RAISING THE BAR
New building! New program! The Seidman College of Business continues to raise the bar! The new building is the magnificent L. William Seidman Center, a state-of-the-art business school building located on the west bank of the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids. This edifice serves as a community tribute to L. William Seidman and his pioneering efforts to establish Grand Valley State University and its Seidman College of Business. The building could not have been realized without the tremendous generosity of West Michigan patrons, stakeholders, and Seidman alumni. State funds were not available to help with this construction project. To all who so generously contributed, please accept our gracious expression of thanks.

The new program is the Executive MBA that Seidman is jointly creating with Spectrum Health, as Spectrum seeks to deepen its management team. We are proud to add one more facet to Grand Valley State University’s long-running collaboration with Spectrum by delivering traditional MBA skills as applicable in the rapidly changing healthcare realm. Classes will have an in-classroom and an on-line component. In-classroom sessions will be recorded with classroom capture technology so that Spectrum’s busy healthcare professionals who are unable to attend can review the content at their convenience.

Stay tuned in future issues of the Update for yet other new initiatives on the horizon as we explore opportunities in the area of agri-business as well as enhancements to our already successful Enterprise Resource Planning Program. Indeed, Grand Valley State University stands as an exemplar of good stewardship of its resources, and the Seidman College strives to recognize the opportunities that can best serve its students as they prepare for their future careers.

In addition to showcasing our new building and its formal dedication, this issue of the Update also covers our popular breakfast series and the recent accomplishments of some of our outstanding students, graduates, and faculty members. And, make sure you don’t miss the photo of our faculty and staff on the inside back cover!

As we “raise the bar,” Seidman College of Business students, alumni, and stakeholders can be proud. Enjoy!

John W. Reifel
Interim Dean, Seidman College of Business
Seidman Update is a semiannual publication of Grand Valley State University’s Seidman College of Business, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Seidman College offers the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Science (BS) or Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Economics, Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Science in Accounting (MSA), and Master of Science in Taxation (MST) degrees. The college is fully accredited by AACSB International.

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To view current and previous issues of the Seidman Update online, visit [www.gvsu.edu/business/seidman-update](http://www.gvsu.edu/business/seidman-update)
The signing of a partnership agreement by Grand Valley State University’s Seidman College and the community’s largest employer, Spectrum Health, aligned with the unveiling of a bronze statue of L. William “Bill” Seidman and the dedication of the new L. William Seidman Center. How appropriate!

Grand Valley’s founding father, L. William Seidman, envisioned a great university that would serve the needs of West Michigan. Fifty years after its founding, the Seidman College of Business took the charge of its namesake to a new level. The Seidman College and Spectrum Health will collaborate to develop and teach an executive-format MBA. This new health executive MBA program is a reflection of Grand Valley’s commitment to flexibility and responsiveness to community needs.

Seidman’s segue to an executive-format program will focus on Spectrum Health’s goal of national leadership. Those in management and leadership roles will need to understand the relationships among all functions within the organization. Innovative approaches will be required as the health care industry enters an era of unprecedented change. “Spectrum Health must explore and create opportunities that will provide a smooth transition throughout this decade,” said Richard C. Breon, president & CEO, Spectrum Health. We are very pleased that Grand Valley State University has been willing to develop an MBA program specifically designed for our integrated health system during a very challenging time in the industry.” Participants in the 22-month EMBA program will be clinical and administrative employees who have been identified as high-performing, high-potential leaders within Spectrum Health.

The Executive MBA curriculum development will be a collaborative process between Seidman College
of Business faculty and Spectrum Health administrators. The curriculum will apply core MBA principles with relevant health care challenges that integrated health systems face. Seidman faculty will shadow Spectrum experts in their respective disciplines, and Spectrum content experts will share their perspectives and insights in the classroom. Classes will be conducted in a multifaceted approach with a combination of classroom, virtual and applied learning sessions.

Spectrum Health is a not-for-profit health system offering a full continuum of care through the Spectrum Health Hospital Group, which is comprised of 11 hospitals including Helen DeVos Children's Hospital; 173 ambulatory and service sites; 960 advanced practice providers and employed physicians including members of the Spectrum Health Medical Group and West Michigan Heart physician groups; and Priority Health, a national health plan. Spectrum Health is West Michigan’s largest employer with almost 21,000 employees.

Neither health care nor Spectrum affiliations are new to Grand Valley. Currently, nearly 6,600 Grand Valley students are pursuing degrees in health-related majors. Further, alumni cite Spectrum Health more than any other organization as their employer.

“Grand Valley State University applauds Spectrum Health’s recognition for ongoing learning and executive development,” President Thomas J. Haas said. “All sectors of the economy face fast-changing circumstances that require innovation. Grand Valley’s agility and commitment to quality are essential components of our key community partnerships. We embrace this opportunity that will enhance Spectrum Health, Grand Valley, and ultimately the larger region both institutions serve.”
Sandy Baruah may work on the east side of the state, but he credits the push to begin his political career to one of the west side’s prominent citizens—Gerald R. Ford. “Vice President Ford, and the civility that [he] represented throughout his career” inspired Baruah as a fourth grader to get involved in politics.

Fast forward to the present. Baruah serves as President and CEO of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce, and one can see that practice of civility guides his working philosophy. As keynote speaker of the Seidman Alumni Association Breakfast Series, Baruah presented a powerful message regarding changing roles as corporate citizens and the impact of those changes on Michigan’s future growth.

Addressing corporate citizenship, Baruah stated that the ever-expanding global footprint has resulted in more areas to serve and more societal needs in this nation, but there are fewer companies to address these needs. “Fewer companies mean fewer deep pockets,” Baruah said. Also contributing to the companies’ inadequacies in addressing these societal needs is the lack of community ties in upper management. “Today, top CEOs are more like hired guns,” Baruah said. “They generally don’t have long ties to their community as in the days before.” Baruah also pointed to intense media scrutiny as an overhanging shadow that may prevent action where action is needed.

Baruah posed the issue of information bias to the audience, and how that may serve as an obstacle to addressing the issues that seem important to us. “We now have the ability to tailor our news exactly to our liking,” Baruah said. “Today, not only do we have our own opinions, but we have our own facts.” This news-tailoring has resulted in an environment where leaders are distrusted, when, in fact, as Baruah pointed out, “our leaders are perfectly rational creatures; they are responding to the market forces we feed them.”

Despite the potential of disengaged corporations and biased news sources, Baruah expressed his optimism for the future of Michigan and its corporate citizens. “We have so much to build on if we can crack this corporate and individual citizenship code,” Baruah said. And according to Baruah, the unity he sees in Michigan’s communities indicates the state is well on its way to cracking that code. “[We are] operating as one Michigan - East and West,” Baruah said, “The collaboration is real and genuine.”

Baruah also emphasized his belief in the power of Michigan’s economic prospects. “Our challenge in Michigan is fortunately equal to our assets,” Baruah said, “and the automobile is the best platform for economic diversification that I can think of.” A unified state is important when wielding such a powerful economic tool, Baruah noted, because with so many technological advances competition is global. “If we focus on East versus West, we are missing the global marketplace. Like Tom Freidman said, the world is pretty flat!”
“Is that pizza or did an angel just give birth in my mouth?”

—Stephen Colbert, on Domino’s pizza

Guests gathered for the Peter F. Secchia Breakfast series knew they were in for a treat when Brandon Solano ’94, Vice President of Franchise Development for Dominos Pizza, took the stage. After an introductory video montage of various television celebrities applauding the re-designed, re-imaged pizza, Solano took to the stage and with refreshing candor and honesty told the story of the Domino’s Pizza turn-around.

Dominos has made no secret of the need to improve its recipe and its customer relations with the latest advertising campaign. Solano has been at the helm of both redoing the pizza and reconnecting with the customers. “In today’s world of deceit and mistrust, Dominos will connect with consumers by being real and transparent, by actually listening and telling the truth,” Solano said.

The resulting series of advertisements included real customer feedback, access to the President/CEO, and behind the scenes views of Dominos’ kitchens. And the consumers responded. “It was the highest rated ad in twenty years,” Solano said. “It was a pizza turn-around.”

Solano presented listeners with five key messages that he said were pivotal in turning around Dominos from a least favorite to a most requested brand:

• Identify and debunk self-limiting myths
• Listen to critics... but not all of them
• Seek high return risks
• Get active management support
• Be willing to sacrifice who you are for who you could become.

In today’s high-visibility world, mediocrity no longer goes unnoticed. “If you have a bad product everybody knows about it,” Solano said. “You can’t hide from it today with all of the social media.”

It was a morning of good breakfast, laughter, and an excellent message. The only thing missing was the pizza! ▼
Sir Ken Robinson challenged the Seidman Alumni Breakfast audience to find its passion and maximize its potential for a full life.

Robinson, author of *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, brought a refreshing message to the Seidman community as he emphasized humans’ need to think differently about the world to achieve happiness.

“The world has changed so much in ten years,” Robinson said. “It’s a revolution and it’s not slowing down, it’s gaining pace.”

“These are things not preceded by history,” Robinson continued. “If we are to meet the challenges and changes at present we have to think differently.”

This is where Robinson’s book comes into play. *The Element* is about thinking differently. Many adults have no idea what their real talents are,” Robinson said. “People are born with natural resources but they don’t really show it.”

Robinson encouraged the audience to evaluate its happiness level based on self-fulfillment rather than physical possessions. “We have come to associate happiness with material well-being,” Robinson said. “Happiness is essential fulfillment in the purpose and meaning of your life.”

But, Robinson warned, life is not linear. “[Life] is organic. It evolves.”

Robinson suggested that a lower-level educational system might be partially to blame in regards to unrealized potential. “Our education is pre-occupied with a certain type of aptitude,” Robinson opined. “One casualty of this is that we aren’t paying enough attention to our vocational skills.”

He reasoned that the current attitude on work and success and happiness in corporate life is a result of our current system values: “conformity, compliance, and linearity.” With not enough focus on discovering humans’ real talents and passions, the workforce could be a roadblock to unlocking true happiness. “Just because you are good at something isn’t a good enough reason to do it for your entire life,” Robinson said.

To an audience full of Seidman alumni, faculty, and current students, Robinson’s message was provocative and eye opening. Robinson left the audience with this to ponder: “If you do things you love, you can be physically exhausted but absolutely exhilarated by it.”

“To be born at all is a miracle, so what are you going to do with your life?”

—Sir Ken Robinson
Mike Guswiler, President of The West Michigan Sports Commission, forecasts an incredible future for Grand Rapids. Guswiler expressed the commission’s goal of turning West Michigan into the premiere venue for hosting a diverse array of sporting events.

Since its inception seven years ago, Guswiler and the rest of the West Michigan Sports Commission have already booked 300 events and tournaments in the area, bringing 315,000 athletes and spectators to the area and generating $100 million in visitor spending. Some of the sporting events include the National Golden Glove Tournament, the NCAA Division I ice hockey playoffs, and the Transplant Games of America.

“Sports are the fabric of our lives. They are all around us.”
—Mike Guswiler

Sports Tourism is a 7 billion-dollar business, and Guswiler and the commission fully intend to bring a bigger piece of the pie to Grand Rapids. Fortunately, as Guswiler pointed out to the audience, sports tourism is a hearty business. “Sports travel did not see the decrease that other leisure and travel markets realized from the recent economic recession.”

One reason Guswiler believes that the West Michigan sports scene is flourishing is the role of the family. “As parents, we want our kids to learn values from sports,” Guswiler said. “We will use our last discretionary dollar to get them out from in front of the TV.”

The future is bright for the WMSC as it moves forward on several projects guaranteed to have a centralizing effect on the West Michigan sports scene. Grand Rapids was named the host city for the 2014 US Rowing Masters National Championship. The 2014 Western Collegiate Hockey Association Tournament will be held in March at the Van Andel Arena.

Most noticeably is the Art Van Sports Complex, slated to be finished in 2015. Located on 10 Mile Road in Rockford, MI, the state-of-the-art facility will offer 12 ball fields, lights, a covered championship field grandstand, concessions, and a Miracle Field for players with disabilities.

The achievements of Mike Guswiler and The West Michigan Sports Commission will surely raise the sports profile of West Michigan in the years to come!

We thank Huntington Bank for sponsoring this breakfast.
Grand Valley State University’s Van Andel Global Trade Center (VAGTC) has been raising the bar since it was founded by the University in 1999. With the support of a small full-time staff of international trade experts, GVSU students are hired by the Center to gain real experience in international business supporting the community. The Center challenges these students to conduct international market research for Michigan businesses looking to grow around the world. Students have the opportunity to not only present their findings in front of these Michigan businesses, but also to work closely with these international professionals, from whom they can learn valuable skills and knowledge.

Alaina Furr (’10–’12) was inspired by VAGTC, “When I first started working at the Center, I didn’t have a clear vision of my career aspirations. The moment I decided to pursue trade compliance actually happened at one of the VAGTC programs. I remember listening to the presenter and thinking, “I want to do what that person does for a living.” Sonja Johnson, Executive Director and Mark Bleckley, Associate Director, both licensed customs brokers, were great mentors for me. In the end, I actually got the lead on my current position through one of their contacts.”

For Kelly Halloran (’06 –’07), working for the Center solidified her future career path and helped her achieve her goals. “The Center opened up the world of International Trade and Compliance which was an area of International Business I considered a “part” of logistics or supply chain. I was not aware of the opportunity, challenge, and excitement that came with moving products around the world in a compliant manner. Sonja was a great mentor and she encouraged me to branch out and take a risk in an area that was very challenging. The trade center supplemented my classroom time regarding culture, doing business in other countries, general international logistics and banking, etc. [...] It really helped me narrow the focus of my career path and try something outside the norm. Learning to take a risk and step outside of my comfort zone continues to benefit me.”

Similar to Kelly, Nicole Huston (’08–’09) discovered a career passion that she was unsure of until she started at VAGTC. “Working at VAGTC validated my choice when entering the Seidman College of Business. I fell in love with marketing during my second year of college and coincidentally began working at VAGTC. Working at the Center allowed me to complete tasks that normally a senior marketing intern would do. The opportunity to work with business professionals on a day-to-day basis helped me feel comfortable once I needed to interview for full time positions.”

Brian Parks (’06–’08) and Nate Engle (’08–’09) learned skills they have carried with them through their careers. “VAGTC helped me to hone in on my event-planning skills. Having practical experience developing themes and understanding customer service and participant engagement have helped me to this day. I also began to understand the importance of relationships,” says Brian. “The work ethic of the VAGTC staff is impeccable,” Nate discovered during his time at VAGTC. “Excellent customer service is the number one goal of VAGTC, and that’s a valuable lesson to learn no matter what type of business you’re in, and it doesn’t come easy. I was really challenged to think critically. International business is complex, and the Center provided me with an opportunity to help contribute to solving real challenges for Michigan businesses trying to expand globally. I’ve used a lot of the technical skills I learned while at the Center in the workforce after receiving my degree from GVSU.”

Contributed by Katherine Gillespie (‘10), Global Resource Specialist
Van Andel Global Trade Center
“I would not be working in my current field today if it wasn’t for my experience at VAGTC.”
—Alaina Furr, Trade Compliance and Environmental Specialist Brunswick Bowling & Billiards

“Sweat the small stuff because it will make you more disciplined and will make you a better professional in the long-run. The difference between “good” and “great” comes down to the little things.”
—Nate Engle, on lessons learned at VAGTC

“Networking and relationships are huge things to develop as a business person. Intelligence and performance can only get you so far. Having a diverse group of people in your network, will open doors to new and exciting opportunities.”
—Brian Parks, President BL’END (Business Leaders Linked to Encourage New Directions) and Financial Analyst, Herman Miller, Inc.

Kelly Halloran, Group Leader in Logistics Amway
Photo courtesy of Amway

Nicole Huston, Marketing Specialist Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge

Nate Engle, Senior Program Manager International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
When Suzianne Benet assumed the role as Department Chairperson of the Marketing Department in 2003, she decided that building a sense of team might occur more naturally if faculty members shared more than a common commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Building a collaborative atmosphere has no doubt contributed to the high level of productivity in the department, which has resulted in faculty achievements in multiple areas during the last few years: teaching success as evidenced by the receipt of University awards, ranging from Pew Teaching Excellence (full-time and part-time faculty), the Alumni Teaching Award, and the Glenn A. Niemeyer Award, and research success resulting in the production of 18 articles appearing in top publications.

This academic camaraderie engendered many types of opportunities for interaction.

Socials. Bowling parties emerged. A “nearly yearly” faculty bowling night, complete with trophy for the best bowler, created a competitive spirit. That activity led to other opportunities to involve faculty and families, including a Holiday party, a Labor Day party, and several baby showers (there are now nine children under the age of six)! Throw in a retirement party or two, and you get the picture that a serious group of academicians have found ways to come together in ways that are not so serious.

Service. The Marketing Department faculty also share a common thread of local service engagements ranging from LaughFest (economic impact study) and C-Snip administration (cat/dog spay/neuter initiative) to survey work for Denny’s, Frames Unlimited, Goodwill Industries, Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra, Bike Friendly GR, and a host of others. And on a global vein, ongoing efforts to help Nicaraguans find entrepreneurial opportunities accentuate the multitude of service activities. In fact, more than 35 outside service assignments were recorded by marketing faculty over a four-year period.

External Relations. The Marketing Advisory Board created three years ago serves as a strategic partner that helps align interests of the students, faculty, alumni, and the community. This engaged advisory board is a true asset for the over 400 students majoring in marketing, the 14 full-time, and 10 adjunct faculty who regularly teach. The department consistently leads the College in Marketing internships for credit, with over 50 student placements each year.
The Board, representing large and small companies from a variety of marketing vocations, provides

- Help to both faculty and students
- Input on curriculum changes and web site
- Networking opportunities with the business community benefitting both faculty and businesses
- Connections for guest speakers
- Assistance for student organizations
- Professional growth working with the business community

Following a recent board meeting, a few members shared sound advice with students embarking on a marketing career.

**Marketing Advisory Board Members**

Daniel Barcheski  
Josh Behrens  
Catherine Cooper  
Thomas Granzow  
Cathy Holton  
Cynthia Kay  
Ryan Lafferty  
Mark Litke  
Jackie Nickel  
David A. Plachecki  
Pat Power

**Dan Barcheski, Axios Incorporated**

“Regardless if you desire to be with a small start up or work for an international powerhouse, every student interested in a marketing career is going to need a solid understanding of the five P’s—Product, Price, Place, People and Promotion. To understand them is to understand the business, how it truly competes, and how it adds value in the marketplace.”

**Cynthia Kay, Cynthia Kay and Company**

“In order for one to be successful in marketing, I believe you must walk the talk with honesty and integrity in everything you do. Additionally, you must be open to new ideas, technologies and platforms to help your clients or employer capitalize on the latest and greatest innovations while driving business results.”

**Ryan Lafferty, CHQ Consultants**

“With marketing it’s all about discovering, uncovering and solving a problem. So you must dig, explore, ask questions and uncover potential road blocks in order to better understand the problem. You can then unpack and decipher the multi-layered information and present it in a clean, concise, consistent manner that is easy to understand.”

**Pat Power, Gordon Food Service**

“Make Excellence Part of Your Brand.” You need to work hard to ensure your internal customer is highly satisfied with the final product. Understand the Customer Experience. Get creative and spend time working side-by-side with customers to gain first-hand experience of their world. Learn to Love Collaboration. You need to be comfortable building relationships with a diverse set of team members. One day you will be working with an advertising agency; the next day you will be working alongside engineers and designers as part of a new product development team.”

Marketing Department faculty
A BIG THANK YOU to Fifth Third Bank from Seidman College of Business for generously underwriting the Bloomberg software in the Gary F. Tilkin Financial Markets Center. The addition of seven Bloomberg terminals, made possible through 5/3’s support, provides students a state-of-the-art facility in which to learn specialized stock and portfolio analysis. This asset serves students by allowing them real-life working practice in finance and business, preparing them to excel in their future careers.
The formal dedication of the L. William Seidman Center October 9, was attended by most of the 600 donors who helped raise $40 million for the construction of the Center.
Delivering education just got better! And “Raising the Bar” is a fitting theme for this issue of the *Seidman Update*, as the new L. William Seidman Center becomes home for the Seidman College of Business on the Pew Grand Rapids campus.
Construction of the Seidman Center was a major investment in the downtown Grand Rapids area, totaling more than $40 million in land acquisition, site preparation, construction and infrastructure improvement costs. In its 40-year history, the Seidman College of Business has grown from 145 students to more than 3,000.

The vision for the L. William Seidman Center was to construct a building that was second to none. Through the generosity of the community encouraged by a lead gift from Richard M. and Helen DeVos, the Shares in a Common Future campaign was launched.

The new four-story, 127,643-square-foot building opened for classes May 6 after years of research, planning and construction. The Seidman Center includes offices for 142 faculty and staff. It also houses all of the outreach centers of the college which include the state headquarters and regional office of the Small Business Development Center, Van Andel Global Trade Center, Richard M. and Helen DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Center for Leadership, Center for Business Ethics, Family Owned Business, and Family Business Alliance.

FUN FACTS

- 23,920 tons of the former building used for the base of the Center
- 285,600 man hours worked
- 34 prime subcontractors
- Nearly 1,000 tradesmen passed through the project
- 4,016 cubic yards of concrete in foundation
- 300 cubic yards of concrete in the arch
- 978 tons of structural steel
- 16,750 square feet of limestone in the exterior
- 41,216 square feet of shingles
- 73,350 square feet of carpeting
- 38,230 square feet of tiled surfaces
- 262,000 bricks

The building is L.E.E.D. Gold certified and has a green roof.

Construction of the Seidman Center was a major investment in the downtown Grand Rapids area, totaling more than $40 million in land acquisition, site preparation, construction and infrastructure improvement costs. In its 40-year history, the Seidman College of Business has grown from 145 students to more than 3,000.
The job assignment was straightforward: The members of the Seidman Timeline Committee were to summarize the University’s desires for this exhibit, and interview exhibit designers and people who knew L. William (Bill) Seidman, and then based on the findings, create a plan to design an exhibit, gain consensus on design, and oversee execution.

GVSU wanted current and future students to understand more about Bill Seidman—not just as the man whose name is on the building, but as a man who encouraged students.

It wasn’t long before I realized that this assignment was far from straightforward. While I am a native of Grand Rapids, whose parents used Seidman & Seidman as their accounting firm, and even though I knew Bill Seidman was an important man, I had no idea of the depth and breadth of this man’s legendary actions and decisions.

The research was addicting, and the findings exhilarating. Through the generosity of Bill’s friends and donors, we were able to take this incredible journey reflecting on Bill’s life. I will always remember the candid interview with Rich DeVos and Arend (Don) Lubbers, GVSU President Emeritus, who shared stories with me about their friend, Bill, who was their inspiration. It was then that I realized the real purpose of this exhibit.

This exhibit captures the essence of Bill Seidman—a man who didn’t just encourage students, but who illustrated amazing leadership that is both brave and honest.

“The hope and purpose of the Bill Seidman Timeline is to inspire and empower current and future students to be leaders, to make a difference, and to live with integrity.”

—Bill, on effective government

“LOVE THEM OR HATE THEM, BUT DO NOT IGNORE THEM!”

—Bill, on dealing with members of Congress
“It wasn’t very far into the project before L. William Seidman gradually became simply “Bill” to me. He was always doing something that was important to the landscape in which he was working—and there was always a quotient of fun in the doing for those associated with it.”

—Arend D. Lubbers, president emeritus, OSU

Dressed for Success

Bill was not overly formal. He appeared on CNBC in a suit jacket, shirt and tie—and saggy shorts that couldn’t be seen on air. And when he rode his bicycle to work, “he set new standards for bike-wear elegance,” said Birge Swift Watkins, former staff assistant to President Ford. “The Greek fisherman’s hat, the Grand Rapids Police jacker, the overflowing briefcase, the baggy pants with rubber bands around the ankles—he looked very sharp as he wove his way through D.C. traffic on his way to the FDIC.”

—Larry Hutchinson, Hutchinson Studios LLC.

“It was easy to be caught up in Bill’s orbit. He was always doing something that was important to the landscape in which he was working—and there was always a quotient of fun in the doing for those associated with it.”

—Larry Hutchinson, Hutchinson Studios LLC.

“HE WHO LIVES BY THE CRYSTAL BALL WILL EAT GROUND GLASS.”

—Bill, on predicting the future

When Michigan Governor George Romney asked Bill about his political affiliations, Bill responded that he wasn’t really a Republican or a Democrat: Instead, he said, “I’m a CPA.”

—Bill, on working with a president

“The best check for the head man is to install a fearless friend who can question his decisions without fear of being sent to Siberia.”

—Bill, on working with a president

“I never—repeat, never—saw Bill Seidman without a smile on his face.”

—Bill Griffith, CNBC “Power Lunch” co-anchor

To the Rescue

In the midst of the 1973 recession, Alan Greenspan—then President Ford’s chief economist—became “agitated” and collapsed in the street, noted Bill. “It would not have been helpful to the Ford Administration for its chief economist to be found flat on his back in the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue,” he explained. “So as honks honked and passersby gawked, I hoisted him over my shoulder, fireman style, and carried him back to his office” where he was diagnosed with “a case of nervous exhaustion and a bad back.”
“I am fortunate to interact with the new building as an MBA student, as a graduate assistant with the Economics Department, and as the President of the Graduate Student Association. At the student level, the new Seidman Center makes a bold statement about Grand Valley’s vision for the future and its dedication to us students within the community. As a graduate assistant, I am excited about the new spaces available in the building to conduct research for this year’s Healthcare Check event I’m working on with Dr. Paul Isley and Dr. Sonia Dalmia. Finally, as the President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), I could not be happier to finally have a dedicated space for graduate students to meet and work. Building a graduate community is the primary focus this year for the GSA, and this building really fosters a sense of collaboration among graduate students.”
—Paul Jabaay, MBA ’14, economics graduate assistant, President of Graduate Student Association

“I think that the Seidman Center has brought together and unified this great business environment that the school so desperately needed at the time of its creation. I have been an ERP Initiative Intern for two and one-half years, and will be graduating this December utilizing the new Seidman Center Technology. I recently received my SAP TERP10 certification as well as an internal SAP certificate from the school for completing SAP courses.
—Joshua Barnier, Accounting and Management Major, ERP Assistant, ’13

“As a student at the Richard M. and Helen DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (CEI) working concurrently on my own startup businesses, the new L. William Seidman Center has been invaluable in helping move forward both of my activities at CEI. I am able to host clients for both of my startups in the professional conference rooms, and I am also able to videoconference with professors about my work at CEI. It would be very challenging to accomplish as much as I have without this beautiful, practical space.”
—Michael Kurley, Management ’13, Entrepreneur at the Richard M. and Helen DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

“We have a great location! During warmer days, I love sitting outside on the patio by the water—a nice alternative to being inside between classes! Another thing I really like is the first floor study lounge. It’s great to have a dedicated space for studying that is not too far away from our classes. Before, I studied at the Steelcase library and hoped to find a quiet spot, but at this new Center you know there will be a quiet spot for you.”
—Rachel Mason, Finance Major, ’14
It was the dream of Bill Seidman, founding chair of Grand Valley’s Board of Trustees, to house the Seidman College of Business—classes, offices and outreach centers—in its own building.

“Bill said it best,” said H. James Williams, former dean of the Seidman College of Business. “He and I were talking when I first came to Grand Valley in 2004. Bill said every great business school in the country has its own building, has its own identity in a concrete fashion.”
Thank you to the 600+ donors whose support brought Bill Seidman’s vision to life, providing a fitting home for the Seidman College of Business.
Grand Valley State University is a place where students conceive BIG ideas, work hard, and get numerous opportunities to obtain cash infusions into their entrepreneurial businesses. Classes enable students to explore what is possible and how to plan moving forward. But, the real testament to Seidman's entrepreneurial classroom experiences is the success of our students and graduates when they convince others that their ideas are worthy of investment.

At the recent Accelerate Michigan Competition in Detroit, Grand Rapids' entrepreneurs took top money prizes. Lindsay Noonan, Michael Kurley, and Vanessa Gore of *Team Soletics won the $25,000 first prize for their new winter sports products, which include a thermal-electric and solar-powered jacket that warms the user's extremities, cools the core, and provides excess power to charge a mobile device. One year ago the team achieved "Best Prototype" at the Michigan Clean Energy Venture Challenge, along with a $3,000 award.

*Team Soletics was formed in the MGT 330 Entrepreneurship taught by Dr. Timothy Syfert, who assigned students to create a viable entrepreneurial business. Since that class ended in December of 2012, the students have participated in several business plan and pitch competitions.
Ryan Vaughn, ’10, former graduate assistant at the Center for Entrepreneurship, won $500,000 to continue work on his company the Varsity News Network (VNN). His company increases exposure and recognition for high school athletes with a product that is high school sports equivalent of ESPN.com. VNN provides high school athletic departments and student athletes a platform to gain the same recognition as collegiate and professional sports programs and athletes.
Grand Rapids Talent Retention

"Diverse thinking forges innovative and creative ideas, catalyzing entrepreneurial ecosystems to thrive."

That statement summarizes the motivation behind GR Flow which was created to showcase the stories behind the entrepreneurs. It glimpses what they do differently, championing individuals of a diverse mind within a community that seeks new ways of doing business and creating a new era of entrepreneurship. GR Flow encourages everyone in the world of entrepreneurship to share stories, collaborate, communicate, and create a new wave in the way we perform as entrepreneurs.

The Richard and Helen DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation and GR CURRENT event “Creativity Entrepreneurship Technology Identity (CETI)” promoted collaboration among people of diverse mentalities.

But this event and others planned are only a piece of GR Flow’s ultimate project. GR Flow’s website, grflow.org, grows weekly with new content. The site exposes young talent in Grand Rapids while encouraging them to stay here. Once the city is truly able to retain talent under the age of 34, then will true vibrancy, inclusion, and sustainable economic development be brought to the rapid flow of growth in Grand Rapids’ start-up community. Collaboration among the creative and business-oriented professional is a must.

“It’s only contagious when it’s viral.” ▲

Randy Visser “live painting,” expressing himself and encapsulating the event onto a single canvas.
Arriving in Grand Rapids in 2006 from Bacolod City, Philippines, Regine Mualla has a special place in her heart for both homelands. Mualla walks the line between two different cultures and two different career paths. Mualla studied accounting at Grand Valley and graduated in 2011, excelling in her studies and earning a B.B.A. Her two internships—one in the Philippines with Pepsi, and the other as a research intern working for Michigan Technological University—both provided great learning experiences.

Like many students post-graduation, Mualla found herself without an immediate job, and uncertainty about her next steps. Thankfully, a hobby proved financially advantageous. “My friends and I had fun drawing a lot of comics in High School,” Mualla said. “It turned from a hobby to a part-time job when I realized people would pay for my art.”

Though Mualla continues to draw and sell her work, she is currently back to interviewing for accounting positions. Only time will tell which career path she accepts!

“I learned a lot about corporate accounting [at Pepsi]. It was great to finally ‘see’ accounting in motion rather than just read about it.”

—Regine Mualla
Tremendous opportunities for learning were realized when the Kappa Beta chapter of Beta Alpha Psi attended the organization’s annual meeting in Anaheim, California. Students, faculty advisors, and accounting professionals from both the U.S. and abroad heard three industry leaders speak, including the CEO of AT&T Mobility, the Vice President of Finance at Walt Disney Parks & Resorts, and author John Blumberg.

But the highlight of the event was learning that board member Sam Schaeffler won an award for her participation in a competition called “Project Run With It.” Sam’s randomly created team of four developed solutions to real-life business problems of actual not-for-profit organizations located in the L.A. area. They had a day and one-half to create a formal presentation showcasing their solutions and then presenting it to a panel of judges. “This was an amazing opportunity,” shared Sam. “I was able to meet new people and to work in a real life situation. My team worked non-stop to pull this off.” Each team member received $1,000 for their respective chapters.

Vice President Steve DeWaard said, “The best part of these annual meetings really is to help the Board become a cohesive unit as well as to bring back new ideas to share with the chapter. This fall Beta has focused on a full array of events including pre-recruiting, firm visits, and socials. Many Betas plan to start working as interns at public accounting firms in the winter, and interesting accounting industry speakers have been scheduled. DeWaard sees these activities as a great way for students to identify opportunities available outside of public accounting. ■

E-Board at its Community Service day. They spent a full day at a lower income, largely Hispanic inner city school in Anaheim working with 2nd grade students for their Global Awareness and Literacy Day. L-R: TJ (Thomas) Muszynski, Becca Glover, Lynn Sayers, Steve DeWaard, Allison Jennings, Tori Roslund and Sangeeth Pushewalage.
That was the challenge facing 39 students representing 29 high schools when they enrolled in Teen Entrepreneur Summer Academy. The entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated by Richard DeVos many years earlier when he helped found the Amway Corporation may also affect these young minds as each year they participate in the Richard and Helen DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (CEI) week-long camp.

Students were paired with team mentors who kept them on task, helped problem solve, and celebrated milestones along the way. “It was really an incredible experience watching the students progress as the week went on,” said Alaina Clarke, team mentor and graduate assistant at CEI. “At first it seemed they were still in the classroom mindset, where thinking outside of the box was not normally celebrated. When they finally realized what they could come up with, their minds went wild and they came up with some really amazing and inspiring ideas.”

By the end of the week, the ten student teams pitched their solutions to community stakeholders for a chance to win $1,000 in cash prizes. The winning idea was for a low-cost, pop-up theater in downtown Grand Rapids.

Teen Entrepreneur Summer Academy

“Develop a product or service concept that will take underutilized spaces in an urban setting and turn into something or some place useful. There is a market niche here and your challenge is to capture it.”
ALUMNI NOTES

1970s

Harvey Elgersma, (BBA ’77), is partner at B2B CFO Partners LLC. They are the world’s largest provider of CFO services.

1980s

James Gillette, (MBA ’81), is consulting in the automotive industry having over 32 years of experience in business, financial, and economic market analysis and forecasting. He previously served as Director of Automotive Analysis at IHS.

Robert C. Crisan, (BBA ’84), was promoted to senior vice president of health care reform and strategic growth at Hylant Insurance.

Kevin L. Prins, (BBA ’84), is the principal of the Ryan Leadership Team in Los Angeles, CA.

Steven C. Woodward, (BBA ‘88), is the assistant vice president of underwriting at Lockton Affinity LLC in Overland Park, KS.

1990s

Todd Medendorp, (BBA ’90), is VP Senior Relationship Manager at Wells Fargo.

Laura A. (Moore) Marble, (BBA ’91), received the Facility Manager of the Year Award from the Building Owners and Managers Association of Metro Detroit.

2000s

Kirk Walter, (MBA ’00), is Senior Director, Tablet Value Stream, Non-Analgesics, with Perrigo Company.

Tom Willett, (MBA ’00), is Pharmacy Coordinator, Business Relations - Information and Technology Services at Meijer.

James A. Murray, (BBA ’01), is one of MR Magazine’s Uptown Downtown award winners.

Kenneth D. Parish, (MBA ’01), was reelected to his fifth term as Kent County Treasurer.

Joshua A. Schultz, (BBA ’01), is a Vice President with PNC Bank Healthcare Business Banking. He earned the professional designation of Certified Medical Practice Executive (CMPE) from the American College of Medical Practice Executives (ACMPE) in October 2012.

Kim D. Barnhall, (BBA ’02), is a financial services manager for the Physicians Service Group in the Carolinas HealthCare System in Charlotte, NC.

Jason W. Brown (BBA ’03), is a risk manager for Thornapple Insurance Agency in Grand Rapids.

Judy Clark, (BBA ’03), has been appointed as the Ionia County Treasurer.

James M. Lesarge (MBA ’04), is the vice president of the board of directors for the West Michigan Chapter of Warehousing Education Research Council.

Nicholas Risko, (BBA ’05), is a Staff Accountant at EHTC in Grand Rapids. He recently relocated from California.

Derek Aten, (MBA ’05), is currently employed with Comerica Bank.

V. Scott Rowley, (MBA ’06), is a Commercial Lender at Chemical Bank in Byron Center.

Jason Karel, (BBA ’06), is the HR Associate Project Manager – Strategic Initiatives, P&C US at BMO Harris Bank in Chicago, IL.

Dwight C. Dettloff, (BBA ’07), is the senior accountant for Altitude Edge Companies in Boulder, CO.

James Evans, (BBA ’07), is a relationship banker/small business specialist at JP Morgan Chase.

Christina L. (Harris) Hildreth, (BBA ’07), is director for Metro Health in Grand Rapids.

Amelia Mitchel, (MBA ’07) is a CPA/ Senior Accountant/Partner at Kroun and Mitchell, LLC in Grand Rapids.

Joy Zeleznik, (BBA ’07), is a Financial Professional Associate at Prudential Real Estate.

Andrew Brummel, (BBA ’08), is an insurance agent and owns his own agency through Farm Bureau Insurance in Grand Rapids.

Brent Mulder, (PhD, MBA ’08), is Senior Director Innovations, Spectrum Health Innovations, Spectrum Health.

Natalia Biondo, (BBA ’09), is the Talent Management Acquisition Specialist at Halliburton in Houston, TX.

Jessica Carlson, (BBA ’09), is an Accountant for Goodby Silverstein & Partners in Detroit, MI.

Robert C. Groothuis, (MBA ’09), is the chief financial officer for Zeeland Lumber and Supply Company.

Stephen A. Hopkins, (BBA ’09), is a team leader for Southwest Airlines.

Elizabeth Tibai, (BBA ’09), is the Administrative Assistant for Ann Arbor Transportation Authority in Ann Arbor, MI.

2010s

Tanya Duncan, (BBA, ’10), is an SAP Finance & Controlling Consultant with Deloitte, with 3 years’ experience on global SAP deployments. She published The Essential SAP Career Guide: A beginner’s guide to SAP careers for students and professionals (First Steps).

Nikki Powers, (BBA, ’10), is the Indirect Relationship Administrator at Nymeo Federal Credit Union.

Katie Seager, (BBA, ’10) is the E&ME Consultant: Solution Development at Microsoft in Seattle, WA.

Anna Sikkena, (BBA ’10), is the Category Analyst at Gordon Food Service in Wyoming.

Mathew R. Cassidy, (BBA ’11), is an underwriter for Quicken Loans in Detroit.

Kaylee A. (Gonzales) Rosecrants, (BBA ’11), is the office manager of Equip Inc. in Colorado Springs, CO.

Anna Fester, (BBA ’12), is the Finance/Human Resource Specialist at West Ottawa Public Schools.

Brandon Bissell, (MBA ’13), is the Director of Marketing at Imperial in Grand Rapids.

Jessica Lis, (MBA ’13), is a Retirement Advisor at Lis, McCallon, Raymor & Co in Livonia, MI.

David Oljace, (MBA ’13), is the Production Engineer at Perrigo.

Please send us news about you! Send your information via e-mail to busalumni@gvsu.edu.
Seidman College of Business Faculty and Staff