

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 8 • FEBRUARY 2026

APSS NEWSLETTER

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

photo by Kendra Stanley-Mills

ISSUE FEATURES

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for the 2026 PSS Appreciation Celebration!
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CAREER ADVANCEMENT WORKSHOP

Join us for the Career Advancement Workshop, a dynamic session designed specifically for Professional Support Staff (PSS) who are interested in growing within the organization.
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REACHING NEW HEIGHTS WITH JEANETTE EPPS

As part of the Roger That! Conference, retired astronaut, Dr. Epps will speak about her inspiring journey of reaching new heights in her career and beyond.
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HIGHLIGHTS

Sharing hobbies, celebrating wins, and favorite pick-me-up snacks!
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UNION NEWS



SAVE THE DATE!

*Join Us
as We Celebrate
Growing with a Purpose*

**2026 PSS
APPRECIATION CELEBRATION**

**Thursday, April 16th
3 PM - 5 PM**

Multipurpose Room, 2nd Floor
Eberhard Center
GVSU Pew Campus

DETAILS COMING SOON!

APSS EVENTS COMMITTEE

The APSS E-board would like to offer to all membership the opportunity to serve on the APSS Events Committee. Members of this committee would be responsible for planning the annual luncheon, student employee appreciation week events, and more! If you are interested, please contact President Tami John at president@apssgvsu.org. Additional information to follow depending on interest.



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS OF GENDER: A FORUM FOR WOMEN AND MEN

BY GVSU EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND COUNSELING TEAM

A panel of leaders in education and public service will consider the dynamics of gender in the workplace. Attendees will be invited to discuss focus questions in table groups. Refreshments will be served.

Thursday, February 19
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
L. William Siedman Center
City Campus

[RSVP](#)

CONSCIOUS CONVERSATIONS – NAVIGATING A CHANGING WORKPLACE: TECH OPTIMISM V. TECH FATIGUE

BY WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Technology promises efficiency, flexibility, and innovation, but it can also bring overwhelm, burnout, and constant change. As workplaces rapidly adopt new tools and systems, women often experience these shifts in distinct ways, shaped by inequities in workload, expectations around availability, emotional labor, caregiving responsibilities, and access to decision-making power. This Conscious Conversation invites participants to reflect on where optimism and fatigue coexist, explore the gendered realities of workplace technology, and imagine more equitable and sustainable ways of working together.

Tuesday, February 24
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Virtual Event via Zoom

[RSVP](#)

CAREER ADVANCEMENT WORKSHOP: STEP FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

BY HUMAN RESOURCES

Are you ready to take the next step in your career—but not sure where to start? Join us for the Career Advancement Workshop, a dynamic session designed **specifically for Professional Support Staff (PSS)** who are interested in growing within the organization.

This workshop will equip PSS members with practical tools and insider strategies to confidently pursue internal career opportunities. You'll learn how to identify roles that align with your strengths, showcase your experience effectively, and stand out in the interview process. Through guided discussion, examples, and actionable tips, you'll gain clarity on how to position yourself for success and advocate for your professional growth.

Whether you're actively applying or simply exploring what's possible next, this session will leave you feeling informed, empowered, and ready to move forward.

Invest in yourself. Discover your next opportunity. Advance with purpose.

Monday, February 23, 2026
11:30a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Kirkhof Center
Refreshments will be provided.



Space is limited. Please register via the link below.

Workday Link:
<https://www.myworkday.com/gvsu/learning/course/ebb6841372271000ca8d026462e00000?type=9882927d138b10...>



BENEFITS & WELLNESS

ALLONE HEALTH EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

BY HUMAN RESOURCES

Whether it's financial worries, aging parents, job stress or health issues, everyone faces challenges from time to time. With your EAP, you don't have to face them alone. As a faculty or staff member, you have access to AllOne Health, a third party employee assistance program (EAP) which offers 24/7 crisis support, consultation, and coaching. Access free resources by creating an online account at www.allonehealth.com/support using the code "GVSUNI" and book up to 7 free sessions with AllOne Health by calling 1-800-788-8630.

What happens when I call my EAP?

An EAP specialist will ask you a few questions to help you identify the best resource to assist you with your personal situation. If you need financial or legal services, you will be referred to an expert in the appropriate field. If you want to see a counselor, we will match you with a counselor or therapist who is experienced in helping people with problems similar to yours.

Who will provide services to me?

AllOne Health EAP maintains a large network of licensed and certified professionals, including lawyers, mediators, psychologists, marriage/family therapists and substance abuse professionals, from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. No matter what concern you are facing, AllOne Health has a full range of diverse professionals available to meet your needs.

Do I have to pay for this service?

No, your employer provides no-cost counseling for you and your household members.

What services does my EAP offer?

- Anytime, Anywhere
- Legal/Financial Resources
- Life Coaching
- Medical Advocacy
- Mental Health Counseling
- Personal Assistant
- Work/Life Resources



I want to utilize my EAP. Where do I start?

You can start by accessing free resources by creating an online account at www.MyLifeExpert.com using the code "GVSUNI". Resources are updated frequently. You can also book a free session with Encompass by calling 1-800-788-8630. As a GVSU employee, you have 7 free sessions total.

Visit the [Human Resources EAP page](#) for MUCH more information!



CAMPUS NEWS & EVENTS

DIGITAL DECLUTTERING

BY IT SECURITY, DAVID VAN SWEDEN

If you have a smartphone, you probably use it often, or even every day! Downloading mobile apps for your phone can help you conveniently access the online services that you use the most. But over time, your device can fill up with older apps that you no longer use. While it may seem harmless to leave an old game or shopping app on your phone, digital clutter isn't just a storage issue. It can actually be a security concern.

Hidden Dangers of Unused Apps

Many mobile apps have permission to access your device's data. They can continue to collect this data in the background, even if you are not using the app. Software developers frequently deploy security updates to newer mobile apps to keep your personal data safe and secure. However, older apps are often not updated as frequently or at all, leaving them vulnerable to security breaches. Cybercriminals can take advantage of this and use outdated apps to try and steal your personal data or even install malware onto your device.

Strengthen Your Security

If you are no longer using an app, uninstall it. This action not only saves storage space but also keeps your device more secure. Be sure to update the remaining software and apps regularly so they have the latest security updates. Remember to download apps only from official app stores, as they are reviewed for safety and security before being posted. Decluttering your apps and performing regular security maintenance helps keep your device and your data safe.

What Can I Do to Stay Safe?

Remember these steps when decluttering and maintaining your devices:

- Regularly review the apps on your phone and uninstall any that you haven't used recently.
- Be careful when allowing an app to access your phone's camera, microphone, or location. You should disable these permissions for any app that doesn't need them.

You can enable automatic updates for mobile apps in your phone's settings to ensure they always use the latest security patches.





CAMPUS NEWS & EVENTS



REACHING NEW HEIGHTS WITH JEANETTE EPPS BY PEOPLE, EQUITY & CULTURE

Dr. Jeanette J. Epps is a former trailblazing NASA astronaut, aerospace engineer, and CIA intelligence officer whose remarkable career embodies leadership and a steadfast commitment to inspiring the next generation. As one of only a few African American women to fly aboard the ISS, she understands firsthand the power of representation and uses her platform to mentor young people.

RSVP to join us for the chance to meet Dr. Epps to hear more about her inspiring journey of reaching new heights in her career and beyond, and engage with local, black-owned businesses.

Visit www.gvsu.edu/rogerthat for more events related to the Roger That! Conference.

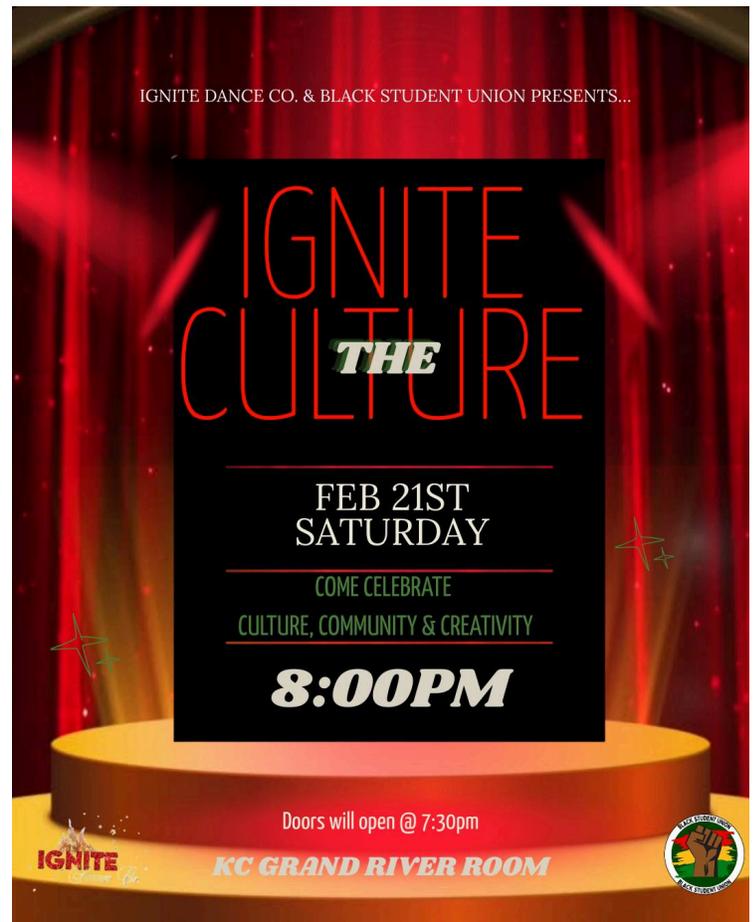
IGNITE THE CULTURE: BLACK HISTORY MONTH SHOWCASE

BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

Thursday, February 21, 2026 - 8:00pm - 11:00pm
Location: Kirkhof Center - Grand River Room (Valley Campus)

The Black Student Union (BSU), in collaboration with Ignite Dance Company, is hosting Ignite the Culture, an event celebrating Black creativity and culture. The program will feature dancers, singers, poets, musicians, designers, and other creatives.

Visit <https://www.gvsu.edu/oma/black-history-month-celebration-24.htm> for more events to celebrate Black History Month.





CAMPUS NEWS & EVENTS



VIRTUAL EVENTS BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

GVSU Alumni Relations has added several sessions to their line-up of free Virtual Events:

Burnout Proof Your Career with Kali Wolken
February 11, 2026, 12-1P

Alumni Travel Program Info Session: Iceland
February 24, 2026, 7-8P

Maximizing Social Security
February 26, 2026, 12-1P

Craft a Winning Resume with Abby Priebe
March 17, 2026, 12-1P

Hidden Costs of Aging
March 31, 2026, 12-1P

Making the Leap: How to Successfully Transition into a New Industry or Role with Clint Polhill
April 15, 2026, 12P-1P

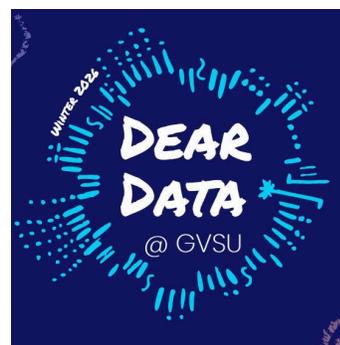
Visit Alumni [Virtual Events](#) for more information.

Visit [Alumni Travel Program](#) for more information on the Iceland trip!



GVSU GRAND RAPIDS SPORTS WEEK BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

Join fellow Lakers in Grand Rapids for two epic games! Cheer on the Rise (Feb. 26) and Griffins (Feb. 27), snag exclusive co-branded merch. Each ticket includes a donation to Grand Valley! [GVSU Grand Rapids Sports Week](#)



DEAR DATA @ GVSU

Dear Data @ GVSU emulates Lupi's and Posavec's project by inviting all students, faculty, and staff to track information about one aspect of their daily life for one week, visualize that data on postcard, and share with the campus community. The postcards will be displayed physically and virtually, at Student Scholars Day in April 2026.

Visit www.gvsu.edu/deardata for more information!



CAMPUS NEWS & EVENTS

REMOTE OPERATIONS DURING WINTER WEATHER

BY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Remote status occurs due to a campus closure. It is an operational status that shifts all non-essential personnel to online work/class. During the winter, hazardous weather conditions are the most common reason to shift to remote status.

When GVSU moves to remote status, a GVSUAlert! message will be sent via text message and email to students, faculty and staff. The GVSU homepage will also be updated to reflect remote status.

In the event of a campus closure, classes will shift to remote delivery whenever feasible. Classes that cannot be delivered remotely will not be held.

Faculty and staff shift to remote work whenever possible during a closure. Essential staff are to report to work. Athletic contests may be held as previously planned subject to approval by the Vice President of Finance and Administration. Other campus events may be held as previously planned subject to approval by the President or the vice president whose division is sponsoring the event.

When the Valley Campus shifts to remote status because of weather-related conditions, the Pew Grand Rapids Campus, Health Campus and the Meijer Holland Campus will also shift to remote.

The operating statuses of other GVSU campuses such as those in Traverse City, Detroit and others locations are unaffected by a campus closure of the Valley, City or Holland campuses. The status of those campuses is determined on a case-by-case basis.



Severe Winter Weather

It is important to know the difference between a winter weather advisory, winter storm watch and a winter storm warning.

A **Winter Weather Advisory** is issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle and sleet that will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to life-threatening situations.

A **Winter Storm Watch** alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a winter storm.

A **Winter Storm Warning** is issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

Winter storms create a higher risk of vehicle crashes, hypothermia, frostbite carbon monoxide poisoning as well as heart attacks from overexertion. Winter storms including blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice and high winds.

Stay off roads if at all possible. If trapped in your car, stay inside. Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Reduce the risk of a heart attack by avoiding overexertion when shoveling snow and walking in the snow.



HIGHLIGHTS



Audrey Kelly, Writing Department. "I love traveling! In 2022, I spent five weeks backpacking Europe with friends. Most recently, I visited London, and this year I'm traveling to New Orleans (for the third time.) In 2027, I hope to see the countryside of France!"

Favorite hobbies

Jordan Sickrey, Registrar's Office. My biggest hobby outside of work is writing. I have been working on a fantasy trilogy since December of 2014, which was my first semester at GVSU as an undergraduate student. I had known I wanted to write fantasy for a long time, and after joining the Renaissance Club and taking ANT 204: Intro to Cultural Anthropology, I had the foundation for my novels: faeries. I started building my own culture over that winter break, and I've been working on these novels ever since. I've been writing for pretty much as long as I can remember, though; it's always been a part of me. I also love to explore poetry, and I've been working on a poetry collection, too."



Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety. "I have been knitting for almost 20 years. I recently tried crochet and have found many more possibilities to create with yarn! A year ago I started my first granny square project - a blanket for my daughter. I finished it over the holiday break and I'm so proud of how it turned out! Needle craft is so relaxing and anxiety reducing for me!"





HIGHLIGHTS

Amazing work!

From **Anne Valkema, Development Services:** “The gift processing team in Development Services processed over \$3 million in physical checks, stock, and online giving over the holiday break and the first week of January and to balance the final calendar year 2025 cash report.” Well done to all of you!

Sharing our wins!

From **Tonya Brown, AWRI:** “I’m going to share a very personal win. In April 2023, I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. I underwent 5 months of IV chemotherapy, followed by a mastectomy, and then 5 weeks of radiation. In March of 2024, I began an oral form of chemotherapy that has milder side-effects but still has side-effects such as chronic exhaustion. This additional treatment will help keep the cancer from returning. On Tuesday, January 20, I took my last dose of oral chemo. Yay!!!

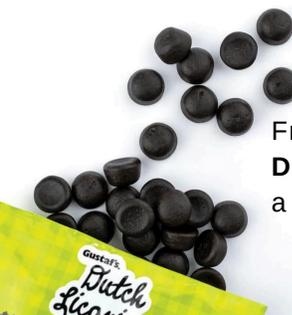
Through it all, I was able to work. I worked in the infusion lab, I worked around naps, I worked from home while healing, but I was able to work. Being able to continue to live my life as normally as possible was important to me, and I am so grateful that GVSU and AWRI (especially Heidi Feldpausch and Cheryl Kastias) were able to flex around my health needs and support my mental health need to continue “business as usual”. I’ve been called strong because I continued to work, but I think it would have been much harder to just lay around feeling poorly with no where to direct my attention or reason to get out of bed.

I’m in remission now, and have a series of maintenance appointments to complete, but I wanted to express my extreme gratitude for the support I have received from GVSU and my colleagues at AWRI and CLAS. This year (2026) is my 39th year at GVSU so I know what I am saying when I say this really is the very best place to work.”

Productivity snacks!

From **Jordan Sickrey, Registrar’s Office:** “I keep a stash of Blueberry Pomegranate Acai Vitamin Waters for hydration + Dr. Pepper for caffeine purposes. I also tend to keep a chocolate stash somewhere.”

From **Carrie Heishman, Teaching & Learning Department:** “For my go to pick me up snack, I enjoy a couple pieces of Dutch black licorice.”





HIGHLIGHTS

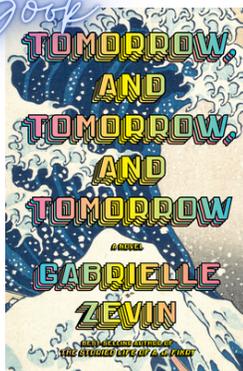
Recipe



Recommended by **Keri Roth, Admissions & Recruitment**: I wanted to share this recipe my sister in law shared with me. We both love Costco's pot pie. I make this in a 9x13 instead of making 2 separate pies and it is so good!

Costco Chicken Pot Pie {Copycat} - You're Gonna Bake It After All

Book



Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow by **Gabrielle Zevin**. Recommended by **Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety**. "I don't think I would have ever picked this book up if I knew what it was about, but I'm so glad I did! A story about a group of friends who create video games, this book touches on friendship, love, growing up, heartbreak, and so much more. And it is so vividly written - the character development is fabulous. Highly recommend."



Passing by **Nella Larsen**. Recommended by **Sue Dix, Office of Financial Aid**. "This book that covers a short span of time and is quickly read is, briefly, a story of what happens when two old friends reconnect after a long time apart. "Passing" takes on a multitude of different meanings, both overt and covert. And, POW, I was not expecting that ending."

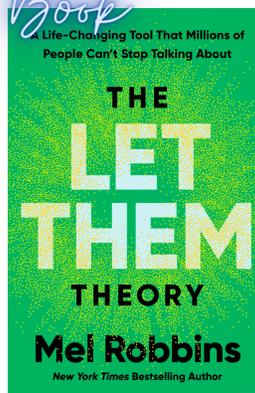
Project Hail Mary by **Andy Weir**. Recommended by **Tammy Brasic, Admissions**. From Goodreads: "Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission—and if he fails, humanity and Earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it."



After the Hunt (dir. Luca Guadagnino), recommended by **Natalie Day, KCON**. Released in October, available on Prime Video.

Movie

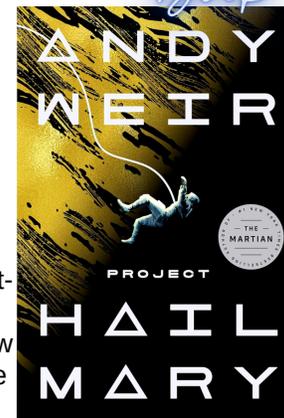
Book



Recommended by **Carrie Heishman, Teaching and Learning Department**: I had many family and friends recommended The Let Them Theory by Mel Robbins. It's a truly transformative mindset shift that can be applied to every area of life—family, work, and personal growth.



Book





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EC

CAMPUS DATES

14TH - VALENTINE'S DAY

16TH - PRESIDENT'S DAY

GVSU.EDU/EVENTS

BIRTHDAYS

2ND - KATIE HAYNES

6TH - JACKSON RICHMOND

6TH - GINA RICKERT

8TH - GABRIELLE MAY

12TH - MARIA PALACIO

14TH - ALLISON BAZAIRE

24TH - ERICA BAKER-BRINGEDAHL

GVSU ANNIVERSARY

1ST - JORDAN SICKREY

4TH - NICHOLE PAYNE

19TH - TAMMY TOBAR

23RD - SHERRI HALL

26TH - SHYCEKA ARMSTRONG

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

14TH - RHONDA LEMIEUX



SHARE A PHOTO OF YOUR FAVORITE PET TO SHARE IN NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

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