

Division of Inclusion & Equity | Spring Update



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Message from Vice President Jesse M. Bernal

After a full year at GVSU, I feel even more honored to be a part of this great community that is dedicated to our shared commitment to advance inclusion and equity. Much has changed in the division in the past year, and other changes are underway as we continue to evolve our strategies to become even more inclusive and equitable.

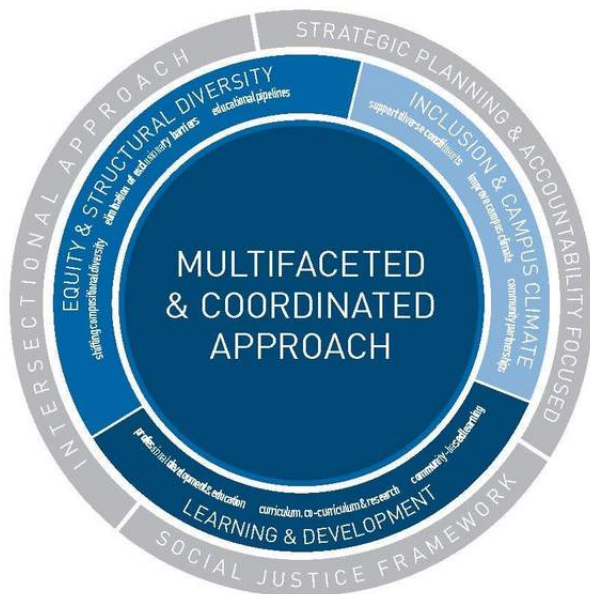
In October 2015, the Milton E. Ford LGBT Center, the Women's Center, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs joined the division, and we established a new relationship with the Kaufman Interfaith Institute through an interim joint appointment of Katie Gordon as Campus Interfaith Services Coordinator. Our relationship with the Division of Student Services will remain strong with the joint appointment of Dr. Marlene Kowalski-Braun as associate vice provost for Student Affairs and Inclusion and Equity overseeing these units, and joining Dr. Kathleen VanderVeen in sharing responsibilities for Disability Support Resources (DSR).



VanderVeen has taken on additional responsibilities for oversight of all Civil Rights Compliance functions, in addition to her continued role as ADA Coordinator for faculty and staff and supervisor of DSR. Dr. VanderVeen will serve as assistant vice president for Equity, Planning, and Compliance, now also supporting our Title IX and Affirmative Action responsibilities in addition to strategic planning, data management, and reporting for the division. Theresa Rowland has been appointed the university's first

full-time Title IX Coordinator and Equity Officer/Director; and, Shontaye Witcher has been promoted to Director of DSR, and will now lead student accommodation efforts and support with her team. The division also welcomes a second Inclusion and Equity Faculty Associate, [Dr. Donald "DJ" Mitchell](#). Dr. Mitchell joins Dr. Dana Munk in providing faculty engagement and advice to division-wide efforts and special projects. Look for more information this summer as the division seeks to appoint two additional faculty associates for fall 2016. As noted in this newsletter, the division is seeking applicants for several open positions, including a Social Justice Educator/Coordinator to assist in reinstituting our training and development programming. See our revised organizational structure [here](#), and information on employment opportunities in this newsletter.

In addition, this semester, the division convened the Faculty and Staff Affinity Council, comprised of eight organizations now supported by the division in partnership with Human Resources. Go [here](#) for more information or to sign-up for one of the groups. We also partnered with Institutional Analysis in Enrollment Development to launch the university's online [diversity dashboard](#). We are also grateful for the campus' engagement in the 2015 campus climate assessment. With your support, we will continue to work to make GVSU an even better place to live, learn, and work. Check out more information about the survey and other opportunities for engagement in this newsletter, including professional development opportunities and nominations for the division Advisory Council, which will be convened in fall 2016.



GVSU's Framework for Inclusion and Equity

After a year of campus-wide dialogue, we completed the university's [Framework for Inclusion and Equity](#), which was endorsed this semester by the University Academic Senate in February 2016 and the Student Senate in March 2016. The Framework was also approved by President's Cabinet in October 2015 and outlines how the division and entire university will work to support the *University's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan*. Ongoing feedback and input is being sought by the entire campus community and can be provided on our [website](#).



MARCH 22-24

Grand Valley's annual Intercultural Festival is this week. Visit gvsu.edu/if to view the full schedule of events.

We're hiring!

The Division of Inclusion and Equity is hiring for the following positions. View full details [here](#).

- Director, Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity & Equity Office
- Director, Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center
- Social Justice Educator/Coordinator
- Special Associate to the Vice President for Inclusion and Equity
- Disability Resources Administrator

Opportunity to attend NCORE

The Division of Inclusion and Equity is currently awarding a limited number of grants for faculty, staff and students to attend the **National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE)** in San Francisco this June. The application and more details about the grant process and what expenses are covered by the grant are available at www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/application. More information about the conference is available at <https://www.ncore.ou.edu>. The deadline for this grant opportunity is March 25. Members of the Division of Inclusion and Equity leadership team will review applications and notify applicants by March 30.

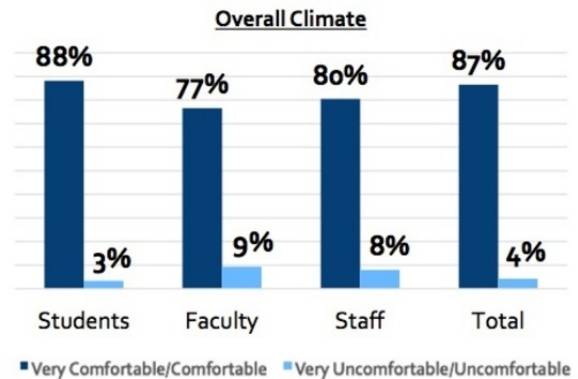
Please contact Kathleen VanderVeen (vandervk@gvsu.edu) if you have any questions.

Climate Survey Results are in:

In November 2015, the division embarked on Grand Valley's fifth climate study. After record participation in the survey, the findings are now being analyzed. Vice President Bernal presented preliminary results to the campus on March 2nd. Eighty-seven percent of the campus reported feeling "very comfortable" or "comfortable."

However, the survey showed that institutional climate is less favorable for certain identity groups including persons of color and transgender

individuals. The next phase of this project will include more detailed data analysis and the convening of action teams to study the findings and make recommendations for changes and improvements at GVSU. Visit our website to watch the March 2nd presentation, to learn more about next steps, and to find out how you can play a part in making GVSU an even better place to learn, live and work. **Full findings will be released later this month at www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu.**



Stay tuned: Prevalence and nature of sexual violence on campus survey to go out

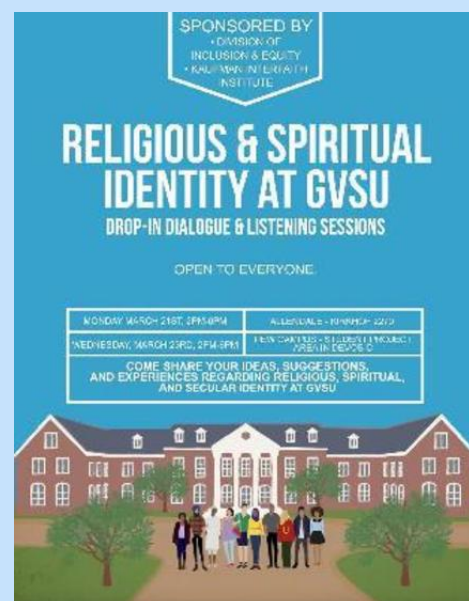
A research study will begin this month to better understand the prevalence and nature of sexual violence on campus, and to assess the campus climate related to such incidents. This study is being conducted by the Division of Inclusion and Equity, Tara L. Cornelius, Ph.D., of GVSU's Psychology Department, and Debra Ross, of the GVSU School of Criminal Justice. A random sample of students will be invited via email to respond to a confidential questionnaire as part of this study. Students selected are highly encouraged to participate as the data will inform future efforts around sexual violence awareness and prevention.

Updates from our Social Justice Centers:

Campus Interfaith Services

Katie Gordon of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute has joined the Division of Inclusion and Equity, on an adjunct joint appointment, as our Campus Interfaith Services Coordinator. In leading our efforts around religious diversity and interfaith engagement, Katie relies on the following framework:

1. *Interfaith engagement is all about bringing people together* from diverse religious, spiritual and secular identities around shared values, distinct traditions, and common goals.
2. *Interfaith engagement is intersectional*, and one's faith/non-faith identity cannot be fully appreciated without looking at the other aspects of one's identity.
3. *Interfaith engagement can strengthen our social justice movements* by building bridges between our differences in order to promote coalitions based in common concerns and aspirations.



This work is not starting from scratch. Eboo Patel, founder of Interfaith Youth Core, has [lauded our university's efforts to be leaders in interfaith cooperation](#). Our interfaith student organization, Better Together at GVSU, has [coordinated interfaith dialogue and service projects](#) every semester for a couple years. And in the fall of 2015, GVSU was the only [public institution recognized as a national finalist for our interfaith community service efforts](#).

Our interfaith efforts are just another component of Inclusion and Equity's efforts to ensure that GVSU is a place where all feel a sense of belonging and can build a sense of meaning. And ultimately, a place where our different identities can be brought together in order to better our campus and wider community.

Interested in this work? Email Katie Gordon at gordonk1@gvsu.edu, or check out the following events: [Listening Sessions on Religious Diversity at GVSU \(March 21 and 23\)](#) [GVSU Campus Interfaith Webinars \(March 29, April 19, May 17\)](#)

Disability Support Resources

Van Shuttle Service

Disability Support Resources is offering a shuttle service on the Allendale campus. This shuttle service is available to anyone who needs assistance getting to and from class or work. Visit gvsu.edu/dsr/transportation for full service details.

DSR Career Advisor

Disability Support Resources (DSR) is excited to announce a new resource in collaboration with the Career Center to assist students with disabilities. Career Advisor, Bryan Payne, is available to assist students with disabilities with career development, career planning, internship opportunities and job searches. The Disability Career Advisor will be working between DSR and the Career Center with several convenient appointment times throughout the week. If you are interested, please call Bryan at 616-331-2490 or send him an email at paynebr@gvsu.edu to schedule a meeting.

DSR Campus Links

Disability Support Resources is recruiting peer mentors to work with our Campus Links program. We are looking for mentors for our Campus Links Red program (residential) and our Campus Links Blue program. If you are interested in mentoring GVSU students and would like more information, please contact Elizabeth Chase at (616) 331-2490 or chaseee@mail.gvsu.edu for general requirements and peer mentor commitment.

Office of Multicultural Affairs

During Black History Month Bobby Springer, Alli Montae and students from the Black Male Scholars Initiative and Niara did a panel discussion to the Finance and Administration Inclusion and Equity Committee. The discussion was rich and informative. Students were asked to share an example of a success and a challenge during their college career at Grand Valley and to share a struggle they had related to being black here on campus. In addition, they were asked to talk about the support they received – Who has supported you? How did they help you? How did you find them? What advice do you have for administrators?

The Native American Student Association (NASA) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) is excited to be planning the 18th annual Celebrating All Walks of Life Traditional Pow Wow. This cultural celebration is scheduled for Saturday, April 9 and Sunday, April 10 in the GVSU Fieldhouse located on the Allendale campus.

A Pow Wow is a community gathering and celebration of Native American culture through ceremony, song, dance, feasting and socializing. Traditional Pow Wows include dancers, drummers, invited Elders, Veterans and other honored guests to perform and participate in the celebration. Come and experience Native American culture and traditions. Visit gvsu.edu/oma to view the full schedule and learn more about this free



community event.



Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center

Assistant Director Marla Wick and Graduate Assistant Scott Burden recently returned from the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC) at Purdue University. The LGBT Resource Center was thrilled to be able to provide scholarships covering hotel and registration for 16 of students who attended. All of this support plus an enormous amount of student energy and initiative produced a fun, educational, and productive conference experience for all 26 of our undergraduate students who attended the conference. Attendees participated in workshops with titles such as Queer Youth Organizing, Sexuality and Gender Identity in the Workplace, Unpacking Nonmonosexual Identities, Navigating Barriers to LGBTQ Healthcare, and many more. The conference also featured keynotes by Judy Shepard, Jessica Pettitt, and Reverend Gene Robinson, a drag show, a film screening, and entertainment by Todrick Hall.

Attendees remarked on the very striking and impactful experience of attending a student-centered conference on LGBTQIA issues. DeAndrea Hollowell, who attended with their group QTPoC (Queer & Trans People of Color), said the following: "It was very nice to be in a room where I didn't feel like a unicorn and didn't have to compromise any part of myself to be there." Another member of QTPoC, Ezra Smith, said, "It was a beautiful experience to be in a place with so many people like me, sort of like a little cut into paradise."

The Women's Center: Reimagining Gender Justice at GVSU and Beyond

The Women's Center, being on the precipice of celebrating our 15th anniversary next year, is embarking on a new journey: a journey of intersectional gender justice work. So what is intersectional gender justice work and what does it look like at Grand Valley State University? While the Women's Center team (or #teamWC) does not have all the answers, we are working to think about these, and other, important questions and invite the GVSU community to join us on this journey.

What is intersectional gender justice work? Kimberle Crenshaw (1994) originally coined the term intersectionality. Intersectionality recognizes that while identity groups likely share some experiences there is not a universal way of experiencing oppression. This concept is rooted in Black feminist thought and other social justice movements, both within, and outside of, higher education (Combahee River Collective Statement, 1977; Anzaldua, 1987). Intersectionality acknowledges both the diversity of identities held by individuals (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.) as well as the way in which our various social systems and institutions work to maintain oppression based on identities. Further, as Patricia Hill Collins (2000), Black feminist scholar reminds us, simply acknowledging the diversity of individual experience is not enough, we must engage in gender justice work to acknowledge and integrate the lived experience of our diverse student populations. Thus, the term gender justice shows intent to center those populations who are on the margins (e.g. women of color, queer and trans* people, people with disabilities, etc.) in justice movements. Read the full article [here](#).

Division of Inclusion and Equity Advisory Council Nominations

Next fall, the Division of Inclusion and Equity will form an Inclusion and Equity Advisory Council in an effort to increase engagement in Inclusion and Equity functions, initiatives, and decision making. The council will include students, faculty and staff members, and external community members representing diverse communities,

constituency groups, and perspectives. Importantly, the council will provide meaningful guidance and accountability for the division's strategic plan and assist in identifying annual priorities or needed course - corrections for ongoing strategic planning. The council will convene sub-councils focused on student, faculty and staff communities, as well as other items identified by the division and councilmembers. The full council will meet twice per semester, with sub-council meetings scheduled as needed. A one-year commitment is expected, and terms are renewable, annually, for up to three consecutive years. To nominate yourself or another member of the community (on-campus or external community members), please go to: <http://goo.gl/forms/BaBqxwHzeL>. Nominations must be submitted by April 29 to be considered. For questions or comments, please contact inclusion@gvsu.edu. **Those who have already submitted nominations are not required to resubmit.**

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