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Colleagues,

As we close out another academic year, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our faculty and staff for leaning in during a particularly challenging semester. Your resilience, compassion, and unwavering commitment to our students made a meaningful difference every day. I am especially grateful to those who chose to end the semester by celebrating our students at commencement — a powerful reminder of the impact you continue to have by showing up, encouraging, and guiding our learners through to this milestone moment. This year, we proudly celebrated more than 500 graduates, each carrying forward the support and dedication they experienced from this community.

For those who will be around this summer, I look forward to seeing you on campus. I hope the months ahead offer opportunities for rest, renewal, and reflection on the extraordinary work you have accomplished this year.

~Sherril Soman  
CECI Dean



# CECI Unit Spotlight



Throughout Winter 2026, faculty in the **Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT) department** extended their impact across campus and the West Michigan community through three key initiatives: welcoming future teachers, engaging the broader public on issues shaping young lives, and partnering with multilingual families to support literacy.

**EDF 115 Winter 2026 Social:** On January 15, 2026, **LEFT faculty members** hosted the **Future Teacher Social** in Loosemore Auditorium on GVSU's City Campus. The event was led by **Dr. Terry Stockton** and elementary education student **Paige Bernard**. Over 100 students and 25 faculty members attended. During this three-hour event, students met the faculty who would teach and guide them through their teacher preparation program.



Over the course of the evening, students had dinner and participated in small-group conversations about entering the teaching profession, took part in a campus scavenger hunt, and rotated through "ask me about..." stations organized around shared themes: early childhood, elementary, secondary, and special education. Faculty and staff from LEFT, the **Teaching and Learning (T&L) department**, the **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (English and Mathematics)**, **Office of Certification and Accreditation (OCA)**, and study abroad programs participated in these structured meet-and-greet discussions, offering students opportunities for mentorship and advising.



The event closed with prizes and brief reflections on next steps in the teacher education program. Its broader purpose - humanizing faculty, reducing barriers to help-seeking, and helping students see themselves as emerging professionals - set a strong tone for the semester. LEFT faculty plan to host the Future Teacher Social again in the fall for incoming education students.



**Educational Foundations Film and Speaker Event:** On March 24, 2026, **Educational Foundations faculty** hosted the annual Film and Speaker Event in Loosemore Auditorium on GVSU's City Campus. Organized by **Dr. Kevin Holohan** in collaboration with EDF faculty, the event drew students, faculty, staff, and members of the West Michigan community. The program examined the impact of social media platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram on the mental health and well-being of school-aged children.



The evening featured a screening of *Can't Look Away: The Case Against Social Media*, directed by Matthew O'Neill and Perri Peltz. The film follows the Social Media Victims Law Center as it pursues legal action on behalf of families whose children experienced serious harm connected to social media use. It raised important questions about algorithm-driven technologies, profit structures, and corporate accountability.

A panel of three experts joined the conversation: Professor Stephanie Tong of Communication Studies at Wayne State University, where she directs the Social Media and Relational Technologies (SMART) Lab; Professor Vaibhav Diwadkar of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience at the Wayne State University School of Medicine; and Professor Melinda Holohan of Family Science and Human Development at Western Michigan University, co-author of *Screen-Aware Early Childhood*.



Each panelist shared research-grounded perspectives before the screening and returned afterward for a moderated discussion and audience Q&A. The event offered insight and guidance for educators, parents, and community members in helping young people navigate an increasingly complex digital world.

Notably, the following day, the *New York Times* reported on a landmark social media addiction case in which Meta and YouTube were found negligent, underscoring the



timeliness of the event's focus.

**ESOL Book Events:** Between March 19 and 25, 2026, the **English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program** hosted six book events in Grand Rapids, Holland, and Battle Creek. The events were coordinated by **Dr. Rui Niu Cooper** with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's National Professional Development (NPD) grant.

*Click on photos to enlarge.*

Coinciding with March Reading Month, the events were designed to strengthen relationships between schools, teachers, and Multilingual Learner (MLL) families. Each gathering provided participants with culturally authentic books and practical guidance for connecting to community resources. Nearly 100 families participated across the six events.

In Battle Creek Public Schools, families received food bags from local food banks. At Burton Elementary and Middle Schools, parents played bingo to win books donated by Kent School Service Network (KSSN) for their children. For the Vanderbilt Academy event, families gathered at Herrick District Library in Holland, where more than 90 library card applications were completed on site. This expansion of events, from focusing on culturally authentic books to providing wraparound family resources, reflects the ESOL program's responsiveness to the evolving needs of multilingual families.

Together, these initiatives reflect the LEFT department's sustained commitment to preparing educators, engaging community partners, and supporting learners at every stage.

# CECI Events



## SAVE THE DATE!

### CECI Fall Kickoff Meeting

Monday, August 24 | 1008 Seidman Center  
8:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. - Professional headshots  
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. - Light breakfast  
9:00 a.m. - Meeting begins

**Mark your calendars now and join us in kicking off another great year of academic, research, and community engagement excellence!**

# Celebrations



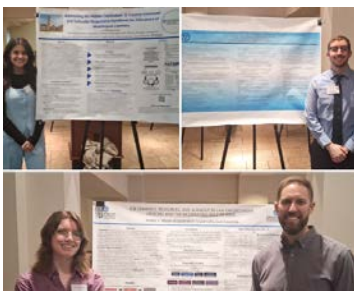
CECI was well represented at the Winter Semester commencement ceremony on Friday, May 1, 2026 at the Van Andel Arena. In total, CECI had more than 500 grads combined from its undergraduate and graduate programs, and we're excited to see what these Lakers for a Lifetime will accomplish next!



**Kathy Bailey, professor in the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies (SCCJLS)**, gave the faculty address to graduate and undergraduate university award recipients at the [2026 Student Awards Convocation](#). Dr. Bailey was selected as a result of her unending support for student success and spoke about the importance of kindness and perseverance in the face of adversity. Nearly two dozen CECI students were recognized at the event.



The **School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies (SCCJLS)** is pleased to announce that the [GVSU Career Center's Intern of the Year](#) winner was **Legal Studies student, Grace Chophonis '26**. Additionally, another **Legal Studies student, Lucero Arizaga Jimenez '26**, was a "Top 3" finalist for the award. In the supervisor category, **Melissa Powell, Grand Rapids City Attorney's Office and SCCJLS partner**, was a "Top 3" finalist. Interns in Legal Studies and Criminal Justice are supervised by **Laura Marsh, Internship Coordinator**, recent winner of the CECI Outstanding Service Award.



**Five CECI graduate students** participated in the Winter 2026 [Graduate Showcase](#) on April 28. The Graduate Showcase is an event offered by [The Graduate School](#) and [Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence](#) to highlight exceptional work done by graduate students. This event features graduate poster presentations on a wide variety of research and scholarly activities from all disciplines. Below are the five CECI students and their presentations.

- **Laura Andres, School of Social Work (SSW)**, *Job Demands, Resources, and Burnout in Law Enforcement Officers and the Moderating Role of PTSD*
- **Rebecca Barajas-Juarez, Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (ELC)**, *Fostering a Sense of Belonging Through Culturally Engaging Campus Environments*
- **Alexandria Marzolf, Literacy Studies (LEFT)**, *Deepening Comprehension Through Student-Centered Professional Learning*
- **Gabrielle Moeggenborg, ESOL (LEFT)**, *Addressing the Hidden Curriculum: A Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Handbook for Educators of Multilingual Learners*
- **Jason Vandenberghe, Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (ELC)**, *Supporting First-Generation Students in STEM: A Model for Enhancing Integration and Belonging*



Congratulations to everyone who was honored at [The Graduate School Citation Awards for Academic Excellence](#)! The Citations for Academic Excellence recognize outstanding academic achievement of graduate students. Awards are given to students who have completed their program or are very close to completion. You can find the full list of CECI honorees on the [CECI website, Winter 2026 Graduate School Citations Award Program](#).

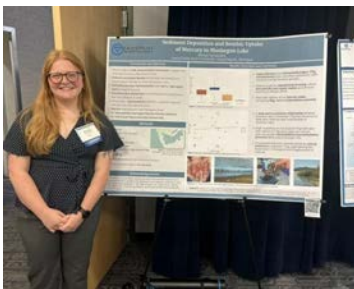


K-12 students from across the area came to the DeVos Center to showcase their outdoor projects at the annual [Groundswell Student Project Showcase](#). 27 projects were on display, all involving hands-on, community-based learning in environmental science.

The event was hosted by the [Groundswell Stewardship Initiative](#), a coalition of partners across West Michigan that is led by CECI's **Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP)** and provides teachers the resources they need for these real-world learning opportunities.



The **Laker Academic Advising Network** received the **Outstanding Team Project Award**. Recipients were **Breeann Mann (CECI Undergraduate Advising Center (UAC))**, Mike Saldana, Kailee McDonough, Trenton Beamon, **Melanie Rabine (CECI UAC)**, Emily Zeliasko and Brenda Tooley. The award was established to recognize the work of an ad-hoc team of AP staff members from two or more departments that accomplish a project benefiting the University.



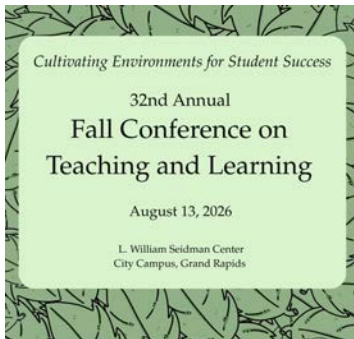
**Emma Van Eerdan, office assistant student worker** for the **Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP)**, received first place in the first ever [GVSU Student Scholars Day Research Poster Competition](#)! Emma is a 2026 graduate with a natural resource management degree, a minor in biology and aquatic science, and a certificate in geographic information systems (GIS). Emma's research was a showcase of her months-long case study work in Muskegon with the [GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute](#). Throughout the months of May to August, Emma conducted laboratory studies of chironomids (the larval stage of non-biting midges); her poster presentation, "Sediment Deposition and Benthic Uptake of Mercury in Muskegon Lake," evaluated the relationship between this larvae, its sediment habitat, and mercury levels in Muskegon Lake. CECI's very own Dr. Chasity Bailey-Fakhoury was Emma's evaluating judge for the competition. Dr. Bailey-Fakhoury praised Emma for her presentation, particularly her ability to explain complicated research in accessible terms for her audience.



**Vicky Wright, assistant director in the Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP)**, was nominated this April for Outstanding Supervisor of the Year at the Career Center Internship Awards at the Valley Campus. Vicky works constantly to lift up the work of our students, advocate for their success, and push for opportunities for them. She's tireless in making sure they have the best learning experiences and work exposure possible.

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# Campus Events



Join Pew FTLC for the [32nd Annual Fall Conference on Teaching and Learning](#) on **Thursday, August 13, 2026**. This milestone event promises a day filled with insightful discussions, innovative teaching strategies, and networking opportunities. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow educators and enhance your teaching practice!

Due to Eberhard Center construction, the event will take place at the L. William Seidman Center, which means capacity is more limited. Pew FTLC challenges you as a community to take this opportunity to practice living the mantra; if you sign up, show up. [Registering](#) means you are committing to attending the event. They understand emergencies arise, and if they do they simply ask you let Pew FTLC know you are no longer able to attend so they may enable others to attend.

Call for Proposals

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# Publications/Presentations



**Janelle Grant Ashbaugh, assistant professor of Educational Foundations (LEFT)**, and Brandon Smith, a graduate student in the School of Social Work (SSW), presented research titled, *Refusing the Periphery: A Self-Study of Black Educational Praxis using Kitchen Table Talks*, at the University of Wisconsin's [Institute of Urban Education Conference](#) this May.



**Courtney Topic, assistant professor, and Pakky Gerkin, professor, both in the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies (SCCJLS)**, presented at the [College of Computing "Innovation Day"](#) showcase on Friday, April 24. The event this year highlighted Computing + X partnerships, including the upcoming degree program in Computing + Criminal Justice. [A video summarizing the event can be viewed here.](#)

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# Important Notices



Faculty/Staff are now **required to scan their GVSU-issued ID in order to enter and exit the DeVos Lot**. When approaching the machine, please scan the barcode on the back of your ID on the **top right of the machine**.

If the barcode on the back of your GVSU ID is faded or not readable, Parking Services recommends being issued a replacement. Hours for the Registrar's Assistance Center can be found [on their website](#).

Please visit [GVSU Parking Services](#) for complete details and additional parking information.



CECI Expense Report  
Guide 2025-2026  
(Full Guide)

Please turn on "Tasks" and "To-Dos" notifications in Workday. This is the **only way you'll be notified** if your expense report is sent back to you for correction. Both expense reports and corrections **must be completed in a timely manner**. Instructions on how to turn both notifications on are on page 4 of the CECI Expense Report Guide.

**Fiscal Year End (FYE) deadlines for CECI faculty/staff:** Please connect with your unit's Cost Center Assistant (CCA - your Department Coordinator) and Unit Head for assistance completing your report(s) by the **CECI FYE deadlines**.

**CECI FYE Deadlines:**

- **Friday, May 29 - LAST DAY** to submit **EXPENSE REPORTS** for **May 2026 (or earlier)**
- **Tuesday, June 16 - LAST DAY TO:**
  - Use **GVSU Expense Card** (formerly p-card) for purchases
    - *May resume use on July 1, 2026*
  - **Book flights** using Lightning
  - Place **Amazon** or **Office Depot orders** via Workday
- **Wednesday, June 24 - LAST DAY** to submit **EXPENSE REPORTS** for **June 2026**
  - **ALL expense reports for FY 2025-2026 need to be submitted by this date!**

**Expense Report Reminders:**

- **Expense reports need to have the correct "worktags"** on them upon initial submission. If you do not know what worktags to use, please ask your unit's CCA.
- **Use the correct "Expense Items" in your reports** - the default Expense Item listed may not be the correct one you need to use for your expense. What automatically populates is Workday's "guess" as to what your expense may be, but your report must have the Expense Item that **most accurately** describes the expense.
- **Technology purchases** require pre-approval from Administrative Associate Dean Humphrey *and* approval from [Technology Acquisition](#).



**2nd Floor DeVos C – East Wing (SCCJLS side)** will be getting new carpeting in the common areas in June. The work is currently scheduled to take place **June 15-19**. All furniture will be picked up in place to limit the daily impact on staff. Please contact [Justin Petersen](#), project manager in Facilities Planning, if you have any questions.

**2nd Floor DeVos C - West Wing (SCLD side)** carpet replacement is scheduled to take place over Winter Break.

*Click on image to enlarge.*



**Major impacts coming up for the intersection of Lake Michigan Dr NW and Winter Ave NW:** In the next couple of weeks, the traffic signal at Lake Michigan Dr. and Winter Ave. NW will be removed to begin preparations for the bridge from the Seward Ramp to the YMCA. **This area will be a 4-way stop through December.**

Additionally, **Lake Michigan Dr. from Seward Ave. to Mt. Vernon will be closing at end of August through December.** Access to Seward Ramp - access from West if construction allows, or from Fulton/south side.

[View map](#)



**Fall 2026 Grading Change:** The Provost's Office and the Office of the Registrar are working together proactively to make plans for grading at the end of the Fall 2026 semester.

The Fall 2026 semester begins Monday, August 31. Based on current scheduling guidelines, this is the latest the fall semester could ever begin. This means that grades would be due on Tuesday, December 22 at Noon. The university will be closed for Winter Break Wednesday, December 23-Sunday, January 3. Staff will be back at work on Monday, January 4, and the Winter 2027 semester will begin Monday, January 11.

Given that the grading process takes about 3 days to complete, it has been decided to **move the university grading deadline to Monday, December 21 at Noon for the Fall 2026 semester only.** Undergraduate academic review will occur on Monday, December 21-Wednesday, December 23. Graduate academic review will occur early in the week of January 4, 2027.

The Provost's Office and Office of the Registrar recognize that **faculty with exams near the end of finals week will have less time than normal to complete their grades.** Hopefully knowing ahead of time will allow them to plan their exams/culminating experiences in a way to minimize stress in the grading process.

A notification will be sent to all instructors prior to the beginning of the Fall semester as well as several reminders as the semester nears completion.

# University Governance

[University Committees](#)

[Representation Slidedeck](#)

[Representation List](#)

# College Governance

[CECI Governance Committees](#)

[Governance Website](#)

[Representation List](#)

# Important Dates

## IMPORTANT DATES!



- May 25** - Memorial Day Recess - **GVSU CLOSED**
- May 29** - **FYE** - May 2026 (or earlier) expense reports due in Workday
- June 16** - **FYE (CECI Deadline)** - LAST DAY to use GVSU Expense Card (may resume use on July 1, 2026)
- June 16** - **FYE (CECI Deadline)** - LAST DAY to book flights using Lightning
- June 16** - **FYE (CECI Deadline)** - LAST DAY to place Amazon and/or Office Depot orders via Workday
- June 22** - S26 1st 6 weeks classes end
- June 23-24** - S26 1st 6 weeks examinations
- June 24** - **FYE (CECI Deadline)** - June 2026 expense reports dues in Workday - ALL expense reports for FY 2025-2026 need to be submitted by this date.
- June 29** - S26 2nd 6 weeks classes begin
- June 30** - Fiscal Year 2025-2026 ENDS
- July 3** - Independence Day Observed - **GVSU CLOSED**
- August 24** - CECI Fall Kickoff Meeting | 1008 L. William Seidman Center

# CECI Resources

[Acronyms](#)

[CECI Connections Guide](#)

[CECI Newsletter Repository](#)

[Experts Guide](#)

[Organizational Chart](#)

[Student Flowchart](#)

## CECI HAPPENINGS

[CECI Happenings](#) 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 April 2026 edition of *CECI Connections*:**

Mary Bair, Jackie Doyon-Martin, Janelle Grant Ashbaugh, Bill Herbst, Katie Humphrey, Sherril Soman, Mara Spears, Victoria Stubbs.

Submit a story for the June edition here!

You may also send items to share in future editions of *CECI Connections* directly to Bill Herbst, Director of Communications, at [herbstw@gvsu.edu](mailto:herbstw@gvsu.edu), and/or Victoria A. Stubbs, Office Assistant, at [stubbsvi@gvsu.edu](mailto:stubbsvi@gvsu.edu).

Questions? [cecidean@gvsu.edu](mailto:cecidean@gvsu.edu) | (616) 331-6821 | [gvsu.edu/ceci](http://gvsu.edu/ceci)

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