



Beware of Phishing and Spam Attacks Related to Retirement Benefits

Many employees are receiving emails from companies with names like "relaxedretirements.com," "yourretiring.com" and "appreciationnetwork.com." These emails indicate that it is time to set up an appointment to discuss your retirement benefits, or that they are available to help "public" employees understand their retirement plans or benefits. These entities are not authorized by GVSU and you should treat their message as spam.

Beware of attempts to gain financial information via unsolicited emails, texts and phone calls from outside "companies" that offer to meet with you to advise on your retirement plans, accounts or benefits.

Your HR Benefits team is here to help you with your employee benefits, including your retirement plan. Legitimate emails regarding your benefits will come from benefitsandwellness@gvsu.edu, hro@gvsu.edu, or individually from one of the members of the Benefits and Wellness Team. You will also receive information from our retirement plan investment providers, Fidelity Investments, and TIAA.

Vacation accrual and university break updates

President Mantella recently announced two measures which recognize, in a small way, how much we value your extraordinary efforts during this past year. These measures, extended breaks and closure and a one-time vacation carryover enhancement, are [outlined in detail here](#).

Leading Laker: Monica Johnstone

When Monica Johnstone, CLAS director of communications and advancement, realized she was starting to get back pain while attending residential art quilting retreats, she knew she had to do something more to take care of her body.

When daily dog walking didn't cut it, a colleague suggested she try out a [Campus Recreation and Wellness personal trainer](#) to help her feel better.



Eager to try something new, Johnstone signed up and was paired with a graduate student trainer who immediately put her to work. After working with her trainer for a few months, Johnstone felt stronger, and has since been able to feel more positive because of her exercises.

Johnstone enjoys the fact that her workouts are set up to help her with specific needs, even when the COVID-19 pandemic made things difficult. "My trainer structures my workouts to address my needs and limitations," Johnstone said. "He didn't let COVID shut us down either. We used Zoom and an online app so the workouts could continue with modest home equipment." Fast forward 10 months, and Johnstone hasn't missed a single workout yet.

In addition to exercising, Johnstone has been keeping positive by staying busy with her sewing projects. "During the early days of the transition, I was making masks like crazy—about 275 eventually—and that sense of doing something constructive really helped," she said. Johnstone also found that she was inspired by all the adaptations to teaching faculty had made, as well as the pet pictures she was able to share in her college's newsletters.

Johnstone has worked at GVSU since January 2007 and loves how she is able to support her colleagues in her position. "Since I was an undergraduate, I have always thought that faculty are a bit magical," she said. "When I was an Assistant Professor, I realized how solitary much of the faculty role can be and that there are few times that someone reaches out and says, 'Let me promote your work' or 'Let me see if I can put you in touch with a person or resource that could help you.' I enjoy the fairy godmother aspect of my job."

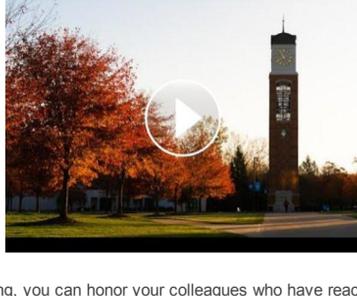
When asked if she had any advice for other faculty and staff, Johnstone emphasized that you need to invest in yourself in addition to helping others, saying that "GV makes it pretty easy to fit fitness into your day, so grab the opportunity!"

[Visit all GVSU Leading Laker features.](#)

Honor Your Colleagues: GVSU Service Awards Recognition

Although we are unable to gather with our colleagues and friends this December for the annual awards program, we can still show up for the people we care about.

View the following tribute in honor of this year's [218 service award recipients](#) or watch this year's tribute video:



During this season of giving, you can honor your colleagues who have reached service milestones by extending your Laker generosity. Volunteer through [Networks of Support](#). Choose from an array of service opportunities or create your own. When you give back through Networks of Support, you have the opportunity to select the name of the colleague you wish to recognize, as well as share a personal congratulatory note with them.

Holidays During COVID-19

The holidays look a little different this year, but that doesn't mean you have to give up everything. Encompass EAP has put together a useful packet about how to navigate the holiday season during COVID-19, including resources on planning, assessing risk, setting boundaries, and preparing kids for changes. [Visit this link to learn more and feel better prepared.](#)



Schedule Time for You during December

When life gets busy, it can be easy to forget to take care of ourselves. When looking to add more self-care to your routine, making goals and incorporating new resources could make a great difference in your overall wellness. This month's calendar focuses on gratitude, community and connectedness. Make goals, access resources, and find time for you this December! [Visit the calendar to try it out today.](#)



Faculty and Staff Winter 2021 Virtual Resource Guide

Free workshops, webinars and resources are available to you as a GVSU employee and for family members as well. Click on the icons to easily search and customize your own plan for wellness with GVSU programs, services and events based on your specific wellness needs.

[Review the full online guide](#)

TREK 100 is Back! Are You Up For the Challenge?

One hundred miles. Eight weeks. Can you do it? This challenge, brought to you by [GVSU Recreation & Wellness](#), allows you to track mileage through running, walking, biking, swimming, rowing, taking a group exercise class, playing an Intramural Sports game, using the upper body ergometer, and other various activities.



RECREATION & WELLNESS

We challenge you to just keep moving, now and always. Take the 100-mile journey with us and [register today](#). Your trek starts January 1, 2021.

HR Team Member Feature: Elisa Salazar

Work Life Consultant

How do you help support faculty and staff at GVSU in your role? I help faculty and staff with their overall wellness through coaching, consulting, programming, departmental support, conflict resolution and navigating resources.

What is your favorite quote? "At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel."- Maya Angelou

If there was only one food you could eat for the rest of your life, what would it be and why? Any sort of seafood. I love salmon and tuna.

What energizes you? I am energized by having thoughtful conversations. I get inspired by hearing people's stories and sharing ideas. I love working on creative projects.

What's your favorite pastime? I enjoy journaling. I have journals from when I was 10 years old. I also enjoy reading and listening to podcasts.

What is your favorite part about working at GVSU? I love working with a diverse group of talented and inspirational people. My role allows me to think creatively on how to engage and support faculty and staff. I feel I am able to bring my full self to work and use my unique gifts and abilities, which brings me joy!

What is your "Laker Effect"? I graduated from GVSU 10 years ago with a master's in social work. My career in social work has been so fulfilling. This May, I earned a second master's degree in communications by utilizing GVSU's tuition reimbursement program. This has allowed me to open up new opportunities and outlets for creativity.



December Upcoming Events

Social Security Retirement Planning: It's Never Too Early or Too Late to Start Planning

[December 7th 8:00am-10:00am](#)

Dad's Network: Virtual Meeting

[December 10th 12:00pm-1:00pm](#)

[View all upcoming events](#)

[Current Job Openings](#)

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