shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2020-2021 UAS Newsletter by focusing on his work and role in the following: [Face Coverings Policy](#); [Faculty Personnel](#)

Policy Committee; and Virus Action Team. This is what Ed had to say.



In January 2020, I began my fifth year in the Provost's office. Back in the first year, I learned that GVSU has written plans for a variety of emergencies (such as a tornado strike), along with a decision and communication structure that can be set up quickly. We do annual "table top drills" to talk through emergencies, and my role in those drills has always been academic continuity planning. On Sunday, March 8, I received a message that our Incident Management Team (IMT) had been activated, and this was not a drill. A few days later, GVSU stopped face-to-face instruction, and two days of training for faculty followed before we went remote. Soon, I was working from home, too.

In my role the past year, I've collaborated with faculty in numerous ways, as my duties quickly evolved in March to be part of the university's response to COVID. In this brief note, I want to recount a few of those efforts, to say a few words about the face coverings policy, the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee, and the Virus Action Team.

You will recall that we made it through the second half of winter semester 2020 in remote mode and that the spring/summer session was in the same format, as the state continued its initial lockdown. As the calendar turned to May, questions were already building about fall semester, and at first, we didn't have many answers. One area that I became very involved in was the development and implementation of the face coverings policy. There were several steps to get us to the policy that was ultimately published in late June, and the growing awareness of COVID-19's airborne, aerosol spread was critical to inform the final policy. In late spring, I heard from many faculty members who wrote to me, or met with me using RingCentral (remember that?), to share articles, discuss the science, make observations, and sometimes state strong opinions about masks and other aspects of risk mitigation for COVID. You know who you are, and I thank you, because all these conversations made a difference.

As the most important part of our face coverings policy had to do with our classrooms, I am so glad for the faculty, staff, and students who met with me and Tina Barnikow in early June in focus groups. The conversation was rich and it informed the Face Coverings Toolkit that went online soon after the policy was published. From my notes from last June, among the key ideas that emerged were creating an education-first approach to enforcement, making disposable masks readily available, and addressing alternatives for those who could not wear a typical mask due to health reasons.

Also, during the summer, several standing committees were called into duty to develop temporary policies. In my *ex officio* role, I attended the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) meeting in late June 2020, when several urgent issues needed to be considered. The committee, ably led by Marie McKendall, was ready to address questions such as: What would be the expectations of faculty work for 2020-21, and what would the annual evaluation of that work look like? How would annual evaluations be treated in light of the salary freeze? How could the tenure pause policy be utilized during the crisis? What will happen with LIFT surveys? Serious, measured recommendations arose out of that meeting, setting the tone for further extensions and clarifications during the fall semester.

By August, the university's Virus Action Team (VAT) had been appointed, and three faculty members joined me and other administrators to oversee the administration of COVID-19-related interventions, monitor the real-time spread of the virus, both on- and off-campus, and maintain effective communication. Doug Graham (Biomedical Sciences), Dave Huizen (Occupational Safety and Health), and Ben Holder (Physics) have been fantastic faculty colleagues on the VAT. As the Provost has said, Doug has been our own "Dr. Fauci", with his clear and empathetic explanation of COVID matters in public settings. Dave has been our expert on the interface of workplace regulation and campus matters, as well as leading a team of students who made "in the field" observations of compliance with our policies. And without Ben, we wouldn't have our highly-used and highly-rated data dashboard. He has a keen sense of data and its visualization. It has been wonderful working with them, and the rest of the VAT, through the academic year.



This has been a challenging and unique year for all of us. I could not have made it through the year without being able to work with outstanding faculty on all aspects of responding to the pandemic.

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## The “We Care Project” Final Report

(By Melanie Shell-Weiss, Brooks College and ECS/UAS Representative)

In late September/early October, the University Academic Senate (UAS) voted to endorse the “We Care Project,” an effort designed to show faculty support for quarantined and isolated Grand Valley students living on campus and in near, off-campus housing in Allendale and Grand Rapids. Working in partnership with the Dean of Students’ care team, Housing and Residence Life, and Facilities, the project collected more than \$2,500 in faculty donations along with a whole range of small gifts. These included faculty and staff members’ favorite books, cards and personal letters written to students, handmade items like knit scarves, socks and hats, baked goods, art supplies, games, puzzles, gift cards, tea, hot chocolate, mugs, and a whole host of other items – all designed to provide comfort and bring joy to students. The donations were used to purchase supplies and additional items to fill the packages. Between September 2020 and March 2021, the “We Care Project” had assembled and delivered just over 700 packages to Grand Valley Students. The Project



continues through the end of Winter 2021 Semester.

Donations to the project were collected through drop-off sites in the Center for Adult and Continuing Studies (Eberhard Center, Pew Campus) and the Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies Department (IRIS) Office (Lake Ontario Hall, Allendale Campus). Volunteers from the IRIS Department also arranged to pick-up donated items from faculty at off campus sites in Grand Rapids, Allendale, and Grand Haven – supporting faculty who due to COVID-19, were not physically working on campus or were unable to come to campus.



Lynnette Keen, academic department coordinator for IRIS, led assembly of the packages on a weekly basis throughout the academic year. This included working with the Division of Student Affairs to identify how many packages were needed as the numbers of students in quarantine or isolation fluctuated throughout the year. At peak periods, the project was assembling as many as a hundred packages or more per week while at other times, those weekly numbers decreased to 15-25. Delivery of the packages, especially at key times, was a true, team effort. During peak demand, when many staff and faculty were also isolated or in quarantine, officers with Grand Valley’s Department of Public Safety stepped in to assist with delivering the packages. The Brooks College Dean’s Office provided ongoing assistance throughout the year, including serving as a back-up site for deliveries and helping to assemble and fill the packages. Members of the Brooks College Advising Office, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department (Brooks), Digital Studies Program (Brooks), and the Writing Department (CLAS) also helped to assemble and decorate packages.



More than once, faculty, staff, and students remarked that the festive atmosphere and socially distanced work to collect, decorate, and assemble the packages on the second and third floors of Lake Ontario Hall helped to brighten their working lives and enliven their working spaces. Although those who donated and assembled the boxes never knew the names of the anonymous students who received them, it has been gratifying to hear positive feedback from the Dean of Students Office, such as when students would specifically request a “We Care” package or would share their thanks. From time-to-time, project volunteers would also remark that they had seen a student wearing one of the hats or scarves that had been donated by the project, for example, noting that it was these small gestures that made them feel that they had indeed made a difference.

Without the generosity of the scores of ECS and UAS members and faculty at large who donated, the “We Care Project” would not have been possible. The decision by ECS and UAS to endorse this effort, coupled with support from the Provost’s Office to promote this work, made a tremendous difference. Thanks to this collaboration, the “We Care Project” was not just a success; the project positively supported faculty, staff, and student employees throughout a difficult year, too.

### Standing Committee Chairs 2020-2021

Most of the work that is done in ECS/UAS comes from the charges that ECS assigns to the Standing Committees (SCs). Each SC is assigned specific charges at the start of the academic year in addition to the regular responsibilities of the SCs as specified in the Faculty Handbook (FH). As each charge is completed, the SC sends a memo to the Chair of ECS/UAS that becomes a business item for discussion at ECS meetings. Recommendations from ECS are sent to UAS and then to the Provost for approval. The composition of each SC is described in the UAS Bylaws and membership always includes elected college and library representatives. The SCs are an important part of our shared governance process. There are twelve SCs and a University Governance Committee (LIFT-MC) that report to ECS/UAS and each of these has a Chair.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	AFFILIATION
AFAC	John Lipford	CCPS
APSC	Kristen Vu	CHP
EIC	Jon Jeffryes & Josita Maouene	ULs & CLAS
FFPAC	Hannah Seidel	CLAS
FPPC	Marie McKendall	SCB
FSBC	Bob Hollister	CLAS
FTLCAC	Deb Bambini	KCON

<b>GC</b>	Andrea Bostrom	KCON
<b>GEC</b>	Gabriele Gottlieb	CLAS
<b>LIFT-MC</b>	Meg Woller-Skar & Paul Sicilian	CLAS & SCB
<b>OEMC</b>	Erica Hamilton	COE
<b>UAC</b>	Julie Henderleiter	CLAS
<b>UCC</b>	Martin Burg	CLAS

## University Academic Senate Report 2020-2021

(Report by Felix N. Ngassa, Chair ECS/UAS, 2020-2021)



The University Academic Senate, UAS, is the highest faculty governance body, which has authority to deal with any academic issue or faculty concern. The *modus operandi* of our shared governance process is such that governance policies are developed collaboratively by the UAS and the Provost. Other policies such as the ones approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT Policies) or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT Policies) complement the shared governance policies. At the level of each College and the University Libraries, there are governing bodies that serve as advisory bodies to the respective Deans. The advisory bodies develop policies, consistent with the policies and guidelines established by the UAS, for their various academic units.

The UAS meets on average once a month during the fall and winter semesters; these meetings are always on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Executive Committee of the Senate, ECS, serves as the clearing house for matters to be presented to UAS. As a clearing house, ECS discusses matters first and then makes recommendations that become business items for UAS. ECS meets once a week during the fall and winter semesters, and these meetings are on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. All recommendations from faculty governance to the Provost and/or President, come from the UAS or in some cases from the ECS acting on behalf of the UAS, pursuant to our *Shared Governance Policies*, SG 1.02.3.3.1. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the ECS met eighteen times, while the UAS met eight times. UAS made several recommendations that the Provost approved. Some of these recommendations are still pending approval. In this report, UAS work in the 2020-2021 academic year has been categorized under the following headings: *Policies/Guidelines, Endorsement/Support, Acceptance of Reports, Appointments, Task Forces, Curriculum/New Programs, and Presentations.*



## **I. Policies/Guidelines**

All recommended policies, policy changes, and guidelines were initiated by the standing committees of the senate, or directly by ECS/UAS. Policy changes were mostly on the *Shared Governance Policies*. UAS acted on the following policies and made recommendations to the Provost.

*Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal for Changes to Board of Trustees Policies Dealing with Affiliate Faculty Benefits (BOT 4.3.3)*: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting changes to BOT 4.3.3 governing non-tenure track faculty benefits. In the proposal, AFAC recommended the reordering of BOT 4.3.3 to parallel the order of BOT 4.2.30 (Regular Faculty Benefits). The proposed changes to BOT 4.3.3 were reviewed by University Counsel. The UAS supported AFAC's recommended revisions to BOT 4.3.3. The Provost approved UAS recommendation after minor edits were made to provide clarity and consistency with other policies. The Provost will support the proposed changes to the BOT at the February 2021 meeting.

*Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Proposal for Continuation of COVID-19 Temporary Academic Policies*: We reviewed a proposal from APSC requesting the extension of the Fall 2020 temporary academic policies into the Winter 2021 semester with modifications to the temporary Student Absence and Attendance policy. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation for Continuation of the COVID-19 Temporary Academic Policies for Winter 2021. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and the temporary policies are effective for the Winter 2021 semester only.

*Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Proposal for Modifying the Class Attendance Policy to Include Student Bereavement Policy*: We reviewed a proposal from APSC requesting the modification of the Class Attendance Policy to Include Student Bereavement Policy. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation to modify academic policy to include student bereavement in the Class Attendance section. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and the policy will be effective beginning Winter 2021 semester. In addition, the Office of the Provost will work with the University Registrar to update the *University Catalog* with this modified policy.

*Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Memo on Modification to the Academic Forgiveness Policy*: We reviewed a proposal from the APSC in which it was recommended that the current Academic Forgiveness policy be modified by adding the statement "Academic forgiveness cannot be used for courses in which academic misconduct occurred". It was also recommended that a checklist be added for each course on the application form. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation on *Modification to the Academic Forgiveness Policy*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

*Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Memo on Continuation of COVID-19 Temporary Academic Policies for Spring/Summer 2021*: We reviewed a proposal from the APSC in which it was recommended that there should be no change in the established C/NC deadline and withdrawal deadline for the Spring/Summer semester. It was also recommended that the temporary Student Absence and Attendance policy be continued for Spring/Summer 2021. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation on *Continuation of COVID-19 Temporary Academic Policies for Spring/Summer 2021*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

*Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Proposal for Expectant Person Parking*: We reviewed a proposal from FFPAC requesting parking accommodations for expectant persons. The UAS supported FFPAC's recommendation on parking arrangements for pregnant or newly-parenting people. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and will ensure that Vice President Sanial is aware of the faculty's support for these parking accommodations.

*Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Proposal for COVID-19 Temporary Personnel Policies for Winter 2021*: We reviewed a proposal from FPPC on COVID-19 Temporary Personnel Policies for Winter 2021. The UAS supported FPPC's

recommendation for temporary personnel policies for Winter 2021 semester. Some specific details of the temporary personnel policies include the following: (1) Deadline for submitting FAP was moved from November 2, 2020 to March 15, 2021; (2) The results of LIFT surveys from Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 will be considered “formative” for faculty; (3) Faculty will use their normal FAR form that is on Digital Measures and faculty do not need to reflect on scholarship, service, or significant focus on their 2020 FAR; (4) The usual deadline for the FAR applies and individual colleges may add additional requirements for the 2020 FAR due to accreditation or related purposes. The Provost approved UAS recommendation but cautioned that starting in Spring 2021, we will resume the normal personnel processes, workload and evaluation of regular and affiliate faculty based on our *Shared Governance* policy (SG 3.01).

*Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on Where Tenure Resides:* Currently, there is a conflict in university documents about where tenure resides. Two Board of Trustees Policies, BOT 4.2.3.2 and BOT 4.2.15.14, suggests that tenure resides in the university. However, BOT 4.2.4.1 suggests that tenure resides in the unit. We reviewed a proposal from FPPC, which was a recommendation that appointment letters indicate that tenure resides in the university. FPPC’s recommendation was based on the following: (1) a unit cannot unilaterally offer tenure or tenure-track, (2) the faculty member is expected to serve the university, (3) the Provost has the final decision on personnel actions, and (4) a unit cannot terminate the employment of a tenured faculty member. The UAS supported FPPC’s recommendation on *Where Tenure Resides*. The Provost’s decision on the UAS recommendation is still pending.

*Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on Personnel Meeting Formats:* We reviewed a proposal from FPPC, which was a recommendation to use technology for synchronous, remote meetings for personnel actions. Given that temporary policy that allowed synchronous online unit personnel meetings was followed in Fall 2020 and Winter 2021, ECS charged FPPC to examine the advisability of a permanent version of this policy and make recommendation to ECS on whether to amend BOT 4.2.10. Consequently, FPPC has recommended changes to BOT 4.2.10.7 and proposing some guidelines to be used in synchronous online meetings. In addition, FPPC recommended the use of a voting method that does not require accessing a new program. The UAS supported FPPC’s recommendation on *Personnel Meeting Formats*. The Provost’s decision on the UAS recommendation is still pending.

*Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on LIFT Scores:* We reviewed a proposal from FPPC on the use of LIFT Scores. In April 2019, the Laker Impression of Faculty Teaching Management Committee, LIFT-MC, submitted its Final Report to ECS. In the report, LIFT-MC identified some issues on high variability across colleges in how LIFT data are used and interpreted. In addition, the report concluded that some colleges (and possibly units) are using LIFT data in ways that are inconsistent with the intended use of the data. Consequently, ECS charged FPPC with evaluating the issues raised by LIFT-MC. FPPC agreed with LIFT-MC that LIFT data should not be used to make “conclusive judgements about teaching effectiveness”. In order to stop the most egregious uses of LIFT results, the FPPC proposed four recommendations that will take effect immediately. Furthermore, FPPC proposed other recommendations that will be made in Fall 2021 on how to interpret LIFT data without the use of the Combined Median Score. The UAS supported FPPC’s recommendation on *LIFT Scores*. The Provost’s decision on the UAS recommendation is still pending.

*Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Proposal on Faculty Teaching Load for Winter 2021:* We reviewed a proposal from FSBC recommending that the University provide increased Adjunct Overload funds necessary to ameliorate teaching loads in Winter 2021. The UAS supported FSBC’s recommendation to reduce faculty teaching loads where possible with excellence in teaching as the top priority. The Provost accepted and thanked FSBC and UAS for the recommendation.

*General Education Committee (GEC) Proposal on Pausing Assessment of General Education Courses for 2020-2021:* We reviewed a proposal from GEC recommending that

Assessment of General Education Courses be paused for 2020-2021. The GEC made this recommendation in response to COVID-19, the resulting increase in teaching load, and the changing teaching formats for faculty. The UAS supported GEC's recommendation to pause assessment of courses taught in the General Education Program for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and the policy has been added to the Office of the Provost webpage that contains temporary policies.

*Laker Impression of Faculty Teaching Management Committee (LIFT-MC) Memo on LIFT-MC Membership in SG Policies:* We reviewed a proposal from LIFT-MC, which was a recommendation to drop the Assistant/Associate Vice President for Institutional Analysis from LIFT-MC membership, and change the "Chair of FTLC Advisory Committee" to "Chair of FTLC Advisory Committee or designee". The UAS supported LIFT-MC's recommendation to *Modify the LIFT-MC Membership in SG Policies*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

*Online Education & Microcredential Council (OEMC) Proposal on Revised Recommendation for Online/Hybrid Course Approvals in COVID-19:* We reviewed a proposal from OEMC recommending that GVSU return to the policy of requiring course change approvals for hybrid and/or online course offerings when the Provost has determined that it is safe and feasible to return to fully face-to-face instruction. The UAS supported OEMC's recommendation on Revised Recommendation for Online/Hybrid Course Approvals in COVID-19. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

*University Assessment Committee (UAC) Proposal on Revision to UAC-Required Assessment Reporting in GVAdvance for the 2020-2021 Academic Year:* We reviewed a proposal from UAC recommending that Assessment of General Education Courses be paused for 2020-2021. In particular, UAC recommended that, "Units are allowed to pause UAC-required assessment reporting in GVAdvance for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021. Units are welcome to enter data and UAC will review any data entered, but units are not required to enter data for Fall 2020 and Winter 2021. Assessment reporting will resume as normal in Fall 2021. Units will not be expected to go back and enter assessment data for Fall 2020 or Winter 2021". The UAS supported UAC's recommendation to revise UAC-Required Assessment Reporting in GVAdvance for the 2020-2021 academic year. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and the policy was implemented effective immediately.

*University Assessment Committee (UAC) Proposal on UAC Bylaws and Chair Election Process:* We reviewed a proposal from UAC recommending changes to the UAC section of our *Shared Governance* policies ([SG 1.02.i](#)). The UAS supported UAC's recommendation to change the UAC bylaws and chair election process. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and the changes to the UAC section of our *Shared Governance* policies ([SG 1.02.i](#)) were effective immediately.

*University Academic Senate (UAS) Proposal to Replace the Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Proposal on Support of Alternative Methods to Compensate for Elimination of Spring Break in Winter 2021:* At its regular meeting on December 11, 2020, the Executive Committee of the Senate (ECS), acting on behalf of UAS, pursuant to SG 1.01.3.3.1, passed a motion to replace the initial recommendation from the Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) regarding Support of Alternative Methods to Compensate for Elimination of Spring Break in Winter 2021. The motion from ECS gave students two days off with no classes in lieu of spring break, with the details determined by the Provost in collaboration with the University Registrar. The Provost approved UAS recommendation with March 10 and April 1 chosen as the two days off with no classes.

## **II. Endorsements/Support**

Under the responsibilities of the UAS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies* ([SG 1.01.2.4](#)), UAS may vote to express its endorsement of policies, events, and initiatives that support and advance the university's mission and values. For the 2020-2021 academic year, UAS endorsed or supported the following initiatives.

*Endorsement of Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Proposal on Annual Salary*



*Adjustment Request for 2020-2021:* We reviewed a proposal from FSBC recommending that it is not prudent for the university, due to larger uncertainty in the enrollment for next year, to do a salary adjustment in January of 2021. The UAS supported FSBC's recommendation to pause salary adjustment for 2020-2021. The Provost accepted and thanked FSBC and UAS for the recommendation.

*Endorsement of the Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Virtual Commemoration for Winter 2021:* UAS reviewed and discussed the Winter 2021 virtual commemoration for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. UAS unanimously endorsed the Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. virtual commemoration for Winter 2021 and encouraged all faculty to participate in the scheduled events, as they are able.

*Endorsement of Letter in Support of the American Council on Education (ACE) and in Response to Executive Order (EO) 13950:* UAS reviewed and discussed a letter written by ECS to support the ACE letter and in response to EO 13950. UAS voted overwhelmingly to endorse the letter as the official position of GVSU faculty. In endorsing this letter, UAS reaffirms a commitment to the role of a university in a free society. In addition, UAS believes GVSU should take a leadership role in speaking up against any existential threat to academic freedom.

*Endorsement of the Provost's Appointed Faculty Representatives to the Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC):* Pursuant to SG 1.02.k, UAS discussed and endorsed the Provost's appointed faculty representatives to the OEMC.

*Endorsement of the "We Care" Project:* UAS endorsed the "We Care" Project. The purpose of the project was to let our quarantined and isolated GV students know they are not alone and brighten their day. Care packages were sent to students in quarantine or isolation on our Allendale and Pew campuses, in collaboration with Housing and the Dean of Student's Care Team.

*Endorsement of Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Recommendation on Annual Salary Adjustment for 2021-2022:* Each year the FSBC is asked to recommend to ECS/UAS a salary adjustment increment for the coming budget year. Our normal recommendation was delayed this academic year due to the large budget uncertainty imposed by COVID-19. We reviewed the recommendation from FSBC that a merit increase be applied according to the normal salary increment process, and an additional increase applied to all faculty equally since faculty were told there would be no normal evaluation process. The UAS supported FSBC's recommendation on *Annual Salary Adjustment for 2021-2022*. The Provost accepted and thanked FSBC and UAS for the recommendation.

*Endorsement of Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Recommendation on Summer Salary for 2021:* We reviewed the recommendation from the FSBC that the one-year pilot, low enrollment thresholds used for Summer 2019 and continued for Summer 2020 be continued again for Summer 2021. The UAS supported FSBC's recommendation on *Summer Salary for 2021*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

*Endorsement of Faculty Representatives to Program Review Subgroups:* ECS endorsed the faculty representatives to the Program Review Subgroups.

### **III. Acceptance of Reports**

Under the responsibilities of the UAS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies (SG 1.01.1.2.4)*, UAS receives proposals initiated by a variety of individuals and groups. The ECS has the authority to act for the UAS within the range of the Senate's responsibilities (*SG 1.01.3.1*).

*Acceptance of Graduate Council (GC) Proposal on Graduate Assistant Funding:* ECS reviewed the Graduate Council (GC) proposal on Graduate Assistant Funding. After deliberation, ECS accepted the report of the GC recommendation on Graduate Assistant Funding as submitted with the caveat to review this further at the ECS retreat in 2021.

*Acceptance of Graduate Council (GC) Response to Organizational Changes Related to Graduate and Lifetime Learning Unit:* ECS reviewed the GC Response to Organizational Changes Related to Graduate and Lifetime Learning Unit. After deliberation, ECS formally accepted the GC response and expressed its appreciation to the GC.

*Acceptance of Student Senate Resolution on Declaring a Climate Emergency:* ECS reviewed the Student Senate Resolution on Declaring a Climate Emergency. After deliberation, ECS formally accepted the resolution and expressed its appreciation to the Student Senate for raising the issues. ECS plans to place the resolutions' recommendations on the agenda for the summer retreat 2021.

*Acceptance of Student Senate Resolution on Excused Absences for Voting:* ECS reviewed the Student Senate Resolution on Excused Absences for Voting. After deliberation, ECS formally accepted the resolution and expressed its appreciation to the Student Senate for raising the issues. ECS plans to forward the resolution as a future charge to the Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) in the 2021-2022 AY.

*Acceptance of the Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal on AFAC Representation on ECS and UAS:* ECS reviewed the AFAC proposal in which AFAC representation on ECS and UAS was requested. In principle, ECS resolved that AFAC's request is acceptable in the spirit of inclusivity and equity. However, because of the implications of the requested change on Board Policies, specifically BOT 3.1.4, and also because more time would be needed to work out the logistical details, ECS will be reviewing AFAC's request further in the 2021 spring retreat.

*Acceptance of the CCPS/COE Restructuring Task Force Recommendations:* ECS reviewed and discussed the CCPS/COE Restructuring Task Force Recommendations that were addressed to the Provost and referred to ECS by the Provost. ECS unanimously passed a motion to receive the recommendations and forward to UAS for conversation.

*Acceptance of the Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) Recommendations on Long-term Role in Teach-In Planning and Implementation:* ECS reviewed and discussed the EIC recommendations on long-term role in Teach-In planning and implementation. ECS accepted the recommendations and will discuss the details of the recommendations further in the 2021 spring retreat.

#### **IV. Appointments**

Under the responsibilities of the ECS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies* (SG 1.01.3.4), ECS serves as a nominating committee for membership for all committees, task forces, and boards that are elected by the UAS. In addition, according to SG 1.01.3.1, ECS has the authority to act for the UAS within the range of the Senate's responsibilities.

*Appointment of Faculty Representatives to the Student Media Advisory Board (SMAB):* ECS appointed faculty representatives to the Student Media Advisory Board (SMAB), following the schedule of the SMAB in which faculty representatives alternate between colleges and the university libraries. Accordingly, a faculty colleague each from COE and CHP were appointed to serve from 2020-2022, and a faculty colleague each from BCOIS and UL were appointed to serve from 2020-2023.

*Appointment of Faculty Representatives to the Steering Team of Reach Higher 2025:* ECS discussed the selection of ECS/UAS faculty for membership on the Steering Team for the university's next strategic plan called *Reach Higher 2025*. The following ECS/UAS faculty were appointed to represent faculty: Majd Al-Mallah (CLAS); Courtney Karasinski (CHP); Jared Moore (PCEC); Karyn Rabourn (COE); Elizabeth Psyck (UL). It must be noted that there are many other faculty members involved in other aspects of the planning such as Enrollment Management, Network of Advisors, etc. Faculty Governance/Shared Governance is at the center of the planning.

*Appointment of Faculty Representatives to the University Technology Council (UTC):* ECS discussed the selection of faculty for membership on the University Technology Council. "The UTC contributes to the technology vision and direction & provides assessment of the

effectiveness of technology services and systems across the University. It is focused on the overall strategic direction and prioritization of major IT initiatives. UTC helps ensure that IT is working on the most important projects for the University and that appropriate resources are allocated to areas of strategic priorities. This body will also be actively involved in creating our Digital Roadmap in spring of 2021.” The following were appointed to represent faculty: Parag Uma Kosalge (SCB); Paul Leidig (PCEC); Christine Smith (CLAS); Laura Stroik (CLAS); Adrienne Wallace (CLAS).

## **V. Task Forces**

When confronted with issues that need focused attention, broad representation and results within a short time frame, ECS/UAS creates task forces to deal with these issues. For the fall 2020, there were three task forces: (1) myGVSU 2019 Campus Climate Survey Task Force; (2) Committee Chair Selection Guidelines (CCSG) Task Force; and (3) Faculty Climate, Equity, and Inclusion (FaCE In) Task Force.

*myGVSU 2019 Campus Climate Survey Task Force:* On July 31, 2020, UAS had a discussion and assessment of the myGVSU 2019 Campus Climate Survey Preliminary Results. Subsequently, ECS/UAS Chair invited VP Jesse Bernal to discuss some concerns raised about the Campus Climate Survey Preliminary Results on August 7, 2020. Because of concerns raised, UAS recommended that the results of the survey (especially the quantitative results) should not be used to make decisions until after a task force put together by the UAS on September 1, 2020, had reviewed the results with VP Bernal and made recommendations for a way forward. The task force has now completed its work and has made recommendations for next action steps in a Final Report that was reviewed by UAS. UAS approved the recommendations in the Final Report of the myGVSU 2019 Campus Climate Survey Task Force.

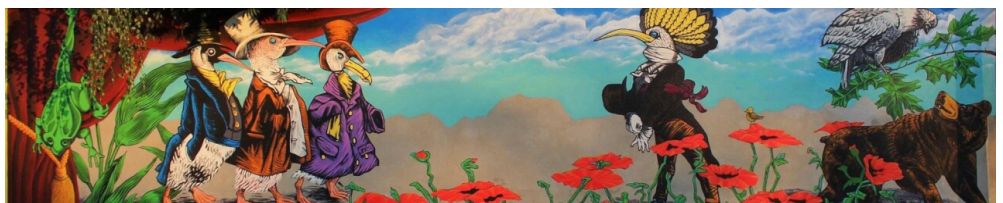
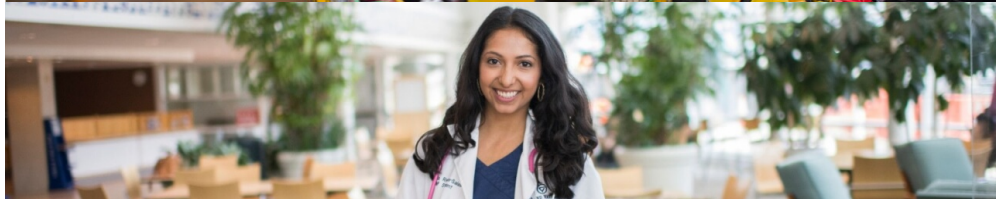
*Committee Chair Selection Guidelines (CCSG) Task Force:* The task force was formed to examine policies and practices for selecting chairs for the Standing Committees of the UAS and to recommend any changes that would improve succession planning and professional development in those positions. ECS reviewed the final report of the CCSG Task Force on December 11, 2020. ECS accepted the CCSG Task Force Final Report and will review the report at the summer retreat as charges for 2021-2022 are assigned.

*FaCE In Task Force:* During the last ECS meeting for the fall semester, December 6, 2019, ECS unanimously approved the creation of the FaCE In Task Force. The goal of the task force is to address equity, inclusion, and campus climate concerns of faculty. The task force is charged with the following: (1) submitting a report that outlines the problem; (2) communicating the role of faculty in addressing the problem; (3) summarizing current faculty efforts to address equity, inclusion, and campus climate issues; and (4) recommending specific action steps that faculty can take to further address any identified concerns based on current efforts and their outcomes. The work of the task force that started in spring 2020 and continued at the start of fall 2020, had to be put on hold pending work with Network of Advisors for Racial Equity and Action.

## **VI. Curriculum/New Programs**

The Governance Procedure for establishment of a new program involves two stages: (1) The Prospectus for a New Program, and (2) The Proposal for a New Program. The New Program/New Academic Unit Council (SG 1.03.B.13) met and approved two new program prospectuses. The following prospectuses were approved by the NP/NAU Council: (1) New Program Prospectus for Birth to Kindergarten Teacher Certification; (2) New Program Prospectus for Bachelor of Science in Senior Living Administration. As called for in the Procedure for Establishment of Additional Units or Programs, the Provost has created a task force for the Development of New Program Proposal: Birth to Kindergarten Teacher Certification. However, the Provost did not support the development of a full proposal for the BS in Senior Living Administration.







## VII. Presentations

We continued our senate tradition of inviting different campus authorities to give a presentation followed by discussions on topics that are relevant and of interest to faculty, staff and students. This 2020-2021 academic year, there were presentations and discussions on the following topics.

Presentation Topic	Presenter(s)
Winter Semester Teaching Modalities	Pam Wells
Enrollment Development Update	B. Donta Truss
Democratic Engagement	Melissa Baker-Boosamra
Update from the VAT	Ed Aboufadel & VAT Faculty Representatives
Strategic Planning: Reach Higher 2025	Chris Plouff
Academic & Student Affairs Budget	Provost Cimitile & Bonnie Bowen
Academic & Student Affairs Reorganization	Provost Cimitile
Transfer Credit Policy Revision GV Catalog	Pam Wells
Program Review	Provost Cimitile & Ellen Schendel
RHT 2025 Steering Committee	Tara Bivens, Mark Schaub, & Janet Winter
Updates on the 2020 Title IX Regulations	Theresa Rowland & Michael Szydlowski
University Budget	Greg Sanial
Strategic Initiatives in the IT Division	Milos Topic
Faculty and Staff Dining Concept	Doug Wentworth
NCAA Update	Paul Leidig
Parking Permits Changes	Chris Swank
Open Collections and Strategy Update	Annie Belanger & Cara Cadena