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**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND COMMUNITY
INNOVATION**
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY®

October 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of our College Newsletter! As we move into a new season of learning and service, we are reminded of the powerful ways education connects us—to ideas, to one another, and to the communities we serve.

I am especially grateful for the way our college leans into **community engagement** as a core value. A heartfelt thank you to all who participated in our **Annual Volunteer Give-Back Event at Blandford Nature Center**. It was a meaningful day of service and connection, where we not only gave our time but also learned about Blandford's mission to restore, sustain, and educate through nature. Your commitment to giving back reminds us that the work we do in and out of the classroom is deeply intertwined with the wellbeing of our local communities.

In a world that continues to face complex challenges, our college stands proudly at the intersection of education, justice, service, and care. Thank you for being part of our ongoing journey.

With gratitude,

~Sherril
CECI Dean



CECI Give-Back Event

On Friday, September 19, CECI faculty and staff came together at [Blandford Nature Center](#) for an afternoon of learning, hard work, and fun. The afternoon started with lunch and learning about the many exciting things you'll find around the 264-acre nature center, from wildlife to trails, to the Nature Makers Market and events like their Harvest Festival. After that, faculty and staff got to work doing various jobs like weeding at the children's farm, to collecting native seeds, and preparing for candle-making that takes place at the Harvest Festival. A great time was had by all, and so much was accomplished as a team! [2025 CECI Give-Back Event Photos](#).



CECI Unit Spotlight



[Social Justice Begins with ME!](#), a reading program at Grand Rapids Main Branch Public Library, is back for its eighth year. The program was founded by **Paola Leon** and is now coordinated by **Emily Nichols** and **Jamie Langlois** in the **School of Social Work**, and serves children ages 4-11 years old and their caregivers. Each month, selected children's books explore a different social justice topic, such as disability rights, economic justice, or immigration. Children ages 4-8 listen to a book read by a volunteer and discuss the month's social justice theme in small groups. Children ages 9-11 read the assigned book in advance and discuss the book as a group. The goal of the program



is to introduce human rights concepts in developmentally appropriate ways to young readers. The discussion helps children apply the story to themselves and their experiences so they can better understand how social justice impacts their worlds. Additionally, children are able to learn about and respect different cultures and communities. The discussion questions were developed with the assistance of BSW students using a social justice framework. Caregivers are also provided a copy of the discussion questions as well as tips for how to continue conversations about social justice at home. This year the program coordinators are working towards developing programming and curriculum so the program can be expanded to other libraries and organizations.



The books for this year address the following themes: September - Racial Justice, October - Human Rights, November - Environmental Justice, and December - Gender Equity. The most recent event took place on Saturday, October 11. Children ages 4-8 had their books read to them and had a discussion facilitated by social work student and faculty volunteers. Children ages 9-11 read *How to Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor prior to attending and engaged in a book club-like discussion facilitated by William Harper, a Graduate Assistant in the School of Social Work. To register for future events, visit the [Grand Rapids Public Library website](#). Learn more about Social Justice Begins with Mel from the 2020 article in [GV Magazine](#).

Celebrations



Paul Bylsma, **Cathy Meyer-Looze**, and **Greg Warsen**, all faculty from the **Educational Leadership and Counseling (ELC)** department, represented GVSU/CECI at the North Ed Career Tech Center's golf outing, which raises funds for [student scholarships](#). It was the 30-year anniversary of this scholarship event which directly helps students attending the Career Tech Center.



Rachel Gorman '14 and **Alexis Reame '10**, both **Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM)** program alumna, made Crain's Grand Rapids Business' Class of 2025 40 Under 40. Gorman is the CEO of the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and Commissioner at-Large for the City of Muskegon, and Reame is the Vice President and Client and Community Relations Director at PNC Bank. Read more about [Crain's 40 Under 40 class of 2025](#) (subscription required).



Raymond J. Higbea, PhD, FACHE, FHFMA, associate professor and director of the **MHA program in the School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD)**, has been elected as a trustee for the [Cherry Health Foundation Board of Trustees](#).



Khadijah Johnson '13 and **Gloria Masterton Hunter '17** on each receiving a **2025 GVSU Alumni Award!** Johnson, recipient of this year's Alumni Service Award, earned bachelor's degrees in health communications and **public and nonprofit administration (SCLD)**. Masterton Hunter, recipient of this year's Young Alumni Award, earned her degree in **social studies and secondary education**. Learn more about all the [2025 Alumni Award recipients](#).



As co-director of the Early Career Educators of Color Award program through the Michigan Council of Teacher of English (MCTE), **Christina M. Ponzio, assistant professor in the Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology (LEFT) department**, nominated the MCTE for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) "[Teachers for the Dream](#)" **Affiliate Award**. The organization received the award for 2025 and was notified that the review committee, chaired by Rochelle (Shelley) Rodrigo, NCTE Past President, was impressed with the affiliate's commitment to recruiting English language arts teachers of color.



Patrick Waterman '10 MPA (SCLD), was named the next administrator of Ottawa County. Waterman is currently serving as the deputy city manager for the City of Wyoming, and was previously the deputy county administrator for Ottawa County before that. He brings with him 23 years of local government leadership experience and over 30 years in planning and community development. [WZZM Story](#).

Reach Higher Together



Reach Higher Together: You told us what matters to you. Earlier this year, the Reach Higher Collaborative Leadership Network engaged with groups across the university to gather thoughts and feedback on challenges and opportunities.

More than 7,500 people provided 30,000+ comments and insights, which were used to identify the [top themes and trends](#) from throughout our GVSU community. Throughout the summer, all comments were synthesized, and the network worked together to make meaning of them, creating a common data set for continued planning and guidance.

Where are we now?

The insights are being used to enhance our university commitments and divisional and cross-divisional planning. Strategic planning continues this fall, with the new plan launching in early 2026. Afterward, the insights will shape our strategic priorities as we collaboratively determine the steps to implement the plan.

Learn more about [Reach Higher Together](#).

Publications/Presentations



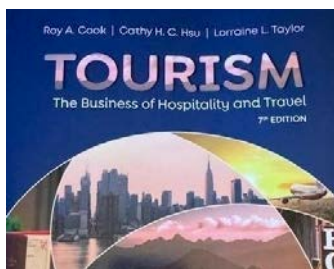
Jaclyn Cwick, associate professor, and Travis Milburn, assistant professor, both in the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies (SCCJLS), attended the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association annual conference in Chicago, IL in late September. Cwick presented with co-author Joshua Williams (University of Minnesota): *Punishing the Traveling Offender: The Influence of Residence-to-Crime and Disadvantage Distances on Case-Processing Outcomes for Firearm Offenses*. Milburn's presentation was titled *Public Criminology on a Rust Belt Radio Show: An Autoethnography*.



Heather Gauck '99, current **special education adjunct faculty** within the **Teaching and Learning Department (T&L)**, recently wrote the op-ed in *The Detroit News*, "[It doesn't replace teachers; it strengthens our ability to meet every child's need](#)," about the use of AI in the classroom. The op-ed is currently featured on *Teach Plus*'s "[Op-eds for Impact](#)" page. Gauck is a special education teacher in Grand Rapids Public Schools, and a 2025-2026 [Teach Plus Leading Edge Fellow](#).



Raymond J. Higbea, PhD, FACHE, FHFMA, Guenter Tusch, PhD, **Larry Warkoczeski, MHSA, JD**, and Jagadish Mandate, graduate student, presented *The Value of the Electronic Health Record and Disability Support* on October 3, 2025 at the 15th Annual Midwest Medical Humanities Conference. Higbea is an associate professor and Warkoczeski is affiliate faculty and executive in residence in the **School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD)**.



Paul Stansbie, Lorie A. Tuma, and Patty Janes, all faculty within the **Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) program (SCLD)**, are featured in the 7th edition of *Tourism: The Business of Hospitality and Travel* (Pearson) with their case study, "Michigan Cares for Tourism." This work showcases a volunteer tourism initiative that unites hospitality professionals, students, and community members in preserving historic and cultural sites across Michigan, illustrating the transformative role of service and sustainability in tourism. Additionally, **Tuma** contributed the case study, "Taking the Jet Ski Industry by Storm," which examines the rise of women-led jet ski riding groups and how this emerging leisure trend promotes inclusiveness, challenges industry stereotypes, and creates new pathways for recreational tourism. As one of the most widely adopted tourism textbooks in higher education, *Tourism: The Business of Hospitality and Travel* elevates these faculty contributions to a global audience and reinforces GVSU's leadership in advancing both scholarship and practice in the field.



Melissa Villareal, associate professor in the School of Social Work (SSW), recently had her research with veterans highlighted in [GV Next](#) on September 15, 2025. The article is titled "Grand Valley Researchers Focus on Veterans' Transitions to Civilian Life." It highlights Melissa's personal connection to the area of study and the importance of helping veterans find their voice to enact change.

Campus Events



Reserve your spot today for the exclusive advanced screening of Ken Burns' new documentary, *The American Revolution*, before the national premiere! Presented by [WGVU](#), in partnership with [CECI's Center for Educational Partnerships](#), and the [Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies](#), this new PBS documentary series uncovers the untold stories behind America's fight for independence. This event is made possible by Centennial Securities.

Tuesday, October 21 | 6:00 PM | Loosemore Auditorium (DeVos E) | Pew Campus

RSVP for the October 21 Screening

Pew FTLC's Personnel Portfolio Workshops

Fall 2025 Personnel Portfolio Workshop (Virtual, multi-week): Prepare for contract renewal, tenure, or promotion with Pew FTLC's multi-week virtual workshop! Gain guidance on crafting your Personal/Reflective Statement and assembling your portfolio through large group meetings, optional small groups, and one-on-one mentoring. To see the full description and participant expectations, please visit [Pew FTLC's PPW webpage](#).

- **October 27 - November 24**
- **Large group meetings on Mondays, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**
- **Spots are limited to 12 people. [Register by Monday, October 20.](#)**



Critical conversations don't have to be difficult. They just have to begin.

Be part of something powerful— GVSU's 13th Annual Teach-In is happening **November 12–13, 2025**. This two-day campus-wide event is built around student, faculty, and staff voices, all coming together to explore and challenge systems of inequity and oppression, while working toward justice and liberation — both on campus and across the globe.

Want to contribute?

We're now accepting proposals from teams of faculty, staff, and students for [sessions](#) and [posters](#). **Submit by October 20, 2025**

**Submit Poster/
Session Proposals
by October 20**

Whether you want to co-lead a session, present a poster, or support the work in your classroom, there are many ways to engage:

- ✓ Offer extra credit for students to attend sessions
- ✓ Defer your class so students can participate for credit
- ✓ Make the Teach-In a course requirement
- ✓ Create reflection assignments to deepen student learning

Let's build a braver, more inclusive community — together.

We can't wait to see what you'll bring to the conversation.



Got big ideas? Got 5 minutes? Introducing **CECI QuickTalks**: A brand-new way to showcase your scholarly work in a lightning-fast format. Fast, fun, and unforgettable!

Be part of the inaugural event. Sign up by **November 3**.

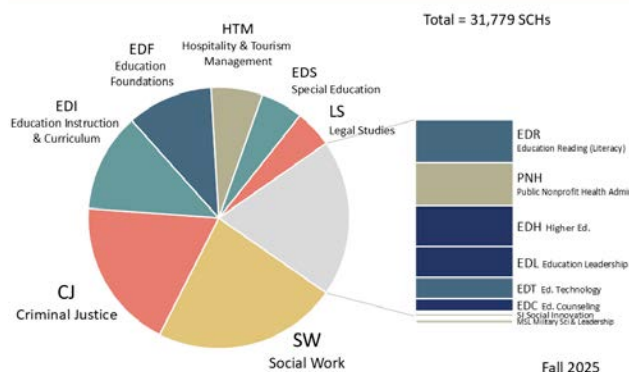
Not presenting? Come discover the amazing work happening across CECI and connect with colleagues.

Please contact [BK Choi and Mary Bair](#) if you would like to participate.

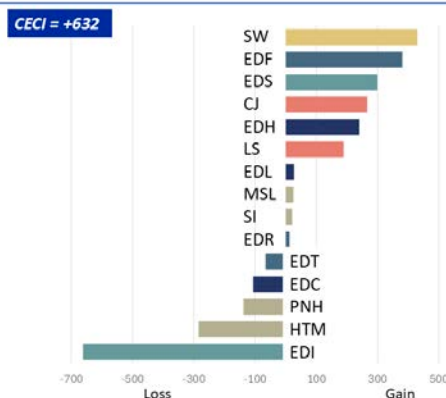
Fall 2025 Census

Information provided by Associate Dean Hoffman. Click on each image below to enlarge.

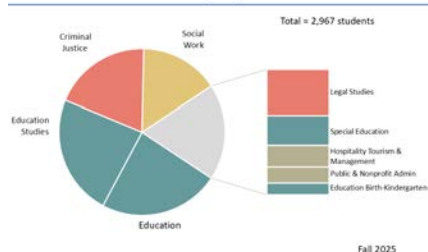
Registration (Student Credit Hours)
by Course Prefix



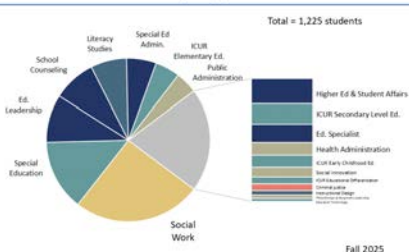
Change in Student Credit Hours by Prefix
Fall 2023 to Fall 2024



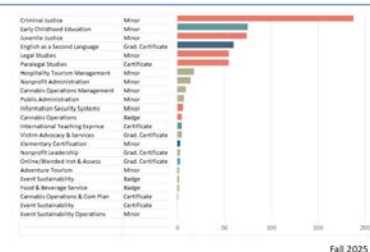
Undergraduate Student Head Count
by Major



Graduate Student Head Count
by Program



Minors and Microcredential Student Headcount



Important Notices



2026 Open Enrollment

2026 Open Enrollment: October 21 - November 5. The annual benefits open enrollment is your opportunity to take a closer look at your benefit options and update/verify your elections for the upcoming year. Please visit the [Open Enrollment page](#) on the [GVSU Benefits website](#) for 2026 plan information, guides and FAQs, and additional benefits available to you.

If you do not submit your elections in Workday by the deadline, HR will be unable to make changes for you for the upcoming year. **For questions regarding your benefits or the open enrollment process, please contact openenrollment@gvsu.edu.**



Updated Mandatory Reporter Training

Updated Mandatory Reporter Training is here. 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@gvsu.edu or (616) 331-9530.

University Governance

[CECI University Committees](#)

[Representation Slidedeck](#)

[Representation List](#)

College Governance

[CECI Governance Committees](#)

[Governance Website](#)

[Representation List](#)

College-Wide Meetings

At the request of [CECI Faculty Council](#), two virtual town hall sessions have been scheduled for CECI faculty/staff to learn about the constraints to the Adjunct/Overload Budget and what this might mean for scheduling and staffing courses during the Spring/Summer 2026 semester.

All CECI faculty/staff are invited to both events, although much of the conversation may be duplicative. Please consider attending one, both, or neither as your schedule allows.

CECI Virtual Town Halls:

- **Thursday, October 30 | 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM | [Zoom \(10/30\)](#)**
- **Wednesday, November 5 | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM | [Zoom \(11/5\)](#)**



Join the CECI Technology and Innovation Committee for the November Big Byte!

- **Date & Time:** Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.
- **Presenter:** Hunter Bridwell, Emerging Technologies Coordinator, IT Innovation + Research
- **Topic:** Touring the X► STUDIO
- **Location:** In-person at the X► STUDIO (Room 311, Consumers Energy/John G. Russell Leadership Building)
- **More info:** [CECI Technology and Innovation Committee](#)
- **Questions:** Courtney Topic (topicc@gvsu.edu)

Important Dates

IMPORTANT DATES!



October 19-21 - Fall Break | **NO CLASSES** - GVSU open for business
October 30 - CECI Virtual Town Hall | 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM | [Zoom \(10/30\)](#)
November 2 - Daylight Saving Time Ends - **Roll your clocks back 1 hour!**
November 5 - CECI Virtual Town Hall | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM | [Zoom \(11/5\)](#)
November 11 - CECI November Big Byte | 1:30 PM | 311 Consumers Energy Building - Pew
November 12 - [GVSU Teach-In](#) | Seidman Center | Pew Campus
November 13 - [GVSU Teach-In](#) | Kirkhof Center | Allendale Campus
November 20 - CECI QuickTalks on Scholarship | 2:00 PM | 138E DEV
November 20 - CECI Fall Social | 3:00 PM | 105E DEV Hager-Lubbers Exhibition Hall
November 26-30 - Thanksgiving Recess | **GVSU CLOSED**
December 6 - [Fall 2025 Commencement](#) | 4:00 PM | Van Andel Arena | [RSVP by 11/21](#)
December 6-13 - Final Exam Week
December 15 - **CECI Final Grades Due by 5:00 PM** | Banner Self-Service
December 31 - Mandatory Reporter Training **DUE** | Workday Learning

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 October 2025 edition of *CECI Connections*:

Mary Bair, Jackie Doyon-Martin, Shawn Evans, Raymond Higbea, Mark Hoffman, Christine Kenney, Jamie

Langlois, Cathy Meyer-Looze, Emily Nichols, Christina Ponzio, Sherril Soman, Victoria Stubbs, Courtney Topic,
Lorie A. Tuma.

Submit a story for the November edition here!

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

Questions? cecidean@gvsu.edu | [\(616\) 331-6821](tel:6163316821) | gvsu.edu/ceci

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