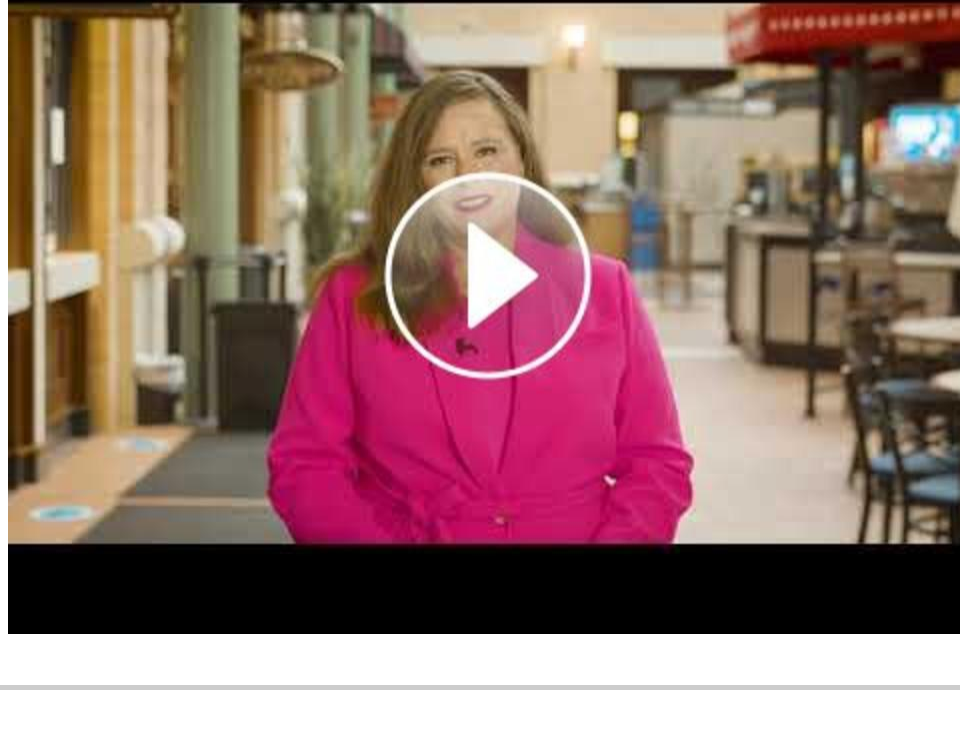




## Emotional Considerations of Returning to the Workplace

As you transition back to the workplace, keep in mind that it may not be easy for you or your colleagues. For advice on how to manage emotions that may arise from returning to work, [read this article provided by Encompass, your employee assistance program.](#)

Maureen Walsh, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, also highlights emotional considerations for GVSU employees as they return to the workplace in the video below.



## Leading Laker: Rence

### Meredith

Campus is looking a little different lately. Social distancing signs, mask requirements, and increased cleaning staff are among some of the changes popping up all over campus. While these may be pretty clear reminders of our current times, they're also a reminder of Grand Valley's commitment to safety and care for faculty, staff and students. No one personifies this commitment better than this month's Leading Laker, Rence Meredith.



Ever since the rise of COVID-19, Meredith, Director of Facilities Services responsible for Grounds, Maintenance and Custodial operations on the Allendale Campus, has been hard at work with Senior Leadership and the Incident Management Team (IMT) to help develop plans to return everyone to campus safely.

Meredith's role has been crucial to how Grand Valley responds to COVID-19, providing PPE, including face coverings, cleaners, hand sanitizers, and gloves to every department on campus. In addition to this, he's been integral in developing a new "Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitization Program" that shifts how Facilities Services cleans and works on campus, utilizing new products and altering scheduled cleaning times to clean more heavily during the day time to address higher trafficked areas.

While Meredith's position is no easy task, he stays generally positive about his work and personal life. "I am self-motivated and a very positive person in general. I think most would say I always have a positive attitude, even during trying times like these," he said. "It also helps to stay positive knowing that university leadership has taken such good care of all of us and are working hard every day to get us back to campus safely."

Perhaps this positivity also comes from his ability to stay busy not only in his position, but in activities that fulfill him outside of work as well. Rence excels at a good project, and is currently wrapping up a home remodel. Not only that, but he loves to enjoy the Michigan summer weather by spending as much time as he can outside. "I play golf, garden with my wife, and spend as much time fishing and cruising the Grand River on our pontoon boat as I can. We camp and spend as much time as possible outdoors, so there is no shortage in the staying busy department for me."

No matter what he's doing, though, Grand Valley is not far from Rence's mind. He stays pretty optimistic about Grand Valley's ability to overcome the challenges ahead, noting that the IMT has spent countless hours planning how to return to campus safely and responsibly. He encourages faculty and staff to be honest in their self-assessments, noting, "We cannot avoid or eliminate this virus at this time, especially without a vaccination. What we can and will do is mitigate situations as they occur."

To do this, Meredith says that it's important to remember to work together as a Laker Community. "Most importantly we need to remember that we are all in this together. The more we safely act alike, the better chance we have at making this a successful outcome for all."

## Return to School: Resources and Support for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

### CDC Back to School Decision-Making Tool

Many parents, caregivers, and guardians face new and difficult choices about how their child will return to school in the fall, such as deciding between in-person and virtual learning. This tool is designed to help parents, caregivers, and guardians weigh the risks and benefits of available educational options to help them make decisions about education in the fall.

[School Decision-Making Tool for Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians](#)

### GVSU Parenting Network

[GVSU Parent Networks](#) will host virtual check-in meetings this semester. Please log on to Sprout to register or email [salazael@gvsu.edu](mailto:salazael@gvsu.edu) to join the listserv. The Moms Network offers a [Facebook page](#) for support and resource sharing. Consider joining a [Network Community](#) to connect with other faculty and staff members across campus.

### GVSU Work Life Consultant

Your [GVSU Work Life Consultant](#) is available to help you create a wellness plan, navigate resources, and consultant on work life concerns, including the conflict resolution process or mental health support. Consider watching the 2-minute [Pause for Self-Reflection Video](#) and filling out the [worksheet](#) to help you assess your needs and set an intention.

### Encompass EAP

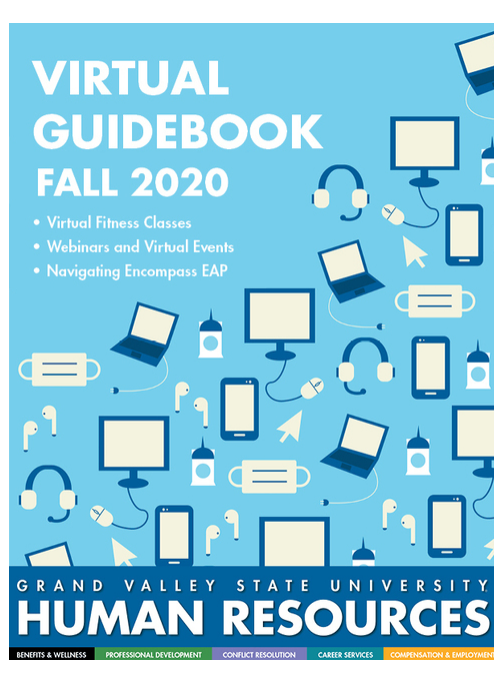
The [Encompass Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) offers 7 free sessions per life event for you and your household members including children over 8 years old. It also offers support such as medical advocacy, personal assistant support, and life coaching. The Encompass EAP provides online tools to help you with [Back to School Planning](#). Additional resources include how to [Help Children Learn at Home](#) with online family activities, [Tips for Helping Children and Youth Cope After a Traumatic Event](#), [Tips for Teens and Young Adults](#), and [10 Tips for Parenting During Turbulent Times](#). The [Resource Locator](#) can help locate resources for you family including elder care and child care. There are also a variety of webinars such as [Talking to Kids About Current Events](#).

(Encompass GVSU company code: gvsuni)

## Fall 2020 Virtual Guidebook

Faculty and staff have access to a variety of programs, events, and services offered by Human Resources. Make the most of your benefits and see all of what Human Resources can offer you this semester in the Fall 2020 Virtual Guidebook.

- **Free Virtual Group Exercise Classes**  
Join fellow colleagues for faculty and staff virtual group exercise this fall. Classes will be offered August 24th-December 18.
- **Participate in Workshops and Webinars**  
From retirement to interpersonal communication with coworkers, HR has a wide variety of opportunities to help you grow.
- **Learn more about your Employee Assistance Program, Encompass**  
From 7 free counseling sessions to interactive resources and so much more, Encompass is here for you.



[Click here for a complete list of offerings](#)

## Responding to Distressed Colleagues: A

### Toolkit for GVSU Faculty and Staff

Wednesday, August 26, 3-4:30pm & Wednesday, October 7, 12-1:30pm

The goal of this training is to increase awareness, knowledge, and confidence in responding to crisis situations for colleagues and co-workers on and off campus.

Participants in this workshop will:

- Review and learn how to use the GVSU Responding to Distressed Co-Workers process map, a tool for faculty and staff.
- Engage in interactive crisis training scenarios in which outreach to Encompass, EAP, Human Resources or GVPD emergency services might be warranted.

Presented by Encompass, GVSU's Employee Assistance Program, and Elisa Salazar, work life consultant.

[Register on Sprout](#)

## HR Team Member

### Feature: Torrey Thomas

How long have you worked in HR at Grand Valley?

2 years.

How do you help support faculty and staff at GVSU in your role? I provide a superior customer service experience to staff/faculty and our many day-to-day visitors (pre-COVID) here at GVSU. I am knowledgeable and skilled in the duties I provide while creating a comfortable and welcoming work environment for all.



What is your favorite quote? "Choose your attitude."

If there was only one food you could eat for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Cheese.

What energizes you? Sunny days.

What is your favorite pastime? Celebration Cinema, popcorn and Pepsi.

What's your favorite part about working at GVSU? The culture and diversity of the students and staff.

## Upcoming Events

Creating, Managing and Keeping Your Students Engaged in their

Online Group Work

[August 14](#)

Blackboard Essentials

[August 18](#)

Faculty and Staff Virtual Group Exercise Fall Session Begins

[August 24](#)

Responding to Distressed Colleagues: A Virtual Toolkit for GVSU

Faculty and Staff

[August 26](#)

[View all upcoming events](#)

[Current Job Openings](#)

