

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 6 • DECEMBER 2025

APSS NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS & UPDATES FROM GVSU'S APSS UNION & ITS MEMBERS

photo by Sam Condon

ISSUE FEATURES

CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

An article by the Bargaining Chair on why it is important to submit your timecard on time!

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AI NAVIGATORS WORKSHOPS

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UNION NEWS



As this year comes to an end, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support to the APSS. Officers, building reps, bargaining team members, union members; I am so lucky to lead such an exceptional group of employees at GVSU. This was a year full of challenges but filled with a lot of shared successes and gaining a strong, new contract. Your constant belief in the union provided me the encouragement I needed through every step I took. Thank you for believing in me.

May the remaining days of 2025 be filled with holiday joy leading to a happy, healthy new year.

Tami John, President

CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS BY APSS BARGAINING CHAIR SHAWN EVANS

Hello APSS Bargaining Unit Members, and welcome to a new contractual cycle of “Contractual Considerations” in the APSS newsletter! We have a lot of new contractual language to cover in this section of the newsletter over the next 4 years, or so. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any specific contractual language questions or if there is a particular section of the contract that you would like me to focus on for an upcoming newsletter article.

I was recently brought into a situation where an APSS bargaining unit member had failed to submit their hours into workday by the payroll deadline. In working through this situation with our colleagues in Payroll and Human Resources, I learned quite a bit. I knew what the contractual language in section 10.5 meant and I recalled the context of those conversations that we had at the bargaining table, but what I learned had to do with the logistics of payroll, particularly what this means for our Payroll colleagues during a holiday week.

As discussed during our ratification meetings, we were able to compel Payroll to return to the practice of sending out regular email reminders to submit your time into Workday. These helpful reminders are in addition to the notifications that we already received in Workday. Bargaining unit members have until 3pm on the Monday following the end of a pay period to submit their hours in Workday. Managers have the same deadline to approve hours submitted by hourly employees in Workday. If there is an error found between 3-5pm on the payroll submission/approval deadline date (the Monday after a pay period), Payroll can likely intervene and help correct. At 9am the following morning, however, hourly payroll is locked. Corrections after this time either mean that Payroll needs to cut an off-cycle check (which isn't as easy as it sounds, considering that our payroll has federal/state/local tax implications, (sometimes) legal order implications, benefits implications, etc.), or Payroll can reopen the report in Workday for all hourly employees (not just you, not just APSS, but all hourly employees at GVSU), work to make the necessary corrections and resubmit the report (which is also not as easy as it sounds – particularly when we are in a holiday week when financial institutions are closed on normal business days and these reports in Workday require additional approvals from our Business and Finance colleagues, who may not be working/readily available for approvals, considering a holiday).

continued on next page...

UNION NEWS



Continued from page 2

Reopening/modifying this report in Workday can cause payroll delays for all hourly employees – e.g., those who receive early access payments from their financial institutions may be delayed; all hourly payroll may be delayed, etc.

The contractual language in section 10.5 of our collective bargaining agreement states that the University has a legal obligation to make sure that hourly employees are compensated for their work no later than the middle of the week following a pay period. This language was in our previous contract (and many before it) – it is not new. The reason this was even a topic of discussion/interest at the bargaining table is that so many of our members had been told that corrections/off-cycle checks were impossible since we went live with Workday finance. We discovered in these conversations that not only was that not technically true, but that notifications to email were also possible. Payroll quickly worked to implement the notifications that we used to receive in the old Ultratime/Tracytime system. And we agreed to contractual language that means that if there is an oversight of the bargaining unit member failing to record their hours, that Payroll will do what they can to correct the error and issue payroll in the contractual timeframe specified in the same section. As noted above – there’s a lot that goes into that – and it’s particularly problematic during a holiday week.

APSS bargaining unit members maintain the responsibility to enter their hours into Workday prior to the payroll deadline. Managers retain their responsibility to approve these hours/discuss with those they supervise should there be any questions or concerns. Although this contractual language is new, if Payroll has evidence that this has been a recurring problem, they can/will send written notification that they will do what they can to correct an error in this instance, but that in future instances the bargaining unit member will need to wait until the following pay period until the error can be remedied.

Bargaining unit members, I implore you, please enter your hours into Workday prior to the payroll approval deadline. Pay attention to the notifications that we receive in Workday and via email – we worked to re-establish this notification system. Put reminders every other Friday on your Outlook calendar to make sure that this is done before you vacate the office for the weekend, a holiday, or for a longer period of time. Our colleagues in HR/Payroll are doing their best to accommodate exceptional circumstances, but if the answer is potentially impacting the payroll of over 3,000 hourly employees (this includes student employees) to correct the hourly payroll that was not entered by one bargaining unit member, the answer might be “we’ll do it this time, but never again.”

Please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas/topics for future articles.

On behalf of your APSS bargaining team,
sme



APSS 2026 CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE! PLEASE SEE YOUR BUILDING REP TO OBTAIN ONE!

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

AI NAVIGATORS

BANISH THE BORE: HOW AI WRITES YOUR AGENDA (SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO)

BY AI NAVIGATORS

Monday, January 26, 11A-12P

Traverse City Regional Campus, RM 215 (or online)

Cut down on time spent planning for and conducting meetings and events by using AI. This session will give you the tools needed to plan strategic sessions, retreats, and meetings with simplified processes that save your brain space and produce results. Plus, you'll get a creative bonus: a quick introduction to Suno, where you'll learn to generate your own short music clips to use in presentations or as upbeat openers for meetings.

[Register via Workday](#)

HOW TO THINK, WORK, AND PROMPT AI WITH PURPOSE

BY AI NAVIGATORS

Tuesday, January 27, 11A

Virtual

This seminar + lab will incorporate beginner-level knowledge of AI capabilities to support empowered choices and strategies for using AI tools effectively; participants will then have time to practice effective strategies in prompt design to solve a real-world problem they are facing at work. The last half hour will be an optional 30-minute play session with facilitators world problem they're facing at work.

[Register via Workday](#)

WRITE IT RIGHT: PRACTICAL AI TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

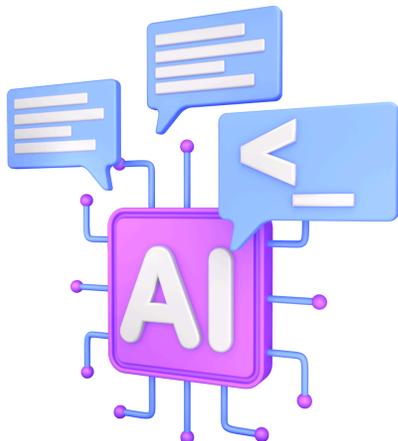
BY AI NAVIGATORS

Wednesday, January 14, 10A

Virtual

AI tools can help you communicate smarter, faster, and with greater impact, but only if you know how to use them well. This session explores how to work with AI as a creative partner, not a replacement for your voice. You'll learn how to tailor AI-generated content for different audiences and platforms, recognize when messages lose their human feel, and refine them to sound authentic, clear, and connection-driven.

[Register via Workday](#)



BENEFITS & WELLNESS

HOLIDAY TIME ENTRY – CAMPUS CLOSURE

The following codes should be used to enter holiday time for the Holiday Campus Closure for *most* PSS staff:

Use Time Type “Holiday” for the following days (observed holidays):

- Wednesday, 12/24/25 (Christmas Eve)
- Thursday, 12/25/25 (Christmas Day)
- Wednesday, 1/31/25 (New Year’s Eve)
- Thursday, 1/1/26 (New Year’s Day)

Use Time Type “Holiday Break” for the following days (campus closure days):

- Monday, 12/22/25
- Tuesday, 12/23/25
- Friday, 12/26/25
- Monday, 12/29/25
- Tuesday, 12/30/25
- Friday, 1/2/26

**HOLLY
JOLLY
TIME**

If you are **full time staff**, enter 8 hours for each day.

If you are **part time staff**, enter 4 hours for each day - per the APSS contract, “When a holiday is on a day a part-time staff member is normally scheduled to work more than four hours, they must make up the difference in hours for that day by either adjusting their schedule within the same week, using vacation, or using lost time. The staff member and manager will work together to adjust for the holiday to not exceed their normal scheduled hours for the week.”

If you are required to work a shift on a campus closure date or the holidays/observed holidays enter your time worked as regular time.

If you have any specific questions, please consult with your manager and/or building representative.

END-OF-YEAR PAYROLL REMINDERS BY PAYROLL

Important Time Entry & Approval Dates

- **December 8:** Timecards will be available to enter holiday/campus closure time (December 22-January 2).
- **December 21:** Time worked between December 7-20 **MUST** be entered in Workday for payment on December 31.
- **December 22:** All time and vacation hours entered **MUST** be approved by supervisors at 3 p.m. We highly encourage time to be approved prior to the holiday break.
- **January 5:** Time worked between December 21–January 3 **MUST** be entered in Workday for payment on January 13.
- **January 5:** All time and vacation hours entered **MUST** be approved by supervisors at 3 p.m.

Review Your Personal & Tax Information

As we approach year-end and prepare for tax season and distribution of W2s, it is important we have your correct mailing address and social security number on file. Please review all personal information in your Workday profile.

Consider also checking your current tax status for your federal, state and local withholdings to ensure you have the proper amount of taxes withheld. Refer to the [IRS tax withholding estimator](#) for assistance.



CAMPUS NEWS & EVENTS

WORKDAY FINANCE UPDATES – DECEMBER 2025 DEADLINES

BY BUSINESS AND FINANCE

To ensure timely processing of your invoices before the holiday break, please see the below cut off dates.

Accounts Payable/Requisitions

These dates apply for anything that needs PAID prior to 12/19. Please make sure to have requisitions/PO's in place before submitting your invoice to Accounts Payable.

- 12/9 Supplier requests for new invoices that need to be paid prior to break
- 12/11 Submit Initial Invoice and Supplier Inv Requests
- 12/16 Final Dept approvals to be complete by end of day 12/16

Expense Reports

- November Transactions submitted by 12/4, with complete approval by EOD 12/8
- December Transactions submitted 12/12, with complete approval by end of day 12/16
- Anything received after 12/16 will post in January.

On December 19, we will run a check run for all payments due through January 5.

As we do each year, we will do our best to process, post and pay anything received after these dates, but it becomes much more difficult to guarantee that.

LEAD WITH LOVE WEBINAR

BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

In today's workplace, leadership rooted in love, not transaction, is a true differentiator. Join Jeff Doolittle on Dec. 16 to learn practical tools to help your team grow and build trust.

RSVP at gvsu.edu/s/3kO



BY GVSU ALUMNI RELATIONS

Join us in Detroit! Cheer on the Red Wings (Jan. 3) and Pistons (Jan. 25) and score exclusive co-branded merch. Each ticket includes a donation to Grand Valley!

Get your tickets at gvsu.edu/alumni/detroitports





HIGHLIGHTS



From Mari Oswill, Information Technology: “My husband, Will, and I were married on September 20 at his parents’ home in Battle Creek. My last name will be changing to Comai. Thank you to my friends in IT and Institutional Advancement for attending!”

Congratulations, Mari and Will!

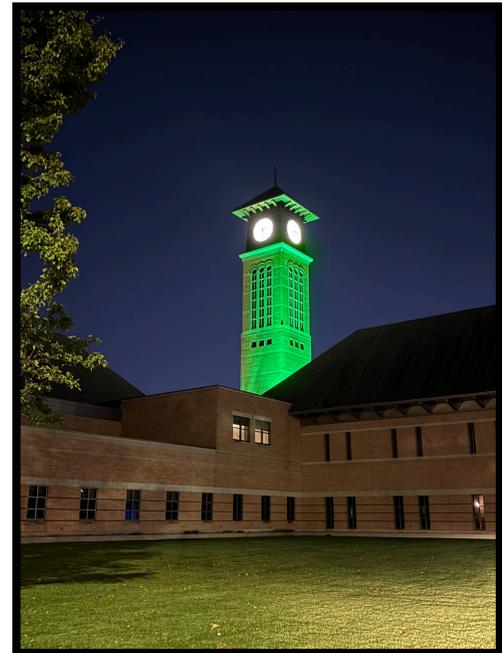


Photo by Annie Parada, University Libraries of the clock tower on the Pew Campus!

The book *Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid was recommended in a previous newsletter. **Keri Roth, Admissions**, recently read this beautiful book (also highly recommended by Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety!) on a cruise which she and her husband took to celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary! “[The book] was uplifting, heartbreaking and fast paced. LOVED it. Here is a pic from where I read *Atmosphere*.”

Congratulations on your anniversary, Keri - looks like a lovely place to enjoy a good book!





HIGHLIGHTS

From **Kerry Hawley, CLAS Center for Experiential Learning:**

“Every fall my family starts Soup Wednesdays. I have been a meal planner since my kids were little. I realized that Wednesday was the busiest day of our week once the school year started. When they were in Kindergarten and 3rd grade I decided that we needed something fast and easy plus everyone was in and out of the house all evening long. So, we started filling the crockpot with some form of soup! It has stuck and 17 years later we still make soup on Wednesday! Our current favorite:

Cream of Mushroom and Leek Soup:

Serves: 4

Difficulty: Moderate

Most health-conscious eaters steer clear of cream laden soups. By pureeing the mushrooms plus swapping evaporated milk for heavy cream, you can put this silky, smooth soup back on the menu. We recommend using an immersion blender for ease, but you could also blend the soup in batches using a blender. To use a blender, carefully fill the blender halfway full. Secure the lid onto the blender, remove the lid's center piece, and cover the opening with a towel to let the steam escape. Feel free to use Shiitake mushrooms here. They'll enhance this recipe with their bold meaty flavor.

Ingredients

- Olive oil 2T
- Cremini mushroom 32 oz, sliced, Button mushrooms can be substituted
- Uncooked leeks 1 cup, chopped
- Fresh thyme 2 tsp
- Reduced sodium chicken broth 4 cups
- Reduced-calorie margarine 4 Tbsp
- All-purpose flour 4 Tbsp
- Table salt 1 tsp
- Black pepper 1/2 tsp
- Fat free evaporated milk 24 fl. oz



Instructions

1. Coat a large saucepan with olive oil and set pan over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and leeks and sauté, stirring frequently, until mushrooms are tender and releasing juice, about 3 minutes; add thyme and stir to coat vegetables. Add broth and bring mixture to a boil; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 5 minutes.
2. Working in batches, transfer mixture to a blender and puree until almost smooth, leaving some mushrooms in larger pieces; set aside. Or puree in pot with an immersion blender; set aside.
3. Melt margarine in the same saucepan over medium heat; add flour, salt and pepper and whisk until smooth and thick, about 1 to 2 minutes. Gradually add milk and bring mixture to a boil, stirring constantly with a whisk to prevent clumping. Return mushroom mixture to pan, stir to blend and simmer 1 minute to heat through. Yields about 2 cup per serving.”

HOLIDAY traditions



HIGHLIGHTS

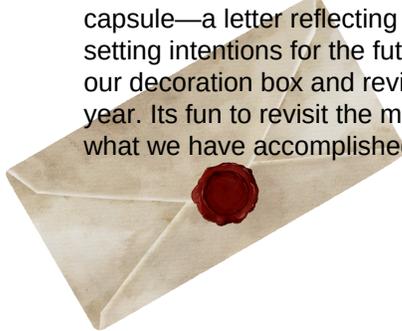
From **Lina Fire, Kirkhof College of Nursing**: “One of my favorite holiday traditions is getting together with my sister-in-law and baking a truly absurd amount of cookies. We make double batches of four different types of cookies, and end up with a massive tub of them that we give away to friends/family.”



From **Gina Rickert, College of Computing**: “The biggest recommendation that I can offer is the Grand Rapids Chistkindl Market. It runs from Nov 19 to Dec 23 and its a great opportunity to do be festive. My family visited this past weekend and it’s highly recommended. More information can be found on their website: <https://christkindlmarktgr.com/>

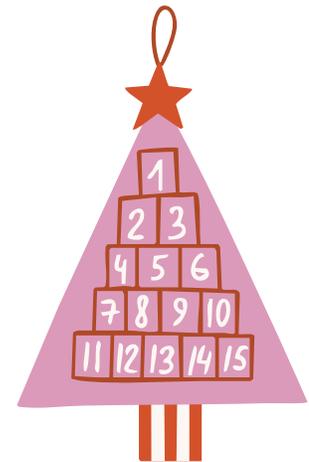


From **Carrie Heishman, Teaching and Learning Department**: “My husband and I started this new tradition a few years ago. To mark the end of the holiday season, my husband and I create a New Year’s time capsule—a letter reflecting the past and setting intentions for the future. We file it in our decoration box and revisit it the next year. Its fun to revisit the memories and see what we have accomplished.”



From **Annie Parada, University Libraries**: “One of my family’s holiday traditions is Wigilia which means vigil in Polish and is celebrated on Christmas Eve. We had an odd number of vegetarian courses (except we do eat fish) including mushroom soup, pierogi, creamed pickled herring, potato pancakes, and whitefish. Before the meal, our matriarch hands out the oplatek (the wafer representing the body of Christ) and we exchange good wishes to each other.”

From **Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety**: “My kids each get an advent calendar, gifted to them by my mom on Thanksgiving. They often wake up early each day leading up to Christmas to open their calendars - the rule is they have to do it together. They each get a calendar representing a current interest, and it is a fun way to contain some of their excitement leading up to the holidays by having something to look forward to each day!



HOLIDAY traditions



HIGHLIGHTS



ROASTED GARLIC MASHED POTATOES

SERVINGS 8

TIME

PREP	20 min
COOK	15 min
BAKE	40 min

NUTRITION

Calories	590	Protein	11g
Carbs	66g	Fats	33g

RATING



INGREDIENTS

- 5 lb. Russet Or Yukon Gold Potatoes, Peeled And Rinsed
- 3 heads To 5 Heads Roasted Garlic
- 1 1/2 stick Regular Salted Butter (3/4 Cup)
- 8 oz. weight Softened Cream Cheese
- 1/2 c. Or So Half-and-half (Or Heavy Cream, If You're Feeling Naughty)
- Salt To Taste
- Black Pepper To Taste

DIRECTIONS

Roast Garlic:

1. **First, trim the garlic.** Use a sharp knife to slice 1/4 inch off the top of a garlic bulb.
2. **Then, add olive oil.** Place the garlic cut-side-up in a piece of aluminum foil, and drizzle olive oil over the top. Sprinkle it with salt, too. I like to use a small ramekin or baking dish so that the garlic stays cut-side-up while it bakes.
3. **Next, bake!** Wrap the garlic in foil, and roast at 350°F for 40-60 minutes, or until the cloves are deeply golden brown and tender. That's it!

Potatoes:

4. Cut the peeled potatoes into pieces and cook in boiling water until fork-tender. Drain water and return to pot, and mash potatoes over low heat until lots of the steam has escaped.
5. Next, mash in softened butter, cream cheese, half-and-half, and salt to taste. Dump in three to five heads of roasted garlic cloves; stir together, then check seasoning. Be sure to salt adequately.
6. Add some fresh ground black pepper, and serve with one or two roasted garlic cloves on top. Serve with steak and expect to be worshipped and kissed for at least 38 hours.

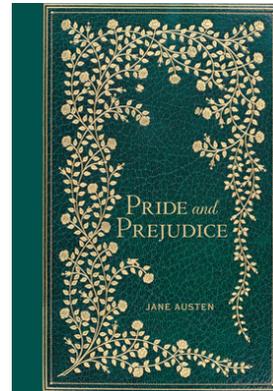
From **Susan Weise, CLAS Dean's Office**: "My brother always does these garlic mashed potatoes for family gatherings and they are AMAZING."

HOLIDAY traditions

HIGHLIGHTS



Recommended by **Annie Parada, University Libraries**: "I finally read *The Hating Game* by Sally Thorne and I loved it. The movie is great as well. It's a nice reminder that our perception of things is only that. We don't always know how others perceive things and their true feelings."

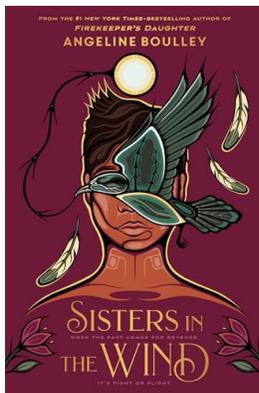


Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen.

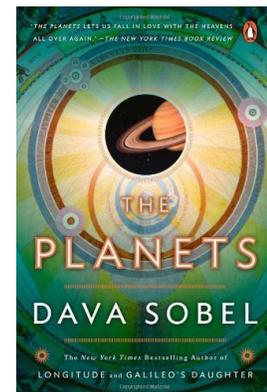
Recommended by **Lina Fire, KCON**. "I think everyone should read *Pride and Prejudice* at least once in their life."

Sisters in the Wind by Angeline Boulley.

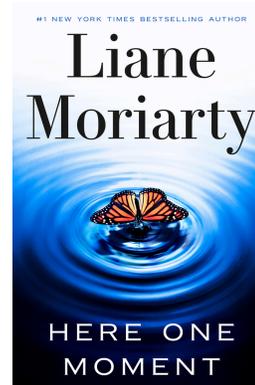
Recommended by **Tammy Brasic, Admissions**. From Goodreads: "A daring new mystery about a foster teen claiming her heritage on her own terms."



Sunburn by Chloe Michelle Howarth. Recommended by **Natalie Day, KCON**. "For the days you wish the 75-80 degree weather would fade away, but also kind of want to enjoy it." (Natalie shared this in the summer - apologies for the late share!) 😊



The Planets by Dava Sobel. Recommended by **Sue Dix, Office of Financial Aid**. "This book treats each planet to its own chapter and gives renewed life to ones love of our solar system through poetry, mythology, astrology, history, and astronomy."



Here One Moment by Liane Moriarty. Recommended by **Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety**. "When a woman on a plane tells the passengers the age and means of their death, some of them begin to examine their lives a little more closely. Their stories intertwine in ways that will leave you on the edge of your seat!"



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ASH GODIN EC	

CAMPUS DATES

6TH - FALL COMMENCEMENT
14TH - HANUKKAH BEGINS
20TH - 31ST - UNIVERSITY CLOSURE (CONTINUED THROUGH 1/5/26)
21ST - YULE (WINTER SOLSTICE)
24TH - CHRISTMAS EVE
25TH - CHRISTMAS DAY
26TH - FIRST DAY OF KWANZAA
31ST - NEW YEAR'S EVE
GVSU.EDU/EVENTS

BIRTHDAYS

2ND - AUNA DWELLE-OLSON
4TH - L DETTLING
5TH - LISA MORNINGSTAR
12TH - TRACIE SAMDAL
18TH - BARBIE YOUNG
18TH - CRAIG HAMMERLIND
18TH - KERI ROTH
27TH - KERRY HAWLEY
31ST - DARRHONDA SCOTT-JONES

GVSU ANNIVERSARY

5TH - SUSAN DIX
8TH - KELLI DYKSTRA
14TH - ROBYN TOTH
GEORGINE BELLO

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

26TH - ROBYN TOTH



SHARE YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS OR TIPS FOR SELF CARE FOR INCLUSION IN THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER!

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY. FOR SUBMISSION INFORMATION, CONTACT THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR.