

Grand Valley State University Women's Commission Mission

The mission of Grand Valley State University's (GVSU) Women's Commission, formed in 1996, is to advocate for all women on campus by acting on their issues and by promoting equity and social justice, ever conscious of the intersection of race, class, gender, and orientation.

Annual Summary

2016-2017, the 20th anniversary of the Women's Commission, was a year of both growth and stability. The leadership team was comprised of both new and returning Commission members who worked toward continued success of our flagship programs including the Fall Welcome, Mentoring Reception, Celebrating Women Awards, and the HerStory series. We brought women together around engaging topics for two installments of our Conscious Conversations, hosting one of these conversations on the Pew Campus for the first time. The most notable achievement for the Commission this year was the launch of a campus-wide Family Leave Task Force. In addition to the approximately eighteen core members of the Commission, the Task Force expands the reach of the Commission with more than a dozen individuals serving on the Task Force.

2016-17 Commission Leadership Team and Core Membership

Leadership Team:

Commission Co-Chair: Kristen Evans, Housing and Residence Life

Commission Co-Chair: Jennifer Palm, The Graduate School

Treasurer: Keri Becker, Athletics

Advocacy Co-Chair: Casey Thelenwood, Center for Educational Partnerships

Advocacy Co-Chair: Samantha Minnis, University Libraries

Events Chair: Jenna Vanner, University Libraries

Core Membership:

Katie Barnhart, Department of Public Health

Chelsea Brehm, Department of Movement Science

Cassonya Carter, Kirkhof College of Nursing

Yumi Jakobcic, Office of Sustainability

Kelsey Martin, University Counseling Center

Lisa Miller, Center for Adult & Continuing Studies (MI-ACE Rep)

Christine Rener, Pew Faculty Teaching & Learning Center

Carol Sanchez, Seidman College of Business (MI-ACE Rep)

Alexis Schewe, Student Academic Success Center

Ashley Schulte, Center for Women and Gender Equity (Liaison)

Kathleen Vanderveen, Division of Inclusion and Equity (Liaison)

Meghan Veltri, Career Center

2016-17 Meeting Schedule

- Thursday, September 15, 4pm, Kirkhof 1142
- Thursday, October 13, 4pm, DeVos 302E
- Thursday, November 11, 4pm, Kirkhof 1142

- Thursday, December 8, 4pm, DeVos 302E
- Thursday, January 12, 4pm, Kirkhof 1142
- Thursday, February 9, 4pm, DeVos 302E
- Thursday, March 16, 4pm, Kirkhof 1142
- Thursday, April 13, 4pm, DeVos 302E

2016-17 Events & Programs

Annual Fall Welcome

The 19th annual fall welcome, held on September 22, 2016 allowed the Women's Commission to recognize the past successes of the group and look toward the future. The luncheon, attended by approximately 100 faculty and staff members, featured an uplifting keynote address by **Lee VanOrsdel**, retiring Dean of University Libraries, who shared an inspiring and comical chronicle of her growth as a young woman and professional, sharing advice including "be patient but firm; be encouraging but tough, and be receptive to input but commanding". This annual kickoff event offers the campus community a reminder that there is an avenue for discussion and advocacy around issues faced by faculty and staff on campus.

GVSU Strategic Plan and Inclusion & Equity Strategic Plan, Framework & Funding Priority Connections:

- Inclusion & Campus Climate – Student, Faculty, Staff Achievement & Success
- Learning & Development – Leadership Development
- Intersectional Approach – Gender, Age, First Generation Status

Collaborations & Co-Sponsorships:

- N/A

Mentoring Reception

The fifth annual Mentoring Reception, held on November 16, was attended by approximately 50 GVSU faculty and staff members and featured the powerful stories of **Keri Becker, Diane Green-Smith, Kelley Monterusso, and Ellen Schendel**. This event offers a comfortable yet professional environment for socialization and networking as well as a platform for accomplished women at GVSU to share insight and advice for newer professionals. Attendees were encouraged to continue conversations and develop relationships with the mentors featured in the panel.

GVSU Strategic Plan and Inclusion & Equity Strategic Plan, Framework & Funding Priority Connections:

- Inclusion & Campus Climate – Student, Faculty, Staff Achievement & Success
- Learning & Development – Leadership Development
- Intersectional Approach – Gender, Age, First Generation Status, Race and Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Veteran/Military Status, Religion and Faith/Spirituality

Collaborations & Co-Sponsorships:

- N/A

Celebrating Women Awards

Continuing the tradition which began with the Maxine Swanson award in 1998, the Women's Commission hosted the Celebrating Women Awards ceremony on March 30 which included contributions by Positive Black Women, Center for Women and Gender Equity, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. The event focused on recognizing the outstanding impact of faculty, staff and students promoting positive social change on campus and in their communities. Special

recognition was featured for **Sue Sloop** and the Lifetime Achievement Award presented to **Provost Davis**. 130 faculty, staff, and students attended to celebrate the award winners including:

- **Unsung Hero Award – Autumn Gorsline-Davis**, Modern Language and Literatures
Presented to an individual who may not be well known by the general public but who goes above and beyond to improve the lives of faculty, staff and students
- **Maxine Swanson Award – Jennifer Palm**, Graduate Studies
Presented to an individual who has provided leadership in support of the rights of women at Grand Valley State University
- **Women's Community Impact Award – Allison Ford**, Club Sports
Presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions for the advancement of women at GVSU and in the community via contributions as a professional, volunteer, or agent of change

GVSU Strategic Plan and Inclusion & Equity Strategic Plan, Framework & Funding Priority Connections:

- Inclusion & Campus Climate – Student, Faculty, Staff Achievement & Success
- Learning & Development – Leadership Development
- Intersectional Approach – Gender

Collaborations & Co-Sponsorships:

- Positive Black Women
- Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Center for Women and Gender Equity
- Children's Enrichment Center

HerStory

The HerStory series, a tradition created by the Women's Center and now facilitated by the Women's Commission, offers an opportunity for the GVSU community to hear the authentic stories of women in leadership positions and the experiences that motivated them to success. More than 50 women have shared their stories via the HerStory series since it began in 2003. The 2016-17 series featured:

- **Takeelia Garrett**, Student Ombuds (October 20, 2016)
- **Suzeanne Benet**, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs (January 18, 2017)
- **Melanie Shell-Weiss**, Director of the Kutsche Office of Local History (February 23, 2017)

GVSU Strategic Plan and Inclusion & Equity Strategic Plan, Framework & Funding Priority Connections:

- Inclusion & Campus Climate – Student, Faculty, Staff Achievement & Success
- Learning & Development – Leadership Development
- Intersectional Approach – Gender, Age, First Generation Status, Race and Ethnicity, Religion and Faith/Spirituality

Collaborations & Co-Sponsorships:

- N/A

Conscious Conversations

The Commission continued the Conscious Conversation series, started in 2014-2015. These well-attended interactive lunchtime discussions around topics related to women's issues promote the oneness of women from all cultures and provides a safe environment for diverse women from across campus to better understand each other in an attempt to foster new meaningful relationships.

- **Family Leave** – November 30, 2016
- **Kin-Keeping, the Second Shift, and Invisible Work** – April 27, 2017

GVSU Strategic Plan and Inclusion & Equity Strategic Plan, Framework & Funding Priority Connections:

- Inclusion & Campus Climate – Student, Faculty, Staff Achievement & Success
- Intersectional Approach – Gender, Age, Sexual orientation, Disability status/varying abilities, Socio-economic status

Collaborations & Co-Sponsorships:

- N/A

Family Leave Task Force

The Commission Advocacy Co-Chairs committed to looking at family leave policy for 2016-2017. The work began with a Conscious Conversation around family leave in the Fall semester in which University stakeholders and advocates who had previously worked on family and maternity leave policy form were personally invited to continue the work as part of the Women's Commission Family Leave Task Force. The Task Force met twice during the Winter semester and will continue to work throughout 2017-2018 and beyond. The initial project of the Task Force is to author policy recommendations focused on equivalent leave benefits for fathers, partners, and adoptive parents with the goal of those recommendations being supported by the greater Affinity Group Council and then sent to the President's Cabinet.

2016-17 Projects and Initiatives

By-laws: The Women's Commission reviewed and updated the group's By-laws to better reflect current practice and growth of the organization.

Climate Study: Members of the Women's Commission contributed to the work of the three Climate Study Action Teams.

Kristen Evans and **Lisa Miller** are serving on the staff action team, **Keri Becker** on the student action team, and **Carol Sanchez** on the faculty action team.

Commission Awareness: The Commission grew in membership in 2016-2017 with new members noting a particular interest in participating in advocacy efforts.

MI-ACE: The Women's Commission sponsored one Commission member, **Ashley Schulte**, to attend the 2017 MI-ACE Conference. Additionally, the Commission Co-Chairs worked with **Marlene Kowalski-Braun** and **Maria Cimtile** to recruit new MI-ACE representative candidates.

Subcommittees: The Women's Commission will implemented subcommittees to further the work of the commission on campus.

2016-17 Partnerships and Collaborations

Children's Enrichment Center (CEC): The Commission continued the tradition of featuring centerpieces made by students at the Children's Enrichment Center at the annual Celebrating Women Awards. The Commission maintains a strong partnership with the Children's Enrichment Center and continues to advocate for the development, growth, and expansion of the offerings of the Enrichment Center.

Human Resources: The Commission began participation in the information fair at new employee orientations and also had a presence at the GVSU Baby Shower Human Resources event. Additionally, Commission leadership team members met with Natalie Trent and Sue Sloop of HR to discuss the goals and work of the Commission's Family Leave Task Force.

Inclusion & Equity: The Commission continued participation on the Affinity Group Council and also had representation on the student, staff, and faculty Climate Study Action Teams. Additionally, the Commission formalized the role of the Inclusion & Equity liaison in an update to the Commission Bylaws.

MI-ACE: The Commission continued involvement with Michigan's American Council on Education Network, an organization committed to identifying, developing the leadership of, advancing, and supporting the retention of women in higher education throughout the state. The Commission maintained regular communication with the MI-ACE representatives, Lisa Miller and Carol Sanchez, and sponsored one attendee for the annual MI-ACE Network conference in June.

Positive Black Women: Members of the Commission, Positive Black Women, Women and Gender & Sexuality Studies, and the Center for Women and Gender Equity came together for a potluck luncheon in December to get to know each other and talk about future collaboration opportunities. In addition, the Commission sponsors the annual Celebrating Women Awards which honors the annual Positive Black Women scholarship recipients.

Gayle R. Davis Center for Women and Gender Equity: The Commission formalized the role of the Center for Women and Gender Equity liaison in an update to the Commission Bylaws.

Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies: Members of the Commission, Positive Black Women, Women and Gender & Sexuality Studies, and the Center for Women and Gender Equity came together for a potluck luncheon in December to get to know each other and talk about future collaboration opportunities. In addition, the Commission sponsors the annual Celebrating Women Awards which honors the annual Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies award recipients.

2016-17 Budget and Expenditures

Expense Type	Projected Amount	Actual Amount
15-16 Carry Over	\$971.90	\$971.90
16-17 Budget Allocation	\$5,228.10	\$6,450.19
Fall Welcome	\$2,700.00	\$2,076.24
Mentoring Reception	\$700.00	\$1,048.85*
Celebrating Women Awards	\$1,750.00	\$1,643.62
Her Story	\$300.00	\$150.00
MI-ACE	\$500.00	\$501.54
Misc. Meeting Expenses & Supplies	\$250.00	\$463.41**
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,200.00	\$5,883.66

*Alcohol expense transferred from Provost Office to Commission

**Includes University Photography cost of \$220.25 and Conscious Conversation refreshment costs of \$108.91

2017-18 Budget and Expenditure Projections

Annual Programs	
Fall Welcome	\$2,700.00
Mentoring Reception	\$1,200.00*
Celebrating Women Awards	\$1,800.00
Sponsorships	
Her Story	\$300.00
MI-ACE Conference	\$600.00
Meeting and Retreat Costs	
Family Leave Task Force	\$200.00
Conscious Conversations	\$200.00
Misc Meeting, Retreat & Supply Costs	\$500.00**
Total Projected Expenses	\$7,500.00
Less 16-17 Carry-Over	\$1,538.43
TOTAL REQUEST	\$5,961.57

*Increase in cost budgeted as funding of alcohol has transitioned to Commission (vs. Provost Office)

**Increase in cost budgeted due to requirement to utilize on campus catering for meetings

2017-18 Projects and Initiatives

Family Leave Task Force: The Women's Commission advocacy committee will continue to lead the Family Leave Task Force effort, with the goal of submitting recommendations endorsed by UAS, PSS Union, AP Committee, and all Affinity Groups to University Administration at the end of Winter 2018 semester.

"Now More Than Ever: Newsletter: The Commission will begin distributing a monthly electronic newsletter in September 2017.

Assessment: Utilizing attendance numbers, website analytics, program evaluations, and newsletter reach, the Commission will create a new committee focused on Commission assessment.

MI-ACE: The Women's Commission seeks to sponsor participation in the 2017 MI-ACE Conference and build a stronger partnership with GVSU ACE representatives.

Collaborations:

- Inclusion & Equity: A dedicated Inclusion & Equity representative (Kathleen Vanderveen) will sit on the Commission and serve as the official liaison between the two.

- Center for Women and Gender Equity: A dedicated Center for Women and Gender Equity representative (Ashley Schulte) will sit on the Commission and serve as the official liaison between the two.
- Positive Black Women: The Women's Commission will continue to grow a partnership with the Positive Black Women organization which may include the co-sponsorship of a HerStory and/or Conscious Conversation installment.
- Affinity Groups: A Commission representative will continue to participate in the Affinity Group Council and seek opportunities for collaboration with additional Affinity Groups.
- Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies: The Women's Commission will work with the Women, Gender & Sexuality studies department in the recognition of outstanding faculty, staff, and students via the Celebrating Women Awards.

2017-18 Commission Leadership Team and Core Membership

- Commission Co-Chairs: Kristen Evans & Jenn Palm
- Advocacy Co-Chairs: TBD
- Events Co-Chairs: Kelsey Martin & Jenna Vanner
- Treasurer: Keri Becker
- Women's Center Liaison: Ashley Schulte
- Inclusion & Equity Liaison: Kathleen Vanderveen

2017-18 Meeting Schedule

The Women's Commission will meet monthly from September through May, alternating between the Allendale and Pew campus. A virtual meeting option will be available for members to participate from offsite. Meetings are held at 3:00pm on Thursdays.

- 9/17/17—KC 1142
- 10/12/17—302E Devos
- 11/9/17—KC 1142
- 12/14/17—302E Devos
- 1/11/18—KC 1142
- 2/8/18—302E Devos
- 3/8/18—KC 1142
- 4/12/18—302E Devos

2017-18 Events and Programs

Fall Welcome: September 19

Mentoring Reception: November 16

Celebrating Women Awards: March 29

Her Story: TBD

Conscious Conversation: TBD