Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Priorities and Strategies, 2026-2031

MISSION

Modeling interdisciplinary education in action: we apply liberal education that cultivates engaged global citizens and supports lifelong learning. Our individual and collective work is a public good that advances understanding of complex problems and societal wellbeing.

VISION

The Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies serves as a regional and national model for integrative and global learning, innovative teaching, and sustainable, inclusive practices that empower students and expand access to higher education. The faculty and staff of Brooks College are deeply committed to not only advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity, but in leading Grand Valley State University in these values.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value:

A collegial and collaborative student-centered environment where we support each other and work together, bridging fields and disciplines, both within the college and across campus, in an open and transparent manner.

Equity, inclusion, and diversity across our curriculum, faculty and staff, and the students and communities we serve.

Integrity in our student-first worldview, and integrity in our actions.

Shared, democratic principles of self-governance and decision making.

Global perspectives that support critical analysis of and engagement with complex systems and legacies across our teaching, scholarship, and community engaged work.

Action-oriented educational initiatives, high impact practices, and experiential learning.

Interdisciplinary research and teaching that challenges disciplinary and field boundaries, expands how we understand and define knowledge, and generate results-oriented work that can be applied to real-life problems and challenges.

Risk-taking and innovation that encourages alternative approaches to scholarship, teaching, and learning.

Academic freedom to ask the questions that need to be asked, and approach the answers, however that might unfold.

Social, environmental, and financial sustainability integrated into operations, planning, and decision making.

Empowered Educational Experiences

Multiple experiential learning and high-impact experiences that are accessible to all students

- High-impact research opportunities for all students, with particular attention to providing these experiences for under served students
- Additional first-year experience partnerships within Brooks and across campus

- Involving alumni who are eager to be trained to coach/advise students on career pathways; this could pair with US 102 within a more robust first-year experience
- Scalable global learning for all students, including virtual exchange
- Improving recruitment and retention in Brooks degree programs
- Greater participation by GVSU students in signature experiences such as Study Abroad, Study Away programs like Beaver Island Field School, the Semester in Detroit program, and new Summer in West Michigan program
- Writing Center activities will be resourced as an essential support for student success

Lifelong Learning

Modeling and inspiring learning as a lifetime pursuit; programs to serve adult learners; programs that involve alumni

- Continue to increase enrollment in the two Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees: Professional Innovation and Leadership & Business Fundamentals; consider creating and adding additional degrees to match interest/need
- Higher education for incarcerated populations (including potential involvement with Bellamy Woods Correctional Facility Program)
- Faculty development of competence-based educational approaches to our courses and curriculum, especially to serve adult learners, veterans, and students with various additional barriers to accessing higher education
- Faculty modeling interdisciplinary research, scholarly, and creative projects for our students, and inform our interdisciplinary teaching and advance the public good
- Involving alumni who are eager to be trained to coach/advise students on career pathways; this could pair with US 102 within a more robust first-year experience

Educational Equity

- SEL Strategic Plan will be finalized and acted upon
- Faculty gain expertise in inclusive teaching practices (ideally through the Pew FTLC Inclusive Excellence curriculum) and update their syllabi, assignment, and classroom/online teaching practices for greater inclusion, accessibility, and equity
- DEI-focused learning experiences for faculty and staff that are meaningful and build community
- Identify and reduce (or eliminate) equity gaps in DFW rates for BCOIS courses/sections
- More affordable texts and OERs (Online Educational Resources)
- Scalable global learning for all students, including virtual exchange
- Develop mentoring programs and more to ensure success and retention of faculty/staff (including cohort of cluster-hired faculty)

Force for the Common Good

- Practice civil discourse within the college and lead and model civil discourse for students and communities
- Increase opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in sustained reciprocal partnerships with local communities (examples: ENS partnerships/placements, HNR 300 opportunities)
- Support scholarship and curricula that contribute to solving urgent public problems
- Promote digital literacy for students and communities, essential to public participation and access to information in a digital society