



# GRADUATE STUDENT CELEBRATION

GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATIONS FOR  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Presented by The Graduate School in collaboration  
with the Graduate Student Association

APRIL 16, 2021



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL



# Graduate Dean's Citation Awards

Winter 2021

Presented by The Graduate School

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in collaboration with the  
Graduate Student Association (GSA)



Dear friends and members of our graduate education community,

At the end of each academic semester, we have the great pleasure to honor those students and faculty who have distinguished themselves in graduate education at Grand Valley State University. The Dean's Citation Awards for Academic Excellence and the Graduate Student Association Faculty Awards are proud Grand Valley State University traditions that began in 2006 thanks to the combined efforts of the University Graduate Council and the Graduate Program Directors. The Graduate School and the Graduate Student Association serve as co-sponsors for this event.

The Dean's Citation Awards recognize excellence in academic performance in several categories. Graduate students are nominated for these awards by staff or faculty members, advisors, graduate program directors, and departmental chairs or school directors. The Dean of the Graduate School reviews the nominees and approves the final selection. Each recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a graduate honors cord. Additionally, the Graduate Student Association honors members of our graduate faculty who have distinguished themselves in mentoring and supporting our students at Grand Valley. Their noteworthy dedication helps to create a vibrant and engaged learning community.

Grand Valley State University is extremely proud of the accomplishments of these graduate students and graduate faculty members. I commend each of our award winners and wish them a very successful future.

Congratulations to all!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey A. Potteiger'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Ph.D., FACSM**  
Dean of The Graduate School  
Grand Valley State University

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**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATIONS FOR  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE  
Winter 2021**

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE DEGREE PROGRAM**

*Seidman College of Business*

- ❖ Logan S. Pauli, Business Administration

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ Chase S. Christenson, Criminal Justice
- ❖ Michelle L. Vogel, Health Administration
- ❖ Andrea C. Gordon, Social Work

*College of Education*

- ❖ Alexandra J. Evans, School Counseling (In-Person)
- ❖ Rachel D. Hamilton, School Counseling (Online)

*Padnos College of Engineering & Computing*

- ❖ Collin C. Beaudoin, Applied Computer Science
- ❖ Omar R. Malik, Data Science and Analytics
- ❖ Ganga Thapa, Health Informatics and Bioinformatics

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Colleen C. Benoit, Physical Therapy
- ❖ Harriet Bird, Public Health

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Maria N. Weston, Biology
- ❖ Emily H. Dorn, Biostatistics
- ❖ Alexandria N. Thompson, Cell and Molecular Biology
- ❖ Cordell A. Zachery, Communications
- ❖ Alexis N. Thurber, School Psychology

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Desiree N. Palmer, Nursing-Doctorate

**OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS**

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Dawn J. Zuidema, Engineering

**OUTSTANDING FINAL PROJECT**

*Seidman College of Business*

- ❖ Belinda M. Boorsma, Business Administration

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ David A. Misiuk, Health Administration
- ❖ Mariekie E. Barone, Social Work

*College of Education*

- ❖ Callie L. Youngman, Educational Leadership
- ❖ Nicole K. Durso, Literacy Studies

*Padnos College of Engineering & Computing*

- ❖ Ryan T. DeMeester, Engineering (Manufacturing Operations)
- ❖ M.M. Suvro Shahriar, Engineering (Product Design & Manufacturing)
- ❖ Jigyasha Timsina, Health Informatics and Bioinformatics

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Mikaela G. Harless, Kyra A. Lauzon, and Jill R. Wamhoff, Physical Therapy
- ❖ Megan R. Gross, Public Health

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Jordan J. Veldboom, Cell and Molecular Biology
- ❖ Patrick D. Anderson, Communications

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Mary D. Chenge, Nursing-Doctorate

**OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION**

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ Alyssa N. McCord, Criminal Justice

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Jasmine L. Mancuso, Biology-Annis Water Resources Institute

**EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OR  
PROFESSION**

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ Kathryn L. Beemer, Public Administration
- ❖ Lizette Trejo, Social Work

*College of Education*

- ❖ Alexis P. Joseph, School Counseling

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Alexis V. Van Dusen, Physical Therapy

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Megan T. Sanders, Biology
- ❖ Alisha Babu, Cell and Molecular Biology

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Lee Diener, Nursing-Doctorate

**EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU**

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ Lucas M. Zhao, Health Administration
- ❖ Kelli J. Dykstra, Public Administration
- ❖ Traci N. Trainor, Social Work

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Rachel M. Bartley, Physical Therapy

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Thomas M. Goralski, Gayatri Mandar Pingle, Niranjana Pokhrel, Sarah Rahmann, and Farrukh Ahmed Siddiqui, Cell and Molecular Biology

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Megan A. Buchman, Nursing-Doctorate

**PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT GVSU**

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ LaShawntelle L. Carson-Pops, Social Work

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Brittany N. Sugg, Physical Therapy



## EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

### *College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ David A. Misiuk, Public Administration

### *College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Sierra H. Reece, Physical Therapy
- ❖ Sabrina S. Sharif, Public Health

### *Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Rutendo Nyasvisvo, Nursing-Doctorate

## 3-MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION WINNER

### *Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Darby R. Disselkoen, Nursing-Doctorate

*Congratulations to all of the Winter 2021  
Graduate Dean's Citation Award Recipients!*

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION FACULTY AWARDS**  
**Winter 2021**

**KIMBOKO INCLUSION AWARD**

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Dr. Kristen Vu, Department of Diagnostic and Treatment Sciences

**FACULTY MENTOR AWARD**

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Dr. Jennifer Fortuna, Department of Occupational Science and Therapy
- ❖ Dr. Sarah Nechuta, Department of Public Health

**OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD**

*Seidman College of Business*

- ❖ Dr. Rita Grant, Accounting

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

- ❖ Dr. Patrick Thorpe, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology
- ❖ Dr. Melba Vélez Ortiz, School of Communications

*Congratulations to the Winter 2021  
Graduate Student Association Faculty Award Recipients!*

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE DEGREE PROGRAM  
Winter 2021**

*Seidman College of Business*

❖ **Logan S. Pauli, Master of Business Administration**

Logan is a top academic performer for his graduating class, speaking to his standard for excellence in academics. He chose to pursue higher education at Grand Valley after receiving a background in Physics from Michigan Technological University. He works in the insurance field while working for his MBA in order to further support his career as a business leader. Maintaining an excellent grade point average while working is impressive and takes a strong will and a dedication to exceptional academics. Logan is an excellent example of a Seidman College of Business student that has academically succeeded.

*College of Community & Public Service*

❖ **Chase S. Christenson, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

Chase (Sky) shines as a stellar student, maintaining a near-perfect GPA as he nears completion of his degree program. Sky has demonstrated a solid understanding of the research process, and will be defending his work ("A Study on the Beliefs of Juvenile Justice Practitioners on Youth Behavior and Treatment") this semester. Sky goes above and beyond in his commitment to learning by maximizing his experience and volunteering for many additional opportunities in the program. Additionally, his dedication and commitment extend into the community. Sky has worked with a variety of community organizations, from those supporting youth and mental initiatives, to others that provide opportunities to our incarcerated communities.

❖ **Michelle L. Vogel, Master of Health Administration**

Michelle's academic performance has consistently been in the top five percent of active students over the past two years. She maintains a full-time student course load as well as successfully meeting the demands of a full-time

management position in healthcare. Michelle's academic work has been outstanding. She consistently engages other students to increase her knowledge and diversity of understanding. A quality measure of academic excellence is Michelle's passion for learning and application of this to projects. She is driven by her zeal for excellence and not just a grade.

❖ **Andrea C. Gordon, Master of Social Work**

Andrea is an exceptional student who excels academically and professionally. She is committed to working in the area of human rights and social justice and does so with excellence. She has been a part of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force and has pushed for systems change. Andrea approaches situations with curiosity and confidence and is a great example of a social work advocate. She understands and appreciates the value of learning from her clients, while applying professional social work practice. She encompasses the values of social work that include justice, service, human rights, and dignity and worth of a person. Andrea is a leader and those qualities are exemplified in all areas of her life.

### *College of Education*

❖ **Alexandra J. Evans, Master of Education in School Counseling (In-Person)**

Alexandra has achieved academic excellence. She has created a great master's project, *Elementary College and Career Readiness Curriculum: A School Counselor Intervention*, that focuses on the limited availability of support for career development in early schooling. This project can be implemented in her career and can use a data-driven decision-making style in future projects. She also demonstrates proactive advocacy and empathy with the K-12 students that she works with. She is relatable and authentic with her students and colleagues and her ability to support students is first rate. Her work in the field is sure to make a long-lasting positive impression in the School of Counseling.

❖ **Rachel D. Hamilton, Master of Education in School Counseling (Online)**

Rachel represents the School of Counseling program's first recipient of this award to a student enrolled in the entirely online program that was launched in Fall 2019. She has worked hard to understand the position and engaged

fully in the role of a professional school counselor. She understands the importance of delivering services to all students using a multi-tiered system of support and her genuine, empathic, and calming presence has served her students well in her time as a professional school counselor. In her classes, Rachel eagerly shares her expertise with her peers and offers examples from her own work that benefits others and stretches their thinking of concepts to apply to their future students as school counselors.

### *Padnos College of Engineering & Computing*

#### ❖ **Collin C. Beaudoin, Master of Science in Applied Computer Science**

Collin was the first student accepted into the combined Computer Engineering/Applied Computer Science program. He did very well as an undergraduate and has maintained his exceptional grades in the graduate program. Besides his stellar GPA, faculty describe him as "outstanding," "intellectually curious," and "a clear step above" his peers. Collin recently accepted a position at The Pennsylvania State University to work on his Ph.D. He is certainly worthy of recognition, and the faculty consider him an exemplar for what they like to see in their students.

#### ❖ **Omar R. Malik, Master of Science in Data Science and Analytics**

Omar Malik is one of the most memorable students in the Data Science and Analytics program. He is a top student with a passion and energy for learning. His dedication to learning went beyond getting good grades. He would often ask questions and participate in discussions on topics outside of the scope of class. When a few other DSA students were started working on an extracurricular project, it was no surprise to find out that Omar was part of the group. Omar had a cheerful disposition and was quick to add to class discussion. He was helpful and friendly to other students as well. Many of the other professors in the program remarked about how they enjoyed having Omar in their class.

#### ❖ **Ganga Thapa, Master of Science in Health Informatics and Bioinformatics**

Ganga has maintained excellent grades in her program. As a Professional Science Master's graduate student, she has participated in many group projects in her classes, where she was teamed up with a student with a

technical background. Ganga remained positive and organized during these challenging projects. She communicated and collaborated well with her groupmates, and her patience and understanding while navigating a project with different backgrounds and perspectives show in her excellent work. Her projects stood out in her classes because of these excellent qualities.

### *College of Health Professions*

#### ❖ **Colleen C. Benoit, Doctor of Physical Therapy**

Colleen is an academic leader within her cohort, exemplifying excellence in both her didactic and clinical coursework. She displays a deep level of understanding of foundational concepts and applied practice in physical therapy. Colleen goes out of her way to initiate and engage in class discussion and is constantly applying evidence in clinical practice. She has maintained an almost perfect GPA throughout her time in the program. She is also heavily involved in undergraduate and graduate research projects where she has been a part of a publication in the *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*.

#### ❖ **Harriet Bird, Master of Public Health**

During the past two years, Harriet has received an A in every single class in the Masters on Public Health program. Harriet particularly stands out based on her performance in advanced quantitative research methods in public health. This is a complex course that involves doing a real-world data analysis with a large epidemiologic research dataset for the course project, and for weekly data analysis homework assignments in Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). This is arguably the most difficult course in the epidemiology emphasis for our program. All faculty in the Public Health Department agree that Harriet is an extraordinary student and leader.

### *College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

#### ❖ **Maria N. Weston, Master of Science in Biology**

Maria has achieved outstanding academic credentials. In addition to her dedication to the Biology program, she has also participated in research of the American Pine Martin that has contributed to the understanding of the

species. She has also contributed to science-based outreach to both the general public and to professionals when it comes to the American Pine Martin. She has shown initiative in mentoring incoming graduate students. Maria is an excellent example of a Biology Graduate Student who has achieved academic excellence in her degree program.

❖ **Emily H. Dorn, Master of Science in Biostatistics**

Emily Dorn will graduate this semester after a very strong performance throughout the Biostatistics Master's program. The Statistics faculty have commented on her strong and engaging participation in the course curriculum. Her written and verbal communication has been superlative in all assigned work and projects. This past year, Emily has also been a graduate research assistant providing statistical support in the College of Nursing where she helped to develop materials that help graduate and undergraduate nursing students apply knowledge of statistics in their scholarly projects. The entire program believes Emily will have tremendous success in the future.

❖ **Alexandria N. Thompson, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**

Alexandria has maintained an excellent GPA in a demanding sequence of courses. In addition, she carried out a successful internship where she was able to utilize some of the laboratory skills she developed in the program. She even has been offered a full-time position at the company upon graduation. Alexandria worked as a Graduate Assistant assisting with 100 and 600-level classes. She is a leader, effective communicator, and has always done an excellent job of both lab preparation and interacting with students from different levels in the biology program.

❖ **Cordell A. Zachery, Master of Science in Communications**

Cordell exhibits a level of mastery of subject matter that is rare among graduate students nationally. Not only does Cordell possess a remarkable reading knowledge relevant to the field of communication, he skillfully and successfully applies conceptual principals to practical communication problem-solving situations—the hallmark of true excellence in the Master of Science in Communication program. The GVSU School of Communication is confident that Cordell will continue to be a major contributor in the field of

communication throughout his career.

❖ **Alexis N. Thurber, Master of Science in School Psychology**

Alexis has earned some of the highest course grades and has the highest graduate GPA amongst her cohort. Her projects are consistently high-quality and she actively participates in both in-person and online courses. Alexis is viewed as a leader amongst her cohort and last year she served as the Vice-President of the student association. She goes above and beyond the program's requirements and has attended additional professional development and supported local school districts screening students for academic difficulties. She has successfully integrated herself into a variety of settings many of which serve culturally and racially diverse student populations. She has become skilled at establishing professional relationships and communicating with staff, parents, and students.

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

❖ **Desiree N. Palmer, Doctor of Nursing Practice**

Desiree exemplifies leadership and innovative thinking in and out of the classroom. She has consistently implemented advanced practice nursing and scholarship as a student scholar. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA in her doctoral graduate education. Desiree has excelled in her courses, clinical sites, and community organizations. She exhibits joy in her learning and future career. She chose the Advanced Practice Nursing, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner as her advanced practice nursing role. In this role, she has shown she is a dedicated healthcare professional and leader in the field. Desiree contains the qualities of an excellent scholar, health professional, and leader making her an outstanding candidate for this award.



**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATIONS FOR  
OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS  
Winter 2021**

*Padnos College of Engineering & Computing*

❖ **Dawn J. Zuidema, Master of Science in Engineering**

- **Thesis Title:** Assess Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) Algorithm(s) Effectiveness for Partial Shading Conditions
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Heidi Jiao (Chair) – School of Engineering, Dr. Nicholas Baine – School of Engineering, Dr. Karl Brakora – School of Engineering

Dawn's thesis is of high-quality work. Her work will have significant impact on the photovoltaic (PV) field. PV systems often suffer from partial shading and there is a lack of systematic study of the effectiveness of maximum power point tracking (MPPT) for partial shading conditions. Dawn has developed new models in MATLAB Simulink to study the partial shading effects and designed and built a printed circuit board (PCB) to verify the models. A draft paper on the Simulink models has been prepared and will be submitted to the 31st International Photovoltaic Science and Engineering Conference (PVSEC-31). Two more papers have been planned.

During her time at GVSU, Dawn completed a Graduate Assistantship which included providing technical and safety support for first year labs. She is also an Owner and Engineer at ZuiDesigns in Grand Haven, MI.

*Dawn's abstract appears on the next page.*

## ABSTRACT

The efficiency of solar energy is an important and ongoing research topic. Photovoltaic (PV) systems convert the irradiance of the sun into electrical energy and store the energy. A key component in determining the efficiency of a PV system is the Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) algorithm. An MPPT algorithm is an algorithm which extracts the maximum available power from a PV module. The voltage at which PV modules can produce maximum power is the maximum power point, which changes with solar radiation and temperature. Current MPPT algorithms have limitations, specifically, if there are drastic changes in the irradiation levels, the MPPT algorithm lags resulting in a significant impact on its power output. Partial shading is one reason there would be a drastic change in the level of irradiation. A simulation of the MPPT algorithm can assist in determining if the efficiency of a PV system is increasing, decreasing, or unchanging in relation to the MPPT algorithm.

A Simulink model released by MATLAB modeled a full PV system well using 360 cells in two panels but lacked the ability to model different solar radiation inputs. This model was updated and parsed the panels out into 5x1, 2x20, 1x45, 1x90, 1x180, and 1x360 cells, thus showed the impact of partial shading on individual or groups of cells rather than the whole solar panel. The new model was found to be easily scalable, completely stable, and repeatable. A printed circuit board (PCB) based on Texas Instruments TIDA-010042 MPPT charge controller reference design for 12VDC was designed to check the model to check the simulation. The PCB design was modified to store data, and included a liquid crystal display (LCD) which showed the status of voltage, current, battery level, and load. This allowed the user to find issues and store and plot data and determined if the simulation of the algorithm correlated to reality.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR  
OUTSTANDING FINAL PROJECT  
Winter 2021**

*Seidman College of Business*

- ❖ **Belinda M. Boorsma, Master of Business Administration**
  - **Project Title:** Navigating a Successful Merger
  - **Project Advisor:** Dr. Leslie Lynch – Department of Management

Belinda is a leader in her program and one of the top academic performers for her graduating class. The MBA program requires that all students complete a final project that has students serve as a business consultant for 4-6 months. Belinda utilized the skills she learned in the MBA program in order to assist with a business problem. She took the lead in her final project and helped her team end with a successful conclusion. The faculty of the Seidman College of Business are confident that the outstanding results from this project will leave the company pleased. Belinda is an excellent example of a Seidman College of Business student that has completed an outstanding final project.

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ **David A. Misiuk, Master of Health Administration**
  - **Project Title:** Sustainability Measures in West Michigan Hospitals
  - **Project Advisor:** Dr. Raymond Higbea – School of Public, Nonprofit, and Health Administration

David had developed a project that encompassed his interests in ethics, supply chain management, and environmental sustainability. While these topics appear isolated at first glance, David has skillfully aligned them as a continuum in his project. David's project is an environmental sustainability assessment of West Michigan Hospitals on the topics of food services management, waste management, and facility structure. This project is a welcome base line assessment linking ethics, supply chain management, and environmental sustainability of hospitals to community benefit accountability and social responsibility.

❖ **Mariekie E. Barone, Master of Social Work**

- **Project Title:** The Association Between Religiosity and Psychological Well-Being of Master of Social Work Students
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Joshua Bishop – School of Social Work

Mariekie went above and beyond with her research project. She looked at the association between religiosity and the psychological well-being of students in the social work program. Mariekie sought to identify factors that are available to MSW students that can protect against the mentally taxing nature of graduate education. Her work is exceptionally important during a time where mental health issues are on the rise, particularly in graduate students. Mariekie embraced her curiosity on this topic and exhibits the qualities of a lifelong learner. She is able to identify gaps in the literature, engages in the research process, and is dedicated to learning. Mariekie contains all of the exceptional qualities that make her a distinguished candidate for this award.

### *College of Education*

❖ **Callie L. Youngman, Master of Education in Educational Leadership**

- **Project Title:** Using an Integrative Framework to Address Teacher Workforce Engagement in LGBTQ - Supportive Policies and Interventions
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Catherine Meyer-Looze – College of Education

Callie has ideas, strategies, and deep thoughts about how to improve the “system” and make it better for everyone. She has a heart and desire to support those who have been marginalized and is a champion for equity. It is not surprising that her master’s project is designed to impact college campuses and preK-12 institutions with themes of equity and inclusion. Her project is the culmination of her experience and is the best evidence of her understanding of the nexus between leadership, equity, and service for all people. The College of Education is confident that Callie will continue to make a difference in the future.

❖ **Nicole K. Durso, Master of Education in Literacy Studies**

- **Project Title:** Leading the Way Toward Culturally Responsive NGSS Instruction
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Nagnon Diarrassouba – College of Education

Nicole's final project is an invitation to educational leadership to support their teachers in implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate pedagogies in the sciences fields. Her project is original in its concentration in that disciplines of science and technology are taught without reference to non-mainstream cultures. Nicole's project establishes social justice and equity among students. The College of Education recognizes this project at the highest level because it is very creative and focuses on areas ignored so far in education settings.

*Padnos College of Engineering & Computing*

❖ **Ryan T. DeMeester, Master of Science in Engineering (Manufacturing Operations)**

- **Project Title:** Real Time Production Scheduling of SAP B1 using Ignition Software for Plascore Inc Value-Add Product Line
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Lindsey Corneal – School of Engineering

Ryan has worked exceptionally hard to produce an outstanding project. He wanted to improve the efficiencies and reduce the possibility for human error causing parts to be scrapped at his work. He designed a production scheduling and flow control system to automatically manage the process flow for the value-add products at his facility. Ryan had to figure out the method and software to use to communicate between machines in their process and enterprise resource planning system. Ryan has worked diligently to ensure that his project was quality work. His project reflects his determination and drive to succeed.

❖ **M.M. Suvro Shahriar, Master of Science in Engineering (Product Design & Manufacturing)**

- **Project Title:** Investigation of the Causes of Variabilities in the Cuff-Dipping Process of Mandrels at a Medical Device Manufacturing Facility
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Shabbir Choudhuri – School of Engineering

Suvro has created a noteworthy project that deserves recognition. The project involved investigation into defect rates of a precision product in a global medical manufacturing company. The process under investigation is long established and institutional memory for many process steps are lost. The work involved working with the engineers, QC people and production personnel in the shop floor. Suvro has handled the complex situation with ease and was able to bring people together for an investigation. In ten weeks, he was able to reveal significant issues that will greatly help the company. The work that Suvro has done is exceptional and much deserving of this award.

❖ **Jigyasha Timsina, Master of Science in Health Informatics and Bioinformatics**

- **Project Title:** Comparative Analysis of Machine Learning Algorithms' Ability to Predict In-hospital Mortality in Myocardial Infarction Patients
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Guenter Tusch – School of Computing and Information Systems

Jigyasha is an outstanding student and a top performer in her program. Her work on her capstone project exceeded expectations. As part of her project, she identified a dataset to conduct the survey and leveraged many of her learned skills from her classes into the project. She is always interested in new developments and research in her field, some of which was included in her final project. Jigyasha is an excellent example of a Health and Bioinformatics Graduate Student that has created an Outstanding Final Project.

## *College of Health Professions*

*The Department of Physical Therapy has selected a group for this semester's Outstanding Final Project Award.*

❖ **Mikaela G. Harless, Kyra A. Lauzon, and Jill R. Wamhoff, Physical Therapy**

- **Project Title:** Roll Maneuvers Versus Sidelying Maneuvers for Geotropic Horizontal Canal BPPV: A Systematic Review
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Bonni Kinne – Department of Physical Therapy

Mikaela, Kyra, and Jill completed an outstanding project that encompassed excellence in the conception, merit, and significance of the research. The students had to put in extra time into the project in the beginning to learn about geotropic horizontal canal benign paroxysmal positional vertigo which is a very complex topic. They had to work diligently to locate all of the published research that is related to interventions for the disorder. They completed their systematic review efficiently and comprehensively. The project will make an excellent publication due to the hard work of these students.

❖ **Megan R. Gross, Master of Public Health**

- **Project Title:** Bridging the Gap: Reducing Hospital Readmission Rates Among Heart Failure Patients
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Heather Wallace – Department of Public Health

Megan's final project is exceptional. Through her professional work at the Holland Hospital, Megan observed high readmission patterns and reduced quality of life among Congestive Heart Failure Patients. Recognizing the potential value of transitional care for this population, Megan designed and carried out this ambitious project which offers value to her workplace, as well as other Congestive Heart Failure clinics around the country. The Masters of Public Health program has been deeply impacted by Megan and know she will reach great heights in the future both professionally and personally.

## *College of Liberal & Arts and Sciences*

- ❖ **Jordan J. Veldboom, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**
  - **Project Title:** Single-Cell multi-Omics: Marketing vs. Reality
  - **Project Advisor:** Dr. Tim Triche – Van Andel Institute

Jordan's internship at the Van Andel Institute started in March 2020, on the day Michigan's stay-at-home order started, so his project was changed to one that could be conducted virtually. He created documentation for developing R packages, focusing on single-cell RNA-seq. This documentation was usually in the form of webpages hosted by GitHub. In the course of the project he learned several coding languages and began analyzing several scRNA datasets that had been collected in the lab. Jordan's project built on skills he developed during his degree program and the Bioinformatics and Genomics graduate certificate at GVSU.

- ❖ **Patrick D. Anderson, Master of Science in Communications**
  - **Project Title:** "It's Not Easy to do a Wikileaks": A Cypherpunk Approach to Global Media Ethics
  - **Project Advisor:** Alex Nesterenko – School of Communications

Patrick's project is exemplary of what world-class communication scholars and professionals do best: provide insightful and systematic analyses of communication issues, questions, and problems. His work focuses on privacy, transparency, whistleblowing, and global media ethics. Patrick's project was featured in the 2021 Graduate Showcase as an exemplary example of outstanding graduate student scholarship. Patrick's book, *Cyberpunk Ethics: A Radical Ethics for the Digital Age*, is currently under review for publication. Patrick has the drive, determination, and curiosity that will make him a highly successful scholar and contributor to the field of scholarly communication.



## *Kirkhof College of Nursing*

### ❖ **Mary D. Chenge, Doctor of Nursing Practice**

- **Project Title:** Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Home Based Primary Care
- **Project Advisor:** Dr. Dianne Conrad – Kirkhof College of Nursing

Mary has done outstanding work for her research project, which moved an organization forward in assessment, identification, documentation, and referrals for social determinants of health needs. She utilized advanced communication skills and processes to lead her quality improvement project that was designed to promote sustainability. She executed outstanding written and verbal communication skills in order to effectively plan, implement and disseminate her project. Mary also placed second in the 3-Minute Thesis competition presenting her work.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR  
OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION  
Winter 2021**

*College of Community & Public Service*

- ❖ **Alyssa N. McCord, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**
  - **First Publication Title:** Taking the Field: The Deleterious Effects of Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination on Students: A Backdrop for a Discussion of Title IX's Application to Individuals with LGBTQ Identities
  - **Second Publication Title:** Rounding the Basis: Analyzing and Applying Title IX's Prohibition on Sex-Based Discrimination to Discrimination Against Individuals with LGBTQ Identities
  - **Co-Author:** Dr. Joshua Sheffer – School of Criminal Justice

In collaboration with a faculty member, Alyssa McCord completed not one, but two peer-reviewed publications during her time in the Master of Criminal Justice program.

Alyssa and Dr. Sheffer started a project to examine Title IX's application to students with LGBTQ identities. Alyssa's research and writing skills, her incredible analysis, and her editing skills were crucial to the project. What they had originally envisioned as a single project-turned-article blossomed into two articles that were accepted and published in *The Legal Educator*, a double-blind peer-reviewed journal.

It is not an exaggeration to say that these articles would not exist without Alyssa's integral contribution and immense effort. The School of Criminal Justice is honored to know Alyssa.

*The publication citations and abstracts appear on the following page.*

**Citation:** Sheffer, J. and McCord, A. (2020). Taking the Field: The Deleterious Effects of Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination on Students: A Backdrop for a Discussion of Title IX's Application to Individuals with LGBTQ Identities, *The Legal Educator* 35(1), 64-71.

#### **ABSTRACT**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects against sex-based discrimination in education. But how does Title IX apply to discrimination against individuals with LGBTQ identities? Research shows that youth with LGBTQ identities face disproportionately higher levels of bullying in schools, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and homelessness, as well as higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideologies than their non-LGBTQ counterparts. This article reviews the ingrained nature of anti-LGBTQ discrimination and its effects on society, with primary focus on this discrimination's relationship to bullying, increased involvement with the juvenile justice system and the school-to-prison pipeline, and increased homelessness experienced by students with LGBTQ identities. The devastating results of discrimination against students with LGBTQ students demonstrates the gravity surrounding discussions of Title IX's application to anti-LGBTQ discrimination in education.

**Citation:** Sheffer, J. and McCord, A. (2021). Rounding the Basis: Analyzing and Applying Title IX's Prohibition on Sex-Based Discrimination to Discrimination Against Individuals with LGBTQ Identities, *The Legal Educator* 35(2), 24-41.

#### **ABSTRACT**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex-based discrimination in education. But there is little discussion, and less historical consensus, of whether discrimination against someone with an LGBTQ identity is sex-based discrimination falling under the auspices of Title IX. The authors demonstrated the importance of examining whether Title IX prohibits anti-LGBTQ discrimination by examining some of the most devastating effects of this discrimination on the lives of students with LGBTQ identities in a previous article. This article continues the discussion by examining the conduct prohibited by laws barring sex-based discrimination and the evolution of sex-based-discrimination laws as applied to individuals with LGBTQ identities. After reviewing the scant judicial authority directly dealing with Title IX and LGBTQ students, the authors analyze and synthesize the law on sex-based discrimination, leading to the inescapable conclusion that discrimination against students based on their LGBTQ identities is, as a matter of law and logic, discrimination based on sex that must be prohibited by Title IX.

## *College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

### ❖ **Jasmine L. Mancuso, Master of Science in Biology**

- **Publication Title:** Bloom and Bust: Multi-year variability in phytoplankton blooms
- **Co-Authors:** Anthony Weinke – Annis Water Resources Institute, Ian Stone – Annis Water Resources Institute, Dr. Sarah Hamsher – Annis Water Resources Institute/Department of Biology, Dr. M. Megan Woller-Skar – Department of Biology, Dr. Eric Snyder – Department of Biology, and Dr. Bopaiah Biddanda – Annis Water Resources Institute

Jasmine's article has been accepted for publication in the journal *Freshwater Science* and represents a unique contribution to our understanding of long-term trends in water chemistry and biological life in one of our regional drowned river-mouth lakes. Long-term monitoring data of this type is rare! And the ecosystem insights that are gained are unique and allow us to assess, for example, the consequences of a warming climate.

Jasmine works as a freelance writer as well as a Laboratory Manager at Oakland University. She is a co-author on three book reviews in *Interchange's Connections for the STEM Classroom 2019-2020*, co-author on a peer-reviewed paper entitled "Housekeeping in the Hydrosphere" in *Life 2021*, and lead author on two manuscripts based on her thesis "Search for drivers of harmful cyanobacterial blooms in a model Great Lakes estuary." Jasmine is a well-rounded individual, making her a model GVSU alumna, an ambassador for the Biology-Aquatic Sciences program, and an emerging leader in the profession.

*Jasmine's abstract appears on the following page.*

## ABSTRACT

Around the world, freshwater lakes are increasingly suffering from harmful algal blooms (HABs) as a result of anthropogenic eutrophication. Muskegon Lake (Muskegon, MI, USA), a drowned river mouth Great Lakes estuary, was declared an Area of Concern by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1987 with nuisance algal blooms cited as a beneficial use impairment. The objective of this study was to quantify changes in HAB prevalence and community composition in Muskegon Lake over 14 years (2003–2016) and explore the environmental factors potentially driving the changes. Using long-term monitoring data, we performed multivariate and univariate analyses on environmental and phytoplankton data to visualize temporal variation. Simple linear regressions were used to assess changes in environmental variables over time and relationships between cyanobacteria biovolume and environmental variables. Non-metric multidimensional scaling (NMDS) was used to visualize variation in annual cyanobacteria community composition and association with environmental variables. Analyses revealed that, despite generally rising water temperatures, a reduction in nutrient concentrations has likely led to substantial decreases in HAB abundance over time. Additionally, HAB community composition appears to be driven by temperature and nutrient form and amount, with *Microcystis* Lemmermann often being dominant. HABs in freshwater bodies should be closely monitored into the future as we enter an era of uncertain climatic conditions.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE  
TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION  
Winter 2021**

*College of Community & Public Service*

❖ **Kathryn L. Beemer, Master of Public Administration**

Kathryn has meaningfully engaged the broader community and profession in ways that have brought tremendous added value and name recognition to the graduate program. During this past academic year, she was awarded a prestigious fellowship through the Michigan Municipal Executives, in partnership with the City of Wayland and the School of Public, Nonprofit & Health Administration. In her role as a graduate assistant, she has used the community connections she has built to help incorporate practitioners into various aspects of the graduate curriculum. The faculty are consistently inspired by her innovative thinking and can-do approach.

❖ **Lizette Trejo, Master of Social Work**

Lizette is the perfect example of an advocate with a strong commitment to addressing social justice issues. She is passionate about promoting culturally appropriate health services for immigrant and refugee populations, specifically advocating for women who have been assaulted and promoting policy initiatives. Most recently, she is working with unaccompanied minors who are currently arriving at the border. Lizette participated in the El Salvador and Guatemala Study Abroad trip because she wanted to understand the communities and culture of the children she works with. She is dedicated, passionate, and cares deeply about advocacy. She is an exceptional candidate for this award.

*College of Education*

❖ **Alexis P. Joseph, Master of Education in School Counseling**

Alexis has served in leadership as a part of the School Counseling Graduate Student Organization (SCGSO) throughout her time at GVSU. Under her leadership, the executive board strived to meet the needs of fellow students in

a virtual world. Needs identified by students were listened to and acted upon by her and her executive board. Alexis leadership style promotes a sense of empowerment and collegiality for SCGSO members regardless of location. She has served the School Counseling Program with a sense of possibility, hope, and commitment even in a time when students could not meet in person. Alexis exemplifies the passion, energy, and commitment needed to be a school counselor

### *College of Health Professions*

#### ❖ **Alexis V. Van Dusen, Doctor of Physical Therapy**

Alexis is a great representation of outstanding community service. She has been the student liaison for the GVSU Michigan Physical Therapy Association, as well as the Vice-President for her cohort. Alexis was helped organize community outreach with organizations like Kids Food Basket and Alternatives in Motion. She has consistently been a very active member of the executive board. Her depth and commitment to service are qualities that make her stand out among her colleagues. Her representation of GVSU and her profession is truly beyond and above any expectations.

### *College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

#### ❖ **Megan T. Sanders, Master of Science in Biology**

Megan has been a vital contributor to the Biology Department. She is involved in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park Service and the Ottawa County Conservation District. Her research topic involves the invasive pest Hemlock wooly adelgid, which kills hemlock trees – an iconic evergreen species. Megan's work includes sharing and disseminating science-based management recommendations to professionals, and also conducting significant outreach activities to the general public. Her dedication to her research and outreach work has measurably improved the ability to combat this species.

❖ **Alisha Babu, Master of Cell and Molecular Biology**

Alisha was an intern for the SARS CoV-2 Wastewater Testing Pilot Study. Since late January 2021, she has taken the responsibility of processing all of the samples for the Kent County Health Department – preparing the samples at GVSU and transporting them and analyzing them on equipment at the Kent County Health Department. Alisha is extraordinarily attentive, inquisitive, and dependable. Presently, Alisha is not only turning around samples quickly, she is also pursuing a research project to improve the procedure. In addition, she is training two undergraduate students from the department of Cell and Molecular Biology to carry on this work in the future.

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

❖ **Lee Diener, Doctor of Nursing Practice**

Lee has exemplified excellence throughout her time as a graduate student. She expresses her joy of learning in the classroom, clinical sites, and community organizations. Lee has also shown outstanding scholarship through her research project entitled Evidence-based Recommendations for Assistive Technologies for Dementia Care in Residential Long-Term Facilities. She has collaborated with a long-term care facility to execute her research and has worked diligently to perfect her research. This reflects her dedication as a healthcare professional, scholar, and leader in the field.



**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU  
Winter 2021**

*College of Community & Public Service*

❖ **Lucas M. Zhao, Master of Health Administration**

Lucas is an excellent example of leadership and service. In his role as the Vice-President for Finance for the Health Professionals Graduate Student Association (HPGSA), Lucas facilitated all financial aspects of the graduate student organization, attended monthly board meetings, and supported all public activities and events. Lucas has actively worked to increase GVSU student attendance at the national ACHE conference which has resulted in significant national visibility for GVSU within the leading organization for healthcare leaders in the United States. He assists with speaker recruitment and records coordination for three healthcare industry webinars each semester. As exemplified, Lucas is very involved and does excellent work in every role he possesses.

❖ **Kelli J. Dykstra, Master of Public Administration**

Kelli is an excellent leader for the Grand Valley community, working as a Cleary Coordinator in the Police Records Unit for the Grand Valley Police Department since 2014. She works to ensure that victims of sexual assault are treated with care, in addition to the other crimes the Cleary Act covers including criminal homicide, burglary, hate crimes, and other crimes perpetrated against women under the Violence Against Women Act. Kelli serves as the Cleary Compliancy Specialist for the department. She is someone who takes her job seriously and her work impacts the safety of the entire Grand Valley student population. Kelli is an excellent example of leadership and service in the campus community.

❖ **Traci N. Trainor, Master of Social Work**

Traci encompasses leadership skills that are based on social justice, equity, and antiracist values. She is compassionate and leads with great enthusiasm. She has served in leadership roles with Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20, the Peer

Advisor for Veteran Education organization, and the GVSU Student Veteran Organization. Traci previously served in the military and was employed as a law enforcement officer which is where her involvement in these organizations stemmed from. Traci also serves as a team leader for PAVE and the financial officer for the GVSU Student Veteran Organization. She is involved, dedicated, and passionate about advocacy and her actions exemplify that.

### *College of Health Professions*

#### ❖ **Rachel M. Bartley, Doctor of Physical Therapy**

Rachel is full of energy and enthusiasm in everything that she does. She has exceeded the requirements for the Interprofessional Education Student Certificate, making her a well-rounded and interdisciplinary student. Her capstone project was featured in the Spring GVSU Health Expo. Rachel is also a GVSU Pro Bono Clinic Coordinator and has led and organized various clinic operations throughout the challenges of the previous year. She is also a Graduate Assistant and volunteered to lead a lab for first year DPT students. Rachel has volunteered in the Parkinson's Exercise class that meets at CHS and has been an integral part of the GVSU DPT program's annual Day of Service, teaching safe patient transfers to other GVSU students, and volunteering at Kids Food Basket.

### *College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

*The Department of Cell and Molecular Biology has selected a group for this semester's Excellence in Leadership and Service to GVSU.*

#### ❖ **Thomas M. Goralski, Gayatri Mandar Pingle, Niranjana Pokhrel, Sarah Rahmann, and Farrukh Ahmed Siddiqui, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**

Thomas, Gayatri, Niranjana, Sarah, and Farrukh were a team of interns hired in late October 2020 to undertake the challenging feat of establishing a functional biosafety level-2 laboratory, complete with technically trained personnel, for SARS CoV-2 virus monitoring within a couple of weeks. The work required an in-depth conceptual understanding of, and ample imagination for mentally rehearsing and questioning, protocols, attention to

the detail of carrying out the procedures, and the ability to work well in teams. This work of this team continues to provide early warning of the increase of the virus on campus and is leading to improved methods of virus detection. The Department of Cell and Molecular Biology is proud of these five students for their excellence in both leadership and service to GVSU.

### *Kirkhof College of Nursing*

#### ❖ **Megan A. Buchman, Doctor of Nursing Practice**

Megan is an outstanding leader in her program. She has served as the president of the Kirkhof College of Nursing Graduate Student Organization (GSO). She demonstrated her exceptional leadership qualities through a wide range of accomplishments through the organization. Some of these include the development of a student mentorship program for DNP students, continuous quality improvement measures carried out throughout the year, and the handing off of a successful mentorship program to the upcoming cohort. The GSO also carried out multiple community service projects including packing children's lunches for Hand to Hand. Megan's organization of all of these events within her role of the GSO in addition to her ability to lead by example make her an exceptional candidate for this award.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN  
PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT GVSU  
Winter 2021**

*College of Community & Public Service*

❖ **LaShawntelle L. Carson-Pops, Master of Social Work**

LaShawntelle has consistently gone above and beyond to promote antiracist practice and social justice values. She is dedicated to promoting inclusion, diversity and equity which has been exemplified throughout her internship. LaShawntelle has worked with nonprofit organizations to help them identify structures within their organization that may be promoting exclusion towards minoritized communities. LaShawntelle has developed two professional trainings titled "Showing up in White Spaces" and "Trauma Informed Philanthropy." These trainings exhibit her deep understanding of systems of power and oppression. She is a leader who leads by example, has a great sense of self-awareness, and is strongly committed to advancing antiracist initiatives.

*College of Health Professions*

❖ **Brittany N. Sugg, Doctor of Physical Therapy**

Brittany has constantly promoted inclusion and diversity. She is a student coordinator for the Pro Bono clinic where her organizational and leadership skills are evident. Additionally, her fluency in Spanish is an excellent contribution to her position. She is the primary person of contact for scheduling and coordinating for the clinic's Spanish speaking population. Brittany has demonstrated a strong commitment to the diverse patient population that she works with and always ensures the comfortability of her patients. She makes sure all of her peers understand the importance of patient-clinician interaction and ensures they have all been properly trained. She is passionate about health equity and arranges volunteers for "FitKids en Espanol." Through her experiences in an out of the classroom, Brittany promotes inclusive thinking and plans to continue that mindset long after graduation.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY  
Winter 2021**

*The Excellence in Sustainability award nominees have demonstrated outstanding leadership and innovative thinking in the community by implementing sustainable best practices. The award recipients must have given life to a sustainability initiative in one or more aspects of the triple bottom line in sustainability (economic, social, or environmental).*

*College of Community & Public Service*

❖ **David A. Misiuk, Master of Public Administration**

During his time at GVSU, David has developed a project that encompassed his interests in ethics, supply chain management, and environmental sustainability. The rationale for this study is that while environmental sustainability closely links with the current societal interest in climate change and hospitals have pursued environmental sustainability measures for several years, the literature on this topic is relatively thin and there are few if any public reports on how hospitals and health systems rank on environmental sustainability. The literature indicates that when hospitals and health systems pursue these environmentally sustainable goals, they yield decreased costs, decreased environmental impact, increased environmental sustainability, and increased social responsibility.

*College of Health Professions*

❖ **Sierra H. Reece, Doctor of Physical Therapy**

Sierra is the prime example of what it looks like to live out sustainability. Throughout her time working for a physical therapy organization, she worked with her manager to create a recycling bin which she was in charge of managing. She created a culture of consistent recycling at her workplace that included all shredded medical documents. Sierra purchased a tool that allowed her to collect coffee grounds from used k-cups where she was able to utilize the collected coffee grounds as compost for patient gardens, and the cups themselves were able to be recycled. Her work caught the attention of

the director who created a sustainability group throughout all of the organization's locations. Additionally, Sierra spends her free time conducting beach and park clean-ups.

❖ **Sabrina S. Sharif, Master of Public Health**

Sabrina has created an excellent final project that was completed in April 2020. Her project, "College Students Perceptions of Food Insecurity and Vending Machine Options," examined the health detriments of consuming unhealthy food, the sugary choices placed in vending machines, and how it creates food insecurity for college students on campus. Sabrina took the lead on this project and was responsible for the idea, design, and implementation of all study protocols. This project was considered in the top three for the Laker Effect Challenge and will affect the way that the state of Michigan addresses healthy vending machine options.

*Kirkhof College of Nursing*

❖ **Rutendo Nyasvisvo, Doctor of Nursing Practice**

Rutendo has demonstrated hard work and impressive outcomes through her engagement with the Mel Trotter Ministries. She assessed the needs of the organization and developed a quality improvement initiative that improved the coordination of care between hospitals, health care offices, and a local homeless shelter. Rutendo was able to achieve sustainable health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. She was able to identify transportation as a major barrier to follow up, improve awareness of health care services at the shelter, and increase follow up appointments made by guests by 51%, increase appointment attendance by 55%, and coordinate transportation for 100% of people that needed it. She also decreased emergency calls to the shelter by 26%. Her impressive success and passion to obtain these results makes her an outstanding candidate for this award.

## 3-MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION 2021 First Place Winner

*The Graduate School hosted GVSU's sixth annual 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition virtually on February 10, 2021. Students presented their independent research in exactly three minutes with the aid of one static PowerPoint slide. A panel of faculty judges from a variety of disciplines at GVSU determined the winner.*

The GVSU faculty who served on the 2021 3MT judging panel included:

- Dr. Andrew Booth, College of Health Professions
- Dr. Neal Buckwalter, College of Community and Public Service
- Dr. James Dunn, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Brian Hatzel, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Tonisha Jones, College of Community and Public Service
- Dr. Libby MacQuillan, College of Health Professions
- Dr. Wendy Reffeor, Padnos College of Engineering and Computing
- Dr. Janet Winter, Kirkhof College of Nursing

### *Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ **Darby R. Disselkoen, Doctor of Nursing Practice**
  - **Presentation Title:** Teen Risk: The Provider's Responsibility?
  - **Advisor:** Dr. Dianne Slager

Dr. Dianne Slager, of the Kirkhof of Nursing, stated, "Darby demonstrates a strong ethical integrity and exceptional work ethic as a Doctorate of Nursing Practice student. Her project impacts the mental, physical and behavioral health of at-risk teens in a semi-rural community during these complex pandemic times. This project was identified through a community health survey.

Her final project firmly demonstrates Grand Valley State's mission to contribute to the enrichment of society through active scholarship and public service. Her project demonstrates effective interprofessional collaboration to shape the practice and community where it occurred. Darby exemplifies professional, articulate graduate values."

## RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

### *Improving Adolescent Risk Assessment and Provider Follow-Up in Primary Care*

More than 60% of adolescent deaths stem from preventable injury-related causes (Cunningham, Walton, & Carter, 2016). Risk categories such as: motor vehicle accidents, suicide, homicide, and other unintentional injuries are among the top sources, often with alcohol or other drugs known to be a factor in these injuries (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018). For this reason, numerous national organizations recommend at least annual screening for and discussion of various areas of risk with a primary care provider.

Current practice at a small midwestern pediatric primary care practice, however, shows that adherence to national recommendations is inconsistent, presenting a gap in the preventive care provided to this population. The practice established a goal to improve care provided to teens within this community and tasked this Doctor of Nursing Practice student to solve the discrepancy. Evidence shows that implementing routine screening using a validated tool leads to increased provider follow-up and intervention during visits. Provider interventions are further shown to lead to reductions in overall risk-taking behaviors among teens over time. The Rapid Assessment for Adolescent Preventive Services (RAAPS) tool offers a feasible solution when used during annual, adolescent well-child exams. RAAPS is a comprehensive, validated screening tool known for its ease of use and the ability to quickly screen for and identify areas of risk within a single patient visit (Yi, Martyn, Salerno, & Darling-Fisher, 2009). Along with the RAAPS, providers were equipped with resources to use in discussion with adolescents about risk. Data was then collected over a two-month period on the use of the RAAPS, major risks areas faced within the community, and provider follow-up.

Preliminary assessment of the successful implementation shows that routine screening for adolescent risk improved provider follow-up and intervention at this project site. Regular discussions of risk prevention are occurring during annual exams, and providers have been able to intervene on major risks which otherwise would not have been identified. This quality improvement thesis will not only improve adolescent preventive care at the project site, but has the potential to exert a positive impact on the lives of the community's teens.



**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
KIMBOKO INCLUSION AWARD  
Winter 2021**

*The Kimboko Inclusion Award recognizes faculty who have made significant contributions in outstanding teaching, distinctive scholarship or creative work, or noteworthy service in moving GVSU graduate education toward being a more diverse and inclusive community. The award recognizes the accomplishments of Dr. Priscilla Kimboko, GVSU's first Graduate Dean, and represents her commitment to these values.*

*College of Health Professions*

- ❖ **Dr. Kristen Vu, Department of Diagnostic and Treatment Sciences**  
Nominated by: Yvonne Tran, Medical Dosimetry

Yvonne writes: "Kristen believes in me and gave me the confidence I needed to be successful in my degree. She is so innovative in her teaching lectures, challenges her students to become the best dosimetrist. She single-handedly was my admission advisor, research advisor, technical support, director, professor, and a person you can count on for absolutely anything.

I am so fortunate that I was accepted into the program and couldn't have been happier with the program. Thank you for everything Kristen!"

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
FACULTY MENTOR AWARD  
Winter 2021**

*The Faculty Mentor Award serves to acknowledge faculty who exemplify a deep commitment to fostering the professional and personal development of graduate students. This includes encouraging the development of individual talent through advising graduate level research, promoting professional development opportunities beyond the classroom, and providing successful transition from graduate studies to individual careers.*

***College of Health Professions***

- ❖ **Dr. Jennifer Fortuna, Department of Occupational Science and Therapy**  
Nominated by: Erin Attard, Occupational Therapy

Erin writes: “As a research mentor, Dr. Fortuna has instilled the skills necessary to conduct formal research as well as pursue a topic that directly applies to needs of those receiving health care services. She has shared her passion for health literacy and has encouraged new opportunities to explore the importance of accessibility within health care. Dr. Fortuna has dedicated a significant amount of time to promote student success and ultimately cultivate a research into a project that was selected as a part of the Graduate Showcase and an article that was recently accepted article to be published through *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*.

Dr. Fortuna has gone above and beyond the basic requirements as a faculty research mentor. Her dedication to her students as well as the profession of occupational therapy is truly inspiring. She is an advocate for not only the field of occupational therapy, but also the accessibility of health information to patients.”

- ❖ **Dr. Sarah Nechuta, Department of Public Health**  
Nominated by: Danielle Uribe, Public Health

Danielle writes: “Dr. Nechuta has been my advisor and professor, as well as the mentor for my master’s project. I am incredibly grateful for the impact Dr. Nechuta has had on my time at Grand Valley, and how her influence has shaped my career path as I prepare to graduate.

Dr. Nechuta encouraged me to pursue my passion for maternal and child health during the development of my project, and guided me through the process of gaining access to data, applying for IRB approval, and connecting with professionals in my field to aid in my research. She's helped me engage in opportunities that allowed me to grow as epidemiologist and a person, including conference presentations and manuscript publication. She encouraged me to apply for a national fellowship this semester, and assisted with the writing of my application materials, conducted a practice interview, and was genuinely excited for me throughout the process. I'm so thankful to have had a mentor who believed in me even when I was hesitant to believe in myself."

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD  
Winter 2021**

*The Outstanding Teaching Award distinguishes faculty who deserve special recognition for exemplary teaching. This includes contributing to graduate student development by using thoughtful and creative methods of instruction, assisting in deeply understanding course content, and engaging students in a dynamic and inclusive manner.*

*Seidman College of Business*

❖ **Dr. Rita Grant, School Accounting**

Nominated by: Kevin Armistead, Accounting

Kevin writes: "Dr. Grant is of the highest degree in terms of caring for students, and consistently goes above and beyond to further the education, and career of her students. There have been numerous times that I have turned to Professor Grant for post-college career advice, including guidance for the CPA exam.

This semester the School of Accounting suffered the loss of a professor. Dr. Grant, in little time, stepped in to teach the International Accounting course, and assured us students she'd try her best to make the change as easy as possible. Knowing all students needed this class to graduate, this is just one example of Dr. Grant's continual willingness to go above and beyond the call of a typical professor in order to ensure the success of her students.

Dr. Grant is an exemplary leader, teacher, and above all a mentor."

*College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

❖ **Dr. Patrick Thorpe, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology**

Nominated by: Christian Nafso, Cell and Molecular Biology

Christian writes: "Dr. Thorpe has been a professor for quite some time now, yet it's clear he thrives to always be a better teacher and mentor. I had the privilege of being a student in two courses instructed by Dr. Thorpe, Ethics

and Professionalism and Advanced Molecular Biology. These courses are extremely different in curriculum, but Professor Thorpe managed to do such a great job at effectively communicating the content in both classes. In the Advanced Molecular Biology course, Dr. Thorpe applied meta-learning techniques to engage myself and other classmates to theorize molecular biology.

During the Ethics and Professionalism course, Dr. Thorpe taught a lot of the everyday skills & abilities that goes into any workplace or institution. On numerous occasions, Dr. Thorpe was able to lead the class discussion where everyone more than wanted to participate. Additionally, he used GVSU as examples for policies, systems, and regulations in lessons and material. He really is a Laker and proud!"

❖ **Dr. Melba Vélez Ortiz, School of Communications**

Nominated by: Patrick Anderson, Communications

Patrick writes: "Dr. Vélez Ortiz engages students in dynamic and inclusive learning experiences. As a communication ethicist, she uses creative listening labs to show students that listening is even more important than talking. Dr. Vélez Ortiz requires students to slow down their thinking and to consider questions and solutions from new perspectives. When making an ethical judgment, we did not make single conclusions; instead, we were required to identify ethically sufficient, ethically desirable, and ethically ideal outcomes and explain how those could be achieved.

Dr. Vélez Ortiz also promotes academic rigor by pushing her students publish or present their work beyond the classroom. Following her advice, I submitted my paper on whistleblowing ethics to the National Communication Association Conference, where it was selected as a Top Paper in Communication Ethics, and to the Journal of Media Ethics, where it has passed peer review and will soon be published."

**GRADUATE STUDENT  
PRESIDENTIAL RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS**

**Spring/Summer 2020**

Arnold, Joshua. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Assessing the Short-term Effects of Translocation on Freshwater Mussels: Is Habitat or Water Quality More Important?*

Bennett, Derek. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Characterizing AM Fungal Contributions to Soil Quality, Nutrient Absorption and Plant Growth in West Michigan Till and No-Till Corn Fields*

Cary, Bert. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Quantifying Available Trout Habitat in the North Branch Au Sable River, Michigan*

Dingman, Paul. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Using Multiple Technologies to Quantify Macroinvertebrate Abundance in Different Substrates of the North Branch of the AuSable River*

Mader, Megan. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology/AWRI.

Title: *Effects of Shoreline Development and Land Cover on Fish Communities Along a Latitudinal Gradient in Eastern Lake Michigan*

Mulligan, William. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Predicting the Internal Phosphorus Load in Higgins Lake, Michigan*

Neuman, Emily. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Star Wars: Phenology of *Nitellopsis obtusa* in Two Michigan Drowned River Mouths*

Sheets, Kathryn. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology/AWRI.

Title: *Mining Matters: Predation Pressure and Water Quality in Young Sand Mine Lakes*

Weston, Maria. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Using Occupancy Modeling to Estimate American Marten Distribution in Michigan's Lower Peninsula*

## Fall 2020

Brand, Jacob. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *The Spatial Genetic Structure of Urban White-tailed Deer in West Michigan*

Hoeve, Mary Kate. College of Health Professions, Speech-Language Pathology.

Title: *Best Practice in Dementia Communication: Determining the effectiveness of Presentation-based Learning for CNAs Working in Residential Care Facilities*

Moran, Kailee; Oldenberger, Jaclyn; VanRegenmorter, Mallory; Williams, Kate. College of Health Professions, Occupational Therapy.

Title: *Occupational Therapy in Outpatient Behavioral Health*

Palmer, Desiree. Kirkhof College of Nursing, DNP.

Title: *Medication Adherence Among Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Patients*

Weidenhamer, Clay. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biomedical Sciences.

Title: *Does EPA Cause a Decrease in Inflammation Through FFAR4?*

## Winter 2021

Disselkoen, Darby. Kirkhof College of Nursing, DNP.

Title: *Improving Adolescent Risk Assessment in Primary Care Using the Rapid Assessment for Adolescent Preventive Services (RAAPS) Tool*

Gizowski, Adam. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biomedical Sciences.

Title: *The Effects of Nonylphenol on the Aggression of Male Crayfish and the Subsequent Pharmacological Treatment with Serotonin*

Liskey, Sabina. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Cell and Molecular Biology.

Title: *The Effects of LRB E3 Ligase Region 2 on Phytochrome Degradation in Arabidopsis thaliana*

Sanders, Megan. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology/AWRI.

Title: *Development of Modified Airborne eDNA Techniques for the Early Detection of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*)*

Sharif, Sabrina. College of Health Professions, Public Health.

Title: *College Students Perceptions of Food Insecurity and Vending Machine Options*

**OTHER GRADUATE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATING  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN WINTER 2021**

**GLENN A. NIEMEYER AWARD  
FOR OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENTS**

*This is a university-wide award honoring the most outstanding graduate students;  
selection is made by the Provost's Cabinet.*

***Outstanding Full-time Graduate Student***

- ❖ Taylor Slais, Accounting

***Outstanding Part-time Graduate Student***

- ❖ Cheryl Bos, Nursing-Doctorate

**Excellence-in-a-Discipline Awards 2020-2021**

***Seidman College of Business***

- ❖ Michael Heinisch, Accounting
- ❖ Logan Pauli, General Business

***College of Community and Public Service***

- ❖ Alyssa McCord, Criminal Justice
- ❖ Spencer Giles, Health Administration
- ❖ Kelli Fitzgerald, Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership
- ❖ Kelli Dykstra, Public Administration
- ❖ Marigold Cobbina, Social Work

***College of Education***

- ❖ Rachel Anderson, Educational Leadership
- ❖ Julie Bergmann, Educational Specialist in Leadership
- ❖ Caroline Murray, Higher Education
- ❖ Kimberly Knoester, Instruction and Curriculum
- ❖ Allison Niebor, Literacy Studies



- ❖ Laura VanDyke, School Counseling
- ❖ Sarah Jenks, Special Education

### *Padnos College of Engineering and Computing*

- ❖ Justin Wickenheiser, Applied Computer Science
- ❖ Daniel Wolf, Cybersecurity
- ❖ Julian Carrasquillo, Data Science and Analytics
- ❖ Jackson Brennecke, Engineering
- ❖ Jigyasha Timsina, Health Informatics and Bioinformatics

### *College of Health Professions*

- ❖ Ellen Smartt, Clinical Dietetics
- ❖ Yvonne Tran, Medical Dosimetry
- ❖ Natalie Loewengruber, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Courtney Laughlin, Physical Therapy
- ❖ Charlotte Cassidy, Physician Assistant Studies
- ❖ Derek Hart, Public Health
- ❖ Mary Kate Hoeve, Speech-Language Pathology

### *Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies*

- ❖ Kirsten Rydewski, Social Innovation

### *College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

- ❖ Lauren Penninga, Athletic Training
- ❖ Jeff Heise, Biology
- ❖ Hilary Skalski, Biomedical Sciences
- ❖ Rachel Thompson, Biostatistics
- ❖ Alexandria Thompson, Cell and Molecular Biology
- ❖ Zoe Newmann, Communications
- ❖ Melissa Damico, English
- ❖ Alexis Thurber, School Psychology

### *Kirkhof College of Nursing*

- ❖ Darby Disselkoen, Nursing-Doctorate

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OFFICERS**

**President:** John T. Jones, Business Administration

**Vice President:** Jeff Brown, Higher Education

**Finance Officer:** Nyia Slade, Higher Education

**Administrative Officer:** Phillip Todd, Higher Education

**Communications Officer:** Kesha Jones, Higher Education

### **Advisors:**

Ms. Valerie Guzman, Director of Student Life  
Dr. Mark Luttenton, Associate Dean of The Graduate School  
Dr. Jennifer Pope, Professor, Seidman-Marketing Dept.

## **GRADUATE COUNCIL OFFICERS**

### **Chair:**

Dr. Andrea Bostrom, Nursing

### **Vice Chair:**

Dr. Wendy Burns-Ardolino, Social Innovation

### **Policy Subcommittee Chair:**

Dr. Shabbir Choudhuri, Engineering

### **Curriculum Subcommittee Chair:**

Dr. Mark Staves, Cell and Molecular Biology



Dr. Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Dean of The Graduate School

Dr. Mark R. Luttenton, Associate Dean of The Graduate School

Irene Fountain, Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Palm, Assistant to The Graduate School

**Graduate Assistants:**

Amanda Filkins, Public Health

Maggie Scannell, Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership

**Student Assistants:**

Long Ho, Business Administration (undergraduate)

Sarah Spencer, Writing (undergraduate)

**The Graduate School**

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