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Colleagues:

As we approach the end of the year, many of us may be feeling a sense of disconnection. On the one hand, the past few months seem to have passed remarkably quickly, and suddenly we find ourselves in December. On the other, the scope of our work and accomplishments clearly reflects a full and productive semester.

With that in mind, I am grateful for the opportunity to recognize the many ways you have advanced our college over these past months. Thank you—and well done—to the organizers, participants, and attendees of our <u>CECI QuickTalks</u> event on November 20, which reaffirmed the human-centered commitment of our disciplines. A special thank-you to Mary Bair, BK Choi, Lynnea Santoya, Rita Cooper, and Victoria Stubbs for their excellent leadership in planning the event.

It was also a pleasure to see the faculty and staff who attended commencement to celebrate our students' achievements. For those unable to attend, a list of our graduating students is available in the digital yearbook.



Finally, last week I had the distinct privilege of meeting with two of our students and the generous donors who provided their scholarships. It is always inspiring to spend time with those who invest in our students and to be reminded of their deep commitment to supporting success across our programs.

Thank you once again for your commitment and contributions throughout this semester. It is an honor to work alongside such dedicated colleagues, and I look forward to continuing our meaningful work together in the new year.

~Sherril CECI Dean

Giving Tuesday Replenish Food Drive

RESULTS

The Replenish Food Drive was wildly successful, which puts our GVSU community in a better spot than it was before.

Thank you all so, so much for your consideration and contributions to this important initiative. Replenish, and CACC, express their gratitude for your generosity this season.

BY THE NUMBERS



A total of **7,000 items** were generously donated, showcasing the GVSU community's commitment to supporting its students in need.

The goal was set at the start of the drive to reach 3,000 total items donated. Thanks to your collective efforts, that goal was more than doubled!





992 items donated by CECI alone reflects ongoing support for the cause, highlighting the importance of community involvement.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A

CECI Unit Spotlight





For the past 30 years GVSU has been offering a master's degree in higher education, and this milestone was not lost on the <u>M.A. in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESAA) program</u>. In October, the HESAA program celebrated their anniversary one of the only ways they knew how: with an abundance of cupcakes and a college mascot in the beating heart of the Allendale campus.

Thirty years of legacy wasn't the only item on the celebratory agenda, however. This fall marks the first semester of the brand new HESAA program. Prior to HESAA, the master's degree program offered two concentrations, one in College Student Affairs Leadership (CSAL) and the other in Adults in Higher Education (AHE). The former CSAL concentration catered to full-time students pursuing a career in higher education and student affairs, while the former AHE concentration was built for part-time students already working full time in the field. The new HESAA program maintains its commitment to both full-time and part-time students but features a revamped curriculum that requires the same core courses as well as supervised practical experiences from all students, regardless of enrollment status.

The HESAA program, nestled within the **Educational Leadership and Counseling (ELC)** unit, prepares students to become effective practitioner educators who pursue various administrative roles in higher education contexts, facilitate student learning and promote student success, and shape inclusive higher education communities. Graduates of the HESAA program are prepared to work in a variety of areas such as admissions, student orientation, housing, academic advising, financial aid, inclusion and equity, and international affairs. All three full-time faculty (Drs. Paul Bylsma, Laila McCloud, and Karyn Rabourn) have terminal degrees, professional experience, and active scholarly agendas in the field. The program also employs adjunct instructors who inject a fresh breath of cutting-edge practical insights into the program's robust curricular options.

Courses offered in the HESAA program range from the foundational (e.g., Proseminar in Higher Ed and Student Affairs) to the theoretical (Affect and Emotion in Higher Ed and Student Affairs) to the practical (Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Ed and Student Affairs). This range of courses allows students (and faculty) to establish themselves as members of a distinct profession, explore concepts and ideas that engage both mind and heart, and practice the clinical skills and competencies needed to properly support student learning. Regardless of the course, however, students can be found actively engaging with/in their education. The three-hour weekly courses are filled with group work, problem- and project-based learning, guest speakers, and even field trips. The HESAA faculty holds their students accountable to the elevated academic standards that graduate study demands, and the students consistently meet their faculty (and the students' own) very high expectations.



While not many students enter college knowing that they want to work as a higher education administrator or student affairs practitioner, the profession is an intuitive continuation of many undergraduate majors. Students with undergraduate degrees in

such diverse subjects as biology, hospitality and tourism management, psychology, education, social work, business, and history have found a home in the HESAA program. Why? Because the work that HESAA students pursue deals fundamentally in academic rigor, empathy and grace, human development theories and practices, student learning, compassion, equity, accountability, and organizational behavior (to begin a much longer list).

Interested in learning more about the program, sharing the program with a prospective student, or signing up for the monthly newsletter? Email highered@gysu.edu and let us know!

Congratulations on thirty years of excellence, HESAA, and here's to a long future of preparing administrators and practitioners to develop equitable, inclusive, and functional institutions of higher learning!



HESAA students with guest speakers, Provost Drake and Vice Provost Lancaster, who shared about their roles administering GVSU.

Celebrations



Pictured from left to right: Sherril Soman, Mark Hoffman, Kelly Margot, Kathy Bailey, Melanie Rabine, Julia Snider, MaryJohn Pachuta-Rysak, Terry Stockton, Paul Bylsma, Janelle Grant Ashbaugh, Zohra Asad, John Lipford.

CECI QuickTalks on Scholarship: On November 20, the College of Education and Community Innovation hosted its inaugural QuickTalks on Scholarship, drawing nearly 50 attendees from across the college.

Eleven faculty members, representing every CECI academic unit, delivered five-minute talks that highlighted a wide range of scholarly work. The rapid-fire format with auto-advancing slides kept the audience engaged and showcased

the breadth and creativity of scholarship across the college. The presentations embodied the theme of "Scholarship Worth Sharing," by highlighting work that advanced equity, enhanced practice, and strengthened programs.

Designed to highlight faculty expertise and build community, QuickTalks gave attendees a chance to learn from one another, spark cross-unit connections, and see the full scope of work happening within CECI. The college plans to continue the event as an annual celebration of collective scholarship.

Presenters from the inaugural CECI QuickTalks: Zohra Asad (SSW), Kathy Bailey (SCCJLS), Paul Bylsma (ELC), Janelle Grant Ashbaugh (LEFT), Mark Hoffman (CECI Dean's Office), John Lipford (HTM/SCLD), Kelly Margot (T&L), MaryJohn Pachuta-Rysak (LEFT), Melanie Rabine (UAC), Julia Snider (T&L), and Terry Stockton (LEFT).



The <u>Bellamy Creek Program</u> was recently featured in the fall edition of <u>Grand Valley Magazine</u>, and the Fall 2025 edition of <u>Horizons</u>, a Grand Valley University Foundation publication.



Nagnon Diarrassouba, associate professor in the Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT) department, received the "Graduate Student Association Kimboko Inclusion Award" at the Fall 2025 Graduate School Citation Awards for Academic Excellence. About the Kimboko Inclusion Award: Graduate students are invited to nominate a faculty member that they feel deserves special recognition for teaching, distinctive scholarship or creative work, or noteworthy service in moving GVSU graduate education toward being a more diverse and inclusive community. The award recognizes the accomplishments of Dr. Priscilla Kimboko (SCLD), GVSU's first Dean of Graduate Education, and represents her commitment to these values.



Leanne Kang, associate professor in the Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT) department, through various funding sources, has secured three research assistants this academic year to help with multiple aspects of the <u>GRPS Uncovered Project</u>. **Meet the team!**

Additionally, Dr. Kang and her two undergraduate researchers -- demonstrating "excellence in undergraduate research and an understanding of the importance of advocating for this high-impact practice" -- were selected to participate in the <u>CUR's 2025-2026 Students Transforming Research (STR) Program</u> with virtual and in-person training in Washington D.C. The team would like to thank Associate Dean Chasity Bailey-Fakhoury and the Dean's Office for their support in this endeavor, and they look forward to reporting to CECI on their experience next year.



On Friday, November 14, 2025, 12 students (11 graduate and one undergraduate) from the **School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD)** were inducted into Pi Alpha Alpha, the prestigious national honor society that celebrates exceptional scholarship in public affairs and public administration. The following students were inducted:

Pictured (Left to Right): Matthew Boak (MPA), Makayla Andersen (MPA), Douglas Ferguson (MPA), Kristine Murphy (MPA), Michaela Breadon (MPA), Rowan Armour (MPA), Christopher McGuire (MPA), Cassandra Chaphalkar (MPA).

Not pictured: Brooke Allen (MPA), Brynn Buschle (BA – Public & Nonprofit Administration), Elora Ferrie (MPA), Leslee Rohs (MPA).



Noah Prysock, Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM/SCLD) and Battle Creek Scholars (CEP) student, spoke at WGVU's *Michigan Listens* program on November 6, 2025. *Michigan Listens* is a collection of stories from everyday people in Michigan, exploring profound questions about values, meaning, and life experiences. It aims to build bridges, inspire understanding, and reveal commonalities among people from different walks of life. Noah shares with audience members and viewers his personal journey and transformation through education. You may view the full episode of *Michigan Listens* on the <u>WGVU website</u> (*Noah's story begins at the 1:00:26 mark*).



Lorie Tuma, associate professor in the Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) program (SCLD), recently completed <u>Trauma Informed Oregon</u>'s *Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices* certificate series. The training was a powerful reminder that many of our students carry invisible trauma, especially in online environments where struggles can stay hidden. By intentionally weaving the six core principles (safety, trustworthiness, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural humility) into her teaching, she will create an online classroom where every student feels seen, safe, and able to succeed. Dr. Tuma is excited to bring these practices into her courses and encourages colleagues across CECI to explore this transformative approach.



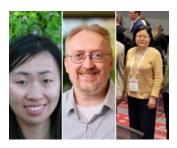
Michelle Wooddell, associate professor in the School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD), was recently elected to the board of directors for the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC), which is the governing body of nonprofit and philanthropic education throughout the world.

Publications/Presentations



Left to Right: Julia Snider, Lexie Oosting, Jen DeWaard.

Julia Snider, Lexie Oosting, and Jen DeWaard, all faculty in the Teaching and Learning (T&L) department, along with three other authors, recently published, "Centering the expertise of disabled advocates in teacher preparation programs," in Teacher Educator Quarterly.



Left to Right: Wei Gu, Daniel Malakowsky, Rui Niu-Cooper.

Wei Gu, associate professor in Teaching and Learning (T&L), Daniel Malakowsky, visiting faculty in Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT), and Rui Niu-Cooper, professor in LEFT, have been working together on exploring AI, FAME Framework, formative assessment and how these impact ESL instruction and pre-service teacher learning. Three faculty co-presented three papers at the MWERA Annual Conference:

- Rui Niu-Cooper, Daniel Malakowsky, and Wei Gu co-presented "Using Al to Support Differentiated Instruction for Multilingual Learners" on November 6, 2025.
- Wei Gu, Rui Niu-Cooper, and Daniel Malakowsky co-presented "Preservice Teacher Perception Changes on Formative Assessment through Al- Supported FAME Model Instruction" on November 7, 2025.

 Daniel Malakowsky, Rui Niu-Cooper, and Wei Gu co-presented "Bridging Formative Assessment and Sheltered Instruction with Al: A Path Forward for Multilingual Learners" on November 7, 2025.



Rui Niu-Cooper, professor in the Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT) department, chaired the "Artificial Intelligence in Teacher Education" session at the <u>Mid-West Educational Research Association</u> Conference (MWERA) on November 6. 2025. She was also the Discussant of the session.

At the conference, Dr. Niu-Cooper happened to see one of her former graduate assistants, Maureen Muthengi, who was presenting her paper that was mentored by Dr. Niu-Cooper, "LearnFlow: Designing a Machine Learning-Powered ESL Tool to Personalize Language Learning for K-12 Students A Conceptual Framework for an Adaptive, Gamified Educational Technology Solution," on November. 7, 2025. It was a great reunion for the mentor and mentee.

Additionally, to support ESOL students to understand AI platforms, ethical issues related to AI use in education, and how AI can be used in supporting altering differentiated instruction for Multilingual Learners at various English proficiency levels, Dr. Niu-Cooper collaborated with Dr. Jiaxin Du from GVSU's Computer Science department to host an event on "Exploring AI in Educating MLLs" on November 8, 2025. More than 55 ESOL students, seven Computer Science graduate students, and all ESOL faculty participated in the event. Thirty-five ESOL students articulated on their exit survey that they would like to know more about how AI can be used in Education.



Ronke Olawale, assistant professor in the School of Social Work (SSW), had her presentation, "New Insights and Key Lessons for Epidemic Preparedness and Response in West Africa," selected by the African Studies Association (ASA), for presentation at the 2025 ASA Annual Meeting which was held in Atlanta, GA, November 20-22, 2025. In this roundtable session, they discussed current events and shared preliminary research related to recent and emergent epidemics in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Themes addressed included the racialized and gendered effects of response measures, how people adapt and make meaning in the face of oppressive policies, and novel "frameworks for preparedness and control."



Top Left to Right: Elizabeth Stolle, Katnryn Ohle, Lindsay Stoetzel. Bottom Left to Right: Jen Vanderground, Christina Ponzio, Allison Phillippe.

A group of faculty from the Teaching and Learning (T&L) and Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT) departments presented at the Literacy Research Association's annual conference in Las Vegas, NV, on December 3-5, 2025. These included Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle, Kathryn Ohle, Lindsay Stoetzel, Jennifer Vanderground, and Christina Ponzio presenting, "Bridging the Divide Between Coursework and Classrooms: Authentic Approaches to Literacy Teacher Education." Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle presented, "Teachers Cultivating Culturally Responsive Literacy Practices Through Engagement in Student-Centered Learning Labs." Additionally, Allison Phillippe presented, "Investigating the Reciprocal Relationship between Literacy and Social Emotional Development with Interactive Read-alouds: A Discourse Analysis and Turning the Page on SEL: Centering Justice in the Integration of Transformative Social-emotional Learning and Literacy with Interactive Read-alouds."



Patty Janes (left), A. Scott Rood (right).

GVSU faculty members **Patty Janes (HTM/SCLD)**, Sango Otieno (STA), and **A. Scott Rood (HTM/SCLD)**, recently published, "<u>Activity Trends Pre/Post COVID-19 in State Park Campgrounds,</u>" with the <u>Recreation Experience Community Network (REC Net)</u>. Dr. Janes was also scheduled to present this research during the Research Symposium of the REC Net Annual Conference, November 8, 2025, at Kiawah Island Resort, SC.

Campus Events



COMMEMORATION WEEK

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Week: January 19-24, 2026. The 2026 MLK Jr. Commemoration Week schedule is set and we look forward to faculty, staff, and student participation! The theme for this year is "Mission Possible II: Building Community, Uniting a Nation the Nonviolent Way." The MLK Commemoration Week executive planning committee is chaired by Bobby Springer, director of Gear Up, and Chasity Bailey-Fakhoury, CECI Associate Dean. Visit the MLK Jr. Commemoration Week website for additional information and event details.

2026 Commemoration Week Events:

- Monday, January 19, 6 p.m.: The 40th Annual MLK Celebration: A Call to Courageous Community Action, Wealthy Theatre.
- Tuesday, January 20, 10 a.m.: Keynote Speaker Derrick Johnson, Kirkhof Center (Allendale Campus).
- Wednesday, January 21, 4 p.m.: Silent March, Zumberge Hall (Allendale Campus).
- Wednesday, January 21, 4:30 p.m.: Keynote Speaker Dar Mayweather, Kirkhof Center (Allendale Campus).
- Thursday, January 22, 6-8:30 p.m.: King In Conversation: The Spiritualities of Non-Violence, CHS (Health Campus)
- Saturday, January 24, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.: MLK Day of Service and Solidarity (various locations).



Save the Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026. Join your Grand Valley colleagues at the 2026 Faculty Awards Convocation on February 10 at 4 p.m. in the Loosemore Auditorium (Pew Campus), for a ceremony to celebrate this year's university-wide awards for outstanding faculty achievements in teaching, scholarship, and service. 2026 award recipients will be announced in January. Learn more about the event and view past award recipients on the Faculty Awards Convocation website.



<u>Fulbright U.S. Scholar Information Session: Friday, February 13, 2026.</u> Preparing for an upcoming sabbatical or other form of leave? Join the Fulbright Scholar information session to hear from GVSU colleagues about the Fulbright Scholar and Fulbright Specialist awards. You'll also meet GVSU's campus Fulbright liaison, Dr. Tooley.

Date: Friday, February 13, 2026

Time: 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Place: Kirkhof Center 2266 (Allendale Campus)

Please <u>register</u> in advance if you plan on attending. Email <u>tooleyb@gvsu.edu</u> if you'd like to connect about the application process or brainstorm possibilities.



SAVE THE DATE! The 30th Annual <u>Student Scholars Day (SSD)</u> is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 8, 2026.** Join <u>OURS</u> in recognizing the curiosity, dedication, and intellectual risk-taking that define our scholarly community. **This year's theme, "SSD at 30: Reimagining the Purpose of Our Scholarship,"** invites students to explore how academic knowledge can inspire, educate, and catalyze when shared beyond traditional boundaries.

Keynote Address: Dr. Keivan G. Stassun, Stevenson Professor of Astrophysics and Director of the Frist Center for Autism & Innovation at Vanderbilt University. **Tuesday**, **April 7, 2026, 4-5:30 p.m.**, Pere Marquette Room, Kirkhof Center (Allendale Campus). **Encourage your students to participate!**

Important Notices



Updated Mandatory Reporter Training DUE DECEMBER 31, 2025. As a mandatory reporter at GVSU, you are **required** to participate in an annual mandatory reporter compliance training.

This year, the training module for **faculty, staff, student employees, and graduate assistants** is available in **Workday Learning** and has been assigned to you as **required learning**. You should have received a system notification from Workday indicating that you've been enrolled in the **"Mandatory Reporter Training 2025-26"** module. The deadline to complete the training is December 31, 2025.

If you have any questions about the Policy or your reporting obligations, please contact the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX at titleix@gysu.edu or (616) 331-9530.



Standing Expense Report Submission Deadlines:

- GVSU expense card reconciliation reports must be submitted at the end of every month.
- Mileage expense reports are due every 30-45 days (CECI's preference is the end of every month).

GVSU Travel & Expense Resources

Workday Expense Report Update: Business and Finance have added **two new Expense Items** to be used for **individual meals** charged on the University Expense Card or when needing personal reimbursement.

NEW Individual Meal Expense Items (replaces "Meals - Other"):

- "Meal Individual Travel" should be used when you are traveling on behalf of the
 University, are <u>not</u> claiming Per Diem, and are using a University Expense Card or
 requesting reimbursement for a meal. This should be used when at least one
 overnight is involved.
- "Meal Individual Non-Travel" should be used when you are <u>not</u> claiming Per Diem but are using a University Expense Card or requesting reimbursement for a meal for yourself when there is <u>no</u> overnight stay involved. Note that these meals are usually taxable.

Workday Expense Report FAQ: Who are the expense report approvers?

Cost Center Assistant (CCA): Your unit's ADC/DC (PSS), unless otherwise assigned. Cost Center Manager (CCM): Katie Humphrey, CECI Administrative Associate Dean. Expense Manager: Kimberly Wittkoski, GVSU Accounting. (Kim is the final approver of ALL expense reports at GVSU)

Please note that there may be additional approvers if you use a specific Designation (DS) or Grant (GR) worktag when completing your report. Those approvers vary depending on the specific worktag you use.

Please always follow the *CECI Expense Report Guidelines* when completing your expense reports. Reports not following the guide will be returned for correction, which may result in delayed reimbursement. Please contact your unit's CCA and/or Unit Head/Director if you have questions about the guidelines, need assistance with your expense report, or need the guidelines re-sent to you.



CECI Dean's Innovation Grant Application **Now accepting submissions for the <u>CECI Dean's Innovation Grant!</u> The Dean's Innovation Grant is designed to support faculty in developing innovative projects with the potential to secure external funding.**

• Eligibility:

- Faculty members (tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track)
- Collaborations between faculty (internal and external to the College) and students are highly encouraged

Grant Use:

 Funding may be utilized for activities directly related to the development of a competitive proposal for external funding

Grant Exclusions:

 Funding cannot be used for standard operational expenses such as salaries, equipment purchases that are not directly related to the proposal development, or travel that is not specifically for proposal development

CECI Dean's Innovation Grant Application Deadline: Sunday, March 15, 2026.

University Governance

CECI University Committees

Representation Slidedeck

Representation List

College Governance

CECI Governance Committees

Governance Website

Representation List



Save the Date! The CECI Technology and Innovation Committee invites you to attend our Winter 2026 Big Byte sessions.

Tuesday, January 27 at 11:30 a.m. (Zoom): Level Up Your Collaboration: Using Zoom Workspace and Microsoft Teams

Presenters: Stephanie Balaskas, Keifer McCrackin, and Justin Melick

Tuesday, February 24 at 11:30 a.m. (In-person, location TBD): Ethics, AI, and

Education: Fueling Ethical AI in Teaching

Presenters: TBD

Tuesday, March 24 at 11:30 a.m. (Zoom): ADA Compliance and SAR-Related Topics **Presenter:** Timothy Mohnkern and Barbara Sevens

A committee meeting will immediately follow each session. Additional information will be provided in January. Have a wonderful winter break!

Important Pates



December 22 - January 4 - Winter Break | GVSU CLOSED

December 31 - Mandatory Reporter Training DUE | Workday Learning

January 5 - GVSU Business Hours Resume

January 12 - Winter 2026 Semester Begins

January 16 - W26 Add/Drop/Pay Deadline | 5 p.m. | MyBanner

January 19 - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Recess | GVSU CLOSED

January 19-24 - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Week | Full schedule

February 6 - Credit/No Credit/75% Tuition Refund Deadline | 5 p.m.

February 10 - Faculty Awards Convocation | 4 p.m. | Loosemore Auditorium

February 13 - Fulbright U.S. Scholar Information Session | 4:30 p.m. | Kirkhof Center

April 13 - CECI Winter 2026 All-College Meeting | 8 a.m. | 1008 Seidman Center

CECI Resources

Acronyms

CECI Connections Guide

CECI Newsletter Repository

Experts Guide

Organizational Chart

Student Flowchart



<u>CECI Happenings</u> is an informational form that can be submitted by any faculty, staff, or student to promote an event, publication, etc. that they would like shared to CECI social media platforms and/or the newsletter.

Newsletter Contributions

Thanks to all those who contributed to the December 2025 edition of CECI Connections:

Mary Bair, Neal Buckwalter, Paul Bylsma, Rita Cooper, Jackie Doyon-Martin, Katie Humphrey, Kristy Jack, Leanne Kang, Jamie Langlois, Rui Niu-Cooper, Kathryn Ohle, A. Scott Rood, Julia Snider, Sherril Soman, Victoria Stubbs, Courtney Topic, Lorie A. Tuma, Michelle Woodell.

Submit a story for the January edition here!

You may also send items to share in future editions of *CECI Connections* directly to Victoria A. Stubbs at stubbsvi@gysu.edu.

Questions? cecidean@gvsu.edu | (616) 331-6821 | gvsu.edu/ceci

Connect with us!









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