

FORUM

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

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NSF project advances students in STEM majors

The financial support and mentorship students received through a National Science Foundation grant helped nearly the entire cohort graduate on time.

The \$600,000 grant aimed to help 120 under-represented, Pell-eligible students at Grand Valley who majored in a STEM field from 2011-2016.

The project, "Mentoring, Academic Support and Scholarships for Science Students (MAS4)," was led by Shaily Menon, associate dean for College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Paul Plotkowski, dean of the Padnos College of Engineering and Computing.

MAS4 supports a national NSF initiative to increase graduation rates of first-generation, low-income and under-represented students. The Grand Valley team provided support through partial scholarships and mentorship, an approach different from other institutions.

"The most common approach is to focus on a small number of students and provide

substantial support from their first to fourth year," said Plotkowski.

The pair looked at the behavior of potential candidates and noticed that many students in their third and fourth years were working to pay for school. "They were lightening their school loads, stepping out for a bit, and in some instances, dropping out," said Plotkowski. "We decided our approach would be different. We wanted to support a larger group."

Each student was assigned to a faculty member who served as a mentor and provided career guidance. Students were encouraged to complete high-impact experiences, such as conducting research or attending a professional development

continues on page 3



Photo by Amanda Pitts

Students are pictured in a biology class in Kindschi Hall. A grant from the National Science Foundation helped support a cohort of STEM majors graduate on time by providing partial scholarships and mentorships.

Across Campus

New major approved by trustees

Grand Valley's Board of Trustees approved a new major in cardiovascular sonography at its November 4 meeting at the L. William Seidman Center.

The major replaces the existing emphasis in adult and pediatric echocardiography and adult echocardiography and vascular sonography with a bachelor's degree of its own. The program will be the only baccalaureate program in cardiovascular sonography in the state and one of only two accredited pediatric echocardiography programs in the nation through the Joint Review Commission on Education in Cardiovascular Technology.

- The board also learned the university's endowment surpassed \$102 million as of June 30 and \$106 million as of September 30. The majority of the spending distribution is dedicated to scholarships and academic programming.

Endowment spending in 2015-16 was the highest ever at \$4.2 million. About \$1.7 million, or 40 percent, directly benefited more than 1,300 students through donor-funded scholarships. Five years ago, the scholarship

distribution amount was \$2.5 million; it has grown by \$1.7 million or 68 percent.

Faculty and staff giving reached a new record of 54.2 percent, making Grand Valley one of the most generous university communities in the nation.

Pilot cohort in Detroit for U-M program

Six Grand Valley students are spending their fall semester in Detroit, immersed in a program that focuses on the city's history, culture and community activism.

They are part of an 18-member cohort enrolled in the Semester in Detroit (SID) program, operated by the University of Michigan. This is the first year Grand Valley has participated. Anne Hiskes, dean of the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies, said the opportunity offers students a unique, place-based experience.

The SID cohort is housed in two houses in the Cass Corridor and Woodbridge neighborhoods. Students take most classes together and are required to serve internships with Detroit organizations.



Photo by Eric Bronson

The Semester in Detroit cohort is pictured. The University of Michigan program includes six Grand Valley students.

Hiskes said she hopes students develop a deep understanding of challenges that face urban communities and develop skills for addressing issues like race and class.

"I hope they are inspired by the community resilience and sustainability initiatives they observe," she said. "As an immersive, cohort

continues on page 2

Across Campus

continued from page 1

experience, the program is structured to be absolutely transformative.”

Liberal studies major Dana Eardley said living and learning with a small group of people lends itself to this type of community-based program.

“Living together enriches our learning experience because we are able to continue our discussions outside of the classroom,” said Eardley. “Members of our cohort are passionate about a variety of social issues. I appreciate that our program encourages us to gain an understanding of how these issues intersect.”

Eardley’s internship is at D-Town Farm, a program of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network.

Angela Paget, a geography and sustainable planning major, has an internship with the Greening of Detroit, an organization dedicated to promoting healthy urban communities through green spaces, education and job training. Paget is developing a composting system for use by neighborhood residents, and helping to plan field trips for K-12 students.

Paget said she’s enjoyed learning more about Detroit’s history through seminar-style lectures and readings. “There is more individual preparation before class, and more interactive learning in the classroom,” she said.

Craig Regester, associate director and on-site coordinator for SID, said the Grand Valley students have enhanced the program’s diversity with their experiences and perspective. Grand Valley students who are participating are Eardley, Paget, Kelsey Stephenson, Stephanie Balke, Mary Eakins and Ryan Samosiuk.

This is a pilot year for the partnership; Hiskes and Regester both said they hope it continues next fall. More information is available online at www.gvsu.edu/semesterindetroit/.

Local students compete in math competition

More than 70 local middle and high school students put their mathematical prowess to the test as they competed against each other during the 4th annual Math-Team-Matics competition at Grand Valley.

During the November 5 event, hosted by the Mathematics Department and Regional Math and Science Center, 14 teams of students from nine West Michigan schools competed in multiple contests involving content from K-8 mathematics, high school algebra and high school geometry.

City High School and City Middle School, both located in Grand Rapids, captured the top prizes in their respective divisions.

This year’s competition included a team challenge with students working in teams of five to solve a mathematical problem, individual tests, a team problem-solving relay race and a bracket-style quiz bowl.

Chelsea Ridge, Regional Math and Science Center math program coordinator, said that this competition is unique since it is predominately planned and coordinated by Grand Valley students from the Mathematics Department who have an interest in education.

This year’s competition marked Nicholas Schweitzer’s second year serving as a Math-Team-Matics student coordinator. He explained that he wants to provide young mathematicians with educational opportunities he didn’t have in grade school.

“This competition allows students to dig deep into a subject they enjoy in order to solve some really neat and brilliant problems,” said Schweitzer, a senior majoring in mathematics and education.



Coopersville Middle School and City Middle School students compete in Final Quiz Bowl during the Math-Team-Matics competition November 5.

Housing seeks applicants for RA positions

Housing and Residence Life is seeking applications for Resident Assistants for 2017-2018.

More than 115 RAs contribute to community building, safety and co-curricular engagement for residential students. Students with strong

continues on page 4

FORUM Volume 41, Number 12

The GVSU Forum is published by University Communications. The submission deadline is Tuesday noon. Send publication items to Michele Coffill, editor, 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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Other publications by University Communications include:

Grand Valley Magazine, published quarterly; visit its website at www.gvsu.edu/gvmagazine.

Visit Grand Valley’s online publication, *GVNow*, at www.gvsu.edu/gvnow, for daily news updates and video features.

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



Clinton rally on campus



Photo by Amanda Pitts

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton waves to the crowd during a rally at the Fieldhouse November 7, one day before the election. Through campus outreach efforts, more than 3,000 students registered to vote during the election season, and more than 500 were shuttled to the Allendale precinct to vote on Election Day.

What's Ahead

Author will connect art, activism during Fall Arts Celebration

Acclaimed author Rebecca Solnit will serve as this year's Fall Arts Celebration distinguished academic lecturer at Grand Valley. During her presentation, Solnit will discuss the intersections between art, geography and community.

Solnit will present "Seeing the Invisible: Journeys through the Overlooked, Unheard, Outside and Insurrectionary" on Monday, November 14, at 7 p.m. in the Eberhard Center. A book signing and reception will follow the lecture.

A San Francisco-based writer, historian and activist, Solnit is the author of 15 books about a variety of topics, including geography, community, art, politics, hope and feminism.

One of her benchmark publications, *Men Explain Things to Me*, is credited with launching the term "mansplaining," which describes when a man explains something to a woman in a condescending or patronizing manner. It has also been labeled as a touchstone of the feminist movement.

"Solnit is very much a public intellectual who believes in the value of the communal, and also, even in the midst of grim times, the power of art and hope," said Beth Peterson, assistant professor of writing. "It seems especially fitting with the water crisis in Flint looming largely in Michigan to bring in a writer who connects art and activism, and who is interested in considering how citizens can engage with their communities."

For more information about all of this year's Fall Arts Celebration events, visit www.gvsu.edu/fallarts or call x12185.



Rebecca Solnit

Post-election events scheduled

The Dean of Students Office, Division of Inclusion and Equity and other campus departments have teamed to sponsor a series of events through the presidential inauguration aimed at continuing dialogues on campus

The remaining events for "November 9 to Inauguration and Beyond: Where Do We Go From Here?" are listed below. Students, faculty and staff members are invited to participate; more information is online at www.gvsu.edu/service/vote.

- **Talk Back Tuesday:** Tuesday, November 15, from noon-1 p.m., Women's Center, Kirkhof Center, room 1201.

- **Post-Election Town Hall Series** (Sponsored by Student Senate, Community Service Learning Center, and Division of Inclusion and Equity): Mondays from 9-11 p.m., November 14 and 28, December 12, January 9 and 23, Kirkhof Center, Thornapple Room, 0058.

- **"Race and the American Dream":** January 17, DeVos Center, Loosmore Auditorium. Sponsored by the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies, this event will feature Nikole Hannah-Jones, *New York Times Magazine* writer, and Jason Riley, *Wall Street Journal* columnist, for a dialogue on progress and challenges since the civil rights movement.

Professors to give their 'last lecture'

Two professors will give a lecture as though it is the last one they will ever give.

Paul Cornish, professor of political science, and David Leonard, professor of chemistry, will present at Student Senate's annual Last

Lecture event on Thursday, November 17, at 7 p.m., in the Mary Idema Pew Library, multipurpose room.

The event, held at universities across the nation, is inspired by a speech, "The Last Lecture," delivered in 2007 by cancer-stricken Carnegie Mellon University professor Randy Pausch. It focused on celebrating the life he had always dreamed of instead of concentrating on death. He died at age 47, almost a year after giving the speech.

Alexander Turnbull, a student senator and member of the Educational Affairs Committee, said students, faculty and staff members nominated 35 professors. The committee decided on four possible lecturers and senators voted on the speakers.

"We host this event to give professors a chance to talk about things beyond the classroom, to delve into their own world," said Turnbull.

The event is free and approved for LIB 100 and 201 classes. Refreshments will be provided.

Summer Film Project set for premiere

After months of filming and editing by Grand Valley students and faculty, the 2016 Summer Film Project is set for its world premiere.

The premiere of "Lucky Jay: Season 2" will take place Friday, November 18, at Celebration Cinema! North in Grand Rapids at 8:40 p.m.



Students and the film crew work on the set of 'Lucky Jay,' the 2016 Summer Film Project. It will premiere November 18 at Celebration Cinema! North in Grand Rapids.

"Lucky Jay: Season 1" will begin at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and admission is \$10, which includes the double feature and entry into an after-party at 10 p.m.

In 2014, "Lucky Jay" was produced in an episodic format as the Summer Film Project, and season two follows the same format.

The new six-episode comedy-drama follows the continuing antics of a young film professor named Jay Calder. While

Jay is away on sabbatical writing his book and wooing his love interest Kate, Calder's confidant professor Hugh Anderson is left running the fictional university's film department with a hostile administration led by new college president Chip Throne.

The cast and crew, composed of more than 20 Grand Valley students, along with about 15 professional actors, filmed "Lucky Jay: Season 2" at various locations around West Michigan, including the Allendale and Pew Grand Rapids campuses, the Blue Bridge in Grand Rapids and Grand Haven.

Since 1994, the Summer Film Project has provided students with the opportunity to work alongside industry professionals while producing a feature length film.

For more information about the "Lucky Jay" series, visit www.luckyjayseries.com.

Grand Valley team partnered with GRCC to support transfer students

continued from page 1

conference. The group also partnered with Grand Rapids Community College to provide up to five scholarships each year to students who transferred to Grand Valley.

The results of their efforts are reflected in the overall graduation and persistence rate of 98 percent.

"This is extremely high for Pell-eligible students," said Menon. "We're very happy with this outcome. The financial support allowed students to focus on their course work and remain in their programs."

Menon said an unexpected and welcome outcome was students' interest in pursuing a graduate degree.

"I think mentoring, research experiences and

opportunities to learn about graduate school all contributed to the students' desire to pursue graduate school, and many went on to do it," said Menon.

This is the third NSF grant Grand Valley has received to support STEM students. The team plans to propose another project similar to MAS4.

FACULTY AND STAFF SKETCHES

In the News

Departments team to host Girls in Sports Day

More than 140 middle school girls from Grand Rapids Public Schools participated in National Girls and Women in Sports Day on campus in early October.

Grand Valley's Athletics Department, Movement Science and Club Sports teamed to offer clinics in a variety of sports, including lacrosse, football, dodgeball, rock climbing and volleyball.

Jason Johnson, associate coach for volleyball, held a clinic to help coaches with their strategies and tactics.

The national event was established to celebrate the passing of Title IX.



Jason Johnson, associate coach for volleyball, is pictured with GRPS coaches during National Girls in Sports Day.

Sketches

Brandon Youker, assistant professor of social work, gave a presentation, "How Do They Do It? Interviews with Goal-free Evaluators," at the American Evaluation Association annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Carrie Buist, assistant professor of criminal justice, was a co-author for a book, *Queer Criminology*, that received the Division of Critical Criminology's 2016 Book Award.

Matthew Roberts, instructional design for eLearning and adjunct professor of political science, gave presentations: "Redeeming PowerPoint through Neuroscience and Good Design," at the Michigan Health Association of Training annual conference; and "Travels in Class: Insights and Tips for Teaching in (Un)Familiar Territory" and "Ghosts of the Digital Native: Considerations Ethical, Practical, and Instructional," at the Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching and Learning in Traverse City.

Housing and Residence Life staff members **Dexter Earney** and **Elizabeth Williams** chaired the American College Personnel Association-Michigan Conference at Wayne State University.

Gordon Alderink, associate professor of physical therapy, and Charlie Pryor, film and video major alumnus, have their photo exhibit of Grand Valley's baseball team 2012 trip to Cuba on exhibit on the Blue Wall Gallery in the DeVos Center through January 31.

Across Campus

continued from page 2

critical thinking skills and leadership abilities are encouraged to apply; visit www.gvsu.edu/ra for more information.

Applications require the submission of a resume and the completion of five essay questions; the deadline to apply is December 21.

University holds technology workshop for Detroit students

More than 20 students from Cass Technical High School in Detroit learned about the latest business technologies during the SAP® Young Thinkers Program hosted by Grand Valley's Seidman College of Business and SAP University Alliance. The event was held October 28 at the GVSU Detroit Center in downtown Detroit.

Students spent the day participating in hands-on exercises that tested their analytical and creative thinking skills, while learning about careers in business and technology. They learned about business and data processes, including working with SAP (Systems, Applications and Products) software.

The program aims to help young students

understand Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and its impact on businesses and everyday life. ERP refers to the automation and integration of a company's core business to help focus on effectiveness and simplified success.

"Students were able to see how technology and working as a team is a big part of any business career," said Meagan Knoll, clinical affiliate professor in the Seidman College of Business. "The workshop sparked new interest for students to pursue careers in business and technology and that is the goal of Young Thinkers."

The program is sponsored by General Motors, SAP University Alliance and the Enterprise Systems Student Union.

Grand Valley named a green college by Princeton Review

Grand Valley has been named one of the country's most environmentally responsible colleges by The Princeton Review for the seventh year in a row. The university is included in the 2016 edition of "The Princeton Review's Guide to 361 Green Colleges."

The guide profiles higher education

institutions in the U.S. that demonstrate notable commitments to sustainability based on academic offerings and career preparation for students, as well as campus practices, initiatives and activities. Grand Valley has been included in the guidebook every year since the first issue was published in 2010.

This latest recognition reflects Grand Valley's commitment to sustainability. Some efforts that took place in 2016 are described below.

- In March, Grand Valley ranked first in the state and in the top 15 in the country in the composting category of the nationwide recycling contest Recyclemania.
- By the end of 2016, Grand Valley will avoid utility costs of at least \$2.3 million annually through the use of energy-efficient practices and procedures.
- Thanks to a \$55,000 grant from Consumers Energy, a Grand Valley team designed and built two solar-energy-producing modules that travel West Michigan to demonstrate the benefits of solar energy.

For more information, contact the Office of Sustainability Practices at www.gvsu.edu/sustainability.