University Academic Senate Newsletter

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Liberal Education for the 21st Century: An Editorial by Provost Cimitile

Provost Maria Cimitile: Maria is the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Maria is also a Professor of Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). We are starting a new decade and a new era in the history of Grand Valley State University. I have said publicly many times that we must remain true to who we are but even more so as we determine our next steps. We are an educational institution that synthesizes a liberal education foundation with professional preparation. The effect of the digital age on how we live and work in the United States and around the globe has likewise changed the landscape of education. Our students will not stay with the same career choice throughout their lives, as they move from one employer to another to seek fulfillment. Many will opt not to join any traditional career path but instead forge their own vision.

What this means for us is that the liberal education foundation our students receive is just as much professional skill-building as the many fine areas of our career building curriculum. Critical thinking, scientific inquiry, problem solving, interpretive analysis, collaboration with others, ethical reasoning…these expressions of humanity are needed now more than ever to prepare students for the change in society and the forces that will impact their individual and collective humanity. The silos that once were characteristic of our professional and social worlds no longer exist. Human flourishing now requires more attention to problem solving, more attention to ethics, more attention to collaborative creation. Add the necessity of multimedia expertise and digital literacy, and we have the outline of liberal education for our age.

Each of the areas I mention (and we could add others) are found across all our disciplines and at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I think of my own discipline of philosophy with its ancient and long-standing tradition. What did I learn as a beginning philosophy student? How to read a text, how to anticipate problems and solutions, how to award charity to others in their thought processes as I developed my own, and the foundations of ethical reasoning and behavior that build character. I learned to approach artistic expression not merely as objects of beauty but also as political commentary on the social milieu and the historical forces of narrative to understand humanity in its full concert. This is the education that Plato taught his followers, and it is what our students need as well.

However, if I were to say, "obviously all students need to study philosophy in the same way I did," I would completely miss the mark as a recommendation for our students. Our students learn in ways that Plato could not have imagined. We need to continually think through our pedagogy and curriculum to be sure we help students see the relevance and application of the important lessons of a liberal education to a world that is very different from even 10 years ago, let alone the 30-something years ago when I started studying philosophy. This entails thoughtful consideration about what education means in the digital age, ensuring that the lessons of liberal education resonate deeply, embracing the digital and challenging it where it is needed.

A liberal education cannot be a relic of the past, but must be a hallmark of the present and future. Fortunately, our strong value of liberal education at Grand Valley places us in the ideal position to educate students to succeed in their professions and communities. Every Grand Valley faculty member embraces the importance of this value and enacts in their teaching, scholarship and service. Now is the time to make clear to our students and external partners how we bring a liberal education to life. To that end, I'm asking each of the colleges and the university libraries to develop ways to highlight for students the elements of a liberal education that they receive in all of our programs. This will help students to thoroughly understand the significance of their curricular pathways while helping articulate to employers the value they bring because of their Grand Valley education. It is our joy and obligation to help students synthesize the value of their education for their careers and engagement in society throughout their lives. Liberal education is our past, our present and our future.

Faculty Respond to the Call for Contribution in the 2019-2020 Senate Newsletter

On November 1, 2019, President Mantella shared her *Reach Higher Together* imperatives with the GVSU BOT. Subsequently, after a series of collaborative gatherings (*Grand Huddle Series*), in which faculty, staff, students, alumni and other university stakeholders discussed and shared ideas on a broad range of topics, the President articulated her *Five Commitments* during the Grand Gathering on December 4, 2019. Provost Cimitile has emphasized the importance of quality education and in many of her presentations, she has clearly articulated why liberal education must not be considered to be a relic of the past, but rather must be a hallmark of the present and future. In the 2019-2020 academic year, UAS aligned its goals and priorities with the *Reach Higher Together* imperatives, and the *Five Commitments* of President Mantella. One of these commitments is to Build a "new liberal education" that expands experiential learning and ensure digital competency and entrepreneurial opportunities for all students. Towards the goal of addressing this commitment, the UAS gathered contributions from faculty for the 2019-2020 Senate Newsletter, which is entitled "Liberal Education for the 21st Century". The contributions of our faculty colleagues are now presented.

Shawn Bultsma: Shawn is an Associate Professor in the School Counseling Program of the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department of the College of Education (COE). Shawn is also the Vice Chair of ECS/UAS for 2019-2020. What is the Value of 21st Century Liberal Education? An essential component of a 21st century liberal education is rooted in the need for shared competencies required for various professions. These competencies form a basic foundation of skills that are customized based on the unique needs of each profession. For instance, practitioners in the field of school counseling require a unique skill set that is quite different than those used by chemists. However, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which students in either program would be successful without basic proficiency in skills that are characteristic of a liberal education.

In the field of school counseling, graduate students learn counseling techniques as they rely on ethical reasoning and more basic communication skills to apply ethical practice and develop more advanced active listening skills. Critical thinking and problem solving are necessary for school counseling graduate students as they depend on these skills to research and select interventions that promote college and career readiness and design strategies to promote equity in student achievement and college access. Collaboration is essential as these graduate students learn techniques to foster teamwork within schools. They utilize quantitative literacy skills to analyze data that informs decision making while advocating for programs and students within K-12 school systems. A chemist's use of ethical reasoning, written and oral communication, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and utilization of data is likely quite different from that of a school counselor. However, in spite of the differences in professional identities, the very skills taught in a liberal education account for the potential for a productive working relationship that can form between a chemist and school counselor when serving together as faculty governance leaders here at Grand Valley. These shared skills are not unique to faculty leaders. They serve as the common denominator shared by faculty members who represent various academic disciplines and colleges. Consequently, the skills that are an essential part of liberal education account for our robust system of faculty governance in the same way that they account for the health of the various professional preparation programs that are represented across Grand Valley. If we are going to remain relevant and continue to offer innovative programs, we will need to leverage and expand collaborative efforts, maximize critical thinking, and apply ethical reasoning to address the various challenges that come our way. This has been our success and will continue to be our path forward as we live out our mission of delivering a first-rate educational experience for students. These 21st century skills are invaluable to our work, and our commitment to a liberal education calls us to continuously practice and model these skills across various committees within the units and college and throughout the university. I am convinced that a liberal education for the 21st century leads to healthier professions as well as a more robust interpretation of shared governance that provides an environment where all can thrive.

Andrea Bostrom: Andrea is a Professor of Nursing and Chair of the Graduate Council (GC).

What is the Value of Liberal Education to Graduate Education in the 21st Century? Graduate education typically focuses on a specific field or discipline. Yet a strong liberal education is an essential foundation for learning at the graduate level. At this moment in history, it is evident that this is remarkably true. As each of us—faculty and students, families and communities, and government agencies at all levels—attempts to understand the virulence of the COVID-19 virus, the breadth of our knowledge base is essential. Whether we are studying business, health care, biology, English, counseling, computer science or any of the other graduate programs at GVSU, the liberal basis of our education helps to ground and prepare us to tackle what intrigues, frightens, and confuses us. In this current crisis, we need to be well-armed with knowledge to navigate the world that is changing around us. With a strong liberal education, we can creatively develop the solutions that will solve the problems in our world, such as global warming or inequality in health care or emerging viruses. Similarly, we will have the skills to communicate these solutions to multiple audiences using a variety of platforms. This is the value of liberal education to graduate education in the 21st Century.

Jon Hodge: Jon is a Professor of Mathematics and Chair of the Department of Allied Health Sciences. What Does Liberal Education for the 21st Century Mean to You? I must admit, I'm writing these thoughts under different circumstances than I originally anticipated. The coronavirus pandemic has changed our lives, our relationships, and our society—at least for the short term. While these particular changes have been abrupt and unwelcome, the reality is that change itself is a given, even under the best of circumstances. Over the past few weeks, I've been inspired by the tireless work of my colleagues as they have adapted to the ever-evolving public health crisis and its implications for higher education. They have learned new technologies, critically examined their own practices, and sought support from collaborators both within and beyond GVSU. They have worked hard to alleviate their students' anxieties by communicating with clarity and compassion. And they have sought to be informed, responsible, and engaged citizens. As I reflect on liberal education in a time of global uncertainty, I am reminded of a quote from David Kalt, founder of Reverb.com, who describes how he became convinced of the value of hiring graduates with liberal arts degrees within the technology sector. In a post for *Inc.* (https://bit.ly/2LgElSA), he states: "A well-rounded liberal arts degree establishes a foundation of critical thinking. Critical thinkers can accomplish anything. Critical thinkers can master French, Ruby on Rails, Python or whatever future language comes their way. A critical thinker is a self-learning machine." I cannot remember a time in my life when the need for critical thinking and lifelong learning was more evident. We are facing challenges that will require us to develop new skills, technologies, and ways of thinking. And we are seeing firsthand that scientific, quantitative, and information literacy cannot be delegated to any one discipline or profession. The need for liberally educated citizens is universal—from healthcare providers on the front lines, to policy makers guiding our government's response, to the millions of workers ensuring that we have safe access to food, medicine, and other essential needs. As educators, times such as these provide an opportunity for us to rise to the occasion and live out the values we strive to instill in our students. In doing so, we affirm both the utility and the nobility of our work together.

Bob Hollister: Bob is a Professor of Biology in the Department of Biology of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Bob is also the Chair of the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) for 2019-2020.

What does Liberal Education for the 21st Century Mean to You? Liberal Education for the 21st century means to me preparing informed citizens. As a scientist who studies the biological impacts of climate change, I feel it is critical that students be wise consumers of information. In order to be a wise consumer of information, citizens need to fully understand the scientific process and clearly distinguish facts from opinions. It is too easy to do a search on your phone and repeat the assertions on the first webpage that comes up; it takes a solid foundation in multiple disciplines to put on-line information into proper context and understand the many sides of complex issues. To me a Liberal Education is as important as

ever. Discipline specific information is easy to come by, but integrated synthesis from multiple disciplines are needed to address the issues of society. I personally am saddened by fake news, the proliferation of mis-information, and the devaluing of science by society overall and frankly see it as a symptom of a failing public education system. The solution to simplistic one-sided approaches to complex issues is a strong foundation in liberal education. Liberally educated people should be quick to listen, slow to judge, and eager to collaborate.

Catherine L. Meyer-Looze: Catherine is the Unit Head for the Educational Leadership and Counseling Program in the College of Education (COE). What is the Importance of Liberal Education in Present Day? President Mantella, along with Grand Valley State University's Academic Senate, outlined our University Five Commitments. One of these commitments was to "build a new liberal education that expands experiential learning and ensures digital competency and entrepreneurial opportunities for all students. At the time of this commitment, we were not thinking that a global pandemic would be declared. Yet, the outcomes of this pandemic, both locally and globally, highlight the importance of a liberal arts education for our students. A liberal arts education is one in which students are offered an opportunity to learn skills and concepts outside of their major discipline. They are able to be exposed to different parts of the world through the arts, literature, sciences, history, writing, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and more regardless of whatever discipline they choose to major in. This exposure not only introduces them to the thoughts and insights of the wisest and incredible minds of the world, but it helps the student to think critically and influences him/her to think in different ways. COVID-19 threw everyone into a world unlike one anyone has ever experienced. Regardless if a student - or professor - was more technologically inclined or not, s/he was forced to interact, teach, learn, communicate, in ways that hasn't been done before. We have been forced to think about the person on the other side of the computer screen and navigate not only communication formats but interpersonal relationships. While we are supposed to be social distancing and we look at each other in public as if the other person is carrying multiple viruses, we crave the social "contact" once we get back to the safety of our computer screen as we are social beings. The medical field and practitioners, in present day, are being asked to be creative with their supplies and dwindling space. Other industries, such as the military, are lending a hand with makeshift hospitals and makeshift supplies. Distilleries are making hand sanitizers. And the list goes on. This creativity is possible due to critical thinking skills and the ability to think outside the box. To shift our paradigms is to be able to have different perspectives and relate to other industries and content areas than the ones we are most passionate about. We are all in this together, and this is the importance of a liberal arts education.

Paul Murphy: Paul is a Professor of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). What is the Purpose of Liberal Education, the Limits of Technology, and the Necessity of Community? In the 1920s, many Americans expressed great hopes that the new medium of radio would solve various social problems. They imagined it might integrate immigrants, revitalize rural life, and extend higher education to everyone. Elite critics disdained commercial stations, believing radio should instead broadcast "highbrow" content to cultivate the masses, such as classical music and lectures by college professors in history and English. In 1922 Stuart Pratt Sherman noted that the University of Illinois, where he taught English, would soon start broadcasting lectures to the state's farmers over its radio station in addition to news and concerts. When the lectures were "canned" in "Victrola records," Sherman wrote his mother, "the professors can go off and play, or go off and die, if they like and all that really 'mattered' of them will live forever and vibrate nightly in the air." As it happened, rural Americans enjoyed commercial radio, with its informative ads, popular music, and folksy and often raucous commentary. The hopes that radio might transform and enlighten the nation remained unfulfilled. While it is certainly true today that radio stations broadcast much that is immensely rewarding, the lessons from the 1920s suggest a persisting truth about the limits of new technologies. We still hold out hopes for the transformative capacity of new forms of media. If not radio, then perhaps podcasts will promise a renascence in aural learning. A colleague once remarked to me that, given the unlimited amounts of information on the World Wide Web, the current college generation will be the smartest ever. Each new tool adds capabilities, but education remains a challenge for many. New media raise novel challenges. Social media's self-reinforcing algorithms may hinder rather than facilitate the communication of reliable information. Certain truths persist, from the 1920s to the 2020s: The process of education is difficult. Learning requires time and commitment. Persistence is essential; our minds stubbornly resist knowledge. Reiteration is helpful, as sometimes lessons must be learned and re-learned yet again. The ongoing Covid-19 crisis drives home a couple of points relevant to liberal education in the twenty-first century. First, the act of citizenship requires the ability to discern what is accurate and reliable from a relentless cascade of information. This requires the ability to distinguish a plausible claim from a paranoid fantasy or an ill-considered extrapolation from minute amounts of data. We are required to judge the source of our news and place what we read and hear within the context of what is plausible, even when delivered with force and conviction from on high. In other words, we as citizens must think critically and learn to hold our own partisan beliefs and prejudices in check when weighing the issues. The second lesson is that education thrives in community. Many students making the abrupt shift to online education due to the emergency find it disorienting. They struggle to deal with the innumerable new requirements and assignments; they must learn to be self-directed even as they face enormous stress and, for some, personal and family financial crisis. Many of our students already learned online, of course, and commuted to school, lived at home, and were forced to find ways to balance work and academics and to raise a family while going to school. Yet, even here, how many still relied on the regular rhythms of the campus—the daily interaction and the in-person intimacy of a community of learners, the mental ticking off the familiar emblems of student life and the checking in with friends and faculty on a regular basis? Going to college is a whole-life commitment requiring immense commitments of time and energy. Learning takes a long time. It involves re-arranging life and, very often, moving to a physical space—not a monastic school, to be sure, but an academic campus separated in many ways from the routine business of society. Students now confronting the rigors of online education are learning what others have known—perhaps since the 1920s. Distance education poses challenges: not just a more attenuated community but the effort required to inhabit the role of student without the disciplining routine enacted in shared rituals and a common space. When Grand Valley was founded in the early 1960s and civic leaders such as William Seidman were scouting locations for a new campus, a local

architect envisioned its home as a thirteen-story "Tower of Learning" to be erected in a rundown section of downtown Grand Rapids that had been slated for urban renewal. While extravagant, the vision is appealing in its aspiration and ambition. The physical campus may not be essential to most students, but the commitment to devote one's life for a long period of time in a community of faculty and students seems essential and deserves such a symbol. Liberal education begins with the seeking mind of an undergraduate. As the pioneering Grand Valley faculty member William Jellema noted, "Far more important than what the individual happens to think about this or that is the mind with which he thinks." One does not have to go to college in a tower to learn effectively, but one must be fully committed to the project. Higher education is a noble aspiration and requires some degree of symbolism and ritual. It is often difficult to put our minds in the right place for higher education without moving our bodies at the same time. College requires a level of commitment difficult to fit into the workaday routines of life. The challenge of distance and online education lies in this problem of place and community. The image of the "Tower of Learning" evokes the hoary notion of the "ivory tower," a type of education detached from practical concerns, too often irrelevant to the values and concerns of the present, and impervious to the larger needs of our society. This need not be the case. Proponents of liberal education have long recognized the multiple roles of the university even as they have pushed back against a higher education consumed with practical concerns. Grand Valley State is committed to training students for global citizenship in addition to professional expertise. To understand the crisis of the Trump era requires perspectives gained in the humanities and social sciences. To challenge the attack on science mounted by so many of our political leaders requires conversance with the modeling of data, empirical reasoning, and the testing of theories. These are skills and outlooks essential for civic leadership today. A GVSU student must have learned to test unquestioned assumptions, to be able to discern common values in a pluralistic society, to explore other cultures and times, and to develop an empathy for others—all products of immersion in the liberal arts. The earliest leaders of Grand Valley placed just such a general education at the heart of the college, proposing a core curriculum heavy in philosophy, history, science, foreign languages, and the study of contemporary problems. It is a venerable commitment. "The great object of a collegiate education," wrote President Jeremiah Day in the Yale Report of 1827, "preparatory to the study of a profession, is to give that expansion and balance…those liberal and comprehensive views, and those fine proportions of character, which are not to be found in him whose ideas are always confined to one particular channel." Or as the authors of *General Education in a Free Society* (1946), the famous Harvard "Redbook" observed, general education is "that part of a student's whole education which looks first of all to his life as a responsible human being and citizen." The tension between liberal education, scholarly specialization, and professional study is perennial in the American higher education system, as is the desire and need to innovate in how students receive that education and to democratize education by disseminating it more widely. We should not lose sight of the essential needs of our civic life at this moment and the particular needs of the often indebted and weary young people of today who are more than a little impatient with "boomer" enthusiasms. Education needs to be relevant and accessible yet also broad and inspiring. It needs to be at home in the modish offices of a digital start-up but suited as well to the gleaming "Tower of Learning" proudly adorning the Grand Rapids skyline.

Kate Remlinger: Kate is a Professor of English in the Department of English of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Kate is also a member of ECS/UAS for 2019-2020 and a Faculty Fellow in the Office of the President. Does Liberal Education Matter in the 21st Century? *Liberal education* is defined by teaching and learning that fosters critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and a broad worldview. These skills are vital, not only for the classroom, but also the workplace, home, community, and personal interaction. A common public perception of higher education in general, and more specifically of liberal education, is that neither meets the needs of today's workplace. The basis for these perspectives is the idea that employment opportunities depend solely on

mastery of discipline-specific skills. It is certainly true that the career path for students who major in metalsmithing or French might not be as linear as one for students in speech pathology or mechanical engineering. Yet, a common thread among these disciplines at GVSU is their liberal education approach, an approach that emphasizes ways of thinking and skills that are applicable to a variety of employment opportunities. There's no doubt that after graduation, students' goals, careers, and jobs will shift and change, sometimes dramatically. A degree grounded in liberal education enables our students to build a solid foundation from which they can adapt to change, to a range of social and workplace contexts, and to evolve along with changing economies. Our goal as faculty is to help students understand what liberal education is and why it matters—that evaluating issues, synthesizing ideas and information, finding solutions, communicating clearly, and having a global understanding are vital skills, not only for their future careers, but also for shaping their lives and communities. We do this by debunking myths and misinformation about liberal education and the value of higher education. We create this awareness by openly discussing with our classes and advisees the qualities that define liberal education and how it provides necessary life skills beyond the university to the workplace, home, and their communities. We demonstrate these connections through our classroom and lab practices, practicums and other field experiences, syllabi, course materials, and assignments. We model liberal education values in our service and research. By doing this, we not only advance understanding about liberal education and the value of higher education, but also, and more importantly, cultivate the kind of teaching and learning that are hallmarks of Grand Valley State University.

Melanie Shell-Weiss: Mel is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Integrative, Religious, and Integrative Studies Department (IRIS). She serves as the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies representative on ECS/UAS.

What does Liberal Education Mean to You? To me, liberal education means courage. Liberally educated people have the skills necessary to solve complex problems. They think carefully, creatively, flexibly, and fearlessly. They know how to locate needed information and apply that knowledge to make a positive difference in their professions, communities, nation, and the world. Because they are steeped in a variety of fields and disciplinary perspectives, liberally educated people can talk to anyone. They make connections – not just among ideas, but also among people. These skills have never been more important than right now. **How is Liberal Education Incorporated in the Curriculum of Your Program/Department?** We like to say that in IRIS, we see possibilities. The Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies Department (IRIS) houses several academic programs, all of which share a common aim of creating flexible pathways for students who want to be leaders in their work and in their lives. Our programs include Integrative Studies (B.A., B.S.), Religious Studies Minor, Intercultural Studies Badge, Social Innovation (Professional M.A.), and the new Global Communications Certificate and Leadership Certificate. Each program provides experiential learning opportunities that guide students to make direct connections between what they learn in their classrooms and real-world applications. The **Integrative Studies** curriculum supports students to create a custom-designed major that uniquely fits their needs. This is a great option for students whose interests span multiple fields or who are particularly interested in "wicked problems" that cannot be easily solved by one discipline alone. Integrative Studies also supports individuals who are looking to change careers or complete their degrees. The customizable nature of the degree makes it

easy for students to stack credentials within the major, earning additional badges or certificates while completing their bachelor's degree. **Religious Studies** is also a program that students can easily adapt to support their larger professional goals. Students earn the minor by completing three core courses as well as elective options drawn from classes across the university. Together these courses help students to interpret religious diversity and better appreciate the role that religion plays, and has played, across all aspects of human experience. **Intercultural Studies**, and a commitment to diversity and inclusion, lies at the heart of all of IRIS programs. Students in intercultural studies learn how to communicate across lines of difference. They also gain self-awareness about their own cultural rules and biases. The **Global Communications** program builds on these skills, supporting students to thrive in a wide range of professional fields such as business, nursing, health sciences, law, social services, and more. Our **Leadership** program trains students to directly apply critical thinking, creative problem-solving, strong written and oral communication, conflict management, and team-building skills to a range of job sectors. At the graduate level, **Social Innovation** is an emerging professional field focused on impact-driven careers that span sectors like governmental and non-governmental work, social entrepreneurship, health care, and others. Through this program, students learn skills in sustainability, environmental and social justice, human centered design, interdisciplinary research methods, and critical assessment of social innovation practices to become change agents who are trained to address complex problems such as childhood hunger, illiteracy, food deserts, contaminated drinking water, poverty, and homelessness, to name just a few. All of this work is grounded in liberal education principles that balance broad knowledge of the wider world with in-depth study in a specific area of interest. What should be the Relationship Between Liberal Education and Professional Education? To me, profession is fundamentally about putting liberal education into practice. Although most professions require the development of specialized skillsets that may be unique to a particular field, liberal education provides a whole range of transferrable skills that make the difference between simply doing a job and making a career. Liberal education empowers us to embrace complexity, diversity, and change. It teaches creative-problem solving, critical inquiry, and the ability to engage in perspective-taking. These skills not only increase one's ability to thrive in the workplace, but they also promote resiliency. This is critical in an era when most individuals will pursue multiple occupations over the course of their working lives. Integrating liberal and professional education also supports innovation. The new LEADS (Lifelong Educational Attainment for Diverse Students) Program (www.gvsu.edu/complete) embodies this idea. Launching in Fall 2020, this duel degree/certificate program is a partnership among IRIS and Brooks College faculty, Seidman College of Business, the School of Computing and Information Systems, as well as several departments in CLAS and CCPS. It is designed for adult students who want additional training in order to be promoted within their current occupation or to build additional skill-sets necessary to pursue new professional pathways. LEADS students will be able to earn a certificate in leadership, global communications, project management, or applied data analytics while completing their bachelor's degree. They can complete their studies while working full-time from anywhere in Michigan, through any of GVSU's campuses. It is also possible to earn only a certificate or to create a customized degree pathway. What Difference Does Liberal Education Make for Professional Practice Disciplines? Integrating liberal education and professional practice disciplines can make the difference between simply having a job verses pursuing a vocation. A whole host of recent studies have shown that individuals who have grounding in liberal arts and liberal education experience more satisfaction in their chosen professions. It also helps students prepare for, or succeed in, their "now" job but also for their next job – whether that be a promotion within that same career path or a progression into new opportunities. I think, for example, of a recent article published by the AAC&U that underscores why in our knowledge-based economy, "it is imperative that colleges and universities develop graduate who have the capacity for continued growth – graduate with a foundation of skills and knowledge that can be built upon for future employment" (Steve Dorman and Kelli Brown (2018), "Preparing the Workforce of the Future," Liberal Education, 104:4). In What Ways Could Students/Faculty Apply Liberal Education into their Professional Practice or Discipline? I love teaching in the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies because we are encouraged to be connectors. We collaborate with faculty colleagues from across the university around shared teaching, research, and community-based work. I also love working with such a diverse range of students, many of

whom are first generation to college and/or returning adults who bring a whole host of life experience and professional experience with them into the classroom. Together, we are all lifelong learners. Students regularly tell us that taking classes like LIB/INT 100 (Reflect, Connect, Engage) is the place where they learned to take ownership of their education, become active learners, and to understand the purpose of being in college. Others like LIB/INT 312 (Collaborative Communication), LIB/INT 331 (Person and Profession in a Global World), and LIB/INT 341 (Leadership for Social Change) not only teach liberal education skills and values but they directly support the development of leadership skills that can be applied to any professional practice. Collaborations like the LEADS Program described above further strengthen these connections between professional practice and liberal education. So, for example, I think of a recent student who used their GVSU education to move from work as a line supervisor to managing a department on the strengths of their leadership, collaboration, and intercultural skills gleaned through our programs. IRIS has many students who have moved into key communications and/or team-driven positions within both the public and private sectors including business, education, non-profit, health, and government work on the strengths of skills learned not just in our classrooms but also through internships pursued as a part of their studies. Perhaps most exciting, a significant number of our alums also work in jobs that were either created just for them or that they self-designed. I cannot think of a better example of how liberal education helps us to see not just what is, but what is possible.

Liberal Education: A Transformative Path

Judy Whipps: Judy recently retired from GVSU after 25 years of service. She was Professor of Philosophy and Liberal Studies.

My exposure to liberal education at GVSU quite literally changed my life. In the late 1980s I had recently returned to West Michigan; I was in my late 30s with a good job working as a legal assistant but didn't have a bachelor's degree. My sister, a former Grand Valley William James College student, suggested I return to college to take a class with Professor Stephen Rowe. The class she wanted me to take was Lib 100, Introduction to Liberal Education (now INT 100 Reflect, Connect, Engage). The impact of that class motivated me to return to school to finish my degree in Liberal Studies. From there I went to graduate school, earning a Ph.D. and eventually returning to GVSU to teach in Philosophy and Liberal Studies. I've recently retired after a wonderful 25 years at GVSU. During those years, I've watched many students discover the value of liberal education.

What was it about liberal education that was so life-changing? I learned to think. That sounds a bit trite. Surely, as a legal professional in my 30s, I knew how to analyze and process information. But this class on liberal education became the place to reflect more deeply about questions of meaning and purpose, to understand how people in the past had encountered big questions, to think with these important figures. In my liberal education at GVSU I came to understand myself as a person who was part of that journey toward humanity. This impact was broader than only my philosophy or liberal studies classes. Courses like Statistics made me restructure how I encountered problems that seemed impossible to decipher at the time. A literary theory class forced to learn how to unpack and analyze unfamiliar terminology from other fields. Sometimes I had to read paragraphs

from those texts out loud – as loudly as possible – attempting to process some of the concepts. And in Stephen Rowe's classes, I learned that I was a participant in the ongoing centuries-long philosophic dialogue about life. I found that I had something to say – perhaps not in a large way, but always with others in discussion. Those dialogues taught me to listen as well as express my own ideas.

As a teacher, I've seen many students re-frame their self-perception in this way. They become empowered to see themselves as thinkers, as participants in this deep immersion in this world of ideas and in their professions. They seem to wake up, become active in their learning, question themselves, their culture and what they learn. Often that process starts when they begin asking how their learning matters in their lives.

When they start asking "why?" and "How does this matter in real life?" they are starting the process of liberal education. Course learning becomes not just something to be learned, to be repeated in a test, but to be applied to their experiences, both professionally and personally. In the process of liberal education, I see students take on responsibility for their own learning. As Adrienne Rich said, students can begin "claiming an education" moving from being a passive receiver of learning, to actively claiming what they want from their learning. This usually leads to lifetime of learning and engagement in their communities.

Over the years, I've puzzled over how this change happens in students. Not all students get it. When they do though, it is most often about integration and engagement – connecting learning to the larger context of their communities. There seems to be a moment when they said "oh, THAT'S what education can be."

As teachers, how do we foster this? I've learned some things about this shift to liberal learning, from my own experiences and from observing other terrific teachers. These teachers often:

1) Ask students to practice intentional openness towards change with an expectation of growth.

2) Build relationships with students by being fully present to them - listening to them and taking their ideas seriously.

3) Ask questions that help students see their own preconceptions and potentially reframe what they think they know.

4) Are clear early in the course about the type of learning that is expected from the class – moving beyond memorization to critical analysis and problem-solving.

5) Connect the course learning to issues facing our local and global communities.

6) When possible, structure grading to reward creative and innovative thought.

I'm sure there are many other liberal education practices that our other faculty could add to this list.

GVSU's commitment to liberal education has enriched my life personally and professionally. I've learned so much from the connections I've made with students and faculty over the years. Now that I'm moving toward the end of my career, I realize with gratitude how much these encounters have added to my life.

Contribution from the Department of Movement Science

The Department of Movement Science offers three Bachelor of Science degrees providing students with a *liberal arts education* coupled with a major in Exercise Science (Clinical Exercise Science emphasis and Health Fitness Instruction emphasis), Physical Education (K-12 Professional Instruction emphasis), and Sport Management (Certificate in Sport Coaching available). We also offer a Master of Athletic Training degree with an accelerated option for a Combined degree program with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and Master of Athletic Training to be completed in five years. Across all of our majors, students critically examine and apply scientific, clinical, educational, and cultural aspects of sports and movement to promote healthy living across the lifespan.

Movement Science faculty were surveyed about Liberal Education for the 21st Century and responded to the following questions:

What Does Liberal Education Mean to You?

"Liberal education means offering students the opportunity to learn about a variety of topics/issues to have more well-rounded education. To help students learn different perspectives."

"I believe a liberal education helps people become well-rounded, broadly educated, and able to employ critical thinking skills to positively impact and successfully navigate a complex world."

"Providing students with a broad base of classes/knowledge that they can take into the 'real world' with them to help them be better citizens."

"An individual has broad knowledge across disciplines that better informs a citizen in a democracy to make the best choices for self and society."

"Liberal education means taking a step back and understanding the complexities of real-world issues and how we can develop novel approaches that incorporate multiple viewpoints."

How is Liberal Education Incorporated in the Curriculum of Your Program/Department?

"I think it depends on the professor and the course topics as to how liberal education is incorporated. Some classes lend themselves more than others to intertwine topics such as social justice, diversity, sustainability, globalization, etc."

"Students are able to choose from a strong variety of general education courses at GVSU,

and in our program they build on critical thinking, inclusion and equity in sport, current topics courses that address contemporary issues and informed decision-making. We inform students of the value of broad thinking and appreciation for other disciplines in the Introduction to Sport Management course."

"Through learning experiences grounded in critical thinking, collaborative assignments, written and oral tasks to explore current issues."

"Students have multiple general education courses that are required as part of our major, and we have introduction classes that speak to the scope and applicability of our major in society."

"Administration of the knowledge, understanding the big picture of student success, issues of social justice, working with an inter professional team to enhance the healthcare of the patient, really where does it not intersect honestly!!!!!!!"

What Should be the Relationship Between Liberal Education and Professional Education?

"We should prepare all students seeking professional careers with the ability to work in complex, diverse, and constant changing environments."

"Liberally educated people are well-rounded citizens, therefore better professionals. We need all of it. This is what I want for my children and future generations. I think those of us who chose to work at GVSU feel strongly that we want to develop liberally educated professionals."

"Liberal Education should provide foundational knowledge that can help a student have a broad knowledge base prior to starting a more specific professional education program."

"Liberal education serves as the logical foundation to build upon. By having an open mind and removing the "blinders" of becoming too specialized, one can better apply their professional education."

"They should be one in the same."

What Difference Does Liberal Education Make for Professional Practice Disciplines?

"I heard this somewhere and can't take credit for it. Your skills/competence get you hired but your "soft skills" get you promoted. Essentially, the liberal education will make you a better employee because you will be a better thinker, problem-solver, and person who can consider other perspectives."

"I think a liberal education helps people find value in others and diverse thinking. An appreciation of other disciplines allows our students to have a deeper view of society, cultures, science, and with our issues, diversity and global perspectives. Global perspective courses allow students get a world view which benefits them as members of society and global citizens."

"I think all students should be required to have a liberal education regardless of what professional practice they go in to."

"Better prepares professionals to understand a broad scope of diversity and inclusion issues."

"I feel it makes for a professional who can see big picture and reflect on pass events to not make the same mistake or perpetuation positivity."

"Without understanding the community, society, and various beliefs and parameters of various groups etc., we can't administer holistic plans for patient care."

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"Start small. Think of one thing you could do different in ONE class each semester."

"It makes me nervous to feel like I have to defend the value of liberal education, and I hope we're not headed toward minimizing this focus. I feel strongly that a broad-based education that includes courses about cultures, diversity, natural and social sciences, and other disciplines expands people's horizons. We need people who are informed about a lot of things, not just focused on major courses or technological skills. Those are all important areas of content, but a liberal education creates more informed citizens and I think that's a good thing."

"A liberal education provides a foundation that is crucial to their education. Liberal education should inform all other professional practices/disciples going forward."

"Be cognitive of what they are learning in the general education, collaborate with those educators to be able to tie the relationship in."

"This happens every day. We must challenge our students think beyond their specific task and their own selves to be effective leaders and stewards."

"Movement Science faculty and students are engaged in high impact experiences including innovative teaching, research, community integration, and active engagement. Liberal education provides our majors with the foundation that they need to be successful professionals and citizens in the 21st century."

Standing Committee Chairs 2019-2020

Most of the work that is done in ECS/UAS comes from the charges that ECS assigns to the Standing Committees (SCs). Each SC is assigned specific charges at the start of the academic year in addition to the regular responsibilities of the SCs as specified in the Faculty Handbook (FH). As each charge is completed, the SC sends a memo to the Chair of ECS/UAS that becomes a business item for discussion at ECS meetings. Recommendations from ECS are sent to UAS and then to the Provost for approval. The composition of each SC is described in the UAS Bylaws and membership always includes elected college and library representatives. The SCs are an important part of our shared governance process. There are twelve SCs and a University Governance Committee (LIFT-MC) that report to ECS/UAS and each of these has a Chair.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	AFFILIATION
AFAC	Eric Hoogstra	SCB
APSC	Agnieszka Szarecka	CLAS
EIC	John Bender	CLAS
FFPAC	Kelly Margot	COE
FPPC	Marie McKendall	SCB
FSBC	Bob Hollister	CLAS
FTLCAC	Betsy Williams & Vijay Gondhalekar	UL & SCB
GC	Andrea Bostrom	KCON
GEC	Gabriele Gottlieb	CLAS
LIFT-MC	Meg Woller-Skar & Paul Sicilian	CLAS & SCB
OEC	Amy Schelling	COE
UAC	Jon Hasenbank	CLAS
UCC	Martin Burg	CLAS

# Reflection on Statistics: Liberal Education and Professional Practice

Paul Stephenson: Paul is a Professor of Statistics and Chair of the Department of Statistics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Other contributing authors are the following: John Gabrosek (Professor of Statistics); Gerald Shoultz (Associate Professor of Statistics); Patricia Stephenson (Affiliate Faculty Member of Statistics); Kirk Anderson (Professor of Statistics); Bob Downer (Professor of Statistics).

Nearly 70 year ago Samuel S. Wilks, the President of the American Statistical Association, said that "Perhaps H. G. Wells was right when he said 'statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write.'" [1]

As we sit here reeling from the onslaught of news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, consider the role statistics play in this crisis. What role does a statistically literate populace have? The very first goal in the 2016 Guidelines for Assessment and Instruction in Statistics Education (GAISE 2016) report endorsed by the American Statistical Association is: "Students should become critical consumers of statistically-based results reported in popular media, recognizing whether reported results reasonably follow from the study and analysis conducted." [2] It is a central tenet of pedagogy in statistics that we want students who take a general education statistics course to leave with the ability to understand statistical thinking. The current coronavirus pandemic illustrates just how important it is that everyone has a basic understanding of data analysis.

No one tuned into the current crisis will forget the phrase "flattening the curve." On February 29, 2020 *The Economist* published an article, entitled *COVID-19 is now in 50 countries, and things will get worse – But there are proven ways to limit the damage*, that contains the graphic which has been adapted by numerous news agencies and health departments. The New York Times dubbed the graph below as "Flattening the Coronavirus Curve" and described it as the "one chart that explains why slowing the spread of the infection is nearly as important as stopping it." [3]

Adapted from CDC / The Economist
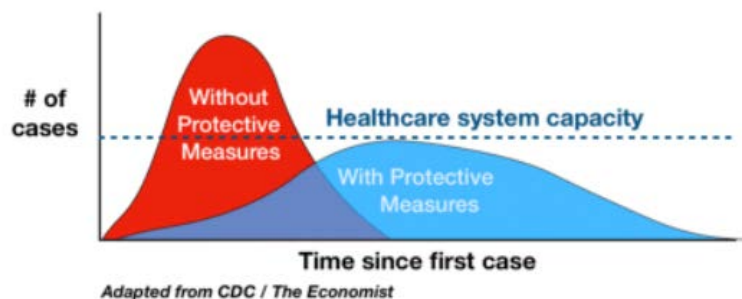
The red curve in the graph models what the U.S. could expect to happen if no public health interventions, such as strict social distancing, were instituted. Cases would spike extremely rapidly, resulting in overwhelming the hospital system. This would put many people at risk

[1] Wilks, S.S. (1951). Undergraduate Statistical Education. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, Vol. 46, No. 253, pp. 1-18.

[2] GAISE College Report ASA Revision Committee, "Guidelines for Assessment and Instruction in Statistics Education College Report 2016," http://www.amstat.org/education/gaise.

[3] New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/article/flatten-curve-coronavirus.html.

of death due to lack of available medical staff and resources. By instituting strict intervention measures, the goal is to flatten the curve so that cases accumulate more slowly, giving the hospital system time to respond. This is a statistical argument; here are two models of what could occur. Which model is more desirable and how do we get there?

On February 28, 2020 the *CBC News* published an article, entitled *'They have changed the course of this outbreak:' Revelations from handling of coronavirus in China*, which demonstrates (in the graphic below) how China's response to the COVID-19 outbreak illustrates how transmission chains — people spreading the infection to others — could be interrupted. [4] The statistically literate citizen, and student, needs to be able to interpret the graphic. The person needs to understand that this is a model of what could occur if we practice social distancing, rapidly hospitalize those who were seriously ill, and restrict movements through the temporary closing of schools and businesses.
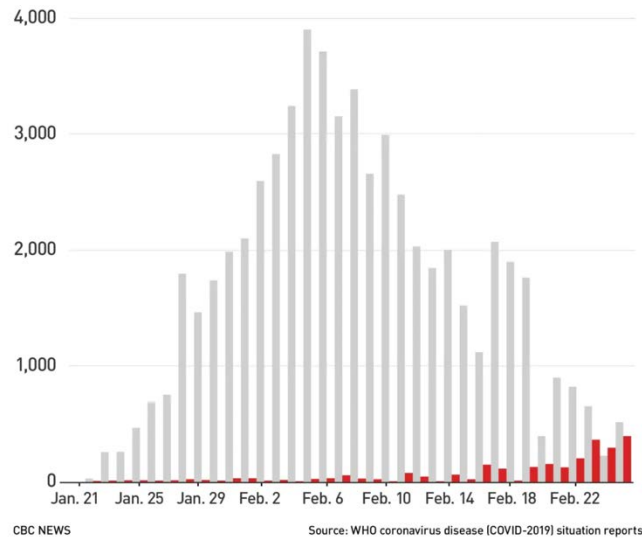
This graph illustrates that the new cases (the grey bars) increased significantly every day from the 21st of January to about the 5th or 6th of February. At that point new cases begin the fall. China had successfully flattened the curve. (Note: The red bars represent the growing number of new cases in the rest of the world.) Being able to interpret this graph and connect it to intervention policies is what data-driven decision-making is all about.
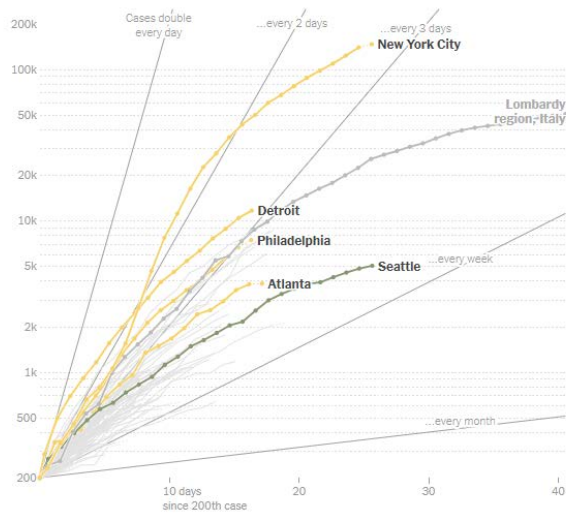
On April 4, 2020 the *New York Times* updated an article entitled *Coronavirus in the U.S.: How Fast It's Growing*, which illustrates (interactively) the daily number of confirmed cases and deaths of COVID-19 in metro areas throughout the US and world. A snapshot of the two graphs is shown below. The numbers are being measured on a logarithmic scale: a straight line means exponential growth, and the steeper a line, the faster the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases (or deaths) is doubling. The graph of number of confirmed cases gives the reader a sense of what's going on right now, as opposed to the graph of the number of deaths, which lags infections by a couple of weeks. The statistically literate citizen needs to be able to interpret the visualizations, but additionally needs to understand that collected data is susceptible to biases. Confirmed case counts are significantly impacted by variable rates of testing due to access to tests and policies related to the administration of tests. As such, case counts are more likely subject to bias simply because of the number of tests that are being performed. However, deaths from the virus are more likely to be counted accurately and are less susceptible to bias.

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[4] Amina Zafar (Feb 28, 2020) 'They have changed the course of this outbreak:' Revelations from handling of coronavirus in China. *CBC News.* https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/covid-19-china-epicurve-1.5479983

Confirmed cases by metro area
for places with at least 200 cases
—— Reported ······ Partial (today)

200k

Cases double
every day   ...every 2 days   ...every 3 days

100k

New York City

50k   Lombardy
                                                             region, Italy

20k

10k   Detroit

5k   Philadelphia   Seattle   ...every week

           Atlanta

2k

1k

500
                                                             ...every month

200

        10 days   20   30   40
        since 200th case

Deaths by metro area
for places with at least 100 deaths

Current doubling time, in days
1   2   3   4   7   30

Deaths double
every day   ...every 2 days   ...every 3 days   Lombardy
                                                           region, Italy

5k

                   New York City

2k

1k   ...every week

500
        Detroit

           New Orleans

        Chicago
200
                                                           ...every month

Los Angeles
100
        10 days   20   30
        since 100th death
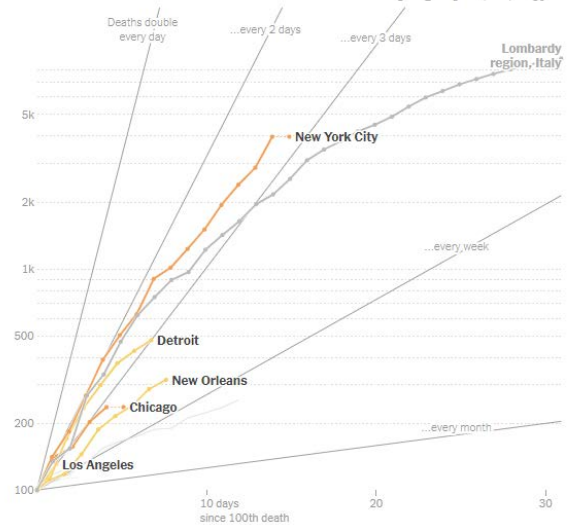
So, what role does statistics play in the COVID-19 crisis? Statistics is the science of collecting, organizing, analyzing, interpreting and presenting data (or information). If our country, or any democracy, wants to effectively combat the spread of this virus, it is critical that our citizens really understand the implications of their own behavior. Statistics is the language through which a convincing argument is presented. But any form of communication is only worthwhile if those receiving the information understand it. In the current crisis social distancing and restricting movements through the temporary closure of schools and businesses requires sacrifice. The willingness to make such sacrifices is more assured when the statistical arguments are fully understood by all citizens. As one might anticipate, statistics plays a similar role in the addressing problems such as climate change, income disparity, and access to health care.

Gaining experience in solving, or attempting to solve, complex problems in multiple areas is an essential component of a liberal education. One benefit of liberal education is that students gain a set of skills or perspectives that transfer to any profession. What policies or candidates are favored, or not as favored, by voters? Survey data help answer that question. How many people live in an area, and what are their demographic characteristics? Census

data help answer that question. What investments over time have resulted in higher levels of return? Data on the value of the investments over time help answer that question. What chronic diseases are prevalent in an area, and what counties have higher prevalence of a disease? Epidemiological data help answer that question. What treatment yields the most desirable outcome? Data from clinical trials or randomized experimental designs help answer that question. What knowledge, abilities or attitudes are more common to certain groups? Psychometric data can help answer that question. Here we see a variety of professional areas where statistics are used to tell a story about a set of data — and hence, about those whom the data represent.

For many of the situations posed in the preceding paragraph, statistics is an invaluable tool in addressing these problems. Statistical methods and tools are applicable to a variety of fields. A quick check of Wikipedia lists 24 areas and fields that apply statistics to various contexts. [5] These include: actuarial science, business analytics (including market research and modeling related to finance and investments), demography (study of fertility, mortality and migration in various populations and their impacts on other components of society), epidemiology, operations research (which uses math and statistics to make decisions related to operation of an industry), psychometrics (which deals with measurement in psychology), and biostatistics (which includes analysis both related to epidemiology and clinical trials for drug testing). Statistics is also a tool in biology, chemistry, engineering, and most of the social sciences. Thanks to the increasing power of the computer for pattern seeking and data analysis, there has been substantial growth in the field of digital humanities. Historians and linguists are talking to statisticians and data scientists in part because the modern computer has enhanced the ability to do textual analysis in ways unheard of years ago. [6]

Statistics often "tells a story" about a data set. As a result, statisticians, data scientists, and practicing professionals who analyze data in their fields need a variety of communication skills. They must not only analyze the data, but they must also summarize the results of that analysis, often to an audience that struggles with quantitative reasoning. To do this effectively, oral and written communication skills that explain difficult concepts concisely, truthfully, clearly, and as free of jargon as possible are necessary tools in the statistician's tool kit. In addition, aided by the continual advance of computing resources, the appropriate and accurate creation of graphs and visualizations that tell the story of the data (which is different from the story behind the data) is even more essential. Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't emphasize that it's critical that any data analyst accurately "tells the story" coming from the data. The audience needs to understand the results of the analysis and how it answers (or does not answer) their burning questions. Because society depends on sound statistical practice, we are committed to employing suitable study designs, applying appropriate statistical methodology without bias and without favoring a predetermined outcome, and the careful delineation of the limitations of one's scientific inquiry.

The development of critical thinking is also a core value upheld by a liberal education, and exploring research hypotheses provides abundant opportunity for critical thinking. To illustrate this point: data does not come from a vacuum; it is always generated within a context. Hence, statisticians and practicing professionals who analyze data in their fields must understand the context, for the context often guides the analysis and interpretation of the data. They must make numerous decisions about the collection, usefulness and veracity of new and/or repurposed data for analysis. Obtaining data raises a host of questions which include: What are ethical ways to obtain data? Does that data accurately represent your population? Does your questionnaire or data gathering procedure obtain data that addresses your research question? Who owns the data that you generate? How do you protect the privacy of subjects in a data frame? Today, questions of privacy, consent, and the global impact of local decisions have are among some of the most important issues for the broad statistical community. Once one has the data, the organizing of the data raises another set of issues: How is more qualitative data handled: Do you leave it as is, do you group it, and how do you group it? What information do you lose by grouping the data or cleaning the data?

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[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fields_of_application_of_statistics
[6] Chad Gaffield (2018). Words, Words, Words: How the Digital Humanities Are Integrating Diverse Research Fields to Study People. *Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application*, Vol. 5:119-139.

Does this organization and "cleaning" of data introduce bias? Again, understanding the context of the data gives guidance in answering those questions. Once the data is cleaned, the next step is the analysis. Does the analysis introduce its own biases? Is the analysis appropriate for the data and the question being asked about the data? Finally, once the analysis is done, there is the summarizing and presenting of the results. What's the clearest way to do this from the audience standpoint, and is the researcher introducing biases? There also must be a sense of humility in our explanations: What are the limitations of the results? What are the assumptions in your model, and are the assumptions valid? Is more being said or deduced from the results than should be? Statisticians must constantly ponder when to speak-up about concerns and when to say silent. Decisions, decisions, decisions!

Many in academia would agree that a solid liberal education includes: the development of logical thinking, solid communication skills, critical and reflective reading skills, the ability to organize and synthesize information and knowledge, the ability to pose meaningful questions and conduct sound research, the exercise of independent judgment, and ethical decision-making. Based on this list, one can argue that the field of statistics touches many of the above areas and, when done well, works synergistically with and complements the professional fields and other areas of the liberal arts. Hence, statistics is an important contributor to a liberal arts education and also serves as a solid bridge between liberal arts education and professional education.

Up to this point, much of this article has focused on how statistical thinking informs effective citizenship and the practice of many professions. But this article would be incomplete if it did not acknowledge that statistics itself is a professional program. A statistics major must not only prepare graduates to collect and analyze data, but must also train statisticians to help those without formal statistical training to make wise decisions, personally and collectively, from data. As Alberts, Kim and Downey (2018) articulated:

> "well-designed statistics courses emphasize not only inquiry, analysis, and critical thinking but the importance of teamwork and communication through frequent projects. More statistics programs are requiring or recommending real life projects that can affect the local and global community. Ethical issues are always very important in statistics especially in studies involving living subjects. Liberal arts education emphasizes broad knowledge and thinking, problem solving, and communication skills – thus it benefits statistics students to understand the need of the community and ethical issues the project may encounter. Finally, a good statistical analysis synthesizes the results in the area of study and find the meaning and general implication of the findings." [7]

Both our undergraduate statistics major and graduate professional science master's program in biostatistics extensively feature the elements described above. Critical thinking within a practical curriculum and a professional setting are integral parts of our programs. The consulting course in our undergraduate program and the mandatory industrial internships in our graduate program require students to apply statistical methods in a professional environment, and these experiences have been successful high-impact learning components of our programs. Reflecting on how our programs infuse professional practice throughout our curriculum, perhaps Alberts, Kim and Downey (2018) are correct when they express that "statistics is not only consistent with the vision of a liberal arts education, but might serve as the exemplar of a modern liberal arts major." [7]

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[7] Alberts, K.S., Kim, H.J. and Downey, J. (2018). Statistics is a liberal arts major. *Tenth International Conference on Teaching Statistics* (ICOTS10). Kyoto, Japan.

University Academic Senate Report 2019-2020
(Report by Felix N. Ngassa, Chair ECS/UAS, 2019-2020)

The University Academic Senate, UAS, is the highest faculty governance body, which has authority to deal with any academic issue or faculty concern. The *modus operandi* of our shared governance process is such that governance policies are developed collaboratively by the UAS and the Provost. Other policies such as the ones approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT Policies) or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT Policies) complement the shared governance policies. At the level of each College and the University Libraries, there are governing bodies that serve as advisory bodies to the respective Deans. The advisory bodies develop policies, consistent with the policies and guidelines established by the UAS, for their various academic units.

The UAS meets on average once a month during the fall and winter semesters; these meetings are always on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Executive Committee of the Senate, ECS, serves as the clearing house for matters to be presented to UAS. As a clearing house, ECS discusses matters first and then makes recommendations that become business items for UAS. ECS meets once a week during the fall and winter semesters, and these meetings are on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. All recommendations from faculty governance to the Provost and/or President, come from the UAS or in some cases from the ECS acting on behalf of the UAS, pursuant to our *Shared Governance Policies*, SG 1.02.3.3.1. In the 2019-2020 academic years, the ECS met seventeen times, while the UAS met eight times. UAS made several recommendations that the Provost approved. Some of these recommendations are still pending approval. In this report, UAS work in the 2019-2020 academic year has been categorized under the following headings: *Policies/Guidelines, Endorsement/Support, Task Forces, Curriculum/New Programs,* and *Presentations.*

I.   Policies/Guidelines

All recommended policies, policy changes, and guidelines were initiated by the standing committees of the senate, or directly by ECS/UAS. Policy changes were mostly on the *Shared Governance Policies* in the Faculty Handbook (FH). UAS acted on the following policies and made recommendations to the Provost.

Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal for the Creation of an Affiliate Complaint Policy: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting the creation of an affiliate complaint policy. The UAS supported AFAC's recommendation for the creation of complaint procedure for non-tenure track faculty for inclusion in *Board of Trustees Policies*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation after adding language regarding complaints of harassment, based on consultation with Legal Counsel and Inclusion & Equity. The Provost will support the proposed changes to the BOT at the February 2020 meeting.

Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal for Affiliate Faculty Mentoring: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting the creation of an affiliate faculty mentoring program. The UAS supported AFAC's recommendation for the creation of an affiliate faculty mentoring program. The Provost supports the idea of creating an affiliate faculty

mentoring program in principle. But, due to ongoing discussions of the process with the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, a formal approval has not been granted at this time.

Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal for the Creation of an Affiliate Workload Plan: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting the creation of an affiliate workload plan for those units that do not have a system for defining expectations for affiliate faculty in the areas of teaching, non-teaching, and other supported activities. The UAS supported AFAC's recommendation for the creation of an affiliate workload plan. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and the draft affiliate workload plan submitted will be available on the Office of the Provost website. In addition, the Provost has asked Associate Vice President Ed Aboufadel to work with the Deans' Offices to ensure compliance with this process.

Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal for Committee Term Change in Faculty Handbook: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting a change to the length of term for faculty members elected to the AFAC. The UAS supported AFAC's recommendation for the change to the length of term for faculty members elected to the AFAC. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the change to the *Shared Governance Policies*.

Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal for Term Expiration Changes for AFAC Members: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting term expiration changes for elected members of AFAC. The UAS supported AFAC's recommendation for term expiration changes for elected AFAC members. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the change effective immediately.

Academic Policy and Standards Committee (APSC) Memo on Temporary Academic Policy for COVID-19 Emergency: In response to the emergency situation caused by COVID-19 that resulted in the overall conversion of face to face instruction to remote instruction, APSC made some recommendations for temporary academic policy. The ECS, acting on behalf of UAS, pursuant to SG 1.01.3.3.1, supported APSC's recommendation on *Temporary Academic Policy for COVID-19 Emergency*. The Provost approved ECS recommendation, effective immediately.

Academic Policy and Standards Committee (APSC) Memo on Academic Forgiveness Policy for Eligible Undergraduate Students in Good Standing: We reviewed a new policy proposal from the APSC on *Academic Forgiveness for Eligible Undergraduate Students in Good Standing*. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation on *Academic Forgiveness Policy for Eligible Undergraduate Students in Good Standing*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Academic Policy and Standards Committee (APSC) Memo on Academic Forgiveness Policy for Undergraduate Students Dismissed, in Jeopardy of Dismissal, or on Probation: We reviewed a new policy proposal from the APSC on *Academic Forgiveness for Undergraduate Students Dismissed, in Jeopardy of Dismissal, or on Probation*. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation on *Academic Forgiveness Policy for Undergraduate Students Dismissed, in Jeopardy of Dismissal, or on Probation*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) Memo on the Creation of the GVSU Ombuds Position: Following the announcement in January on the creation of an Ombuds Office for GVSU by President Mantella, EIC made some recommendations with some specific attributes they would like considered for the GVSU Ombuds Office Charter. The UAS supported EIC's recommendation on the *Creation of the GVSU Ombuds Position*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Memo on Systems of Reporting: We reviewed recommendations from FFPAC that was in response to a charge from ECS to create resources that help faculty and staff understand how to use the systems of reporting. The UAS supported FFPAC's recommendation on *Systems of Reporting*. The Provost

approved UAS recommendation.

Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Memo on Automobile Charging Stations: We reviewed recommendations from FFPAC that was in response to a charge from ECS to consider the feasibility of adding more automobile charging stations on all campuses and make recommendations commensurate with findings. The UAS supported FFPAC's recommendation on *Automobile Charging Stations*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Memo on Security and Police Booth Locations: We reviewed recommendations from FFPAC that was in response to a request from Student Senate to investigate how the location of security and police booths on all campuses is communicated and make recommendations as needed based on findings. The UAS supported FFPAC's recommendation on *Security and Police Booth Locations*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on Emergency Recommendations for Teaching Evaluations, Faculty Service, Faculty Scholarly/Creative Work, and Tenure Clock: In response to the emergency situation caused by COVID-19 that resulted in the overall conversion of face to face instruction to remote instruction, FPPC made some emergency recommendations on the following: Student Impressions of Teaching; Faculty Service Work; Faculty Scholarly and Creative Work; Option of Pausing the Tenure Clock. The ECS, acting on behalf of UAS, pursuant to SG 1.01.3.3.1, supported FPPC's recommendation on *Emergency Recommendations for Teaching Evaluations, Faculty Service, Faculty Scholarly/Creative Work, and Tenure Clock*. The Provost approved ECS recommendation, effective immediately.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on Reassigned Time: We reviewed a proposal from FPPC, which was a recommendation for Faculty Handbook Language (SG 3.03) on a policy for reassigned time for Chairs of University Committees. The UAS supported FPPC's recommendation to *Revise SG 3.03 and Add Section 3.03A to SG 3.03*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on Proposal to Revise SG 3.01.C and BOT 4.2.5: We reviewed a proposal from the FPPC regarding the revision of *SG 3.01.C and BOT 4.2.5*. The UAS supported FPPC's recommendation on *Revision to SG 3.01.C and BOT 4.2.5*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Memo on Evaluation of Teaching: We reviewed a proposal from the FPPC regarding the *Evaluation of Teaching*, which will modify BOT 4.2.9. and SG 3.01. The proposal defines Peer Review as consisting of examination of a course dossier and in-class observations for one course. The UAS supported FPPC's recommendation on *Evaluation of Teaching*, which will modify BOT 4.2.9 and SG 3.01. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the implementation of a pilot in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Graduate Council (GC) Memo on Policy for Culminating Experience Projects (CEP): We reviewed a proposal from GC on establishing a Culminating Experience Projects (CEP) policy for graduate students. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and approved the requested addition to the *Graduate Education Policies and Procedures Manual* to be effective immediately.

Graduate Council (GC) Memo on Policy for Uniform Course Numbering System: We reviewed the recommendation from the GC on a *Policy for Uniform Course Numbering System*. With the expansion in the number of doctoral programs and use of curricular mapping at GVSU, there is need for clarity on the descriptive text for graduate level courses in the Uniform Course Numbering System. The UAS supported GC's recommendation on *Policy for Uniform Course Numbering System*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation. The new policy will appear in the University Catalog and the Graduate Education Policies and Procedures Manual.

Graduate Council (GC) Memo on Policy for Converting Professional Learning into Graduate Credit: We reviewed the recommendation from the GC on a *Policy for Converting Professional Learning into Graduate Credit*. This policy offers an opportunity for graduate students to receive graduate credit for abilities they have acquired through non-credit courses, structured, non-credit professional development programs, and professional work experiences. The UAS supported GC's recommendation on *Policy for Converting Professional Learning into Graduate Credit*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation. The new policy will appear in the University Catalog and the Graduate Policy Handbook.

Graduate Council (GC) Memo on Policy for Converting Micro-Credentials into Graduate Degree Credit: We reviewed the recommendation from the GC on a *Policy for Converting Micro-Credentials into Graduate Degree Credit*. The concept of "stackable badges or certificates" has the potential to allow graduate students to use credits taken while completing a micro-credential towards a graduate degree. The UAS supported GC's recommendation on *Policy for Converting Micro-Credentials into Graduate Degree Credit*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation. The new policy will appear in the University Catalog and the Graduate Policy Handbook.

General Education Committee (GEC) Changes to Assessment Cycle (SG 1.02): We reviewed a proposal from the GEC regarding changes to Shared Governance Policies as it relates to the general education program assessment cycle. In the proposal, the wording in our *Shared Governance Policies* (SG 1.02.f.iv.e and SG 1.02.f.iv.e.3) were changed to reflect a move from three-year cycle to four-year cycle. The UAS supported GEC's recommendation to change SG 1.02.f.iv.e and SG 1.02.f.iv.e.3. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the change effective in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Laker Impression of Faculty Teaching (LIFT) Management Committee Membership: We reviewed a proposal from the LIFT Management Committee requesting revision to *Shared Governance Policies* language dealing with the LIFT-MC membership (SG 1.03.B.6.i). The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the change effective immediately.

Laker Impression of Faculty Teaching (LIFT) Management Committee Reporting: We reviewed a proposal from the LIFT Management Committee requesting revision to *Shared Governance Policies* language dealing with the LIFT-MC reporting (SG 1.03.B.6.iv). The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the change effective immediately.

Online Education Council (OEC) Memo on Online/Hybrid Course and Program Proposal Review Process: It is anticipated that the volume of proposals for online/hybrid courses and program offerings will continue to increase. It is therefore important that faculty who are specifically experienced in online/hybrid teaching pedagogies and practices be involved in the review of course and program proposals with a focus on online/hybrid teaching and learning. The UAS supported OEC's recommendation on *Online/Hybrid Course and Program Proposal Review Process*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Online Education Council (OEC) Memo on Chair Position, Overall Membership Composition, and Responsibilities of OEC: ECS had charged OEC to make appropriate recommendations specifically about the committee chair position as well as the overall membership composition. Upon consultation, both OEC and UCC recommended that the Chair of OEC be chosen from faculty serving on the OEC. This is different from the current practice of the UCC Chair serving as both the Chair of OEC and UCC. OEC also recommended a change in the overall membership composition and responsibilities of the council. The UAS supported OEC's recommendation on *Chair Position, Overall Membership Composition, and Responsibilities of the OEC*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Online Education Council (OEC) Memo on Pilot Micro-Credential Approval Process Proposal: We reviewed a proposal from OEC to modify the OEC membership and purpose to become the Online Education and Micro-credential Council (OEMC). According to this proposal, OEMC will deal with any changes in delivery and delivery-related changes in packaging or bundling of courses around micro-credentials. OEMC will not approve new

curriculum; new coursework would continue to be routed through the regular curricular process. The proposal is for a two-year pilot of the OEMC and OEMC would request that ECS/UAS provide charges to report on and monitor the effectiveness of the pilot. The UAS supported OEC's recommendation on *Modifying the OEC Membership and Purpose to become the OEMC for a Two-Year Pilot.* The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Revisions to Shared Governance Policies 1.01, 1.02, 1.03, and 2.05: We reviewed proposed changes to *Shared Governance Policies* 1.01, 1.02, 1.03, and 2.05 that came from within ECS (SG 1.01, 1.02, 1.03 and 2.05). These changes were necessary to make our *Shared Governance Policies* clear and easy to understand, while also responding to substantial changes to our bylaws done by the Senate Bylaws Evaluation (SEBLEV) Task Force. The recommendation from UAS was approved by the Provost and the changes were made effective immediately.

Cleanup of Research Policies in Faculty Handbook: We reviewed research policies in the Faculty Handbook (FH) and the *Senior Leadership Team* (SLT) *Policies*. Accordingly, UAS recommended the addition of some existing *SLT Policies* to the curation of the regular FH under the "Research Policies" section. The Provost approved UAS recommendation and supported the change effective immediately.

II.   Endorsements/Support

Under the responsibilities of the UAS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies* (SG 1.01.2.4), UAS may vote to express its endorsement of policies, events, and initiatives that support and advance the university's mission and values. For the 2019-2020 academic year, UAS either endorsed or supported the following initiatives.

Endorsement of MLK Commemoration Week: We reviewed and discussed the 2020 weeklong celebration to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, MLK Commemoration Week. UAS unanimously endorsed the 2020 MLK Commemoration Week and encouraged all faculty to participate in the scheduled events, as they are able.

Endorsement of Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey for 2020: We reviewed and discussed the participation of faculty in the HERI national survey for 2020. UAS unanimously endorsed the participation of faculty in this national survey and acknowledged that the university stands to gain valuable information from the national survey.

Endorsement of Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Recommendation on Annual Salary Adjustment for 2020-2021: We reviewed and discussed the FSBC recommendation on annual salary adjustment for the 2020-2021 academic year. FSBC's recommended goal is to "maintain or enhance our position relative to peers." UAS overwhelmingly endorsed FSBC's recommendation on the annual salary adjustment goal for 2020-2021.

Support of Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Recommendation on the Definition of Effective Teaching and the Differentiation of Effective and Excellent Teaching: We reviewed and discussed FPPC's recommendation on the proposed definition for effective teaching as well as the differentiation between effective and excellent teaching. UAS unanimously supported FPPC's recommendation on the proposed definition for effective teaching and the differentiation between effective and excellent teaching.

Support of Student Senate Resolution on the Creation of Prayer/Meditation Center (Interfaith Reflection Spaces): We reviewed and discussed a resolution from Student Senate requesting Prayer/Meditation Center at CHS. UAS modified the resolution and unanimously supported the creation of Prayer/Meditation Centers at each of the three GVSU campuses. Upon consultation with Legal Counsel and Inclusion & Equity, the new designation will be Interfaith Reflection Spaces.

Support of Student Senate Resolution on Opposing the Grand River Waterway Project: We reviewed and discussed a resolution from Student Senate on Opposing the Grand River

Waterway Project. UAS modified the resolution and unanimously supported Opposing the Grand River Waterway Project. This project has since been halted by the Department of Natural Resources.

Endorsement of Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Recommendation on Summer Salary for 2020: We reviewed the recommendation from the FSBC that the one-year pilot, low enrollment thresholds used for summer 2019 be continued for summer 2020. The UAS supported FSBC's recommendation on *Summer Salary for 2020*. The Provost approved UAS recommendation.

Support of Student Senate Resolution on Creating a Repository of Syllabi: We reviewed previous action that was taken by ECS on February17, 2017 on the *Student Senate Resolution on Creating a Repository of Syllabi*. APSC will be charged in 2020-2021 with exploring the idea of creating a repository of syllabi.

Support of Student Senate Resolution on In-person Examination on Election Day: We reviewed previous action that was taken by ECS on February 15, 2019 on the *Student Senate Resolution on In-person Examination on Election Day*. APSC will be charged in 2020-2021 with exploring the idea of recommending a policy for in-person examination on election day.

Support of Student Senate Resolution on Rescheduling Exams During Finals Week If Student has 3 or More Exams: We reviewed previous action that was taken by ECS on February 15, 2019 on the *Student Senate Resolution on Rescheduling Exams During Finals Week If Student has 3 or More Exams*. APSC will be charged in 2020-2021 with exploring the idea of recommending a policy for rescheduling exams during final examination week if a student has 3 or more exams.

III.   Task Forces

When confronted with issues that need focused attention, broad representation and results within a short time frame, ECS/UAS creates task forces to deal with these issues. For the 2019-2020 academic year, there were three task forces: (1) Gendered Language Evaluation (GLEV) Task Force; (2) Consensual Relationship (CONREP) Task Force; and (3) Faculty Climate, Equity, and Inclusion (FaCE In) Task Force.

GLEV Task Force: The GLEV Task Force was created during the ECS retreat in Spring/Summer 2019. The role of GLEV was to include inclusive language and eliminate gendered language in University Policies including *Shared Governance Policies*, *Senior Leadership Team Policies*, and *Board of Trustees Policies*. GLEV completed its work and submitted its final report that was reviewed by UAS on September 27, 2019. UAS unanimously supported the recommendation from the GLEV Task Force. The Provost approved the recommendation from UAS. Furthermore, the Provost has charged Associate Vice President Ed Aboufadel to work closely with Vice President Tom Butcher to ensure that appropriate changes are reviewed and supported by the necessary approving bodies and ultimately reflected in the relevant policies.

CONREP Task Force: The CONREP Task Force was created during the ECS retreat in Spring/Summer 2019. The task force was formed to "examine University Policy (SLT 9.2), in light of the Mission, Vision, and Values of the University, and propose possible revisions to the said policy." The task force completed its work and submitted its final report to ECS, which was discussed at the ECS meeting of December 6, 2019. UAS reviewed and unanimously supported the recommendation from the CONREP Task Force. The Provost approved the recommendation from UAS.

FaCE In Task Force: During the last ECS meeting for the fall semester, December 6, 2019, ECS unanimously approved the creation of the FaCE In Task Force. The goal of the task force is to address equity, inclusion, and campus climate concerns of faculty. The task force is charged with the following: (1) submitting a report that outlines the problem; (2) communicating the role of faculty in addressing the problem; (3) summarizing current

faculty efforts to address equity, inclusion, and campus climate issues; and (4) recommending specific action steps that faculty can take to further address any identified concerns based on current efforts and their outcomes. The work of the task force is ongoing.

IV.   Curriculum/New Programs

The Governance Procedure for establishment of a new program involves two stages: (1) The Prospectus for a New Program, and (2) The Proposal for a New Program. The New Program/New Academic Unit Council (SG 1.03.B.13) met and approved three new program prospectuses. The following prospectuses were approved by the NP/NAU Council: (1) New Program Prospectus for Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology; (2) New Program Prospectus for Bachelor of Science in Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences; (3) New Program Prospectus for Bachelor of Applied Studies. As called for in the Procedure for Establishment of Additional Units or Programs, the Provost has created task forces for the development of the proposals. The Council for New Programs and New Academic Units also approved a proposal for the expansion of the Integrative Studies Program that is offered in the Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies (IRIS) unit.

V.   Presentations

We continued our senate tradition of inviting different campus authorities to give a presentation followed by discussions on topics that are relevant and of interest to faculty, staff and students. This academic year, there were presentations and discussions on the following topics.

Presentation Topic	Presenter(s)
Effective Meetings	Christine Rener
GVSU Bookstore Services	Tony Glaab
Data Loss Prevention (DLP)	Sue Korzinek & Chris Voorheis
Campus Diversity	Ed Aboufadel
Affordable Course Materials: Cengage	Jared Moore
LIFT-MC Final Report for 2017-2018	Paul Sicilian & Meg Woller-Skar
Benefits/Wellness/Work Life	Tara Bivens/Lindsey DesArmo/ Elisa Salazar
Campus Climate Survey	Kathleen VanderVeen
Housing/Residence Life/Laker Experience	Andy Beachnau & Colleen Lindsay-Bailey
Campus Dining/Nutrition	Doug Wentworth/Deb Rambadt/ Chris Uhl
UL Changes to Open Access Fund	Annie Bélanger/Jeff Daniels
Land Acknowledgement	Andrea Mukavetz/Simone Jonaitis/ Lin Bardwell
Emergency Locks in Classrooms	Brandon DeHaan
Research Administration	Bob Smart
University Budget	Greg Sanial
New Virtual Mentoring Initiative	Dana Munk
Updated Graduate Exit Survey	Jeff Potteiger