

## The CLAS Teacher

Visitors, Affiliates, and Part Time Faculty are important to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and have let us know they would like a streamlined source of important information so that they can perform well and get the most out of their experience in CLAS. Expect this newsletter to arrive before the start of Fall and Winter terms.

~Associate Dean Gretchen Gabbrith

August 2016

### Appropriate Academic Credentials

Dear Colleagues,

We're writing because we in the Dean's Office very much value your contribution to CLAS and Grand Valley. At this time when our professor is moving so fast, we are working hard to construct professionally viable ways forward for our colleagues.

This past academic year (2015) learned from our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), that they will be placing new emphasis on verifying that all instructors teaching at the college level have and they have been identified as the appropriate academic credentials. Looking ahead to the HLC site visit to GVSU in 2017, the university has begun to explore the implications of these guidelines and how to document that all of us who teach at GVSU meet those requirements. Most immediately, we have learned in the last few weeks that having these credentials will now be a requirement for those seeking promotion to Senior Affiliate status. Over the next few weeks, we will be working with our unit heads to determine what will be asking you to work with your unit heads to verify that you either have the HLC-commended academic credits or to put together a formal plan for completing that coursework in a reasonable amount of time.

The specifics of these requirements are as follows:

A person teaching a college-level course must have the degree in the relevant field or subfield at least one level above the level at which the course is taught (e.g., an instructor with an MA in History would be eligible to teach an undergraduate course in History). In the absence of that degree, the instructor must have at least one of the following: a test score (either dependent or independent) (which will be documented by unit heads) OR at least 18 credits of coursework in relevant graduate courses. In the absence of any one of these three possibilities, the person can work with the unit head to put together a plan of study that would allow her to achieve the 18 credits of graduate work in a reasonable amount of time.

For those who teach solely in the settings, the university is working on a variation on this policy that would allow for those with bachelor's degrees to continue in that role as long as they are not the instructors of record.

At this point, we are writing simply to keep you informed of these coming changes. The next step will involve having our Academic Services review and vote on Grand Valley's "faculty qualifications policy" that will put us in compliance with HLC. We are currently engaged in place, and will be working with our unit heads who will in turn be working with any colleagues who need to document an existing degree or relevant field experience or to put together a plan of study to achieve the relevant academic credits.

Best wishes,

Fred Antczak, Founding Dean of CLAS

Gretchen Gabbrith, Associate Dean, CLAS

### What is Fall Breather?

As Dean Antczak explains, "I invite faculty, as they are laying out their fall 2016 syllabi, to plan to give no reading, no assignments, no homework for the weekend before the drop deadline (Oct. 28), that is **October 22 and 23, 2016**. I am not suggesting that you take any time away from class, nor even that you debase by an iota the amount of work in the fall course. I'm simply asking you to redistribute it, so that for that weekend across as many courses as possible, there's no assigned work. I'm asking for a specific weekend because distributing it on different weekends would dilute its effect."

This CLAS tradition is greatly appreciated by our students.

### CLAS Teaching Excellence Award for Affiliate Faculty in the introductory level classes (100 and 200 level) [\(attachment\)](#)

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences created the **CLAS Teaching Excellence Award for Affiliate Faculty** to recognize the work of distinguished Affiliates teaching the introductory level classes. The award will be presented

each year at the CLAS Spring Convocation. The award will be selected by students, alumni, other faculty, or administration, and will be submitted no more than one nomination each year. Review of materials will be completed by a committee assembled by the Dean. The person chosen for this award will be presented with a plaque, a copy of which will be displayed in the CLAS Office.

This award is based on the following criteria which are not ranked by order of importance nor exclusive:

- Connects with students to provide positive relationships and provide academic support
- Uses highly effective practices in teaching
- Engages students and stimulates intellectual curiosity
- Creates and fosters a positive student learning environment
- Challenges students while providing the encouragement and/or support for students to be successful
- Demonstrates growth as a teacher

### Engaging Difference

**FTLC Fall Conference 2016. August 24** [Learn more and register](#)

### Syllabus construction with an eye toward student success

We all know that a complete and informative syllabus can help set a productive tone for the course. It also can help mitigate potential headaches for you and your students, as well as your chair and your Dean (as in, with student grievances or academic misconduct issues). The Faculty Handbook (Information Given Classes at First Meeting, 3.01 H.1) and a white paper by Pew FTLC are two great resources for syllabus construction. A recent white paper by Pew FTLC may be found here: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/~/media/assets/2015/07/syllabus-design-02.htm>

As presented in the Faculty Handbook, a complete syllabus includes essential information, such as prerequisites, instructor's contact information and office hours, and required texts/materials.

Students also appreciate supplemental information, such as a (tentative) outline of topics, an exam/assignment schedule, and special class procedures (e.g., Blackboard).

Finally, the aforementioned FTLC white paper also gives examples of important policy statements that a complete syllabus should include. Many of these appear below, but the following list includes two that are NEW as of Fall 2015 or Winter 2016.

- Policy with regard to student absences
- Disabilities Support Resources statement (reminding students that they bear the responsibility to register with DSR for test accommodations and to notify their instructors for the need of such accommodations)
- Academic integrity/plagiarism policy statement (examples can be found at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/cals/academic-integrity-294.htm>)
- Pertinent General Education or Supplemental Writing Skills (SWS) information
- NEW as of Fall 2015: Fire/emergency statement. (Example: "Fire: Immediately proceed to the nearest exit during a fire alarm. Do not use elevators.") For more details, see 8/2015 email by Sgt. William O'Donnell, GVSU Police Dept., concerning state legislation on fire safety requirements at all Michigan universities.
- NEW as of Winter 2016: Appropriate use of email and computing (see [CLAS weekly mailing item 10/27/15](#) for details of recent policy changes)
- Other "netiquette" expectations—use of personal devices during class, email etiquette, etc.

### FERPA

**Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)** requires that the university establish a policy and adopt and enforce procedures to protect the confidentiality, accuracy, and privacy of the information it collects on its students. The information collected on students may only be viewed by those individuals who have a legitimate "business" need to use the data as determined by the university's FERPA officer. The responsible officer at Grand Valley is the Registrar.

### Federal Law: Confidentiality of Student Work

Please safeguard student work. Boxes, folders or any other receptacle for collection and/or distribution of student work may NOT be placed in hallways. While it seems efficient to place graded student work in the halls, this practice breaches confidentiality procedures outlined in Federal Law (FERPA). All student work should be collected or returned in a manner that ensures confidentiality and reduces the likelihood of student work falling into inappropriate hands which could lead to plagiarism.

### Some Great Campus Resources You Can Access

- [Message](#)
- [Injury Care Clinic](#)
- [Digital Print Shop](#) in the Art & Design Department (large format and specialty printing not covered by the Copy Center). Very competitive pricing.
- [Farmer's Market](#) Wednesdays through October 26, 2016 10am-1:30pm, Allendale Parking Lot G
- [E-learning resources](#) assistance at the [Digital Studio](#)
- [Campus Bus System](#)
- [Sprout](#) ([www.gvsu.edu/sprout](http://www.gvsu.edu/sprout)) to sign up for workshops on campus
- [GVSU Alerts](#) direct to your phone
- Need an [Acronym Decoder](#)? We have one!

### Keeping Up with the News about Liberal Education

Interested in keeping track of news stories about how issues related to liberal education and inclusive excellence are playing out in higher education across the United States? Consider signing up for the AACU's [Weeks Liberal Education News Watch](#), a roundup of the week's stories.

[www.aacu.org/learn/education-news-watch](http://www.aacu.org/learn/education-news-watch)

### Important Dates

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|-------------|--|
| Aug. 16     | <a href="#">Regalia Repair Clinic</a>  |
| Aug. 20     | Course registration portfolio for Senior Affiliates due to unit head   |
| Aug. 23     | GVSU Faculty and Staff Picnic, 8:45am-11:00am, Allendale Campus  |
| Aug. 24     | <a href="#">Faculty Teaching and Learning Center Conference</a> , Eberhard Center                                |
| Aug. 25     | <a href="#">CLAS Faculty and Staff Meeting</a>   |
| Aug. 26     | Fall Classes Begin   |
| Aug. 29     | Postponed Senior affiliate promotion due to unit head  |
| Sept. 2     | Last day to Add, Register, Pay, 5:00pm   |
| Sept. 4-6   | Labor Day Recess, Sept. 6 no classes, offices open   |
| Sept. 12    | <a href="#">Fall Arts Celebration: Emerging Renaissance</a> (The Wind Quartet Performs Beethoven)                |
| Sept. 16    | <a href="#">CLAS Faculty Research Colloquium</a> , 2:30-5:00pm, 308 PAD  |
| Sept. 22    | <a href="#">Fall Arts Celebration: GVSU and Seuthof Art and Design Faculty Exhibition</a>                        |
| Sept. 26-30 | <a href="#">Student Civic Assembly (SCA) Week</a> (Rock the Vote)  |
| Oct. 3      | Unit recommendation for Senior Affiliates due to Dean's Office (Head Nicholson)                                  |
| Oct. 3-4    | Mid-term exams. ANNUAL SCHEDULE available – email notice will be sent  |
| Oct. 10-14  | Mid-term exams   |
| Oct. 11     | Last day to register to vote in Michigan   |
| Oct. 13     | <a href="#">Fall Arts Celebration: Faculty and Conversation with Oliver de la Paz and Kay Ryan</a>               |
| Oct. 21     | <a href="#">Mid-term exams due in Business Admin room, Barron &amp; Blueboard close at this time</a>             |
| Oct. 22-23  | <a href="#">CLAS Faculty Research Colloquium</a> , 2:30-5:00pm, 308 PAD  |
| Oct. 24     | <a href="#">Fall Arts Celebration: Francesco Harper Project and GV Dance present "Beethoven's The Creatures"</a> |
| Oct. 25     | Winter 2017 textbook orders due to UBS   |
| Oct. 28     | Drop-deadlines with W grade  |

Suggestions? [clas@gvsu.edu](mailto:clas@gvsu.edu)