

This is the start of my 4th year as President of Grand Valley State University. I am appreciative of our mission, our Board; our faculty/staff/students, our relationships with donors and members of our Foundation, our alumni, and community leaders. Their support underscored our value and our reputation. In the past three years our mission has guided our actions and our decisions – all of which are built on the values of GVSU: relevance, standards, and service.

Some highlights from this past year in the context of our strategic plan:

Goal One

Offer high quality undergraduate and graduate education...

EDPAC. As you know, strategic enrollment management continues to be an imperative. The challenges still are posed with Prop 2 and demographic shifts. I was pleased to note our graduation rates (IPEDS) at 56% up from 52% in one year. Our goal is 60 % by 2012 will put us solidly in the top four of 15 MI public universities (not that far from 3rd).

Quality of student learning. There are innovations ongoing in these areas that expand the classroom. Our faculty and staff promotes our effective delivery of learning outcomes in curricular and co-curricular activities. Our assessment protocols were particularly noted, surpassing NCA/HLC standards.

We must address needs of the adult learner in our graduate programs from a pedagogical perspective. Included among those adults are returning veterans who we will welcome to our campuses. GVSU, like GRCC, was just named to the national list of top 15% of universities in terms of veteran friendliness.

Goal Two

Create a broad educational experience...

As our curriculum evolves for today's world, we need to continue to find efficiencies in all we do – especially in the use of our faculty's time.

We continue to be a national leader on sustainability with recognition as one of the Top 25 “green” institutions.

I continue to meet with our foreign students as well as encouraging student exchange, in order to attract and retain foreign students needs even more attention in the years to come.

Goal Three

Contribute to the enrichment of society by building collaborations...

I continue to look for ways to engage our partnerships with the private sector.

We continue to see some return on our efforts with GRCC and the cooperation use of the Meijer campus in Holland. We hope to do the same at Muskegon CC.

Health strategic plan... Early Assurance; Johnson Center to the Bicycle Factory; Hauenstein Center...and others

Explore Center in Entrepreneurship

Through the efforts of Elaine Collins, Pat Oldt and others, we have and continue to be supportive partners with GRPS. We have new leadership in Dr Tim Wood, who will continue the mandate for high quality alternative institutions.

Marcia's role in promoting relationships, especially at our home, is of value for the university and is appreciated.

Goal Four

Promote inclusion, equity and intercultural learning...

Disappointed but not discouraged is how I earlier described the decrease in the number of students from minority backgrounds. However, this year we are seeing some increase in applications and our retention numbers have improved.

Our Division of Inclusion and Equity is operational. We have, through Board policy, extended benefits to house-hold members. The Inclusion Strategic Plan is published through the efforts of Jeanne. We still have work to do to fully implement our plans.

And, we have designed a model program for students with disabilities that continues to be implemented.

Goal Five

Create a vibrant university culture...

Students first. We must encourage their development in all domains; intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional and in civic responsibility. The value of service is reinforced with each other.

Community focused projects are important. I am pleased with our national recognition at the ACE annual meeting for the Honor Roll in community service.

Goal Six

The budget process is a yearlong activity and is connected with our plan in a very integrated manner...

Our priorities for master facilities plan have been established in our submittal to the state for capital outlay as well as internally for master planning for the next 5 years. Library and classroom capital outlay...our plans and actions keep our S&P rating as A+.

Five major infrastructure improvements last year, with another one underway now: learning, living and dining on the south of Allendale's campus. The fund-raising for the Library is job one.

I continue to be a fiscal conservative and have created a mind-set amongst the Senior Management Team that we will be, as in the past, cost conscience. We always want the best quality and value for the dollar. Our financial ratios are better today than a year ago...an indicator of stability.

We responded and continue to respond to the current economic issues by ensuring our students remain whole in scholarships and financial aid.

Goal Seven

Effectively present the university's image and advance its reputation...

My annual accountability report has given us the platform to share that we are the most cost effective delivery system of public higher education in Michigan.

Our marketing plans and execution have continued to position ourselves in the market.

Two highlights should be noted ... GVSU is top in Mid-west as "up and coming" university and Princeton Review lists GVSU among the "best in the midwest".

The achievements in our intercollegiate athletic program continue to bring us national recognition. Our sixth Directors' Cups (Best DII program in the nation) demonstrates our sustained excellence in our athletics programs.

As you know, it is great that NCA/HLC is complete with unqualified reaccreditation. Also this past year ABET for Padnos College of Engineering and Computing was also completed successfully, as well as Occupational Therapy Education and accreditation for Radiologic Sciences degree is almost complete.

As the chair of the Presidents Council and President of GVSU, I will, in appropriate settings, remind our leaders of their goals and support of higher education. I continue to beat the drum for a degree as a public good. My theme "you do not cut the engines with storms around you!"

Goal Eight

Develop and expand relationships with current and new constituencies...

We are succeeding in broadening the base and attracting additional new donors. We've expanded the donor base by more than 25% in the past three years..

GVSU had a record year in 2008/9, raising a record of \$28,000,000 from all sources (part of the Comprehensive Campaign), and our Development Division and Alumni are already thinking with 20/20 vision.

The 50th anniversary year of GVSU approaches, and Teri Losey and her committee have this well in hand.

I continue to be appreciative of Board support and the work of the Senior Management Team, especially in light of our strategic planning efforts.

Our faculty and staff need to be thanked for their efforts and pride in GVSU and to each other, because without them GVSU would not be able to achieve its mission.

Finally, our students are why we are here. They make choices. Without them we do not exist. We must always fulfill our promises to them as well as those in our community and state who invest in their future.

Now, permit me to look ahead as we prepare for the next 50 years.

We must understand our role and responsibilities, especially talent recruitment and retention, and economic development

Our current relationship with the state government is under stress. In spite of declining state tax revenue, we must never lose sight of the problems faces by students and their families. Grand Valley must continue to reduce costs, remain affordable, and maintain quality. We need to increase financial aid and fulfill promises made to donors and students. We must increase scholarships in each succeeding year, and offer more on-campus jobs and internships. We must be ready to help financially distressed students.

And, we need to plan ahead. Strategic Planning 2015 is already underway, with Dr. Julie Guevara on the point. Our goals must be succinct, understandable, and measurable – our values must be clear. Our imperatives will include Facilities Master Planning, Enrollment Management, Inclusion, Strengthening the Base, Image, and Economic Development. I hope to be ready, after endorsement by the Board of Trustees, to hand the project to the divisions and colleges by January 2010.

Our mission is to continue to focus on students – undergraduate and graduate, on curriculum, student services and internships. We must be the catalyst for synergistic partnerships. The University can bring parties together to solve problems or provide resources for new start-ups, as well as expansion of existing companies. We must provide intellectual capital via faculty knowledge or research, as well as faculty and other staff expertise in business plans, marketing, product development, patents, and grant writing. We must provide practical relevant short term training and idea development via conferences, seminars, and roundtables. We should provide specific business incubation through incubator space, shared technical equipment, and expertise across the spectrum.

Public higher education is so integral to our future. We have a moral obligation to nurture leadership. Our tools are quality, affordability, access, and accountability.

I passionately believe that a college degree is a public good and an economic multiplier. An affordable Grand Valley will be relevant, a good steward, and provide service to region.

Thanks again for all you do and for doing the best with what we have!