Across Campus

Program gives students with autism confidence, earns recognition

A nonprofit organization dedicated to providing resources for families who have children with special needs ranked Grand Valley State University as among the top 10 U.S. campuses with services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

In its rankings, Friendship Circle noted Grand Valley’s Campus Links program, which matches ASD students with a peer mentor to help them transition to college.

Holly Miller, a senior majoring in Chinese Studies, was diagnosed with autism at age 4. She participated in the first cohort of Campus Links in 2012, and said having a mentor held her accountable and the program provided an immediate social circle.

"If I didn’t participate in Campus Links, I’m not sure I would have been able to make the transition or been able to adjust to college," said Miller, a native of Kentwood. "It helped me gain my independence from my parents."

Campus Links is sponsored by Disability Support Resources; since the program was established five years ago, 30 mentees and 20 student mentors have participated.

Kutsche Office offers grants to faculty members

The Kutsche Office of Local History has launched a new initiative that will offer grants to faculty members who will work with community partners and students on a project.

Director Kimberly McKee said the department is accepting proposals from tenure-track or tenured faculty who have an existing agreement with a community partner.
Across Campus

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or demonstrate a plan for sustained work with a partner. Projects should reflect the department’s mission of giving voice to diverse communities through history.

McKee said two Community Collaborative awards of $1,000 each will be made annually to support travel, supplies, data collection and related expenses. An additional $300 is available to support a faculty member’s work in the community.

The deadline for proposals is March 1, and the funding cycle will begin July 15. More information and application instructions are online at www.gvsu.edu/kutsche.

Students learn about renewable energy

More than 70 middle school students from 27 local schools learned about the impact of energy use and its effect on the environment at an interactive outreach event October 22 on campus.

During “Energizing Our World,” students participated in various sessions where they engaged in hands-on STEM activities to learn about solar, wind and hydropower. From constructing their own wind turbines to testing the power of flowing water, the lessons highlighted the benefits of renewable energy, the best sustainable practices and the applications of renewable energy in various fields of study.

The Regional Math and Science Center, Physics Department, Geology Department, and Office of Sustainable Practices sponsored the event.

“Energize Our World provided an experience to middle school students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to learn about renewable energy,” said Diane Miller, RMSC program coordinator. “The center strives to inspire students to be excited about learning while empowering them to become informed citizens.”

Also on hand was an 18-foot, solar energy-producing module designed and built by a team of students from the Padnos College of Engineering and Computing. The “Solar on Wheels” unit consists of eight solar panels and a collection of solar shingles. The portable module, which was financially supported by a $55,000 grant from Consumers Energy, has the capacity to emit four kilowatts of electricity.

Open enrollment ends November 2

Open enrollment for benefit-eligible faculty and staff members runs through November 2.

This time frame is an opportunity to refresh all benefit options. Visit www.gvsu.edu/healthwellness and click on “2017 Open Enrollment” to review options; confirmations must be made on dependents and benefit plan coverage, home address, life insurance beneficiary designation and flexible spending and health savings accounts.

Staff members from Human Resources-Benefits will host open forums to answer questions; locations and dates are online at www.gvsu.edu/healthwellness. Call x12220 or send an email to healthandwellness@gvsu.edu for more information.

University receives national honor for community service

Grand Valley has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The President’s Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition an institution of higher education can receive for its community service work and civic engagement.

The 2015 Honor Roll recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. Institutions were picked for their scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation continues on page 3

FORUM Volume 41, Number 10

The GVSU Forum is published by University Communications. The submission deadline is Tuesday noon. Send publication items to Michele Cellioli, editor, l-c/o forum@gvsu.edu. Telephone: 616-331-2221. Web: www.gvsu.edu/forum.

Faculty and staff members can find an online “Sketches” submission form on the Web at www.gvsu.edu/forum.

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Grand Valley State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

GVFaces

Brandon Borstler, Office Coordinator, CLAS Dean's Office

Brandon Borstler was ready to start his professional career away from Allendale after graduating from Grand Valley in 2012. Yet, after working for two years at Georgia College and State University, he returned to the place he considers home.

Borstler is the office coordinator for the CLAS Dean’s Office. His tasks include managing grade submissions, supporting several associate deans, and coordinating requests for facilities.

Borstler said his position allows him to advance his career and support his alma mater.

“I really enjoyed my college experience, and I wanted to help support that in the administration side,” Borstler said. “I want to help people have the same kind of experience I did.”

While Borstler’s interactions with students are minimal, he said he enjoys being a part of the campus community. Even if his work does not involve direct work with students, he keeps them in mind.

“The main mission of the university is to support the student body, and we can’t forget that,” Borstler said. “Everything we do, even if it seems unrelated, should try to positively impact student’s lives.”

Grand Valley has been a part of Borstler’s life since he arrived on campus. He met his wife, Claire, through the writing program. They married on campus in 2016.

Borstler earned a bachelor’s degree in English and creative writing.

“I love being back on campus, walking around, feeling the campus atmosphere,” Borstler said.

The Borstlers are big fans of the outdoors and spend a lot of their time rollerblading, biking or playing sports.
What’s Ahead

GVSU, SVSU face off to raise funds for charity

Once again, Grand Valley is facing off against rival Saginaw Valley State University for the Battle of the Valleys fundraising competition. The proceeds raised at Grand Valley will go to the Lake Children’s Fund, established in 2014 to assist groups and local non-profits that work with children.

The competition, which runs from October 30-November 5, coincides with the football game between the Lakers and Cardinals. The game takes place November 5 at 3 p.m. at the University Center in Saginaw. The winning university receives a traveling trophy, which is presented at half time at the football game.

Battle of the Valleys began in 2003 and has raised more than $500,000 for local and national charities that benefit children. The campus tradition is organized by Student Senate and Laker Traditions.

Fundraising events are scheduled and T-shirts will be sold in Kirkhof Center.

October 30: Pumpkin 5K at 10 a.m. at Enclave Apartments; Haunted Halls at 8 p.m. in Holtzroofer Learning and Living Center.

October 31: Angry Bird competition from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. in Kirkhof Center lobby.

November 1: Pumpkin Smash from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. in Kirkhof Center lobby; GV’s Got Talent at 9 p.m. in Cook-DeWitt Center.

November 2: Pie Day from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. in Kirkhof Center lobby; Mr. Laker at 9 p.m. in Cook-DeWitt Center.

November 3: Battle of the Valleys Carnival from noon-3 p.m. in Kirkhof Center lobby; Super Smash Bros. Tournament from 3-11 p.m. in Kirkhof Center, room 2215; Family Feud at 9 p.m. in Kirkhof Center.

November 4: Battle of the Valleys Carnival from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. in Kirkhof Center lobby; Mission IMPROVible at 7 p.m. in Kirkhof Center, Pere Marquette Room; Water Pong at 8 p.m. in Kirkhof Center Lobby.

For more information, visit gvsu.edu/battleofthevalleys.

Panelists will discuss health of city services

State and municipal leaders will discuss the response to the Flint water crisis and the health of city services in Grand Rapids at the November Health Forum of West Michigan event.

“Municipal Infrastructure and Health” is set for Friday, November 4, at 8 a.m. at the DeVos Center, Looserman Auditorium. The event, sponsored by the Midwest Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research Center and Grand Valley, starts with a light breakfast at 7:30 a.m. It is free and open to the public.

Panelists are Keith Creagh, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Eric DeLong, deputy city manager, City of Grand Rapids; and Eric Pessell, director of the environmental health division, Kent County Health Department. Julia VanderMolen, assistant professor of allied health sciences, will be the moderator.

Register online at www.gvsu.edu/vphealth.

Scholar will discuss censorship, religion

A professor of religion at the University of Chicago will bring first-hand accounts of religion and censorship when she delivers a keynote presentation on campus.

Wendy Doniger, scholar and author of The Hindus: An Alternative History, will give a presentation on Monday, November 7, at noon in Kirkhof Center, room 2215.

“I Am Grand Valley’ nominations open

Nominations for the annual “I Am Grand Valley” student leadership recognition campaign open November 2.

Students, faculty and staff members can nominate students who display and employ strong leadership skills that affect the campus community. Nominations are due November 30 and can be submitted online at www.gvsu.edu/iamgv.

The Office of Student Life will distribute “I Am Grand Valley” shirts and certificates to nominated students to wear on the first Wednesday of every month. Nominees will be recognized at the “I Am Grand Valley” Leadership Reception in January.

For more information, visit gvsu.edu/iamgv or call x12454.
In the News

Retirees attend tech session

Nearly 20 Grand Valley retirees met October 21 for a workshop on emerging tech trends presented by Information Technology staff members.

John Wezeman, Helpdesk supervisor, and John Klein, associate director of Academic Systems, led the workshop, which was held in the Mary Idema Pew Library. Participants discussed cyber security, passwords and web resources.

The workshop was a result of a Retiree Task Force, which aims to improve university communications with retirees. Another result from the task force was a revamped website, www.gvsu.edu/retiree, listing university news, events and resources.

Sketches

Alan Steinman, director of the Annis Water Resources Institute, gave the Keiser Distinguished Lectureship in Life Sciences, “Ecosystem Restoration from the Everglades to the Great Lakes: Fact, Fiction and (occasional) Frustration” and “The Role of Science in the Restoration of Aquatic Systems,” at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio.


Elena Lioubimtseva, professor of geography and sustainable planning, was a lead author of a chapter, “Outlooks and Emerging Issues,” in the UNEP/UN/ECE 2016 Assessment for the Pan-European Region, published by the United Nations Environment Program. She also gave a presentation and seminar as part of the University of Versailles master’s program, Adaptations to Climate Change.

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What’s Ahead

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the Mary Idema Pew Library, multipurpose room. Her presentation will be preceded by a reception that begins at 11:30 a.m. and followed by a book signing.

The event is free and open to the public. It is approved for LIB 100 and 201 courses.

Sarah King, associate professor of liberal studies and program coordinator for religious studies, said Doniger’s book was withdrawn from publication in India because it offended a group of right-wing nationalists. The Hindu was published in India in 2010 and became the target of lawsuits, including that it violated the country’s law of deliberate offending a person’s religious sensibilities. In 2014, Penguin Books India announced it would not publish the book in India, an announcement that drew calls of censorship.

King said Doniger, a prolific author of more than 40 books, will talk about the challenges of discussing sensitive topics in religion, especially Hinduism.

Abhishek Ghosh, assistant professor of religious studies, studied with Doniger as a graduate student. “Wendy may be very controversial in India, but these controversial ideas are also very important to understanding alternative perspectives on Hinduism,” Ghosh said.

Doniger’s presentation is sponsored by many Grand Valley departments: Area and Global Studies, Brooks College Dean’s Office, Meijer Honors College, Human Rights Minor, Kaufman Interfaith Institute, Liberal Studies, Sociology, and Anthropology.

New center supports growing biomedical industry

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“We’ve been working with Grand Valley from the start and the institute is located in downtown Grand Rapids, so it has been a natural fit to work with aMDI,” said Brent Mulder, senior director of SHI. “We’re relying on Brent and his team to look at the next steps required to bring the product to market. That includes creating a manufacturing plan, testing new prototypes and making recommendations.”

Other clients include Lansing-based Running Form Labs, which is studying how to improve human motion in running.

Nowak said aMDI is steadily growing. In the first six months, Nowak has hired three graduate students, two undergraduate students and a full-time engineer; he is currently seeking a post-doctoral researcher associate in robotics surgery modeling, simulation and analysis.

“It will take another three to five years for us to become fully sustainable,” he said, “but we are demonstrating our continuous growth through each project. It is exciting to see all the enthusiasm for aMDI from the West Michigan community.”

For more information, visit www.gvsu.edu/amdi.

Faculty and Staff Sketches


Jeff Kelly Lowenstein, assistant professor of communications, wrote a book, The Chilean Chronicles: Moments and Memory Forty Years After The Pinocchet Coup, published by Three Weddings Press.

Polly Diven, professor of political science, gave a presentation, “Superpowers and Small States: US, China and India Vie for Influence in Sri Lanka,” at the European Consortium of Political Research in Prague, Czech Republic. She also chaired a panel discussion, “Immigration, Identity and Public Opinion in Europe.”

TRIO Student Support Services staff members Ariel Arnold, Care McLean, MarcGus Wright and students gave a presentation, “Engaging, Increasing, and Sharing First Generation College Student Experiences Studying Abroad,” at the American College Personnel Association-Michigan Conference.

Christopher Toth, associate professor of writing, and Hazel McClure, associate librarian, were co-authors of a chapter, “Ethics, Distribution, and Credibility of Infographics: Using an Emerging Genre to Teach Information Literacy Concepts,” in a book, Information Literacy: Research and Collaboration Across Disciplines, published by WAC Clearinghouse Press and the University Press of Colorado.

Sharalle Arnold, associate director of the Women’s Center, participated as a panelist, “Campus Pantries Feeding Students: A Discussion of Food Insecurity on College Campuses,” at the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus. The event was organized by the College and University Pantries Research Project.

Sok Kean Khoo, associate professor of cell and molecular biology, wrote an article, “Effect of Storage Time on Gene Expression Data Acquired from Unfrozen Archived Newborn Blood Spots,” published in Molecular Genetics and Metabolism.

Housing and Residence Life staff members Colleen Bailey, Brandie Tenney and Brian Hatzel, associate professor of movement science, gave a presentation, “Living and Learning from the Ground Up,” at the Association of College and University Housing Officers International Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Jason Crouthamel, professor of history, served as a co-editor of two collected volumes, Psychological Trauma and the Legacies of the First World War and Traumatic Memories of the Second World War and After, published by Palgrave Macmillan.