

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 10 • APRIL 2026

APSS NEWSLETTER

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

SEIDMAN CENTER

photo by Kendra Stanley-Mills

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Registration is free...
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UNION NEWS



ELECTIONS

2026 - 2027 APSS E-BOARD ELECTIONS

The 2026-2027 APSS E-board election will take place **Tuesday, April 21, 2026**. You will receive a link from the Qualtrics system in order to vote in the election. If you have opted out of the Qualtrics system, please send an alternate email address for us to send you the link for voting.

The following are the nominees for each office. [Their candidate biographies can be viewed here.](#)

Vice President

- Sam Bravo
- Denise Gross
- Jackson Richmond

Chief Alliance Steward

- Cameron Jowers
- Rhonda LeMieux (Incumbent)

Secretary

- Michelle Holstege (Incumbent)

Membership Director

- Jenna Bench
- Kate Knopp
- Rayshena Wilson (Incumbent)

DID YOU KNOW?

ALL APSS members can attend board meetings. Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month from noon to 1 PM. Currently, meetings are held in SER and virtually through Zoom. If you would like to attend and can't make it in person, please email your Building Rep and they'll provide you the Zoom link a day or two before the scheduled meeting.

UNION DUES - SUMMER 2026 SCHEDULE

Union dues will not be deducted from your paycheck for June, July, and August (payroll numbers 11 - 17). Dues deductions will start back up in September, beginning with your 9/8/26 check (payroll number 18).



MOVING OFFICES?

If you change office locations, please notify the APSS Membership Director and your Building Representative so we can ensure your contact information and rep are up to date!





UNION NEWS



HEALTH INSURANCE FOR RETIREES UPDATE

BY BARGAINING CHAIR SHAWN EVANS

Hello APSS Members and Retirees –

Rest assured, your APSS Leadership have been working diligently to represent your interests as they pertain to the conversation about the termination of medical benefits for retirees, including active employees who would have been eligible for this benefit in early retirement, for those hired prior to January 1, 2014. There is a lot to cover, but I would like to start with questions that we received directly from one of our members:

(paraphrasing): “What actions have been taken by the APSS and what is the union’s stance on the change to medical benefits for retirees hired before 2014? Did the union have any input into this decision?”

APSS leadership was invited to a meeting with representatives from Human Resources on January 13, 2026. We were given embargoed information about the employer’s decision to terminate the medical benefit for active employees/retirees hired prior to January 1, 2014. It is our understanding that all unionized groups (AFSCME, POAM/COAM, APSS) had the same meeting with the same representatives from Human Resources. It is worth noting that Faculty and AP had a combined meeting with different representatives from HR – Faculty and AP left their meeting unclear on the change that was happening. The primary purpose of our meeting was about language in each of our contractual bargaining agreements that pertained to the benefit that the employer had chosen to discontinue. It is, however, very important to note that when we received this information, we all left the meeting with the understanding that the lump sum and annuity options would be based on the employee’s “magic 75” date, or age if later – more on this in a while. The APSS, while crystal clear on the decision being made by the employer, did not endorse this decision (and we have connected with Eric Johnson at The Lanthorn to have previous statements by Dr. Shorty clarified.)

We have contractual language in 12.4.2 that allows the University to “modify or terminate this plan upon reasonable notice to staff and retirees and provided that the changes are the same for each staff member group.” We agreed that 352 days amounted to ‘reasonable notice’ for the termination of the benefit and the plan presented to us discontinued this benefit for each staff member group alike.” Consequently, we agreed to a Letter of Agreement (LOA) on section 12.4.2 (and also section 9.4.C Job Share Classification, because it was mentioned there as well). Once again, I would like to emphasize that not having contractual language to prevent the employer from making this decision, nor agreeing to a LOA as it pertains to specific contractual language affected by this decision, does not equal endorsement of this decision.

The APSS (nor AFSCME, nor POAM/COAM) did not have any input in this decision. Neither did Faculty, nor AP. This decision is being imposed upon all staff member groups alike.

APSS leadership has spent days (not hours) engaged in conversations about the decision that was made and the impact that this decision has on active and retired APSS members. Email, text, zoom, in-person, phone calls, check-ins, follow-ups ... this has been taxing for the people who have been most involved. Following a meeting, I reached out to the APSS legal counsel to ask a few questions:

1. What are the employer’s legal obligations in this scenario?
 - a. Does the employer have to offer anything to impacted employees/retirees?
 - b. Does the employer have to provide more time for us to make our decision?
 - c. Can we compel the employer to redo the math based on what we were told – that the actuarial valuation of present value would be based on each individual’s “magic 75” or current age?
2. Does the Alliance have legal recourse?
 - a. Is there case law that would support an injunction?
 - b. Would it be beneficial to APSS members to have legal representation in this matter?

continued on next page...



UNION NEWS



HEALTH INSURANCE FOR RETIREES UPDATE

BY BARGAINING CHAIR SHAWN EVANS

The responses from legal counsel, while disheartening, were appreciated. The employer has no legal obligation to pay impacted active employees/retirees anything – they could just terminate the benefit and offer no lump sum or annuity option. We cannot legally compel them to redo the math based on what we were told on January 13, nor to allow them more time for those impacted to make their decision (although this time has been extended by the employer/Plante Moran until May 1, 2026.) Legal representation at the informational sessions would be a show of force, but nothing more. We have no legal recourse.

I spent Monday, March 23, in each informational session with Plante Moran. Tami John and Michelle Holstege attended the AM sessions with us in the Multipurpose Room in MIPL; Rhonda LeMieux was there for the AM sessions in MIPL and joined me for the afternoon session in MIPL and the late afternoon session in SCB. As noted in the invitation, representatives from Human Resources (and the Division of Business and Finance) were present at each meeting. Those representatives did not speak during any of the informational sessions (AVP Wieschhorster spoke when directly spoken to.) We were informed that representatives from Plante Moran were there to discuss the “is,” and that any questions pertaining to the “why” and the “how” should be directed to VPs Sanial and Shorty. I ensured that participants at each meeting understood that the benefit – medical coverage for retirees – was being terminated, despite the representatives from Plante Moran continuing to use the verb ‘transitioned.’ I was called out by AVP Wieschhorster for reminding participants that the unions understood that the calculations for the lump sum and the annuity would be based on the “magic 75,” per what we were told from HR – the response was an unwillingness to speak to something that was said in a meeting where AVP Wieschhorster was not present. Another participant called on AVP Wieschhorster to respond to very real concerns about the “why” and the “how,” and was similarly gaslit and told that this was not the forum for those discussions, and that there would be no answers provided to those questions. Participants in that session requested a town hall meeting from the Division of Business and Finance who could speak to employees/retirees concerning, unanswered questions about the “why” and the “how” behind this decision.

In response, I have forwarded VP Sanial, Dr. Shorty, and AVP Wieschhorster the agenda from the meeting that we had with representatives from Human Resources on January 13, 2026. We left our meeting in January with the understanding that employee information would be provided to actuaries so they could calculate the lump sum and annuity benefit based on the “magic 75” or current age. As the actuarial assumption used to calculate the lump sum and annuity offers (62 or current age, whichever is greater) does not honor what was communicated to the unionized groups, I have asked the employer to work with Watkins Ross (the actuary) and Plante Moran to redo the math for all impacted and allow more time for those who need to make a major financial decision. At the time of writing, I await a response to this inquiry.

This is the best account I can give on the union’s stance on this matter.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns that I have not addressed here, or in the previous newsletter.

In solidarity,
sme

Another member provided contact information for Dedicated Help for those with questions: If you have questions, please reach out to our dedicated help line at **1 (877) 511-0873** or via email at GVSU@plantemoran.com.



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MICROSOFT E-LEARNING BY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

20 Microsoft 365 Tips To Work Smarter, Not Harder

April 15, 1-230pm

Getting Started With Microsoft Teams

April 22, 1-2pm

Maximize Productivity With Free Microsoft Copilot Features

April 29, 1-2pm

Getting Started With OneDrive

May 13, 1-2pm

Register for these trainings via Workday Learn!

MAKING THE LEAP: HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION INTO A NEW INDUSTRY OR ROLE WITH CLINT POLHILL

BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

Making a career change—whether stepping into a new industry or stretching into a bigger role—can feel uncertain and overwhelming. In this webinar, we'll explore practical tools and proven strategies to help you identify your transferable skills, test new career paths with confidence, and reposition your experience for what's next. We'll also look behind the curtain at how hiring managers actually evaluate career changers: what they look for, what raises concerns, and what makes a transition compelling. Drawing on real-world examples from my own career pivots and hiring decisions, you'll learn a practical framework to assess fit, craft a credible transition story, and focus your job search on the signals that truly resonate with decision-makers.

April 15, 2026, 12-1P - Virtual. [RSVP here.](#)



GVSU CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT

BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

Join us for the 6th Annual GVSU Cornhole Tournament! [Registration](#) is free — just pick a teammate and a team name. All GVSU faculty, staff, and students are eligible to participate. The first 32 teams to register will be guaranteed a spot. Just want to watch? Come and cheer on your coworkers and meet colleagues from across campus! We'll have free snacks and drinks, plus Louie's Lunchbox food truck will be on site!



CAMPUS NEWS & EVENTS



SEED LIBRARIES BY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Spring is Coming!

Time to start your seeds inside for springtime planting. We are busy restocking the seed library located on the first floor of the **Mary I Pew Library**. Also we have a mini seed library now located at the **Frey Library in 205 DCIH!** Both are open to anyone to use; please share with any students you know who may love gardening or want to grow to have access to fresh veggies and fruit.



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month! This is a time for advocates, survivors, their loved ones, and the community to come together to talk openly about sexual violence to support survivors, increase knowledge and awareness, and identify strategies and resources to prevent sexual violence.

Visit the [Center for Health and Wellbeing's website](https://www.apssgsu.org) for more information and events.



HIGHLIGHTS

Office Space

Marisa Naylor, Public Safety. “Here are a few of the challenge coins I keep on my desk. Over the years, I’ve built a small collection, and each one has a story behind it.

The first coin I received was from the Department of Justice, United States Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Michigan back in 2014, when I left my first big-girl job there. At the time, someone explained the tradition to me: if you run into a colleague while out and present your coin, they have to show theirs. If they don’t have it, they owe you a drink—if they do, then you owe them one. It was a simple but memorable way to represent connection and shared experience.

Challenge coins themselves trace back to military tradition, where they were used to signify membership, build morale, and recognize service. Over time, that tradition carried into law enforcement, where coins now serve a similar purpose—reinforcing pride, recognizing contributions, and strengthening relationships both within departments and across agencies.

I’ve come to appreciate that meaning more personally in recent years. One of the more recent coins I received was from a detective with the Ottawa County Sheriff’s Office. Before coming to GVSU, I worked as a Detective Bureau Assistant with Ottawa County, at a time when they didn’t yet have challenge coins. Recently, Detective Cieslinski with OCSO visited GVPD to use our soft interview room for victim interviews, as the environment provides a more supportive setting for those conversations. I was able to assist with the recording equipment during his time here, and as a gesture of appreciation, he presented me with one of their newly created challenge coins.

That experience stood out to me because it reflects exactly what these coins are meant to represent, collaboration, mutual support, and the strong working relationships we share, including the partnership between GVPD and the Ottawa County Sheriff’s Office.

Hannah Noorman, Padnos College of Engineering. “I’m lucky to have a large window in my cubicle, which my plants love. One of my cabinets is decorated with magnets to show off some of my interests and make my space as colorful and welcoming as possible. They are often conversation starters!”



For me, these coins are more than decorations. They’re reminders of the connections and shared efforts that make our work meaningful.

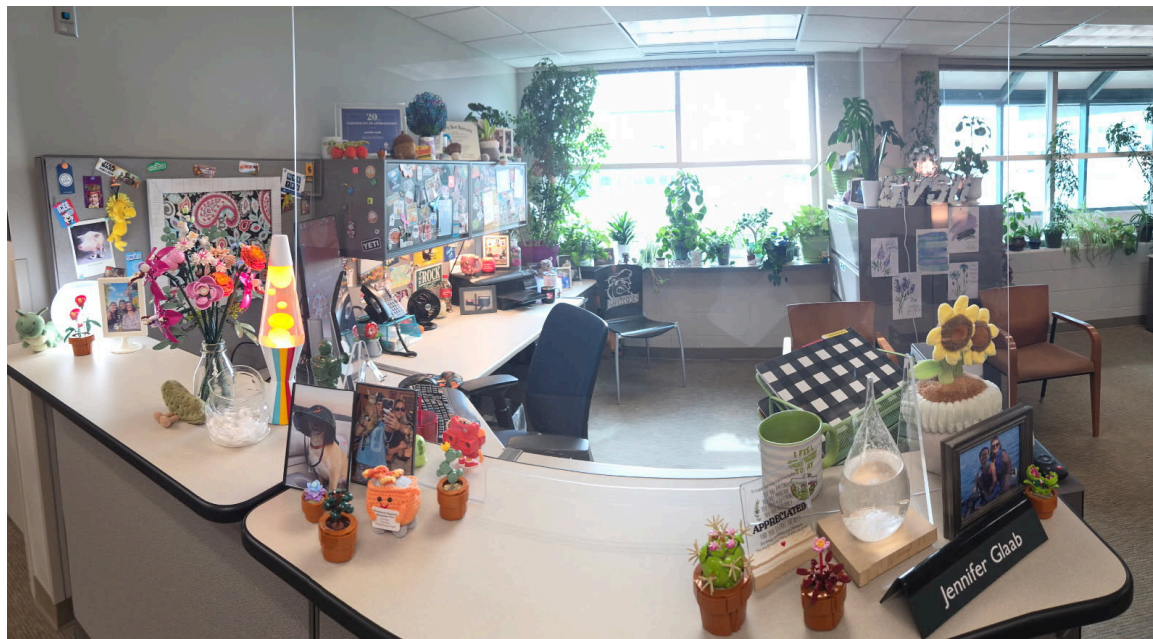


HIGHLIGHTS

Office Space

Jennifer Glaab, Chemistry Department. “It has taken me 20 years, but I have a cubicle that I love!

It is filled with stuffed animals, family photos, stickers, Lego creations & an ever-growing plant collection. Hard not to be in a good mood when you are surrounded by cheerful things that are important to you.



Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety. “To others, my cubicle probably looks messy, but to me, it’s full of things that make me happy! Many, many pictures of my family (\$1 magnets on Shutterfly!!), quotes that I love, artwork made by kiddos, knickknacks from travels and other important events, plants (that I try so very hard to keep alive), window stickers that I change out with the season, and of course, anything to showcase my Laker Pride! I love being surrounded by things that remind me what is important in life. Come visit anytime. I’ll make you a cup of coffee!”



HIGHLIGHTS

Office Space

Katie Haynes, Biomedical Sciences. “Biomedical Sciences Office Mascot: Lucky Dee Ceased is our office mascot. Lucky is always celebrating the different seasons and holidays. Our students love to see how Lucky celebrates!”

Katie’s Desk Space: I have a slight obsession with pigs. For 20+ years, I’ve been collecting pigs, and they assist me here at work. When I go on vacation, I’m always searching for new pigs. After I return, my faculty enjoy coming into the office to see if they can find the new additions. There are more pigs not pictured that have had to spread further out into the office!”



Georgine Bello, Art Museum. “Working for the Art Museum, we always get opportunities to participate in the creative endeavors our Learning & Outreach Manager organizes for program events. I like to hang the finished products in my cubicle. We did collaging for a time. I loved this kind of feminine phrase from a key lime package and it inspired ideas for a citrus collage: Key Limes FLORAL, PETITE & SLIGHTLY SWEET. And for some reason, I also love lemons and pineapples.”

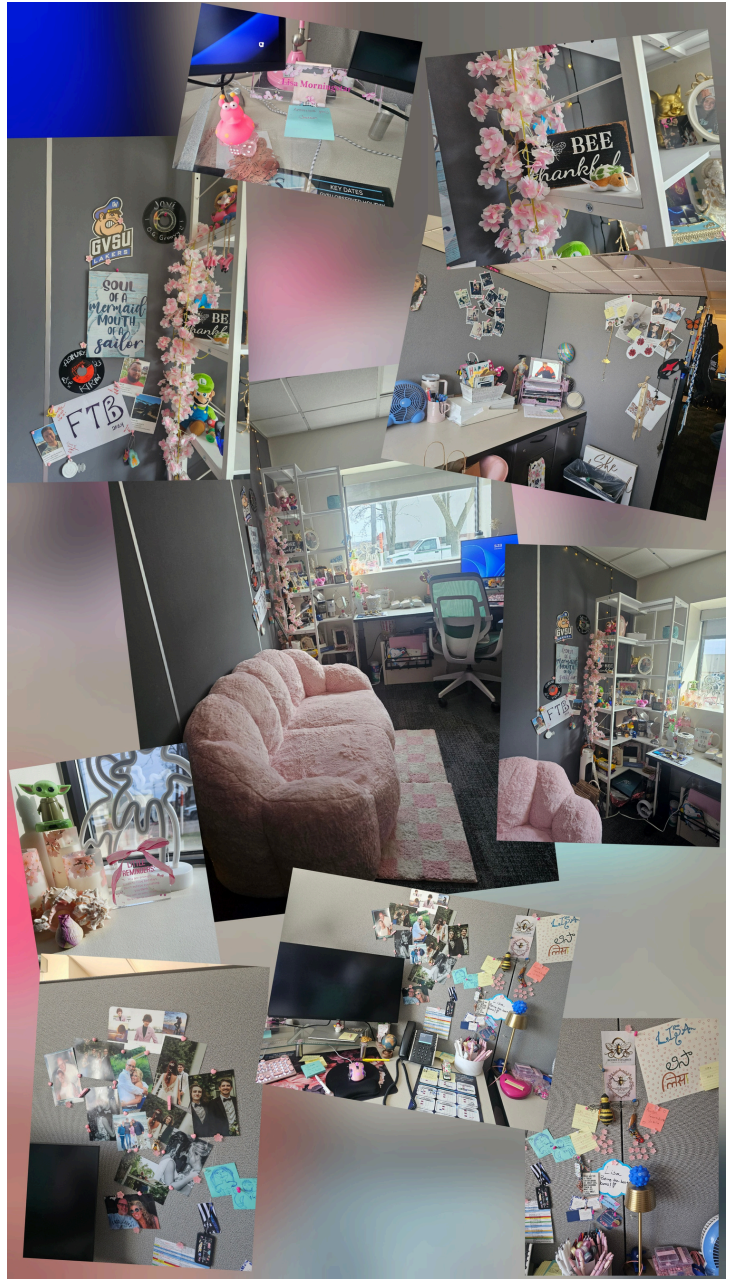




HIGHLIGHTS

Office Space

Lisa Morningstar, Parking Services. "Here are some pics of my offices [Allendale & Grand Rapids] Clearly pink and GVSU blue are my favs along with my students. "



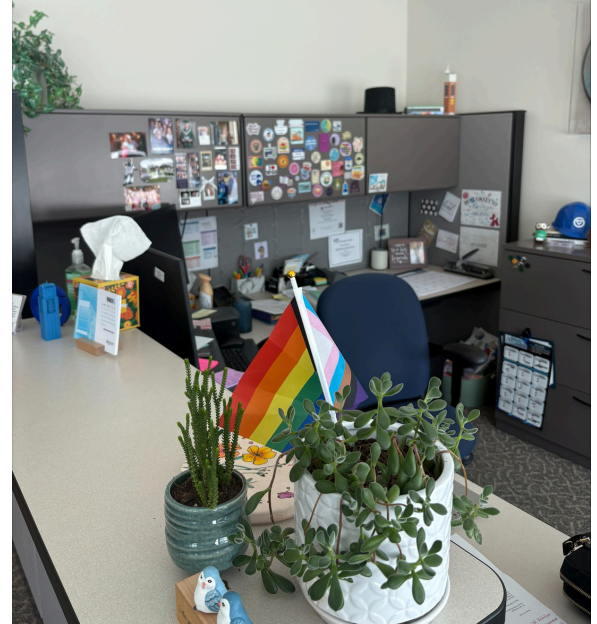


HIGHLIGHTS

Office Space



Abigail McClure, BCOIS Dean's Office. "Attached are a few pictures of my cubicle space in LOH (BCOIS Dean's Office). I've spent a lot of time curating my ~vibes~, haha!"



Angel Kropf, Student Employment. "One thing I've done in my office is to use picnic baskets (bought at thrift stores for no more than \$5) to organize office supplies on the shelves in my office. They hold everything from holiday decorations to extra tablecloths for events to supplies we use only at orientation. I mix that with a bit of personal stuff, as shown in the picture."



HIGHLIGHTS

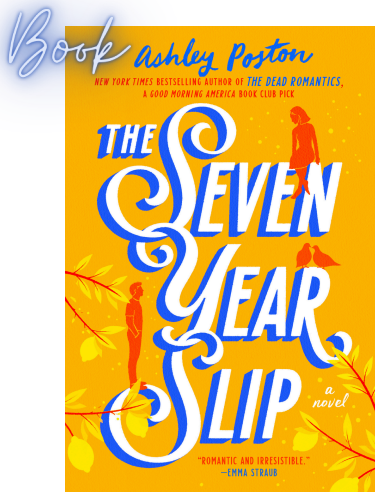
These Cold Strangers by **J.T. Ellison** Recommended by **Tammy Brasic, Admissions**. From Goodreads: "...a chilling tale about how a reporter's deep dive into a viral video challenges her preconceived notions of what being a hero really means."



Book



The Matchmaker by **Aisha Saeed** Recommended by **Sue Dix, Office of Financial Aid**. "I am amazed at this book! A romance/mystery or a mystery/romance? It works either way. Nora Khan is a matchmaker to the elite and descriptions of the many different ceremonies in the Indian culture are delicious. But someone is out to get her and her agency and the answer is doubly sinister. I love the characters in this novel, so much. If you want a fun, fast read, try it. You'll like it!"



The Seven Year Slip by **Ashley Poston**. Recommended by **Kelli Dykstra, Public Safety**. "A quick and easy read with romance, science fiction, and life reflections written in a beautiful way!"



Recommended by **Georgine Bello, Art Museum**. "I recommend you check out the GVSU Art Museum's PAC Gallery in PAC. We have two main exhibitions each school year, one in fall and one in winter and after each at the end of each semester we have VMA Graphic Design and Photography senior project student exhibitions. Check us out <https://www.gvsu.edu/artmuseum/>"



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TREENA GILBERT

BIK, CEC, IDC, KEN, WAT

CAMPUS DATES

25TH - CLASSES END

25TH - EXAMS BEGIN

GVSU.EDU/EVENTS

BIRTHDAYS

11TH - KYRA VANOOST

9TH - LEAH THOMAS

17TH - MICHELLE HOLSTEGE

21ST - TAMI JOHN

GVSU ANNIVERSARY

17TH - ERIN BRAGINTON

18TH - KELLIE KNIGHT

22ND - LAUREN HOLTON

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

5TH - SHERRI NELSON

27TH - HEIDI FELDPAUSCH

28TH - ANNE KAMSTRA



SHARE YOUR SUMMER PLANS, TIPS FOR TRAVEL, OR FAVORITE PLACES TO VISIT IN MICHIGAN FOR THE MAY NEWSLETTER

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